



LERNing

February 2013

A newsletter of the Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network



Columbus, Ohio

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of LERNing focuses on the upcoming National Workshop on Christian Unity, April 8 through 11, 2013, in Columbus, Ohio. For information and regular updates, visit: <http://www.nwcu.org/>



2013 NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY – REGISTRATION EASY AS 1-2-3

Registration for the National Workshop requires three steps: (1) Workshop registration, (2) LERN Network registration, and (3) hotel registration. You can register by mail or on-line (*see link below*). The registration rate is \$175 for the full workshop – or a daily rate of \$75 per day. (After March 15th the full rate is \$200.)

FOR LUTHERAN ATTENDEES! For the 2013 National Workshop, in addition to the general registration for the Workshop itself, you need to also register in advance with the LERN network. The LERN registration rate is \$35.

You may complete LERN registration on-line at: www.elca.org/ecumenical or print out the registration form and mail it to the ELCA Office of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations (see address below) – in care of Eileen Heffner.

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

You must book your accommodation for the Hotel *separately* from the Workshop registration. Be sure to mention that you are attending the National Workshop for Christian Unity (NWCU) to get the Workshop discount rate of \$109/night plus tax.

Sheraton Columbus at Capitol Square

75 East State Street
Columbus, Ohio 42325
phone: 614-365-4500

*Note: Be sure to ask for NWCU rate of \$109/night
Special rate available only until March 15th*

link: www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/christianunity2013



Sheraton Columbus at Capitol Square

Hotel Highlights. Indoor heated pool and whirlpool, fitness center, sun deck, outdoor pool. The **Lounge** features sandwiches (5 p.m. to 11 p.m.) The **Grill** offers American fare (5 p.m. to 11 p.m.)

KEY MEETINGS & ACTIVITIES FOR LUTHERANS

Here is a brief run-down of meetings and activities of particular interest for Lutherans at the 2012 Workshop.

MONDAY, 16 APRIL

- LERN Executive Board Meeting
- LERN Board hosts lunch for First-Time Lutheran Attendees
- LERN Plenary I: Information and Discussion with the ELCA Section of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations
- Opening Worship Preacher – ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Northeastern Ohio Synod

TUESDAY, 17 APRIL

- LERN Plenary II: Action Item – Recommendations from the LERN Ecology Task Force on leadership, treasurer function, and communications. Also – Brief overview of work underway on joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic declaration titled: *On the Way*

WEDNESDAY, 18 APRIL

- Joint EDEIO-LERN-UMEIT Plenary: Coordinating the Ministry of our Networks with the Coordinating Committees

THURSDAY, 19 APRIL

- Closing Address – Kathryn Lohre, ELCA Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations
- LERN Executive Board Meeting

TRAVEL FROM PORT COLUMBUS AIRPORT TO SHERATON HOTEL at CAPITOL SQUARE

Port Columbus International Airport is approximately 6 miles (10 kilometers) from the Sheraton Columbus at Capitol Square, site of the 2013 National Workshop.

Shuttle service is available through **Urban Express Transportation**. For reservations (required), contact: (614) 253-7000 or (877) 840-0411. Shuttle pick-up is outside of baggage claim.

Taxi rates are approximately \$25-30 one-way.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2013 NATIONAL WORKSHOP

The 2013 National Workshop will mark the 50th anniversary of Vatican II with the theme “Ecumenical Legacy of the Second Vatican Council.” Dr. Karen Westerfield Tucker (United Methodist) will offer a plenary presentation on Vatican II from a Protestant perspective, with a response from Dr. Jared Wicks (Jesuit). Seminars related to this theme include *Mary in Ecumenical Perspective* and *Our Common Baptism – Rites of Initiation and Catechesis*.

An additional plenary will consider the church-dividing issues of race and racism from a perspective of students from theological schools in Ohio. Titled *Forward Focus – New Voices speak on Race and Catholicity*, this plenary will consider ministry and church leadership in an increasingly diverse American society.

TWO EUCHARISTS

It remains the case that a major dividing point among Christians is the Holy Eucharist. Whether we call it “Holy Communion,” “Lord’s Supper,” or “Holy Eucharist,” the bitter reality is that not all Christians are able to share with one another when individual communities gather to “do this in remembrance” of the Christ whose life is our Unity.

This year at the National Workshop we will gather twice in Eucharistic celebrations – at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday and again at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

The Eucharist on Tuesday will be held at St. Joseph’s Cathedral according to the Roman Catholic rite. Those who are not Roman Catholic are invited to stand in prayer at their places during the distribution of the Eucharist as a witness to our hope.

The Eucharist on Wednesday will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church according to the rite in the Book of Common Prayer. Those who are from church bodies who are prevented from receiving communion from other Christian traditions are invited to stand in prayer at their places during the distribution of the Eucharist as a witness to our hope.

There is no local cultural event scheduled for the 2013 National Workshop, with the program designed so that all workshop attendees may attend these two liturgies.

COMPLIMENTARY SHUTTLE (DOWNTOWN AREA ONLY)

The Sheraton Hotel does offer a complimentary shuttle service in the downtown area only (not to the airport), including service to the Short North and German Village areas – which are local shopping and entertainment venues. The shuttle operates Monday through Friday during select times. For more information, please contact the hotel concierge.



German Village in Columbus

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL

St. Joseph's, the cathedral church of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Columbus, is a gothic landmark that dates back to the 1860s. Located at the intersection of East Broad Street and 5th Street, it is the site of the Opening Prayer Service for the 2013 National Workshop for Christian Unity. The cathedral will also host the Tuesday evening Eucharist.



St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Cathedral

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Wednesday evening Eucharist is at Trinity Episcopal Church in the Capitol Square district of Downtown Columbus. A parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, the church's structure dates back to the 1860s and is a registered national landmark.



Trinity Episcopal Church in Columbus

SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD

The Southern Ohio Synod, with 207 congregations and more than 94,000 baptized members, is one of the most diverse synods in the ELCA. It extends from several major metropolitan areas to many small town and rural settings, stretching from north of Columbus, south to the Ohio River. Post-modern urban lifestyles contrast with a significant, nearby Appalachian culture. The synod provides ecumenical resources, support services, and programs designed to build and sustain healthy congregations.

The synod is committed to starting at least one new mission every year in growing areas. Existing urban, small town and rural congregations receive assistance for redevelopment and transformational ministries. Callon Holloway, Jr. serves as Synod Bishop.

RECAP FROM OKLAHOMA CITY

The following reports highlight key discussions and outcomes from LERN meetings held at the 2012 National Workshop in Oklahoma City.

LERN PLENARY I

Regularly many LERN members share that one of the major reasons they attend the National Workshop on Christian Unity is the opportunity that gathering provides to spend time with ELCA staff from Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations. This past April in Oklahoma City, both Don McCoid and Kathryn Lohre were able to spend the week with us at the Workshop.

In their report at the Monday LERN plenary, Don and Kathryn discussed five major topics with Network members:

- We're living into our full communion agreements
- We're actively engaged in conciliar ecumenism
- We're living into our long-standing bi-lateral dialogues
- We're faithfully engaging the divisions within our own church
- We're making great strides in our inter-religious work

It continues to be quite amazing to learn about all that they do to serve the ecumenical ministry and work of the ELCA throughout the year. If you would like to get a copy of Don and Kathryn's full report please contact them at: erinfo@elca.org

LERN PLENARY II

LERN borrowed an idea from its Episcopalian colleagues with the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers network (EDEIO) and devoted a plenary in Oklahoma City to a session title *Dusting Off Our Ecumenical Documents*. Three different teams of LERN members led discussions around each of the major themes of the 1982 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) document. As Christians, our foundation is sharing in the life and the mission of the Church comes from the common call we all receive in Baptism. It is the community of the baptized that is nourished by meal of our Lord and major milestones have occurred since BEM was released which have allowed many of the churches to share in Eucharistic hospitality around the table. The

recognition of ministries continues to be a major challenge among the churches and has become further complicated by a lack of consensus on current moral and ethical issues, such as human sexuality. During the discussion, the facilitators referenced ELCA full communion documents, as well as the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

There was interest in having LERN continue the discussion and information-sharing on various elements of BEM and what guidance it can provide as we grow into our full communion relationships with Episcopalians, Methodists, Moravians, and our Reformed sisters and brothers. Also, how do we move forward with other dialogue partners and other Christians to live in the unity we share through crucified and risen Christ?

LERN PLENARY III

In response to restructuring in the ELCA, LERN established a task force in late 2010 to develop recommendations for guiding the work of the Network into the future. The LERN Ecology Task Force shared its initial recommendations with the Network during the final plenary in Oklahoma City. Three key areas were discussed: (1) communications, (2) treasure function, and (3) network leadership.

The Executive Board sensed there was consensus among LERN members to have the Task Force continue its work and further refine recommendations. This includes:

- Forming a Communications Team to work on further developing LERN's information-sharing capacity
- Establishing a Treasurer to work directly with ELCA churchwide offices, which will house our financial services.
- Developing a refinement to the Executive Board composition, to allow additional members to join the board based on particular functions or expertise – such as Communications Officer and Treasurer – while maintaining geographical representation as well.

The Task Force will work on logistics and responsibilities for each of these and bring recommendations to LERN members at the 2013 National Workshop in Columbus, Ohio.



"Jesus Wept"

**sculpture on grounds of St. Joseph's Old Cathedral,
across from Oklahoma City National Memorial**

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CHRISTIAN UNITY AT OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL

On Wednesday, April 18th, on the eve of the anniversary of the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, attendees at the National Workshop for Christian Unity gathered at the site for a time of prayer and reflection.

At a memorial across the street from where the federal building once stood, attendees gathered for an ecumenical prayer service. The memorial, with a sculpture titled "Christ wept," is on the grounds of St. Joseph's Old Cathedral, which was heavily damaged during the bombing. Following the service, the museum at the National Memorial was open for all to visit.

A workshop seminar followed, titled "Christian Response to Peace and Nonviolence." The seminar provided an opportunity to converse around efforts among our churches and other partners to promote nonviolence, peace, and reconciliation in a broken world.

Panelists included, Michael Trice (Assistant Dean for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue at the Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry), Ronaldo Cruz (with Pax Christi – a Catholic organization engaged in a ministry of peace-making), and Jordan Blevins (advocacy consultant – at the time – for Church of the Brethren and National Council of Churches). The three captured the contribution that Christians can make together to raise awareness, inform public dialogue, and take meaningful steps to attend to suffering and to overcome violence – such as what Oklahoma City experienced and which continues to occur in communities around the globe.

LERN REPRESENTATIVES – PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR YEAR-END REPORTS

At the end of every calendar year, LERN members are asked to complete a one-page year-end report. This form allows you to provide information on your ministry as an ecumenical representative and to report on the ecumenical and inter-religious activities in your synod over the past year. The form is on-line at: www.elca.org/ecumenical

DON MCCOID RETURNS TO PITTSBURGH

In August 2012, Don McCoid moved back to his home in Pittsburgh, but continues to work in his capacity as Assistant to the Presiding Bishop, which includes his role with ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations. He is spending one week a month in Chicago and the rest of the time in Pittsburgh throughout 2013. His contact information at the ELCA offices remains the same: Donald.McCoid@elca.org.

LERN NEEDS YOUR HELP!

For more than 10 years we have been served well by various LERN members who have volunteered as editors for the LERNing newsletters. However, we are exploring other options for communications and information exchange with LERN members and other Lutheran ecumenists.

If you, other colleagues in your synod, or members of your congregation, have skills in social media, editing, or electronic communications please let us know.

We are forming a communications team to work on our web presence, information sharing strategy, and other opportunities for keeping LERN members informed. Contact Rocky Piro at docroc93@gmail.com to volunteer yourself or other communication-savvy Lutherans to help the Network.

LERN EXECUTIVE BOARD (by region)

- 1 - Rocky Piro (president), docroc93@gmail.com
- 2 – Kenny Bowen, resgreeter@yahoo.com
- 3 – vacant
- 4 – Nathan Allen, PrNathan@sbcglobal.net
- 5 – Chris Olkeiwicz (vice president), revcco@gmail.com
- 6 – Tim Philabaum (secretary), tphilabaum@hotmail.com
- 7 – vacant
- 8 – Tom Prinz, pastor125kemp2@verizon.net
- 9 – Mary Finklea, pastorfinklea@bellsouth.net

RANDY LEE (1956 to 2012)

The Rev. Randall Lee, who served as the former Director for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations for the ELCA, passed away on July 4, 2012. Randy had a strong sense and understanding of the unity of the Church. He played a significant role with the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues, as well as with the Lutheran World Federation and the coordination he provided for the statement on episcopacy. Randy was heavily involved in developing the partner relationships with the church bodies that established full communion with the ELCA.

Randy attended Valparaiso University and Christ Seminary-Seminex (M.Div. and STM) before earning a Doctorate in Systematic Theology at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. He served as pastor at three ELCA parishes – Bethel Lutheran Church (University City, MO.); the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint Luke (Chicago); and Grace Lutheran Church (Evanston, IL). He was the Executive Assistant to the ELCA Secretary before moving into the Director's position for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations.

Randy had moved back to Wisconsin and died at University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison. His funeral liturgy was celebrated at noon on July 9 at First English Lutheran Church in Wisconsin Rapids. A prayer service was also held July 9 at ELCA churchwide ministries in Chicago. Randy is survived by his parents, Raymond and Marilyn Lee. His obituary in the Wisconsin Rapids Tribune stated the following: "He was a devoted servant and leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and was committed to the visible unity of the Body of Christ. He served the church with theological wisdom, gracious hospitality, and evangelical perseverance."



SHARE YOUR ECUMENICAL and/or INTER-RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES!

It is always welcome to learn what other LERN members are doing in their local settings. Below is a notice provided by Kenny Bowen on a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity event sponsored by the Southern California Ecumenical Council. Please share articles, write-ups or event notices to any of the LERN Executive Board. We'd like to share the word on what's happening!

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Ecumenical prayer service at
3 pm on Sunday, January 27, 2013
Congregation of St. Athanasius
at the Cathedral Center of St. Paul
840 Echo Park Avenue, Los Angeles

Bishop Dean Nelson, Southwest California Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
will bring the message.

The theme this year, "*What Does God Require of Us?*", was chosen by university students in India reflecting their concern about the caste system in their country.

The St. Athanasius Youth Choir will provide special music. The offering will be given to support the neighborhood food bank in Echo Park.

Following the service there will be a reception in the adjacent fellowship hall. All persons are welcome to this worship service. This an ecumenical gathering of Christians of all denominations sponsored by the Southern California Ecumenical Council and the congregation of St. Athanasius Church.

Contact SCEC at 626-578-6371 or
scec1@scec1.org

SEE YOU IN COLUMBUS! APRIL 8 – 11

IOWA LUTHERANS & CATHOLICS GATHER

Lutherans and Catholics in the Des Moines area look forward to hosting Rev. Dr. Don McCoid as speaker at their annual clergy luncheon March 7. Lutherans and Catholics have been gathering regularly for prayer and dialogue since Pope John Paul II's visit to Iowa in 1979. The idea of inviting McCoid to address this year's gathering surfaced among a group gathered to discuss "The Hope of Eternal Life," the report of the most recently concluded round of U.S. Catholic-Lutheran dialogues.

The group has asked Don to summarize the areas that have been discussed in Lutheran-Catholic dialogue since Vatican II, both internationally and in the U.S. How far have we come in the last 50 years? What are the major areas of consensus and the remaining points of difference? Where are we headed as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and what does all this mean for parish pastors and their congregations?

The night before the luncheon Don will participate in an event for campus ministry students from Grand View University and Drake University. He will help students consider the importance of ecumenism in a post-denominational world where few people, especially young people, see the relevance of denominational labels. What does denominational identity mean to Millennials? What is to be gained spiritually by ecumenical endeavors?

An event for lay people the next evening is being organized by the Center for Renewal of Grand View University and hosted by Dowling Catholic High School. Don will help this gathering reflect on the breadth and significance of the ecumenical convergence achieved between Catholics and Lutherans since Vatican II. We have come a remarkable way as churches, but what are the implications for our local congregations and parishes? Have we come to the point where ecumenical consensus shapes our life together on the local level as fully as it might? How do the polarities within our own traditions pose road blocks to greater visible unity?

Chris Olkiewicz is located in Des Moines and serves as the ER for the Southeastern Iowa Synod. He would be happy to answer any questions about these events and can be reached at revcco@gmail.com.

INTER-RELIGIOUS CASE STUDIES

EIR has launched an inter-religious case studies project. We invite you to share the "Call for Submittals" below widely throughout your ELCA networks, and to consider what stories you might share or solicit from your synod.

CALL FOR SUBMITTALS:

We want to hear your stories of engaging with people of other religions through an ELCA ministry. What was most challenging? What was most fulfilling? What were the most pressing theological questions and practical concerns? We invite you to submit your stories (1000 words or less) to ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations for possible inclusion in a collection of case studies of inter-religious life in the ELCA. Photos, videos, or illustrations are also welcome.

You can email them to erinfo@elca.org or mail them to Kathryn Lohre, ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631.

REGISTER EARLY FOR 2013 NATIONAL WORKSHOP!

Register early to get the best rate for the National Workshop on Christian Unity.

- (1) Workshop registration rate is \$175 for the full week – or a daily rate of \$75 per day.
AFTER MARCH 15TH THE FULL RATE IS \$200.
- (2) LERN network registration is \$35.
- (3) Hotel rate is \$109/night plus tax.

Register on-line at: <http://www.nwcu.org/>

