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April 2014

### New: Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network blog!

The Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network (LERN), a network of synod leaders, has launched a blog where you can find:

- Monthly reports from ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations staff
- Notes from the monthly meetings of the Executive Board of the network
- News, information and feature stories related to the work of the network
- Information about the National Workshop on Christian Unity, where the network meets annually



This blog is not just for members. All are welcome! | [LERN blog](#)

This blog replaces the print newsletter LERNing.

### Celebrating five years of the ELCA-United Methodist Church full communion agreement

This August will mark the fifth anniversary of the final vote ratifying the full communion agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Methodist Church. In a special letter addressed to the bishops of each church and their respective ecumenical networks, the co-chairs of the full communion coordinating committee extended the invitation to "celebrate and to deepen understanding of and appreciation for our full communion agreement." Two special opportunities were lifted up:



- "We encourage local churches to join with full communion partner churches for a one day retreat following the model of the Living and Growing Into Full Communion format designed by our Coordinating Committee.
- "We encourage Annual Conferences and Synod Assemblies to feature moments of witness, where the work of a cooperative ELCA-UMC ministry in the area is highlighted, and to share them with us at [erinfo@elca.org](mailto:erinfo@elca.org)."

The full text of the letter, the local formation template, and the full communion proposal, "Confessing Our Faith Together," can be found on the LERN blog. | [Full blog](#)

### "From Conflict to Communion"

In 2013 the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity produced a report titled "From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017." This Lutheran World Federation and Vatican document continues to be an important resource for local ecumenical dialogue. The Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Officers will highlight this statement within dioceses. The Catholic Conference of Bishops will send it to every diocesan bishop. Our Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Representatives Network is currently studying it and preparing for local dialogues. Some ELCA bishops have taken the initiative to invite the Catholic bishops to study this document and begin planning for observing the 500th anniversary of the Reformation together. It is [available for download](#).



### "Why Follow Luther Past 2017?"

The ELCA Consultative Panel on Lutheran-Jewish Relations has prepared and published a resource titled "Why Follow Luther Past 2017? A Contemporary Lutheran Approach to Inter-Religious Relations" as a contribution toward the 500th observance of the Reformation. The resource acknowledges the challenges of Luther's anti-Judaic legacy and goes on to offer four of Luther's key theological principles that can support a more positive approach to inter-religious relations. The resource can be [downloaded here](#).



### Christian Unity Gathering

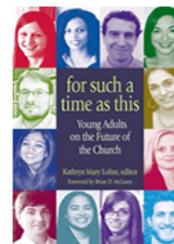
The inaugural Christian Unity Gathering will be convened by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA in Washington, D.C., May 19-20, 2014. The event will provide an opportunity for gathering and celebrating the movement for Christian Unity in the United States. After an intensive restructure, the Council currently has two priorities:



interreligious relations with a focus on peace and mass incarceration. Public sessions at this year's Christian Unity Gathering will provide an opportunity to learn more about mass incarceration and what we can do together as Christians and with partners to address this crisis. Guest speakers will include Dr. Iva E. Carruthers, social justice and policy advocate, educator and activist, and the general secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference; Dr. Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund; the Rev. Dr. Harold Dean Trulear, associate professor of applied theology and director of the Doctor of Ministry program, Howard University; and Jim Wallis, founder and president of Sojourners, and editor of Sojourners magazine. To learn more and to register for the public sessions go to: [National Council of Churches](http://www.nccchc.org).

### 'For Such a Time as This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church'

An ecumenical collection edited by Kathryn M. Lohre, ELCA executive for ecumenical and inter-religious relations was recently released by Judson Press titled, "For Such a Time as This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church." The 12 young adult contributors – representing a broad spectrum of cultures, races, and Christian traditions – offer a mutual exchange of ideas, experiences, and insights into today's most pressing challenges and opportunities, and issue a call to intergenerational study, dialogue, and engagement. More information can be found [here](http://www.judsonpress.com).



### Opportunities through the World Student Christian Federation

A number of opportunities for ecumenical formation and leadership development are currently available through the World Student Christian Federation. Opportunities include leadership positions in the Federation's North American Regional Committee, international camps at the Agape Ecumenical Center in Northern Italy, and a variety of workshops, courses and trainings. [Visit their website](http://www.wscf.org) for more information.



### New 2014 Global Church annual directory

Our Global Church is the annual directory highlighting ELCA missionaries, scholarships and ministries. It provides a wonderful overview of our church's global engagement, including new projects that will be funded through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. Request one free copy (no shipping and handling) at 800-638-3522 or [RIS@elca.org](mailto:RIS@elca.org). Order two or more free copies at [www.ELCA.org/globalmission-resources](http://www.ELCA.org/globalmission-resources) and pay only shipping and handling. For more information, contact [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).



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