

2007 Churchwide Assembly, Navy Pier, Chicago

The Landahl Substitution Motion Passes!

“Saturday, August 11, 2007. The churchwide assembly, the highest legislative authority in this church, has said today that there should be an end to punishing people who call, congregations who call other people in the Body of Christ who are in same-gender relationships and likewise an end to punishing people who are in those relationships.” – Phil Soucy, *Director, Communications, LC/NA*

The text:

RESOLVED, that in an effort to continue as a church in moral deliberation without further strife and pain to its members, the Churchwide Assembly prays, urges, and encourages synods, synodical bishops, and the presiding bishop to refrain from or demonstrate restraint in disciplining those congregations and persons who call into the rostered ministry otherwise- qualified candidates who are in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Churchwide Assembly prays, urges, and encourages synods, synodical bishops, and the presiding bishop to refrain from or demonstrate restraint in disciplining those rostered leaders in a mutual, chaste, and faithful committed same-gender relationship who have been called and rostered in this church.



Main Motion Refrain/Restraint passes 584 Yes (58%) - 431 No (42%). Total votes cast = 1015.

The ELCA document which contains this motion is published at http://www.elca.org/assembly/pdf/E3_Landahl_substitution.pdf

Bishop Paul Landahl, Metro Chicago Synod, put forward this motion as a substitute to another motion, which was original prepared by Goodsoil in preparation for the Churchwide Assembly.

Phil Soucy's full discussion of the parliamentary maneuvers leading up to this vote can be found at http://www.goodsoil.org/item.php?itemset=2007_daily&item=7

From: The Rev. Megan Rohrer"The Rev. Megan Rohrer"
<megan@welcomeministry.org>
Subject: out GLBTQ clergy and pastoral leaders at CWA
Attachments: image001.png, image002.jpg
Date: Thursday, August 09, 2007 5:03 AM

To the left is a photo of the clergy that were introduced to the ELCA at Churchwide yesterday. This is us lining up for a photo for the Lutheran.

For those of you watching at home, the buzz is that debate will likely occur this afternoon (committee of the whole was last night) and that much of the action will moved and addressed by the Bishops, who seem be more fearful of their own discipline then the pastors on these stairs.

Regardless of what happens this afternoon or tomorrow, I wanted to let you know that the clergy on these stairs are remembering and thankful for the ECP folk who made it possible for them to be on these stairs.

The Rev. Megan Rohrer, Director

From: The Rev. Megan Rohrer"The Rev. Megan Rohrer"
<megan@welcomeministry.org>
Subject: CWA update.
Attachments: brad crowd 2.JPG, panel.JPG, standing room only.JPG
Date: Wednesday, August 08, 2007 7:16 AM

As happens at nearly every churchwide there is much excitement that things are moving and shaking. It is as expected that there have been some moving moments and some moments of feeling like this is the same old same old.

I wanted to share with you all is that the number of people at goodsoil keeps increasing and we have had to upgrade room sizes a couple of times. You can see from the photos of the question and answer session with Brad S. that there room is standing room only - amongst the crowd were bishops, pastors and a whole lot of people wearing rainbow scarves. Following this meeting more than a hundred voting members went to the legislative strategy session at goodsoil headquarters for a closed door meeting.

However, more exciting to me than any possible or impossible policy change has been meeting many of the other queer pastors who have come out today (as of 7:30 am central). Many of them we have known about, many we have not. There are stories of courage, many words of thanks were shared to you all from the folk who drew strength from the public lives and ministries of the members of the ECP roster.

Some of the graceful work from within seems to be building a new way of living together faithfully that may not have been possible in the past. The two pamphlets (one of personal stories and one of ministries) of queer pastors are quite amazing.

What will come of this is the work of the Holy Spirit, but I am moved by the words of the Lutheran Core who as quoted in the Chicago Tribune - Rev. Paull Spring, chairman of Lutheran CORE, a conservative Lutheran coalition: "I'd like to help them in anyway I can," he said of the ministers on the list. "But I also run up against biblical teachings. I am in pain on a different level."

Chicago Trib article with Pr. Erik C:
<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-0807gaylutheransaug07,0,3695363.story>

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Gay ministers take a stand

Pastors seek change in Lutheran policy

By Manya A. Brachear

Tribune religion reporter

9:18 PM CDT, August 7, 2007

Flouting what they call a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, more than 80 gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered Lutheran ministers declared their sexuality on Tuesday in hopes of changing a church rule that excludes gay and lesbian clergy who do not live what the church calls “a chaste life.”

The activists donned hand-knit, multicolored scarves to hand out booklets titled “A Place Within My Walls” at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s biennial national assembly in Chicago. The booklet features testimonies by gay ministers, including Rev. Bradley Schmeling, an Atlanta pastor removed from the church roster after telling his bishop he was in a relationship with a man.

The booklet also includes a list of more than 80 clergy who are currently serving, are awaiting a call from a congregation or were removed from the roster because of their sexual orientation since the last attempt to change the church’s policy failed in 2005.

Many ministers on the list are part of the Extraordinary Candidacy Project, a group of ordained gay clergy who are excluded from the church rolls but serve congregations that call them.

“Forcing people to lie and hide lacks integrity for a faith that has as its core message: Tell the truth in public in a way that sets us free,” said Rev. Erik Christensen, the pastor of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church of Logan Square who is part of the group and one of three Chicago names on the list. “I think this particular moment is pivotal. It really calls the church to accountability for its ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy.”

Perhaps as telling as the names on the list were those that were absent. Pastors estimate about a dozen gay ministers serve in the Chicago synod, where departing Bishop Paul Landahl allows gay clergy to serve in consultation with him if they are in a relationship.

“It points to the disastrous effects of this policy,” Christensen said of the incomplete list. “Because of the policy, it doesn’t matter what the climate is. We see this policy creates fear.”

Rev. Patrick McGuire, interim pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Chicago Heights, said he added his name because “we need more witnesses to the larger church body.” Although McGuire is not in a relationship, he said he would be honest about it if that time comes.

“If I do fall into a relationship, I’ll be honest about that and we’ll see where the spirit leads us,” he said.

That’s precisely what Schmeling did in 2006 when he told his bishop he was in a committed relationship with a former Lutheran pastor now serving in the United Church of Christ. Since then he has become a poster child for the call to change the church’s policy before the scheduled release in two years of a broad social statement on human sexuality.

Almost a third of the church’s synods, or regional governing bodies, have endorsed a proposal that would permit gay and lesbian pastors in committed relationships to serve congregations and would reinstate those who have been removed because of a same-sex relationship. The church will debate the resolution this week.

But Rev. Paull Spring, chairman of Lutheran CORE, a conservative Lutheran coalition, said the church should draft the social statement first. Regardless, he hopes the policy on gay clergy remains in place. He fears lifting the celibacy rule may split the church.

“Is this a stand or fall issue for the church? I admit, I’m struggling with this question,” Spring said.

“I’d like to help them in anyway I can,” he said of the ministers on the list. “But I also run up against biblical teachings. I am in pain on a different level.”

A similar effort in 2005 to suspend the celibacy requirement before the completion of the social statement failed to get a majority vote.

Also Tuesday, the ELCA’s presiding bishop, Rev. Mark Hanson, was re-elected for a second six-year term. Hanson, who has been outspoken about the war in Iraq but silent on the issue of gay clergy, is also president of the Lutheran World Federation.

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