

BRINGING CARING CONVERSATIONS TO OUR CONGREGATIONS

A clergy in-service day hosted by the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference

An invitation

Grace be yours and peace.

Last spring, we —Pastors Mark Harris and André Lavergne— spoke at the regular monthly gathering of K-W clergy on our experience initiating and leading “Caring Conversations” in our parishes. As you are likely aware, “Caring Conversation” refers to a model commended by National Church Council to ELCIC congregations, in a direction affirmed by the 1999 Regina convention, “where members of the ELCIC ... are able to listen to the experiences of gay and lesbian people and their families” (NCC Minutes, March, 1999; Minutes, Seventh Biennial Convention, p. 35). As we suggested at the clergy gathering, our experience with Caring Conversations, in our own communities, has been very, very positive.

Out of our spring meeting, there came requests that we do a fuller day to encourage and to help parish pastors to initiate the Caring Conversations process in their own congregations. Since then, we have put together a clergy in-service day to be held on Thursday, October 10, from 9 am to 3 pm, at Christ Lutheran Church, Waterloo. The event would appear especially timely given the recent action of our Eastern Synod Assembly.

This invitation, then, is being extended to clergy of the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference and to the clergy of our four neighbouring conferences —Toronto, Hamilton/Niagara, London and Georgian Bay. You are invited to attend *Bringing Caring Conversations to Our Congregations: A clergy in-service day hosted by the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference*. While a few details are still being worked out, in general, the shape of our day will be as follows:

Agenda

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| 9:00-9:30 am | Arrival. <i>Coffee is on!</i> |
| 9:30-10:00 am | Gathering Worship — Steve Weber presides at a service of Holy Communion. |
| 10:00-10:15 am | Welcome. Introductions. Housekeeping. |
| 10:15-11:45 am | Reading the Bible for Today: A Lutheran Approach to Same-Sex Passages
Whole-group presentations by Tim Hegedus and Sarah Dille with an opportunity for questions and answers. |
| 11:45-12:30 am | Brown-Bag Lunch |
| 12:30-1:50 pm | Workshops — Pastors are invited to choose one of the following:

1. The Bible and Same-Sex Passages/Issues: Questions, Concerns, Resources
Led by Harold Remus and Loretta Jaunzarins, this workshop provides an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, listen to and share with others, and find out what resources are available to learn more. |

2. **Our Hopes and Fears** Led by Colleen Shantz, this workshop will be most helpful to those who have a concrete idea of what they hope for in beginning the Caring Conversations process and what specific challenges they anticipate. Together we will discuss the principles that might successfully guide the Caring Conversations process and strategies for addressing concerns.

3. **Doing A Caring Conversation: A Pastoral Approach** In a conversational environment, Mark Harris and André Lavergne lead workshop participants through their experience of bringing Caring Conversations to their congregations.

4. **Caring Conversations: A Lay Perspective** Stephanie von Schilling, Henriette Stumper and Randy Schnarr reflect on their experience as leaders and participants in a congregational Caring Conversation.

2:00-3:00 pm

Panel Discussion and Whole-Group Conversation James Brown, Claudine Carlson, Michael Pryse, Eric Reble and Tanya Varner engage in a panel discussion which will issue in an opportunity for some whole-group conversation.

The panel discussion and whole-group conversation will focus on the following:

"What significant questions does this issue present for you and what are you doing to address those questions?"

3:00 pm

Concluding Prayer. *Godspeed.*

Our Leaders

A member of the Eastern Synod Council and Vice-chair of the K-W Council of Churches, **James Brown** is Pastor at Christ, Waterloo, our host congregation. As well, he is currently working on the ELCIC + Renewing Worship project where he is serving on the Editorial Team for Holy Communion and Related Rites.

Claudine Carlson serves as Pastor of Holy Cross, Burlington. Pastor Carlson has completed advanced studies in psychology at the University of Waterloo. She also lectures in spiritual formation at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary.

A member of Christ, Waterloo, and an ordained Lutheran pastor, Dr. **Sarah Dille** is an Assistant Professor of Old Testament Theology at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. She has recently completed revisions to her book "Mixing Metaphors: God as Father and Mother in the Interplay of Deutero-Isaiah's Metaphors" (working title), and is currently serving on an LWF consultation in Theological Education having to do with seminary curriculum and gender issues.

Recently retired as Dean of the Chapel, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, and a member of the ELCIC's National Church Council, Pastor **Mark Harris** serves with Pastor Tanya Varner in a team ministry at Mount Zion, Waterloo. Pastor Harris is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree at the University of Toronto.

A member of St. Mark's, Kitchener, and an ordained Lutheran pastor, Dr. **Tim Hegedus** is an Assistant Professor of New Testament Theology at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. He is currently working on a project on Biblical interpretation in the early church, as well as revising his doctoral thesis to submit it for publication.

Pastor **Loretta Jaunzarins** serves at Matthew's, East Zorra. She is doing graduate studies in philosophy and biblical studies at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, and is involved in Parents for Community Living (Waterloo) and the Boarding Homes Ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto).

Together with Pastor Nadine Nicholds, **André Lavergne** serves in a team ministry at Trinity, New Hamburg. Pastor Lavergne chairs the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship and, together with Pastor Wendell Grahlman, maintains Lift Up Your Hearts, the ELCIC's Worship and Spirituality web site.

Bishop **Michael Pryse** is serving in his second term as Bishop of the Eastern Synod. He formerly served as pastor of the Mildmay-Neustadt Parish and of Holy Cross, Burlington, and as Assistant to the Bishop, Eastern Synod. Bishop Pryse is especially committed to the causes of Christian unity, ecumenical cooperation and global justice. Together with his wife, Lois, and four daughters, Bishop Pryse is a member of St. Mark's, Kitchener.

Eric Reble, Pastor Emeritus of St. Peter's, Kitchener, has served in world missions (India), church planting (St. Paul's, Bridgeport) and other congregational and church-wide ministries. Together with his wife, Jean, Eric is a member of St. Peter's Kitchener, where he continues as a volunteer member of the pastoral team.

A member of St. Mark's, Kitchener, Dr. **Harold Remus** is Professor Emeritus, Religion & Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University, retired Adjunct Professor, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Past President of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies. An ordained Lutheran pastor, he was the Founding Managing Editor of *Religious Studies Review* and is the author of numerous books and articles related to New Testament studies.

Raised in the Missouri Synod, **Randy Schnarr** is a member of Mount Zion, Waterloo, where he serves on the Congregational Council. Mr. Schnarr is a sales representative for a major tool company.

A graduate of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and member of Advent, Toronto, **Colleen Shantz** is completing her PhD in New Testament studies at St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology.

A member of Mount Zion, Waterloo, **Henriette Stumper** is a liturgical Assisting Minister and the Coordinator of Mount Zion's Community Kitchen. She is affiliated with the Optometry Clinic at the University of Waterloo.

Newly ordained, **Tanya Varner** serves in a team ministry with Pastor Mark Harris at Mount Zion, Waterloo. She recently completed a joint seminary internship at Reformation, Kitchener and the House of Friendship, Kitchener.

Dean of the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference, Pastor **Steve Weber** serves in a team ministry with Pastor Doug Kranz at St. John's, Waterloo. The Webers —Steve, Janet and their son Kyle— serve as a foster family for Waterloo Region Family and Children's Services.

A member of Mount Zion, Waterloo, **Stephanie von Schilling** was instrumental in creating the Parish Nurse program at Mount Zion. With a background in nursing, Ms. von Schilling is recently retired as Director of Clinical Services for the Community Care Access Centre, Region of Waterloo. She now works as a private consultant in community health care.

Registration and Notes

1. Please confirm your intention to attend to Pastor Steve Weber <rev.weber@stjohnslutheran.on.ca> by Friday, October 4, 2002. By Monday, October 7, we should have a list together of participants. Should you wish to car-pool with others from your area, drop us a line and we will attempt to assist.
2. Please bring a brown-bag lunch. The K/W Conference will supply coffee, tea and juice.
3. Please convey this invitation to any clergy in your conference who may not have access to electronic mail.

Directions to Christ, Waterloo

Christ Lutheran Church is on the corner of Lexington and Anndale, directly across the street from Waterloo Mennonite Brethren Church and Pinehaven Retirement Residence and Nursing Home. The address is 445 Anndale Road, Waterloo. The phone number is (519) 885-4050.

From Hwy 86... exit at University Avenue *East*;
 turn left (north) at the traffic lights from University onto Bridge;
 turn left (west) at the traffic lights from Bridge onto Lexington;
 turn right (north) at Anndale Road;
 turn left into one of the two parking lot entrances.

Christ Lutheran Church has recently completed the construction and furnishing of a lovely, new worship space which will serve us for worship and larger group gatherings.

Welcome!

We hope that you can join us on Thursday, October 10, at Christ Lutheran Church, Waterloo.

Please confirm your intentions by Friday, October 4, to Pastor Steve Weber, Dean of the K/W Conference. He may be reached at <rev.weber@stjohnslutheran.on.ca>.

Further information is available from either of the undersigned. Simply drop one of us a note.

We look forward to greeting you on October 10 and wish you well in your fall ministry.

All blessings.

André Lavergne <lavergne@telc.ca> *and*
Mark Harris <mtzion@bserv.com>