

CONTINUING CARING CONVERSATIONS  
CC 6: THE BLESSING OF SAME-SEX COUPLES  
SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2005



A clergy and laity event hosted by  
the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference

Grace and peace to you.

At the 2004 **Eastern Synod Assembly**, the following motion was passed:

*That the Eastern Synod petition the National Church Council to initiate a study of the theological, ecclesiological, and pastoral implications of authorizing a parish-based local option to perform same-sex blessings and bring appropriate recommendations to the 2005 National Convention.*

In September, 2004, **National Church Council** approved a project wherein scholars from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada would be invited to write short essays on various aspects of the question of the blessing of same-sex couples. These essays would inform the work of NCC and serve as congregational/conference study material ahead of the ELCIC national convention. The essays are being made available on the ELCIC website [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca) at [www.elcic.ca/docs/2005/blessings.html](http://www.elcic.ca/docs/2005/blessings.html).

In March, 2005, **National Church Council** referred the following resolution to the ELCIC National Convention:

*That the ELCIC acknowledge the inadequacy of sections of Sex, Marriage and Family, A Social Statement of the Lutheran Church in America, 1970, referring to homosexuality and homosexual behaviour in light of developing theological, pastoral and sociological scholarship and that the ELCIC suspend the application of those references.*

*That the ELCIC allow pastors to perform blessings for same sex couples who want to make a life-long commitment to one another in the presence of God and their community of faith. Authorization to perform such blessings shall require the consent of the pastor, the consent of the congregation or calling agency as expressed by a 2/3 majority vote at a duly called meeting, and consultation with the synodical bishop. These blessings shall use a rite authorized by this church.*

*That the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship be requested to develop a provisional rite for the blessing of same sex couples in committed relationships.*

In view of the Eastern Synod motion and National Church Council's response, a **Caring Conversations 6** event will take place on **Saturday, April 16, 2005, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.**

At CC 6 we will explore the matter of the blessing of same-sex couples with a focus on National Church Council's actions (essays and resolution) and on how we can live together with compassion and grace in community and society.

Sponsored by the K/W Conference, CC 6 will be helpful to pastors, congregational council members, witness, missions and adult learning people, and other leaders. The event will be especially helpful to **national convention delegates**.

This invitation is being extended to clergy and lay people of the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference and four neighbouring conferences in Toronto, Hamilton/Niagara, London and Georgian Bay. Of course, others are welcome!

We hope that you will join us on Saturday, April 16, at St. Peter's, Kitchener. Please set the date aside now, get registered, and **pass the word**. We look forward to greeting you!

All blessings this Holy Lent.

Mark Harris ~ [mharris@mzlc.ca](mailto:mharris@mzlc.ca)

André Lavergne ~ [lavergne@telc.ca](mailto:lavergne@telc.ca)

Harold Remus ~ [hremus@wlu.ca](mailto:hremus@wlu.ca)

## CARING CONVERSATIONS + WEBSITE

PS A web page has been created in connection with the K/W Conference Caring Conversations events. Go to the website of Trinity Lutheran Church, New Hamburg [www.telc.ca](http://www.telc.ca) and click on "Caring Conversations." You will find 10 sections offering access to many helpful resources. Section 7 details the entire series of six K/W Conference Caring Conversations events.

## CC 6 + REGISTRATION & NOTES

Please confirm your interest as soon as possible to Pastor Rick Pryce at [stphilip@online.net](mailto:stphilip@online.net) or by phone at (519) 896-1357.

1. Please provide the name of your congregation together with the names of participants.
2. By Monday, April 11, we should have a list together of participants. Should you wish to car-pool, drop us a line and we will help to identify others attending from your area.
3. CC 6 will take place at St. Peter Lutheran Church, 49 Queen Street North (between Duke and Weber streets), in downtown Kitchener. For directions please call (519) 745-4705 or visit [www.stpeters.golden.net](http://www.stpeters.golden.net).
4. There is no cost for the day. Please remember to bring a brown-bag lunch. The K/W Conference will supply coffee, tea & juice.
5. Many CC 6 presenters have written essays or supplemental papers which are available on the ELCIC website at [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca). Click on the "Blessings" graphic.
6. Please convey this invitation to any who might be interested. CC 6 will be especially helpful to congregational leaders and national convention delegates.

## CC 6 + AGENDA

9:00 - 9:30 am	Arrival. Registration. <i>Coffee is on!</i>
9:30 - 10:00 am	Gathering Worship — <b>Shirley Ruller</b> presides and <b>Cindy Jacobsen</b> preaches at a gathering Service of Holy Communion.
10:00 - 10:15 am	Welcome. Introductions. Housekeeping.
10:15 - 10:30 am	<b>Mark Harris</b> ~ National Church Council & the Eastern Synod motion <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What was the Eastern Synod's motion?</li><li>2. What has NCC done?</li><li>3. Where are we now?</li><li>4. What will come before the national convention?</li></ol>
10:30 - 10:45 am	Questions, Answers & Conversation
10:45 - 11:05 am	<b>Colleen Shantz</b> ~ Life in Community: A Gospel Witness
11:05 - 11:25 am	<b>David Pfrimmer</b> ~ Life in Society: A Christian Witness
11:25 - 12:00 nn	Questions, Answers & Conversation
12:00 - 12:45 nn	Brown-Bag Lunch (Coffee, tea and juice supplied.)
12:45 - 1:35 pm	Workshop 1 <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Oz Cole-Arnal</b>: "Local Option" in First-Century Christianity and the Lutheran Reformation</li><li>2. <b>Mark Harris</b>: NCC's Direction for the National Convention</li><li>3. <b>Peter VanKatwyk</b>: Pastoral Issues Related to the Blessing of Same-Sex Couples</li><li>4. <b>David Schnasa Jacobsen</b> &amp; <b>Harold Remus</b>: The Role of Language in Considering Same-Sex Blessings</li></ol>
1:35 - 1:45 pm	Break
1:45 - 2:35 pm	Workshop 2 (a repeat of the four alternatives offered earlier)
2:35 - 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 - 3:00 pm	Whole-Group Conversation
3:00 pm	Closing Prayer. Godspeed.

## CC 6 + PEOPLE

✚ = author of an NCC essay available at [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca).

✚ = author of an NCC supplemental essay available at [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca).

✚ = author of a Caring Conversation essay available at [www.telc.ca](http://www.telc.ca).

Dr. **Oz Cole-Arnal** has taught Church History at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary for over 30 years. An ordained Lutheran pastor, he is father of two grown boys and stepfather of three grown girls. He is married to Bonnie, a United Church minister, and is an active member of Christ Lutheran Church, Waterloo, Oz is also active in social justice concerns in the wider church. ✚ ✚

Pastor **Mark Harris** serves with Pastor Tanya Varner in a team ministry at Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Waterloo. Mount Zion began a Caring Conversation process in 2000. On secondment to the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship, Mark represents the ELCIC on the Consultation on Common Texts. He is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree (liturgical studies) at the University of Toronto.

Ordained in 1986, Pastor **Cindy Jacobsen** has served parishes in South Dakota and Ontario. She holds an M.Th. in Pastoral Counselling from WLS where she is working on a doctorate. She is a pastoral counselling specialist with the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE) and an approved supervisor with the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT). Pastor Jacobsen serves in ministry with Pastor Frank Haggarty at St. Peter's, Lutheran Church, Kitchener. ✚

An ordained pastor of the United Methodist Church attending St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, Dr. **David Jacobsen** is an Associate Professor of Homiletics at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. He is the author of two recent books on preaching: *Preaching in the New Creation: The Promise of New Testament Apocalyptic Texts* (Westminster John Knox, 1999) and, together with Dr. Guenter Wasserberg, *Preaching Luke-Acts* (Abingdon, 2001). ✚ ✚

In partnership with Pastor Nadine Nicholds, **André Lavergne** serves as a pastor at Trinity Church, New Hamburg. Trinity began a Caring Conversations process in 1999 and adopted an *Affirmation of Welcome* in 2004. On secondment to the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship, André works on various national worship projects including the current Renewing Worship endeavour and the ELCIC's worship website, *Lift Up Your Hearts* [www.worship.ca](http://www.worship.ca). ✚ ✚

An ordained Lutheran pastor, Dr. **David Pfrimmer** is Director of the Eastern Synod's Lutheran Office for Public Policy at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. David has recently been called to serve as Principal-Dean of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. He will assume his duties at WLS on May 1, 2005.

**Rick Pryce** is pastor of St. Philip Lutheran Church, Kitchener, and a member of the Eastern Synod Council. He presently acts as a Conference Resource Person of behalf of the Congregational Life Working Group for Support.

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 served as the Founding Managing Editor of Religious Studies Review and Director of Wilfrid Laurier University Press. He is the author of many books and articles related to the New Testament and early Christianity. ✚ ✚

Vice-Dean of the K/W Conference and member of the K/W Conference Council, Pastor **Shirley Ruller** serves with Pastor David Malina in a team ministry at St. Matthews Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

A graduate of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and member of Advent Lutheran Church, Toronto, Dr. **Colleen Shantz** is Assistant Professor of New Testament at the University of St. Michael's College in the Toronto School of Theology consortium at the University of Toronto.

An ordained Lutheran pastor, Dr. **Peter VanKatwyk** is recently retired as Director of the Pastoral Counselling Programs and Professor of Pastoral Care and Counselling at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. For 25 years he maintained a therapy practice at Kitchener's Interfaith Pastoral Counselling Centre where he directed clinical education programmes as a supervisor with the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE) and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (AAMFT). He is the author of various books on pastoral care and therapy. +