

# NETWORK NEWS



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## Jesus is the one way to God and escaped any boxes we put him in!

by Mark Chavez, director

Do we agree with our ecumenical partners on the Christian faith we confess? The 1991 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America churchwide assembly adopted a policy on the basis for full communion relationships with other Christian denominations. It lists six characteristics of full communion relationships.

The first and necessary condition for a full communion relationship is "a common confessing of the Christian faith," implying agreement in the Gospel. Hence the ELCA policy cites article VII of the Augsburg Confession repeatedly: "for the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments."

With that in mind, consider this answer by Katharine Jefferts Schori, the new presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church, when asked by Time magazine in July, "Is belief in Jesus the only way to get to heaven?"

"We who practice the Christian tradition understand him as our vehicle to the divine. But for us to assume that God

could not act in other ways is, I think, to put God in an awfully small box."

When asked why she said, "Our mother Jesus gives birth to a new creation and we are his children," in her sermon at the Episcopal convention last summer, she replied: "It was very deliberate and conscious. I was wrestling with the image of blood on the cross, the image of labour. It's medieval imagery actually, Julian of Norwich. It seemed appropriate to the text and the hard work we are trying to do in this place."

Another full communion partner denomination has made similar statements.

The Presbyterian Church's 2006 General Assembly approved a document that commends the study and use of a multitude of images for the Triune God, including "Compassionate Mother, Beloved Child and Life-giving Womb." The document only specifies the use of the revealed name of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – in the baptismal formula.

Given the above, it is hollow to say that

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the ELCA is in full communion with these denominations in any truthful sense if the first and necessary condition is "a common confessing of the Christian faith."

The ELCA's full communion agreements should all be re-examined in the light of only one question: Is there agreement in the Gospel and a common confessing of the Christian faith? Forget all the other important matters – the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament and the historic episcopate – and look at only one thing: Do we confess Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation?

Why have our ELCA bishops, in particular, been silent in the face of statements such as Schori's that explicitly deny the Christian faith? Where are bold confessions from our bishops stating, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Where are the confident confessions of Jesus' own words, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"?

Surely, we can expect at least one of our bishops to tell Schori that God put Himself in a box by sending his only Son to be born of Mary and placed in the small box of a manger. Then when Jesus had the audacity to proclaim that he is the only way, we put him on a cross and in a tomb, another box, but one that he triumphantly left empty.

"How can some of you be saying there is no resurrection from the dead? If there is no resurrection from the dead, Christ himself cannot have been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless...and if Christ has not been raised, you are still in your sins. And what is more serious, all who have died in Christ have perished. If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are

the most unfortunate of all people." 1 Corinthians 15: 13-14 and 17-19 ♦

Editor's note: check at [www.wordalone.org/nr/Jesus-is-the-one-way.shtml](http://www.wordalone.org/nr/Jesus-is-the-one-way.shtml) for a longer version of this article.

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# Convention set April 29-May 1 at Calvary Lutheran in Golden Valley

by Betsy Carlson, editor

As proposed in a resolution passed by the 2005 Orlando Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, participants in the 2007 WordAlone convention will learn about the authority of the Bible and reading it in a Confessional, Lutheran way.

The annual convention is scheduled April 29 to May 1, Sunday 6:30 p.m., through Tuesday 12:30 p.m., at Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minn. Registration information will be mailed soon and posted on the WA website.

In addition to keynote addresses on reading the Bible, the convention is expected to discuss and vote on theological fundamentals of the WordAlone movement, which were proposed more than a year ago by Prof. Dennis Bielfeldt, South Dakota State University, Brookings, S.D. These foundations were the focus of last fall's WordAlone theological conference. A study guide for the fundamentals is at [www.wordalone.org/docs/wa-study-guide-2006.shtml](http://www.wordalone.org/docs/wa-study-guide-2006.shtml) and a digest version of his proposal is included at the bottom of this article.

Keynote speakers will be Karl Donfried, a world-class Biblical scholar and author of "Who Owns the Bible," and Prof. Steve Paulson, who teaches systematic theology at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. Donfried is professor emeritus in the department of religion and biblical literature at Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

The keynote speakers will review the use of Scripture in the third part of the ELCA sexuality study, "Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality," as to whether or not it represents a confessional,

Lutheran way to read and interpret Scripture.

Election of WordAlone board members also is on the agenda for the convention. Leaving the board after completing the maximum of two 3-year terms are Chairman John Beem and Secretary Gracia Grindal. Pastor Fred Baltz, vice chair, and layperson Stephanie Olson are each finishing their first terms.

### Here are Bielfeldt's proposals as edited and shortened:

1. God is real and statements about God are either true or false
2. God causes things to happen in the universe
3. All structures, institutions and sets of ideas or beliefs have been shaped by history
4. Nothing finite is infinite
5. The true church is hidden, but is manifest primarily in local assemblies
6. Original sin is the condition of humanity's freely, but inevitably, turning from God toward something finite
7. The Holy Spirit works by grace alone to grant sinners the saving faith, not by grace with the necessity of human assent ♦

## What's new with the house of studies?

by Dennis Bielfeldt, director, WordAlone's Institute

Much has happened since the 2006 WordAlone convention directed the WA Board to implement the vision of an "autonomous, independent and fully accredited" Lutheran house of studies. After nine months of effort, I can report these things.

We now call the house of studies an "institute" because of the original Latin connotations of *institutio* as "arrangement, instruction and education." The institute will have "partner arrangements" with existing educational institutions for "instructing" lay people, pastoral candidates and pastors in classical Lutheran theology, so that they might be "educated" to bring the robust theological tradition of the Lutheran Reformation into play within the contemporary North American cultural horizon.

We have conversed with Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and Concordia University in Irvine, Calif. Luther Seminary told us to keep them updated on our progress, establish our institute and then discuss a possible relationship. Concordia Seminary and Concordia University display sustained interest in our project, and we have visited a number of times. We are interested in Concordia Seminary because it has a wonderful library, a very strong confessional faculty and administrative leadership who truly wish to forge a bond with us. Concordia University is very interesting to us because of its history with the Lutheran Bible Institute, its sympathetic leadership, its growing educational excellence and its geographical location. Our desire is to partner immediately with Lutheran Bible Institute and Concordia University to offer masters-level courses both on and off-campus. We will be in Irvine again in February, and hope to

announce something more formally after that visit.

We have two events scheduled. From June 17-21 the institute will host a theology conference for all interested at Mt. Carmel Ministries in Alexandria, Minn., featuring Steve Paulson of Luther Seminary and James Nestingen, formerly of Luther Seminary. There will be a kick-off banquet on the final evening of the conference with a detailed report of institute activity and up-coming events. In the fall, Nestingen and Paulson will teach a course in the Twin Cities entitled "Scripture and Interpretation: A Confessional Hermeneutic for Preaching and Teaching."

We are searching for gifts to implement the institute. Many people have already given generously, and many more are starting to see how such an institute can change the "lay of the land" within North American Lutheranism generally, but especially within the ELCA. Our hope is not to build traditional bricks and mortar, but to employ the latest technology to partner with existing institutions to deliver a solid Lutheran theological education. We are more than happy to receive your designated gifts for the institute through the WA office at New Brighton.

The institute has as its central task the perpetuation of Lutheran confessional theology. We want to provide quality pastoral candidates to ELCA and other Lutheran churches and their members who are yearning for strongly confessional pastors. But we envision other foci as well, including the development of Lutheran educational resources, theological conferences and pertinent lay events, robust continuing education for pastors and a theological research agenda that takes seriously Reformation theology and its presuppositions. ♦

## New sexuality study separates law and Gospel

by Mark Chavez, director

I read all of "Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality," the third study done under the banner of "Journey Together Faithfully." It is the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America study on sexuality, on which the denomination is asking members to comment. It's part of a process leading toward a churchwide social statement on sexuality in 2009. To me it's a smorgasbord that includes a few good dishes, a number of mediocre dishes and several dishes tainted with food poisoning. The problem is that it's hard to keep the tainted dishes separate from the good ones and one risks getting food poisoning by sampling anything.

That said, we should do all we can to warn ELCA churches and members about this study and its presuppositions, and encourage them to be sure to respond to the study. There are some members of the task force, a small minority at best, who read the Bible in agreement with the Church's 2,000 year-long consensus on sexuality and sexual relationships. I believe, the long-term effect of the trajectory set in this new study, if approved, will be devastating for ELCA churches and members, for our nation and for marriages and families.

Information about the study and how to download it are available on the Internet at [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/). Responses are to be submitted by Nov. 1, 2007.

It won't be easy to get people to respond because of the length of the study, about 140 pages. The study's authors, a 15-member task force and two ELCA pastors on churchwide staff in the church and society office, say they want broad participation in the study. You can be sure the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender activists will participate and respond. The churchwide staff and task force might get an overall response that is more supportive of their apparent agenda, which seemingly accepts homosexual behavior, than was the response to the second Journey Together Faithfully study report. That feedback clearly rejected the GLBT agenda.

Here are my initial reactions.

This third study reports on the devastating impact of pornography, sexual violence, commercial exploitation and so on, but says very little about the growing sociological evidence that the impact of sexual relationships outside of marriage is not good by any measure. An entire

session of the ELCA study is devoted to "Sexuality and Economic Justice." Yet not once do they report the work of Don S. Browning, Alexander Campbell Professor Emeritus of Ethics and the Social Sciences at the Divinity School, the University of Chicago, and Director of the Lilly Project on Religion, Culture, and the

Family (see: <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/research/rcfp/index.html>) and many other sociologists working with

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the same evidence:

“ . . . the modernizing process has done much to break down old cultural pressures and economic dependencies that functioned to support stable marriage formation. As a consequence, there has been more divorce, nonmarital births, and alternative family patterns in modernizing societies. Abundant social-science research has accumulated since the early 1990s indicating that these marriage and family disruptions have not been good for the health and well-being of either children or adults.” (http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/webforum/062003/commentary.shtml; see also www.americanvalues.org; www.imapp.org; www.marriageinstitute.org)

Browning has been one of the leading researchers in this area. The absence of this significant evidence is mystifying given the study authors’ well-placed concern for the connection between sexual exploitation and children living in poverty. The ELCA could adopt a social statement in 2009 that would truly speak the Word of God over against the sin-distorted sexuality of our culture if the task force and the church and society staff would look at all the evidence.

Moreover, the study itself (excluding the resources at the end by David Tiede, a study of Galatians, and Timothy Wengert, an introduction to Luther’s treatise on “The Freedom of a Christian,” at the end) is thoroughly antinomian. The glossary includes a decent definition of antinomian but apparently some of the study’s authors don’t know what it is or are explicitly antinomian. The definition from the study: “Antinomianism: literally it means without or against (anti) law (nomos); the term is applied to the view, rejected by the Lutheran reformers, that

the Christian believer is free from the need for any and all moral laws, obligations or principles because they are saved by grace and not by moral effort.”

The study begins by insisting that the church’s understanding of sexuality must be grounded in the Gospel. While it distinguishes law and Gospel, it makes the mistake of separating them. This is a fundamental error since we are simultaneously and totally saints and sinners as long as we live in this old creation. There are several places where, citing Galatians, the study says we are not free in Christ to do whatever we want, but in the end the study points to doing just that—whatever we want. To be perfectly blunt, the authors of “Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor” need to reread the Bible.

As I’ve said, all of us are sinners and as such we all stand under the law in every aspect of our being including our sexuality and our sexual behavior. Every one of us is accused, convicted and condemned by the law.

The absence of this significant evidence is mystifying given the study authors’ well-placed concern for the connection between sexual exploitation and children living in poverty.

God the Father uses the law to drive us to His Son, Jesus, the good news of the Gospel. Yes, He forgives us under the Gospel and sets us free in Christ,

but we are set free to obey Him, not to disregard the law or to declare that the law no longer applies to us as sinners.

Therefore, the church’s understanding of sexuality must be grounded in both law and Gospel. The study’s assertion that our understanding be grounded only in

(Continues on page seven)

the Gospel is an antinomian move.

Ironically, the authors of this third study want it both ways. In the section on sexual violence the study wants to bring the law into the picture by calling for “justice” (clearly a matter of the law) but then in the same paragraph places limits on the law. After all, the authors don’t want the law invading the privacy of “lovers” (though they don’t mention it, it seems to be an attempt to protect sodomy):

“As Christian people we will reflect on correcting imbalances of power, protecting the vulnerable against violence and coercion, and preventing destructive behavior. This is why it is not possible to discuss human sexuality without discussing justice. **It may seem a little strange at first to bring justice into a consideration of our most intimate relationships.** But the intimacy of these relationships makes us vulnerable, and so justice becomes imperative. Because our sexual lives are so intense, so complicated, and so private, justice can be difficult to sort out and enforce. . . . **On the other hand, we are concerned about the state intruding into the private affairs of lovers and families. That is itself a moral issue.**” p. 50 [emphasis added]

Free in Christ uses the Bible as just one among many authorities; and makes human experience an ultimate source. This sexuality study says that we view everything with different lenses: “Philosophers, linguists, social scientists, and many theologians recognize that we make sense of things around us by using the lenses or filters we are given.” p. 35

“We can and do view any matter related to sexuality through multiple cultural lenses, but as Christians we also bring our ‘gospel’ lens.” p. 36

“As people of faith, we trust in a living

God who continues to work through cultural realities. We believe in the liberating presence and work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the lens of the gospel introduces us to a radical freedom that has the power to view other cultural practices and assumptions for what they are—as life-giving or harmful. The Reformation has taught us that even the practices and assumptions of the church must be critiqued by the clear lens of the gospel.” p. 37

The authors don’t mention a law lens, but more troubling is the whole notion of lenses and reducing the Gospel to just one of many lenses. Since when is the very Word of God that which we can choose to use or not to use? Since when is God’s Word a lens in our hands along with a number of other lenses? This whole approach makes us the authorities over the Gospel rather than vice versa, which contradicts the Lutheran understanding of the authority of Scripture.

Wengert writes in his introduction to Luther’s treatise “The Freedom of a Christian,” at the end of this study:

“However, what Luther had discovered was that God’s Word works on us. . . . More importantly, it is clear that we are not in charge of this Word (as if it left us with things to do or facts to believe) but rather the Word does something to us (namely: humbles and raises; terrifies and comforts; puts to death and brings to life).” p. 131

Just as with “Journey Together Faithfully” 1 and 2, after everything is presented and we are left to decide what is right and wrong, the study repeats the dreary and predictable litany that we will disagree and we won’t all see it the same way. The study says that differing and conflicting views are not ultimately important:

“ . . . this study lifts up the theme of

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*(“New sexuality study...” Continues from page seven)*

Christian freedom in responsibility as a prominent part of the framework for this discussion. It insists that in Christian freedom matters of sexuality are matters for debate but are not essential to salvation or the gospel message. This evangelical (gospel grounded) hermeneutic (a way of interpreting) is crucial to articulate as a guide for moral deliberation in our current context where many people hear discussions of social issues as if Christianity were primarily a religion of law.” p. 8

“Even when we hold deeply contrary views on moral issues, questions of church and civil law are not necessarily church dividing. The church and its unity are grounded in the gospel. Our identity in Christ Jesus as forgiven sinners provides us with the basis from which to pursue what will truly benefit the earthly welfare of human beings and the world itself.” p. 21

“The differences we discover among ourselves in matters of sexuality and sexual ethics can be deep and serious. The study materials take note of this in various ways as we have seen. The study also operates with the understanding that differing views, when held in good conscience and in respect for God’s Word, need not divide us; they are not matters of salvation. This is the clear implication of Paul’s argument in Galatians.” p. 75

In the above quotations, the blatant antinomianism (separating law from Gospel) shines through. The contradictions among the sexuality study and Galatians and Tiede’s study are glaring. The sexuality study says that the problem in Galatia was that Jewish believers were imposing Jewish religious culture on Gentiles. Paul would be shocked to read this! Tiede’s study of Galatians rightly says it wasn’t just a matter of culture but of God’s law—the

Commandments.

Interestingly, not once does this sexuality study wrestle in any serious way with the following passage from Galatians:

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

The basic presupposition of this study is that believers only need to agree on the Gospel and once we move into morals and ethics we will disagree as believers and that’s fine. The result is that the study denies that there are absolute truths and values—except of course to insist that sex and sexuality are good—and worse yet, in the end, places it completely in our sinful hands to determine what might be good for our neighbor.

Watch out neighbor! ♦

**Editor’s note:** check at [www.wordalone.org/nr/study-separates-law-and-Gospel.shtml](http://www.wordalone.org/nr/study-separates-law-and-Gospel.shtml) for a longer version of this article.

*(“Ruptures...” Continues from page eleven)*

churches” in civil court cases while asserting that congregations leaving are “schismatics,” according to a posting Aug. 9, 2006, on The Layman Online.

The Layman Online says the strategy urges PCUSA officials to shop for judges from “hierarchical” denominations, such as Roman Catholics and The Episcopal Church, who may be sympathetic to the property claims of their “hierarchical” PCUSA. The strategy warns against going before a Baptist judge. ♦

## Reclaim offers critique of worship renewal in ELCA ‘Evangelical Lutheran Worship’

by Norman P. Olsen, member of the Reclaim Committee, retired pastor

From the beginning, the project for the proposed new ELCA hymnal was heralded as “Renewing **Worship**.” The book is named “Evangelical Lutheran **Worship**.” And at the Churchwide Assembly next August in Chicago, a “**worship** jubilee” is planned on Navy Pier “celebrating the renewal of **worship** in the ELCA.”

Lutheran worship should reflect Lutheran theology and our rich Lutheran heritage. But note that in “Renewing Worship, Vol. 2: Principles for Worship” (Augsburg Fortress: Minneapolis, 2002; p. iv) proponents of the new hymnal appealed to “growing ecumenical consensus” rather than to fidelity to Reformation principles of worship, which is what we should bring to the ecumenical table.

With all this ELCA effort to “renew **worship**” we should ask: “Just how does ELW propose doing renewal?” If we look at the following pages of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s new ELW book, we get an idea:

p. 94 The Invocation—“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” ELW suggests God’s name is optional and may be replaced with: “Blessed be the holy Trinity...” and the sign of the cross made after Trinity. Did the Trinity die on the cross? Why make God nameless?

p. 97 Sprinkling with water—“The assembly may be sprinkled with water during the singing.” ELW avoids the term “holy water,” but promotes the practice.

p. 97 Thanksgiving for baptism—this is offered by ELW as an alternative to the confession and absolution (on p. 94). Where is the precedent for this rite? Does

it move the ELCA towards the liturgical revival of ecumenical movements rather than remind us of baptism as, for Luther, daily “drowning and rising.”

pp. 24, 25, 38, 46, 51, 52, 59 Scripture Lessons—ELW suggests readings from the apocrypha such as Baruch, Sirach and Wisdom. These texts are not canonical Scripture for Protestant churches.

p. 105 The Apostles’ Creed—ELW accepts the change in the Apostles’ Creed from “his only Son” to “God’s only Son” for gender correctness. The original language connects “God the Father almighty, creator” and “his only Son.” The Trinitarian connection is weakened. Of which “god” is Jesus a son?

p. 108 Communion Prayer—“In the night in which he was betrayed...” The words Jesus used to institute the Lord’s Supper are used as part of a prayer offered to God. Jesus spoke them as his promise to sinners, not as a prayer to God. Luther fought against it. It reverses the direction of His promise to from sinners and, rather, addresses Jesus’ words to God.

Psalms 1 to 150—ELW has emended the Book of Psalms, removing many masculine pronouns and titles in reference to God. Emend (ELW’s word) means “to make corrections by editing.”

Hymn 858 and 859—Due to an outcry against changing the beloved hymn “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,” ELW has included both the traditional and the emended versions. See how changing the hymn tampers with the memory bank of the church, and makes for bad texts, grammatically and theologically. ♦

## ELCA pastor in same-sex relationship faces hearing

by Betsy Carlson, editor

Will a proposal to allow ordinations of persons who are in same-sex relationships resurface at the 2007 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Assembly? A similar proposition was defeated narrowly at the 2005 churchwide assembly.

A supporter of an ELCA pastor facing possible discipline in Atlanta, Ga., reportedly suggested just that possibility, according to an article in *The Southern Voice*, a publication for homosexuals.

That pastor, Bradley Schmeling, faced an ELCA hearing Jan. 19-23 in Atlanta for violating the ELCA standards for ordained pastors, which require homosexual individuals to remain celibate. Schmeling had told his bishop last August that he had entered into a committed relationship with another man.

Bob Gibeling, said to be a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Midtown Atlanta, told *The Southern Voice* that he supported Schmeling and attended events during the hearing. The hearing was closed to persons not involved in it.

Gibeling was quoted as saying: "Pastor Brad has never deceived anybody, or even agreed to follow this unjust policy. We're so close to changing anyway, and this whole trial dramatizes the injustice of the policy for someone so qualified and loving. It's almost a no-brainer to see how in the world we can continue with the same policy."

The *Southern Voice* reported that Gibeling said the ordination issue could easily be revisited at the churchwide assembly in Chicago later this year.

Barbara Lundblad, an ELCA pastor, preached during a "Liturgy of Prayer and Footwashing" (sic) at Schmeling's

church, St. John's Lutheran, Jan. 18. Her sermon was posted on the church's web site. She asserted that the current ELCA ordination standards "deny life in the flesh to gay and lesbian people."

She continued: "We should remember how the Book of John starts: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh.' The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and to deny life in the flesh is a very serious matter."

Her statement that denying the flesh is a serious matter is perhaps correct, but probably not in the sense Paul meant when he wrote in Romans 8: 12-14: "So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (NRSV)

The findings of Schmeling's hearing committee had not come in when the *Network News* went to press.

But organizations pushing to open ELCA ordination to non-celibate homosexuals press on with their work. Just this fall, an ELCA church in California and one in Chicago called and ordained new pastors not from the ELCA candidacy roster, but from that of the "Extraordinary Candidacy Project" roster. On its web site the Extraordinary Candidacy Project reports that its roster includes "sexual minority seminarians, pastors, AIMs, diaconal ministers and deaconesses who have refused to comply with the ELCA's celibacy rule." ♦

**Editor's note:** check at [www.wordalone.org](http://www.wordalone.org) for a longer version of this article.

## Lutheran Clergy Connect

Clergy Connect is one way for churches seeking a pastor or other leader to connect with potential candidates who believe that Christ alone is sufficient for the unity of the church and that the Word of God is the authority for the church. Below are the most recent listings. A full list, which includes more detail and listings, is posted at: [www.wordalone.org/clergy.shtml](http://www.wordalone.org/clergy.shtml)

To list your search on Clergy Connect, mail or fax your request on church letterhead, signed by an officer or call committee chair, to: Word Alone Network, 2299 Palmer Dr., Suite 220, New Brighton, MN 55112 - fax: 651-633-4260. Include this information: title of position, church's name (city and state), contact person with phone number and e-mail address. If you list your search, please inform us when you fill the position.

Calls are listed starting with the most recently received.

### Our Savior's Lutheran Church Chokio, Minnesota

**Position:** Full-time Pastor.

**Contact:** Please contact Bob

Amundson, call committee member at 320-324-2555; (fax) 320-324-2623; 23665 610th Ave., Chokio, MN 56221. Alternate contact: Tammy Dierks at 320-324-7110

### Gloria Dei Lutheran Church Tomah, Wisconsin

**Position:** Director of youth and family ministry.

**Contact:** Please contact Pastor Bill Rice for any questions and a job description. Bill Rice at (608) 372-4758 or [srpastor@charter.net](mailto:srpastor@charter.net).

**Send résumé to:** Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 310 W Elizabeth Street, Tomah, WI 54660

For details on these calls, go to <http://www.wordalone.org/clergy.shtml> on the Internet

## Ruptures widening in mainline churches

by Betsy Carlson, editor

The ruptures within both the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and The Episcopal Church are growing from mere crevices into crevasses.

Disagreements in both churches have been visible in disputes over ordinations of gays or lesbians in homosexual relationships. The root of these conflicts disputes, though, is the authority of the Bible.

A big sticking point in both the PCUSA and TEC (a new acronym being used by The Episcopal Church) is ownership of properties—buildings, sanctuaries, trusts, endowments and other tangible assets.

TEC dioceses accuse departing priests and parishes of abandoning the TEC or the (worldwide Anglican) Communion.

The priests are sometimes told their rights to serve as priests have been "inhibited," which means they can no longer preside at their parishes nor perform clerical activities. The parishes are told to surrender their properties to TEC or face civil lawsuits, which are being picked up by the secular news media.

Several departing Episcopal priests and parishes have stated that they realigned with the Anglican Communion through the Convocation of Anglicans of North America (or CANA) established under the Anglican Province of Nigeria.

In a 27-page strategy document leaked to the reform-minded Presbyterian Lay Committee, PCUSA governing bodies are urged to portray themselves as "true

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