

NETWORK NEWS



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Youth conventions need volunteers

The W.A.Y. Convention (The “Word-Alone Youth” Convention) needs you! Plain and simple: We need volunteers for both the Minnesota (June 18-21) and California events (June 25-28) for registration, recreation leaders, ushers, gophers, prayer teams and more.

What kind of people are we looking for you ask?

Adults, college kids, parents, pastors, youth leaders, grandparents and anyone else who wants to help make each of these an incredible event! You don’t have to be a WordAlone member or have kids registered at an event to volunteer.

The Minnesota event will be at Bethel College and Seminary, St. Paul, and the California event at Vanguard University

in Costa Mesa. The theme is “Student Leadership” and Dennis “Tiger” McLuen is the keynote speaker. SONIC-FLOOD will perform in concert on the final evening at both conventions.

So, please contact me as soon as possible for registration information or to volunteer so we can start assigning roles and putting together teams. Some helpful info for me:

- Which event?
- Days available?
- Time available?

Thank you and God Bless!

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WA annual convention

The WordAlone Network’s annual convention is scheduled April 28-30 at North Heights Lutheran Church, Arden Hills, Minn. The major speakers will be Pastor Mike Foss, senior pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Burnsville, Minn; Dr. James Nestingen, professor of church history, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn; and Dr. David Tiede, president, Luther Seminary.

WordAlone Board

Meeting highlights listed

ELCA constitutional changes

At its January meeting, the WordAlone (WA) Board suggested priorities for amending ELCA constitutions to establish representative governance and checks and balances within the ELCA. The suggestions are:

- Churchwide constitutional changes must be ratified by the synods; and congregations must ratify synod constitutional changes
- An amendment so that no one is discriminated against for assembly voting member positions (delegates) on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender or professional status
- A model resolution requiring bishops to approve requests from prospective pastors to be ordained by someone other than a bishop
- Redistrict synods to create comparably sized synods and have synod

assemblies elect representatives to the churchwide council.

WA bylaw changes

The board adopted several changes to the WA bylaws and articles of incorporation, the most important stresses that WA is a membership-based organization. Rather than stating that the corporation shall have “voting members,” the wording was changed to say that it “shall have members who have the right to vote.”

Commitment to this summer’s youth events

The board received a report on two youth events scheduled June 18-21 in Minnesota, and June 25-28 in California and agreed to support the preparations.

2002 WA budget approved

Treasurer John Beem of Miltona, Minn, reported that donations by individuals and congregations increased by 25% from 2000 to 2001. Overall contributions were up more than \$100,000 from the previous year to \$512,000 enabling WA to significantly reduce its debt. The board adopted a budget that anticipates a revenue increase in 2002 of 15.25 percent.

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New task force on seminarians initiated

A new WordAlone (WA) task force on seminarians has begun its work to help seminary students in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) think about and face the implications of a new ELCA bylaw exempting seminary graduates in unusual circumstances from a requirement that only bishops ordain them. The two main concerns of the task force are: 1) How to inform and communicate with seminarians; 2) How to communicate with congregations who are interested in learning more about the bylaw and in supporting seminarians who are interested in getting an exemption. The ordination-by-a-bishop requirement came from Called to Common Mission, a full communion agreement between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church USA, which was implemented at the beginning of 2001.

Task force chairman, Pastor Randy Freund of Hutchinson, Minn., asked the task force to work to make sure

- that WA members are informed as to the direction of the organization concerning the exemption issue
- that members of WA find out how the bishops are addressing these exemptions in their individual synods

- that WA congregations be contacted and urged to host area WA meetings where local members can be informed of the exemptions issue
- that task force members and others contact their synod councils to initiate conversations about the use of the bylaw and how seminarians can proceed to obtain exemptions
- that seminarians be contacted and informed of the work of the task force
- that a process for meeting with seminarians, bishops and faculty be set up so that seminary seniors will be fully informed of their options by the end of February
- that congregations involved in the call process be fully informed of their options.

Anyone with responses to these ideas, or who knows of seminarians who may be interested in an exemption, please contact the chair of the committee, Pastor Randy Freund at rfreund@hutchtel.net.

Grants awarded to two first call pastors

Grants of \$5,000 each were awarded to pastors Nancy Harrmann, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Osage, Minn., and Chris Magnell, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Altoona, Iowa, recently by the Seminary Debt Relief Fund Committee of the WordAlone Network and Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). Both are graduates of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and in their first call assignments.



Nancy Harrmann



Chris Magnell

Tony Stoutenburg, Naselle, Wash. committee representative.

He said: "It is a sad situation. At one time the church understood that providing a seminary education for its pastors was a duty for the whole church, so seminary tuition was almost nothing. Today, tuition and expenses are more than \$12,000 annually at Gettysburg Seminary (Pennsylvania), for example.

"Even with a \$90 million budget, the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) has dramatically reduced its support to the seminaries while funding a whole host of projects that have little to do with the proclamation of the Gospel. All this while seminary graduates carry debts averaging in excess of \$25,000."

In order to be eligible, a pastor and the congregation served must be members of WordAlone or LCMC or both and support the principles of the organizations. Further, the pastor must have been ordained outside the historic episcopate. The fund is for any eligible graduates from any seminary.

WordAlone set up the fund in 2000 and since then WordAlone and LCMC members have donated to the fund. The purpose of the fund is to support pastors who seek to serve the church but find themselves facing tremendous debt payments, according to Pastor

WA asks support of pastors not ordained by bishop

Now that the ELCA's bylaws are amended to make it possible for pastors to be ordained by someone other than a bishop, it is imperative that we support the future pastors who will not conform to the ordination requirements of Called to Common Mission (CCM), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and The Episcopal Church USA full communion agreement, says Mark Chavez, director of WordAlone. One way to do this is for congregations to state publicly that they would gladly call a pastor who is not ordained by a bishop in the historic episcopate.

Therefore WordAlone is forming a public list of congregations who would like to call pastors not ordained in conformity with CCM. If your congregation would like to be included on that list, send a message or letter to the WordAlone office (signed by a congregational officer or pastor) with the simple message:

"Our congregation would gladly call a pastor not ordained by a bishop."

Another way to support future pastors who will not conform to CCM is for current pastors to take a stand along side them. So we are also forming a list of pastors and associates in ministry who want to go on record as not conforming to CCM themselves and who would gladly serve with pastors not ordained by a bishop in the historic episcopate. The list is for retired people as well who want to take a stand for freedom to practice what most Lutherans believe. Send a message or letter to the WordAlone office with the simple message: "I do not conform to CCM's requirements, and I will gladly serve with a pastor not ordained by a bishop."

These public lists will be posted on WordAlone's website (www.wordalone.org).



"Our congregation would gladly call a pastor not ordained by a bishop."