

## NEWS FROM THE BOARD

In the aftermath of the strategic plan from the past year, the NAAC board has evolved into a working board with each member taking on specific responsibilities. This has been possible, in part, since we have delegated the annual gathering to a planning team. This provides many more opportunities for service: on the board, or as a member of the planning team, or other NAAC task forces. It is that time of year when we are beginning to recruit for board membership. Members serve for a three-year (renewable) term,

and this year the class of 2010 has three members who will be completing their service. We will be looking for at least three candidates interested in joining the board with a new term starting in August 2010 following the annual gathering. Georgia Liebowitz heads up the board recruitment efforts and would love to hear from anyone who may be interested or would like to nominate someone (lay or clergy) to serve on the board. Her address is [glbeardsley@msn.com](mailto:glbeardsley@msn.com).

What does a board member

do? The board represents the membership of NAAC in making on-going decisions about strategic directions, resource development, programming (including input for the annual gathering), enhancing communication among our members, and strengthening relationships among our ecumenical partners. We usually hold one face-to-face meeting at the time of the annual gathering. Normally the board members come in a day early to the gathering. In addition, we

*Continued on page 3*

## MYSTERIES OF FAITH FOR BAPTISMAL LIVING TODAY

The annual gathering of the North American Association for the Catechumenate (NAAC) will be held at the beautiful Duncan Conference Center in Delray Beach, Florida.

The theme this year is "When Heaven Touches Earth: Reclaiming the Mysteries of Faith for Baptismal Living Today." Special focus will be on the Great Three Days, especially the Easter Vigil as a formative highpoint of the catechumenal journey.

Featured speaker is Dr. Gail Ramshaw, Professor of Religious Studies at LaSalle University and author of several books, including the newly released *Christian Wor-*

*ship: 100,000 Sundays of Symbols and Rituals.* Dr. Ramshaw's topics at the gathering include: "2000 years of Easter: The Vigil In, Out, and Back Again" (A Christian History of the Triduum and why it is returning in the 21st century) and "Twelve Readings: Are you Kidding!?" (The meaning and importance of the scripture lessons appointed for the Vigil). Our Presiding Minister and Preacher will be Dr. Gordon Lathrop, Professor Emeritus of Liturgy at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Dr. Mark Mummert,



composer and organist at Christ the King Church in Houston, will head up the Worship and Music Team.

See article on page 3 on the rich array of workshop offerings which are part of this summer's annual gathering.

## BOOK REVIEW

"The God I understood was founded in poetic mystery, not reason. Worship was an experience I could feel in my body, not an ideology." These autobiographical reflections are from Alexander Shaia in his book, *The Hidden Power of the Gospels*. Released in early February, this book describes the story of "Quadratos," the name Shaia gives to a four-fold path of spiritual discovery. The journey of Quadratos comes from the author's long years of experience, study, and reflection.

Shaia views the four Gospels through the lens of Quadratos. Instead of approaching the Gospels as biographies, he sees them as responses to the particular experience of the community for which the Gospel account was written. Matthew is a response

to the question, "How do we face change?" The core question of Mark's Gospel is "How do we move through suffering?" In the Gospel of John we encounter the question, "How do we receive joy?" The witness of Luke asks "How do we mature in service?"

This four-fold path, so central to the Christian experience is embedded, Shaia believes, in universal ancient wisdom and is discovered in all the great religions. The Quadratos journey, a recurring four-fold cycle, is constant companion throughout our lives. Within the Christian tradition this four-fold path is played out not only in the placement of the Gospels but the way they are ordered in the lectionary cycle. The four-fold path is also revealed in the *ordo* of the liturgy (Gathering,

Word, Meal, and Sending) and the process of baptismal preparation (Inquiry, Catechumenate, Illumination, and Mystagogy).

Quadratos fits "hand and glove" with catechumenal process. Shaia discusses this in the book. Recently, it came as no surprise when I learned that he had been involved in the liturgical groundwork for the Rites of Christian Initiation in the Roman Catholic Church.

I recommend this book. You will find the theology compelling, and I suspect you will find deep resonance with your own faith journey and the formational experience called catechumenate. (*The Hidden Power of the Gospels: Four Questions, Four Paths, One Journey* by Alexander J. Shaia, HarperOne, 2010)

Bryon Hansen

## RENEWED CATECHUMENAL INTEREST IN ELCA

The Reverend Bob Shafer, Director for Worship in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, has launched a consultation on the catechumenate. Members of the task force include two NAAC Board Members: the Reverend Bev Piro and the Reverend Rick Rouse. This study process is

exploring the catechumenate as a primary discipleship tool for use in the church. Shafer has visited several ELCA congregations around the country currently engaged in catechumenal ministry. A rich and multifaceted conversation began in October with the Catechumenate Con-

sultation Team. The conversation will continue. One immediate outcome has been the addition of a new page on the ELCA worship site called "The Catechumenate." Check it out at [www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Catechumenate.aspx](http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Catechumenate.aspx).

## REGISTER EARLY AND PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT

### Early Registration Deadline is May 15, 2010

We are encouraging all participants to register for the summer gathering early this year. Please indicate your intent to attend by at least registering for the event along with your deposit.

A special pre-conference gathering is also being planned for denominational leaders over lunch and early afternoon of July 29. Limited travel assistance is available. Mark your calendars now for July 29 through August 2, 2010 in Florida.



Register online at [www.catechumenate.org](http://www.catechumenate.org)

## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

*Continued from page 1*

we keep in touch by email and hold quarterly conference calls. Each board member also agrees to take on a specific task such as membership director, liaison with denominational representatives, newsletter editor, and so on. With the work load spread around, we are now able to get more done and support one another in our mutual efforts to strengthen the mission of NAAC. Find out more about how you can be a vital part of our ministry of preparing persons for baptism and baptismal living. Contact me or any of our

board members:

Dan Benedict  
Secretary and Public Relations  
*stlukebysea@yahoo.com*  
Bryon Hansen  
Newsletter Editor  
*bryon.hansen@yahoo.com*  
Sherman Hesselgrave  
Fundraising Task Force  
*sherman@spiritone.com*  
Jay Koyle  
Ecumenical Liaison,  
Board Criteria and Recruitment  
*djk@tablesong.com*  
Georgia Liebowitz  
Board Recruitment  
*glbeardsley@msn.com*

Mary Peterson  
Membership Director  
*revmarypete@aol.com*  
Beverly Piro  
Treasurer  
*bpiro@prlc.org*  
Rick Rouse  
President and Chair of Annual  
Gathering Planning Team  
*rwrouse@comcast.net*  
Samuel Torvend  
Ecumenical Liaison  
*tovensa@plu.edu*  
We appreciate your on-going  
prayer support.  
With you in Christ's joyful service,  
Rick Rouse, President

## WORKSHOPS AT THE GATHERING

A number of workshops will be offered covering theory, practice, skills and an introductory track. They include:

"Stages and Ritual of Conversion: How does this cat thing work?" with Dan Benedict

"Introducing Liturgical Evangelization in the Congregation" with Clifford King Harbin

"Putting Your Team Together" with Bev Piro

"The Web, Sacraments, and Evangelization: Welcome to the 21st Century!" with Beth Lewis

"Your Year Round Catechumenate: A Walk with Jesus" with Jerry Pare  
The Catechumenate as Ministry of Welcome with Richard Rouse

"Formational Imaginations among Emerging Church Communities" with David Hahn

"The Catechumenate and Denominational Offices: Strategies for Opening the Doors" with Bob Schaefer

"Uniting Behaving, Believing and Belonging" with A. Wayne Schwab

"The Challenge of Catechesis in a Post-Theodosian World" with Taylor Burton Edwards

Conversations with Mark Mumert, Gail Ramshaw, and Gordon Lathrop

NAAC Newsletter Editor: Rev. Bryon Hansen  
1279 High Street, Auburn CA 95603  
530.885.4515  
[bryon.hansen@yahoo.com](mailto:bryon.hansen@yahoo.com)

■ "Christianity is about water. Everyone who thirsts come to the waters. It's about baptism for God's sake. It's about full immersion, about falling into something elemental and wet. Most of what we do in worldly life is geared toward our staying dry, looking good, not going under. . . . [Baptism] is about surrender, giving in to all those things we can't control."

– Anne Lamott