

NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – STRATEGIC PLAN

The Board of Directors met at Pacific Lutheran University in late April, hosted by board member Samuel Torvend. Culminating a year of discernment including a special consultation, survey, and feasibility study, the Board worked hard on crafting a new vision for NAAC. The result is a draft of a Strategic Plan for the organization that will be presented to members for their input at the annual gathering this August in Niagara Falls. An executive summary is included in this issue for review.

We are excited about a new direction and renewed energy for mission. One of the first objectives has already been met: a redesign of our website. Special thanks to Tom Witt, a web designer who gave the site a new look and provided for a user-friendly platform. We have also provided for a NING site (see related article). We are grateful to Clement Mehlman who continues as our most excellent webmaster. Finally, the Board voted to add another member to the Board of Directors so that we will now have

three classes of three persons (including three officers), each director serving a maximum of two three-year terms. These terms will rotate in order to provide more continuity in the leadership. We are currently looking for an active layperson to be nominated and subsequently elected at our August gathering. Please submit any names (including your own) to me at rwrouse@comcast.net.

Hope to see you this summer in Niagara Falls!

Yours in joyful service,
Rick Rouse, President

THE 2009 GATHERING

It isn't too late to register for NAAC's 2009 Gathering. Practitioners of the catechumenate from across the United States and Canada will gather August 3 to 6 in Niagara Falls. The keynote speaker is Dr. Craig Satterlee from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. "Living in the Promise of Our Baptism: Connecting Worship, Experience, and the Sacraments" is the theme of Satterlee's lectures.

Emerging church leaders Emily Scott and Isaac Everett will lead worship and provide music. They are liturgists and musicians as well as leaders in vibrant and creative emergent churches in New York City.

Workshops covering a variety of topics and rich liturgy will mark each day. Don't miss this annual



For all pastors, lay leaders, and seminarians

Join us for workshops, speakers, inspiring worship at the Annual Gathering of the North American Association for the Catechumenate this summer, August 3-6, 2009 at the beautiful Mt. Carmel Conference Center in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

"Ancient Rites for a New Generation of Disciples"

www.catechumenate.org for information and registration form. Check out half price rate for seminary students & those under 35!

Contact Sheryl Ann Waage, Registrar

waages@k-com.net Tel: 503-654-6359



opportunity for great fellowship and networking. Sheryl Ann Waage, registrar for the event, would love to hear from you. Send her the enclosed registration form along with a deposit check.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact her at Milwaukie Lutheran Church at 503-654-6359 or email her at sherylanmlc@comcast.net or waages@k-com.net.

A NEW VISION UNVEILED

Below is an executive summary of a new strategic plan for NAAC that will be presented for input and affirmation at the 2009 Annual Gathering. This is a work in progress and all suggestions are welcome. If you are unable to attend and wish to share your comment, please email Dan Benedict, NAAC Secretary, at stlukebysea@yahoo.com. Thanks.

Draft of Strategic Plan: Executive Summary

History

The North American Association for the Catechumenate was formed in the early 1990s for the purpose of providing training in the catechumenate process. Founding members included representative from the United States and Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), and the Episcopal Church in the United States (ECUSA). The organization is chartered in the State of Washington, USA and is a federally-recognized non-profit (501(c)3) organization. By Laws were adopted in 1995 and revised in 2005.

Initial funding was provided by a generous grant from the ECUSA Evangelism unit, and the organization was under the guidance of a self-perpetuating volunteer Board of Directors.

The initial purpose of the organization was to provide training in the catechumenate process. After a number of years, it was decided to change the focus of

the organization from training to development and support of catechumenate practitioners with annual gatherings led by a keynote speakers and a variety of workshops. Worship has always been an important aspect of the Gatherings.

Denominations were invited to contribute to the support of NAAC. In recent years, donations ranging from two hundred to \$1,000 annually were received from the ELCIC, ELCA, ECUSA, United Methodist Church (UMC), the Reformed Church of America (RCA), and the Presbyterian Church – USA (PCUSA).

In recent years NAAC has published an occasional newsletter, and the website (www.catechumenate.org) provides an extensive bibliography of books and articles as well as other resources for catechumenate practitioners. A new interactive feature on the website called “Living Wet” provides a forum for online networking and sharing of ideas.

Our Core Values

Spiritual Growth: We promote and encourage growth in discipleship through faith formation, especially utilizing the catechumenate, an intentional process of preparation for baptism and baptismal living.

A Supportive, Creative Community: We do our work in partnership with practitioners and others, recognizing that we can learn from and support each other.

An Ecumenical Vision: We are a community of diverse communions across the US and Canada with a vision for sharing a com-

mon sacramental spirituality. *Professional Development:* We are committed to building the theological and practical skills of ministry practitioners by providing access to the resources and training necessary for leading the catechumenal process.

Integrity: We value strong lay leadership as well as strong clergy leadership and support; we share the truth in love and honor our commitments to one another.

Our Mission

The North American Association for the Catechumenate seeks to promote and nurture the catechumenal process in order that the whole faith community might fulfill Christ's commission to make disciples, baptizing and teaching all peoples.

Our Purpose

1. To provide opportunities for sharing of information, growth in skills, encouragement of high standards and excellence in the promotion and development of the catechumenate.
2. To create and support catechumenal leaders and congregations across North America.
3. To provide a liaison between Christian communions in sharing of “best practices” in faith formation; and to maintain a close relationship with those who work in the area of worship, evangelism, and spirituality.
4. To promote the catechumenate through public presentations, representation in appropriate forums, and annual gatherings.
5. To encourage cooperation among our ecumenical partners

that will aid in the implementation, growth, and sustainability of the catechumenal process in congregations and denominations.

6. To provide support and nurture to our colleagues within the NAAC organization.

Our Vision

To be a vital, ecumenical organization of faith formation practitioners (lay and clergy) who promote and provide training for the catechumenate, working in partnership with denominations, seminaries, universities, other para-church agencies and congregations with the goal of helping change congregational culture so that faith communities can become lively, faithful minorities in a post-Christian, post-modern culture and serve as transformational communities of disciples for the sake of God's mission in the world.

The Annual Gathering

The annual gathering is the major means for professional development of lay and clergy leaders who are engaged in the catechumenal process. Through keynote addresses, workshops, and other opportunities for networking and informed sharing of stories, participants gain new inspiration and fresh ideas that deepen their own sense of call to baptismal ministry and their passion to engage others with the Good News.

Every NAAC annual gathering will be built around a catechumenal model that includes worship, study, and service with the following elements:

1. Robust ritual celebration: water typically used in at least one of the liturgies; sacramental actions done without apology; a liturgist for each gathering; model one of the catechumenal rites from a denominational

resource, followed by spiritual reflection in small groups.

2. Faith sharing facilitated in small groups, reflecting on the speaker(s), workshops, and experience from our ministry contexts.

3. Intentional building of community that includes social time, free evening out with others, and other networking opportunities.

4. Witness and service opportunity, selecting a local charity or advocacy group to receive the Eucharistic offering (and have a representative of that group speak).

5. A "first day" orientation and track of workshops that introduce those new to the catechumenal process on how to think about the catechumenate and integrate this process into one's congregational ministry.

Our Strategic Goals (Current and Future)

1. To host the annual gathering of NAAC that offers training, networking, and enrichment.

2. To strengthen our linkage within and between denominations in North America; and to seek a proactive connection with allied groups (e.g., RCIA/North American Forum).

3. To continue to grow as an organization with a clear sense of mission and a proactive board to help us realize our strategic goals. Research other non-profits for best practices of board development and organizational strategies.

4. To develop membership criteria, and to encourage active participation in NAAC among practitioners from all denominations.

5. To provide quality resources (online and print media) for members.

6. To cultivate and promote new leadership in NAAC and for the whole church.

7. To provide mentoring opportuni-

ties for new members.

8. To recruit and support a diverse and growing membership.

9. To encourage development and sharing of resources and ideas among members.

10. To facilitate greater use of web technology as a means to enhance communication and our work together. This includes downloadable resources and creating an online network of practitioners.

11. To market NAAC more effectively to various denominations, judicatory leaders, congregations, and other institutions and individuals who have interest in spiritual formation and discipleship.

12. To develop fund-raising strategies and goals; and to seek funding sources (membership fees, gifts from denominations and donors) that will enable us to expand our ministry.

13. To explore and implement a "threshold" project (e.g., a common ecumenical resource that insists on a liturgical component adapted to each denomination's practice with modules to get started).

14. To explore the feasibility of a full or part-time Executive Director and/or Fund Raiser.

15. To promote ecumenical liturgies, especially the Triduum including the Great Vigil of Easter.

16. To maintain a roster of catechumenal congregations in US and Can.

17. NAAC will provide/promote catechumenal training for congregations and others such as:

- a. Local/regional training events for congregational leaders;
- b. Seminaries and continuing education events;
- c. Events to "fly the flag" (denominational events)
- d. Web links to events (both directions) with downloadable NAAC publicity materials.

PLANS REVEALED FOR 2010 GATHERING

The NAAC Board of Directors has approved plans for the 2010 Gathering to be held at the Duncan Conference Center in Delray Beach, Florida. The theme is "When Heaven Touches Earth: Reclaiming the Mysteries of Faith for

Baptismal Living Today." A special focus will be on the Easter Vigil as the highpoint of the catechumenal journey. Keynote speakers will be Dr. Gail Ramshaw, Professor of Religion at LaSalle University, and Dr. Gordon Lathrop, Professor

Emeritus of Liturgy at the Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Mark Mummert, formerly professor at the Philadelphia Seminary, will head up our Music and Worship Team. Mark your calendars for July 29 – August 1, 2010.

NEW NAAC WEBSITE

Check it out! The new website can be accessed at www.catechumenate.org. You will find easy-to-locate resource pages which are in the process of being developed.

You will also want to sign up to be a member of the "Living Wet"

NING site, a place for sharing faith stories as well as contributing ideas for spiritual formation and discipleship. "Living Wet" provides an opportunity to form an online community of catechumenate practitioners where we can interact through the means of an

"open forum." Each month, beginning in June, a board member will take responsibility for introducing a topic and monitoring the conversation. Feel free to jump in and offer your comments and questions and/or introduce a new topic at anytime.

BOOK REVIEW

The Songs of the Mothers: Messages of Promise for the Future Church (Joe Morris Doss, Church Publishing, Inc., 2002) is an important book for people working with the catechumenate. Reminding the reader of the three major periods of reform in the history of the church (Constantinian, Gregorian,

and Protestant Reformations) the author continues to describe the reformation currently underway in the life of the church. Citing the biblical witness of two women, both mothers (Song of Mary and Song of Hannah), he continues to suggest that the reconciling voices of women, especially mothers,

are currently at work moving the church toward an ever more powerful, reconciling transformation. The book's 300+ pages are divided into five chapters titled A Call to Reformation, Justice, Mission, Baptism, and God's Suffering, Ministry and Community.

Rev. Dr. Clay Morris



GATHERING REMINDER

You are invited to join us this summer in beautiful Niagara Falls, Ontario for NAAC's 2009 Annual Gathering. For more information, you can go to the website at www.catechumenate.org. A registration form is enclosed with this newsletter and is also available on the website.

"The dignity of one's baptism needs more than drops of water, dabs of oil, taps on the cheek, and plasticized bread dipped in a modicum of wine. Baptism into Christ demand enough water to die in, oil so fragrant and in such quantity that it becomes the Easter aroma, kisses and abrazos, bread and wine enough to feed and rejoice hearts. And rooms of glory filled with life rather than crumpled vestments and stacks of folding chairs."

Aidan Kavanaugh

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