Welcome, Readers!

Christian Perspectives on Talking about Human Sexuality
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The task force of the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has released their recommendations to be considered by the Churchwide Assembly in August. While many people have participated in discussions around the issues before our church, there will clearly be many more discussions between now and August.

As Resource Center Directors, you will undoubtedly be asked for advice on resources to use by individuals and groups to continue these conversations in a healthy and respectful manner. Resources to assist us in moving forward as the body of Christ in mission in the world.

Here are a wide range of resources, including books on communication, forgiveness and reconciliation, to assist with these conversations. I hope that you and your partners in ministry will find this summary helpful.

Christian Perspectives on Sexuality

Journey Together Faithfully - A two-part study guide and discussion questions addressing the ELCA's "A Message on Sexuality: Some Common Convictions" designed for congregational use.

Faithful Conversation: Christian Perspectives on Homosexuality - James M. Childs J r. (Editor)
This volume, initiated by the ELCA seminary presidents in response to a churchwide mandate for study of the issues of blessing of homosexual unions and ordination of gays and lesbians, is aimed at engendering real reflection and conversation by providing Christians with the basic tools to engage the many dimensions of this question for themselves and with each other.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=160599&isbn=0800635809

Many Members, yet One Body: Committed Same-Gender Relationships and the Mission of the Church - Craig L. Nessan - Based on Dr. Nessan's acclaimed lectures, this book brings new perspective to this crucial issue. Nessan looks at irreconcilable differences on these issues and proposes a way for churches to move beyond them.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=160596&isbn=0806649038

Sexual Fulfillment: For Singles and Married, Straight and Gay, Young and Old - Herbert W. Chilstrom and Lowell O. Erdahl - With a compassionate tone, two former ELCA bishops explore the issues Christian people face with respect to the experience and expression of their sexuality.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=112344&isbn=0806640472

Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology - James B. Nelson - A classic and influential answer to the question, "What does Christian faith have to say about our lives as sexual beings?"
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=125736&isbn=0806617012

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Singles Ask: Answers to Questions about Relationships and Sexuality, New Rev. Ed.-Harold Ivan Smith - As a popular speaker and workshop leader, Harold Ivan Smith knows the questions singles are asking. As a divorced single Christian, he has wrestled with the questions himself. In this book he presents no simple answers, but frank, honest, biblically based guidance to enable singles of all ages to make wise life decisions.


Ignite! Sizzling Texts: Biblical Texts on Sex Part of the Ignite! High School Bible Study - This study takes an honest look at various biblical texts concerning sex and sexuality with an eye toward how to live faithfully as a sexual being in God's world.


The Bible and Homosexuality

Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views - Robert A.J. Gagnon and Dan O. Via - Two New Testament scholars discuss the relevant biblical texts on the subject of homosexual behavior and orientation. Discussing both Old Testament and New Testament texts in a thoughtful and irenic dialogue, this volume can facilitate reflection and discussion among church members on a vital and contentious issue in American church life.


The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate Robin Scroggs - Examining what is proper use of the Bible in debates about homosexuality, this work brings a little more light and a little less heat to the discussion, a little more acceptance of all persons on the "other side," and maybe even an awareness that in Christ there is really no "other side" at all.

http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=111282&isbn=0800618548

Homosexuality and Christian Ethics

Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches - Walter Wink - This unique resource presents short pieces from some of the nation's most prominent church leaders - Protestant and Catholic, mainline and evangelical - who address the fundamental moral imperatives about homosexuality. Together they invite the reader to open his or her heart to the Spirit, to tolerance, and to Gospel values.

http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=125719&isbn=0800636457

Spirit Ethics: Scripture and the Moral Life - Paul Jersild - In our postmodern, pluralist society, the ethical contents and authority of Scripture are addressed, and a proposal is made for a way of developing a biblically based Christian ethics, particularly on the issue of homosexuality.


Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics - William H. Lazareth - Lazareth rescues Luther's christocentric reading of Scripture and his ethics from
largely quietistic interpretations current through the Nazi period and sets his sights on how Luther's principles of biblical interpretation fueled his understanding of the church's life and mission. He proposes enduring principles for a Lutheran social ethic.

Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life, 2nd ed. - Robert Benne - Theologian and ethicist Robert Benne addresses the Christian life in its religious and moral dimensions by writing about the vocation of the Christian in daily life. This second edition includes Benne's reflection on ethical and ecclesial issues of homosexuality.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=112707&isbn=0800636260

Counseling
Pastoral Care of Gays, Lesbians, and Their Families - David K. Switzer - Written by a pastoral theologian, this thoughtful book provides factual information, theological and biblical insight, and practical counseling skills to help congregations become caring communities for gays and lesbians.

Sexual Shame: An Urgent Call to Healing - Karen A. McClintock - This is the book that provides congregational leaders with the tools to identify the assumptions, behaviors, and structures that promote, while masking, sexual shame and to begin healing sexual shame both individually and corporately.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=125586&isbn=0800632389

Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach - Christie Cozad Neuger - Neuger contends that pastors must take up the challenge of pastoral counseling, especially in light of the revolutionary pastoral implications of gender studies and feminist theology, as well as the continuing personal and social effects of sexism.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=125582&isbn=0800634225

Counseling Men - Philip L. Culbertson - Culbertson addresses the radical disparity between the stereotypes of how men are portrayed in our society and how they actually live their lives, between the media's macho, superhero, all-controlling, fantastic lovers and the fearful cogs in the wheel of today's impersonal business world, mortgaged to the hilt and worried about career and the responsibilities of providing for their families.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=125622&isbn=0800627865

Reconciliation, Conflict Resolution and Forgiveness
Our Community: Dealing with Conflict in Our Congregation - Susan Lang - Our Community begins by looking at what conflict is and who we are as people of God, then discusses ways that we deal with conflict, healthy and unhealthy conflict, life skills, the role of the pastor and lay leaders in conflict situations, and how to heal and rebuild community.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=114023&isbn=0806644117

Antagonists in the Church - Kenneth C. Haugk - Kenneth Haugk shows how congregational leaders can learn to prevent or reduce much of the pain and suffering caused by antagonism; tell the difference between constructive, healthy conflict and destructive antagonism; and cope with antagonism when it arises. A study guide is available to accompany this book.

The Gift to Listen, The Courage to Hear - Cari Jackson - Jackson interweaves listening techniques with spiritual principles that emphasize the importance of listening and provide a framework for more effective listening. http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=112685&isbn=0806645520
Growing Healthier Congregations: How to Talk Together when Nobody is Listening, A Video Workshop - Ronald W. Duty, Patricia Taylor-Ellison, and Patrick Kiefert - From the Church Innovations Institute comes this program, training video, and toolkit that will help congregations engage all of their staff and members in the task of growing the Christian community.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=155432&isbn=6000230125

Spiritual Maturity: Preserving Congregational Health and Balance - Frank A. Thomas - A delightfully realistic prescription for the habitual attitudes and actions so commonly known to rob pastors, and laity of the power and joy of service together.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=116571&isbn=0800630866

A Forgiving Heart: Prayers for Blessing and Reconciliation - Lynn Klug - This collection of powerful prayers offers understanding and new perspectives, providing healing for our relationship with God, ourselves, family and friends, in our communities, and among nations. These prayers have been gathered from spiritual writers including C.S. Lewis, Mother Teresa, Henri Nouwen, and Desmond Tutu, as well as ordinary people who have struggled with offering and receiving forgiveness.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=112589&isbn=0806639970

Bringing Out the Best in People: How to Enjoy Helping Others Excel - Alan Loy McGinnis - The author of the best-selling book The Friendship Factor, McGinnis studied the great leaders throughout history, the most effective organizations, and many prominent psychologists to discover their motivational secrets. Fascinating case studies and anecdotes about Lee Iacocca, Sandra Day O’Connor, and many others show how you can put 12 key principles to work in your family or organization.
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.asp?clsid=112635&isbn=0806621516

Fire of Grace: The Healing Power of Forgiveness - Richard W. Rouse - Using as a framework the story of the arson fire that destroyed the facilities of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood, WA but was a catalyst for healing of the congregation, the community, and even the arsonist and the arsonist’s family, Rouse teaches readers about the five-stages of forgiveness and ties these stages to the catechumenate. Augsburg Fortress will publish this book in summer 2005.
ISBN: 0806651121

Many leaders throughout the ELCA pray that we continue to focus on the central faith that binds us together as Lutheran Christians rather than on issues that have potential to create conflict. These resources are intended to provide a range of perspectives and tools to assist in discussion and dialogue.

Don’t forget to dial in!

The next Conference Call with Augsburg Fortress representatives will be Tuesday, April 26 at 10am CDT. Dial in and join the conversation!
Is your Resource Center on the membership list of the Association of Lutheran Resource Centers or have you forgotten to keep current? Is there a Center in your area or knowledge who should be a member? Now is the time to get your own membership to Pam Drenner and to get others on board, too.

One of the advantages of belonging is joining the ALRC membership discussion board on ecunet. Lots of information shared there. Also, taking part in the Conference Call with Augsburg Fortress on the last Tuesday of each month. It’s a wonderful time of sharing and learning.

If you have any questions, contact Pam at the information on the second page of this newsletter.

Plans are moving right along for the ALRC Gathering in Chicago October 27, 28, 29 and 30. It’s going to be a great time together, as usual. We will be staying in a different hotel because the Marriott has changed their policies on a number of things, so we’re going to be at the Springhill Suites with free shuttle service to and from the Lutheran Center or you could walk if you wanted to. They also supply free breakfast, even on the weekend, free parking, phone and internet. AND, we will have our hospitality room, too.

The Board will be having a Conference Call on April 18 to nail down some more details; The Nominating Committee of Bonnie Weber, Karen Harthan and Marty Shifflett are hard at work making contacts for officers; Fun things are being planned—hopefully, you have circled those dates on your calendar and are making the necessary arrangements to be there!

Happy Birthday to YOU-U-U-U

From the Lutheran Resource Center at Clear Lake, IA - Contact, Karen Harthan—05/01
From the Resource Connection at Atlanta, GA - Contact, Sue Huff—05/01
From the NW Pennsylvania Synod Resource Center at Oil City, PA - Contact, Mary Housholder—05/04
From the Lower Susquehanna Synod Resource Center at Harrisburg, PA - Contact, Marty Shifflett—05/06
From the Resource Connection at Atlanta, GA - Contact, Mardee Rightmyer—05/14
From the Eastern ND Synod Resource Center at Fargo, ND - Contact, Kim Bailey—05/25
From the Region 1 Resource Center at Seattle, WA - Contact, Janet Nelson—05/27
From the Heilig Resource Center at Salisbury, NC - Contact, Glenda Ball—05/31
From the EC Synod of WI Resource Center at Appleton, WI - Contact, Ellen Mai—06/17
From the Source, Inc at Chevy Chase, MD - Contact, LaJuan Quander—06/17
From the NE Ohio Synod Resource Center at Cuyahoga Falls, OH - Contact, Karen Kaufman—06/21
From the SWMN Resource Center at Redwood Falls, MN - Contact, Sara Johnson—07/09
From the Central States Synod Resource Center at Kansas City, MO - Contact, Amy Lumanog—07/18
From the NW Synod of WI Resource Center at Eau Claire, WI - Contact, Bonnie Weber—07/22
From the Region 1 Resource Center at Seattle, WA - Contact, Carolyn Strain—07/24

May you all have a happy day!