

This is the Pastors' Letter from our parish newsletter for September, 2010. Because we have had several requests for this Pastors' Letter, we are including it among the documents for Transitioning into the NALC.

Dear Parish Family,

We are now very close to the September 12 vote. What is at stake is nothing less than the Christian faith itself. The struggle has been primarily about the Name of God, the authority of the Holy Scriptures, the proper distinction of Law and Gospel, and salvation through Jesus Christ alone. Although prominent in the debate, the issue of sexuality has been secondary. The ELCA's actions last August show that it is not capable of adhering to the authority of the Holy Scriptures and has challenged the Name of God in its literature including *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

An outstanding example of a lack of adherence to the Holy Name of God is shown in the Service used to receive seven actively homosexual individuals into the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. You will find the following:

1. The Service does not begin in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but "in the name of the Triune God."
2. The "Gloria tibi, Domine" or "Glory to you, O Lord," said or sing before the reading of the Gospel, was transmuted into "Glory to you, O Holy One."
3. One intercession of the Prayers of Intercession, reads "O Sophia, Wisdom and Mother of us all, you are One with many names and images. May we see in all who are gathered here today your multiplicity of blessings. Today we honor your unlocking systems and practices that devalued and demeaned us for so many years and by putting your way of honoring people in its place."
4. The Eucharistic Prayer includes these words, "Life-giving Mother, you make a home for us in the midst of our fear ..."
5. The Prayer of Jesus, not called The Lord's Prayer in the service, was prayed in six forms, one of the choices being, "Our Mother, who is within us, we celebrate your many names. Your wisdom come, your will be done, unfolding from the depths within us. Each day you give us all that we need. You remind us of our limits and we let go. You support us in our power and we act in courage. For you are the dwelling place within us, the empowerment around us, and the celebration among us, now and forever. Amen."
6. The unbaptized were invited to receive Communion.
7. In the blessing at the end of the service, the Holy Trinity was referred to as, "...Creator, Redeemer, and Holy Spirit."

Mark Holmerud, Bishop of Sierra Pacific Synod, presided. Bishop Dean Nelson of the Southwest California Synod and Bishop David Brauer-Rieke of the Oregon Synod participated in the Rite of Reception. Thus we can safely assume that the text of the Service received the full endorsement of the ELCA.

This service reflects a complete departure from Christian and Lutheran orthodoxy. The Prayer of Jesus herein quoted is Gnostic and indicates a self-centered spirituality. These sorts of texts, we would assume, reflect acceptable standards in the ELCA. Not only is the ELCA departing from Lutheran orthodoxy but from Christianity itself.

Your pastors were confident that this would happen, but we did not expect it to happen so soon. The ELCA of the future will be an aberrant, quasi-Christian religious organization. How sad it is for us to see this happen.

We appeal to you to keep Holy Trinity under the shelter of Christ and the Christian faith by approving our leaving the ELCA. Orthodox Christianity and, more importantly Christ Himself, will continue to be under attack in the ELCA. It will be difficult to impossible to practice our Christian faith with any integrity in an organization that refuses to be Christian.

Please pray for Holy Trinity Church in these last weeks before the vote. Christ will see us through these troubled times.

In Christ,  
Pastor Mike & Pastor Mandy

PS – A copy of the original Rite of Reception worship service document mentioned in the above Pastors' Letter can be downloaded at [www.welcomeministry.org/RiteofReceptionJuly252010.pdf](http://www.welcomeministry.org/RiteofReceptionJuly252010.pdf)