



**First Canadian Extraordinary Call
Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM)
candidate called by Holy Cross, Newmarket, ON**

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www.lutheransconcerned.ca

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A Newmarket, Ontario Congregation has become the first ELCIC congregation to call an openly queer-identified candidate from the roster of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries to the ministry of word and sacrament. On April 20, 2008, members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church (www.holycrosslutheran.ca) voted overwhelmingly to call Lionel Ketola as Associate Pastor. He will be deployed throughout the ELCIC (www.elcic.ca) as an Ambassador of Reconciliation to advocate for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in the life and ministry of the ELCIC.

Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (www.elm.org) promotes the full inclusion of sexual minority persons in the professional ministry of the Lutheran Churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada does not allow openly lesbian and gay persons in same-gender relationships to become ELCIC pastors, and requires lifelong celibacy for sexual minority persons seeking to serve in ministry. ELM views this discriminatory policy as a fundamental violation of the creation of all persons as sexual beings and of the sanctity of the primary relationships of all people. ELM exists as a hopeful alternative for those who seek to follow God's call by serving in professional ministry in the Lutheran churches.

Lionel Ketola was first endorsed for ordination with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) in 1985. After coming out to his bishop in 1986 Lionel's internship site was cancelled and he faced the prospect of being dropped from the master of divinity program at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Saskatoon. While Lionel was allowed to finish his degree, his progress towards approval for ordination was halted. For the next fourteen years, Lionel worked in the non-profit sector and with a variety of church-related organizations, and eventually retrained to work as an art therapist.

After learning about the ECP through a friend, Lionel, who'd been "sensing the spirit's nudge to once again risk pursuing [his] calling to ministry," made application to the ECP and was endorsed in April, 2004. Having already completed his seminary education, all that remained was completion of an

internship in order to advance to the approval phase of the ECP candidacy process. Finding a placement became a two year project for Lionel, who spoke with many congregations to find one that would be willing to serve as an internship site for someone not currently in an ELCIC candidacy process.

In February 2006 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Newmarket, ON, voted to call Lionel as Intern. Following the successful completion of his internship, Lionel was granted approval for first call and ordination by Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries in June 2007.



Colleagues and Friends Celebrate Lionel's Installation as Intern at Holy Cross Lutheran Church

ELCIC congregations are required to call ELCIC rostered candidates. Lionel's call marks the first time an ELCIC congregation has chosen the path of faithful disobedience by calling an Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries rostered candidate in order to promote the full inclusion of queer people in the professional ministry of the church.

Commenting on the vote to call Lionel Ketola, Holy Cross Pastor Dawn Hutchings offered: "There are days in this blessed church, when the splendour of God's grace is overwhelmingly palpable. This is one of those glorious days!"

Lionel shared "feeling very privileged to be called by such a courageous congregation, to embody grace and gospel and advocate for the full inclusion of queer people in the life and ministry of our ELCIC. I feel proud to be a part of Holy Cross. And I feel proud to be part of the queer community, to be called as an openly queer man by Holy Cross to help our ELCIC more deeply integrate and celebrate the gifts of sexuality and spirituality. I am excited about the scope of this ministry of reconciliation which will include word and sacrament ministry in ELCIC congregations, advocating for policy change in our ELCIC, increasing the number of Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregations, challenging existing RIC ministry settings to deepen their welcome and advocacy, and developing a broader grassroots leadership base for our ministry of reconciliation".

Plans for Lionel's ordination are presently underway.