

## CONSULTATION TO MEET

The Board of Directors have discerned that the time is ripe for a consultation on the future directions of NAAC. So, a cross section of the membership and denominational representatives have been invited to attend, and they will be assembling at the Sisters of Mercy Retreat Center in Auburn,

near Sacramento, California, on April 3 and 4.

We believe that NAAC is a wonderful organization with much to offer the church as it seeks to form disciples in these interesting and challenging times. We also believe that this is a critical time

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## RICH VARIETY OF WORKSHOPS AT GATHERING

Here are the workshops which will be offered at the NAAC Gathering in July. NAAC appreciates those who offer to share their passion for the catechumenate by presenting these workshops.

● "Bringing It Home: Getting the Catechumenate Started in Your Congregation" by Georgia Beard-sley, Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Portland, Oregon. A practicum on how to "do" the catechumenate, including developing a formation team,

planning out the season, obtaining sponsors and all the little details to help you get a process going in your community of faith.

● "Stirring Christmas Waters: Preparing for Baptism in the Season of Advent" by James Dodge, student at Institute for Worship Studies, Four Square Church, Canley, Oregon. This workshop will introduce catechumenal practitioners to a lectionary-based catechesis designed for sponsors/mentors/godparents to journey

together with baptismal candidates *en route* to Christmas or Epiphany baptism. There will be a slant towards catechesis of young people fifteen to twenty-five years old and the people working with them, most often middle to senior-aged people who demonstrate calling, gifting, and dedication to youth discipleship.

● "Sharing the Word" by Edie Boettcher, catechist, Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, Wash-

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## FOR BIBLE STUDY

Here are some prompts to consider as we engage catechumens in reflection on the lessons: "Do you feel attracted to anything in this reading? Why? Do you feel resistant to anything in this reading? Why? Do you identify with any person or thing in this reading? Why? Do you feel called by this reading? How? A period of silence follows the question to give everyone time to think and pray?" Margaret Ralph, "Breaking Open the Word and Catechumenal Catechesis," *Catechumenate*, January 2008, p. 16.

## NAAC NEWS ON THE WEB

Issues of *NAAC News* in color will be available on the website and ready for downloading. The issues will be available on the Resources page of the site. Items, articles for future issues, and ideas for the newsletter should be forwarded to the editor. All back issues are also available.

## FAITH AND FONT: DISCIPLING FOR A NEW CHURCH

A Faith and Font catechumenate training event took place at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church in Seattle on January 18-20, 2008. Modeled on previous training events, over the course of 25 hours together participants had the opportunity to learn about and practice elements of the catechumenal process.

Guided by five lay catechists from catechumenal churches in the Seattle area, liturgist Pastor Paul Hoffman and convener Pastor Bev Piro, both from Phinney Ridge, thirty-five lay members, deacons, and pastors from across the US were formed into a “mini congregation” for three days.

“Real People” shared their “real stories” of coming to faith through the catechumenate process.

Participants joined with the full Phinney Ridge congregation for worship on Sunday morning which included the Rite of Welcome for candidates in the PRLC process known as The Way.

Folks came from as far away as Pennsylvania, Indiana, and California and as near as Seattle suburbs. They came from Lutheran, Episcopal, and Methodist churches and from synods, dioceses, and seminary. They came because they have heard a calling to reach out to the unchurched with the goodness and grace of God.

Pastor John Carlson of Coatesville, PA, jumped right in and began the process in Lent this year. There are 26 inquirers in the process and Pastor Carlson and his team have interpreted the

language of the catechumenate in a way that feels more authentic to them: The process is called GIFT (Growing in Faith Together); “sojourners” are paired with “companions in faith” from the congregation and they meet in small groups led by “shepherds.”

Faith and Font catechumenate training is available in a “traveling package” form that would include leadership for an event in your area. Contact Pastor Bev Piro for more information at 206.783.2350 or [bpairo@prlc.org](mailto:bpairo@prlc.org).



## NOT A PROGRAM

“... even though individuals might, for the most part, journey together, these people should be treated as individuals rather than members of a class or ‘this year’s group.’ The ‘many forms of God’s grace, the free cooperation of the individuals, the action of the church and the circumstances of time and place’ are all factors in the shape and duration of the initiation journey.”

“Any arbitrary definitions of needs and readiness ... are to be set aside in favour of individual needs, readiness, and discernment.”

“Remove arbitrary determinants of readiness — the framework of September-to-June school year, grade levels achieved, topics covered — and develop a discernment process for all individuals asking to celebrate one or more sacraments of initiation. This will help the parish to steer away from ‘sacramentalizing’ the unevangelized.” — Margaret Bick, “Christian Initiation,” *Celebrate*, Jan. 2007, 14-17.

## CONSULTATION

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for the members of NAAC to ask questions and engage in dialogue about our mission and how best to live it out. The time is right to chart a course for the future through this consultation with a range of voices.

The Reverend Ann Hallisey, a professional consultant, will facilitate the consultation using a process called Appreciative Inquiry. It is a process that promises to bear much fruit. Please keep this event and its participants in your prayers.

Bryon Hansen

### More Information

For full details on new resources and on the Annual Gathering in Federal Way with registration information, visit the website: [www.catechumenate.org](http://www.catechumenate.org).



## LIVING FOR THE SPIRIT IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

The NAAC Board is pleased to present the 2008 Gathering at Federal Way, south of Seattle, July 24 to 26. The Gathering will help us consider the challenges facing catechumenal ministers and Christian communities in an increasingly secularized society where an awareness of scripture and the sacramental tradition has diminished. How can we listen afresh to the stories of those who are seeking faith? How might the catechumenate offer a fresh approach to assimilating Christians in a culture at odds with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Through presentations and guided group work, we will reflect on catechumenal ministry in this postmodern world.



Samuel  
Torvend,  
Speaker

The speaker, Dr. Samuel Torvend, is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Pacific Lutheran University. Samuel is an engaging, interesting and fun person to hear, and he has lots to say about faith, evangelism, and formation in a post-Christian world. His keynote addresses are certain to spark ideas, reflection, and conversation. He also serves as Associate Director of the Center for Religion, Culture, and Society in the Western United States. He participates in Pacific Lutheran

University's Lilly Foundation Wild Hope Project. Dr. Torvend teaches courses in the history of Christianity and historical courses on specific topics. In all of these courses, his early interest in the relationship between Christian insights and practices with a culture's social, economic, and political systems continues to engage students with the power of religion to shape public life.

While an editor at Augsburg-Fortress, he supervised the editing of *Welcome to Christ*, the ELCA catechumenal resource. He is author of *Daily Bread, Holy Meal: Opening the Gifts of Holy Communion* and *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Theology, Sacraments, and Ethics*. As a member of the North American Academy of Liturgy, he has served on the Liturgy and Social Justice Study Group. He received an MA in liturgical studies from the Aquinas Institute, an MDiv from Wartburg Seminary, and a PhD from Saint Louis University. He is a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Seattle.

The liturgist for the Gathering is The Rev. Dr. Clayton L. Morris, Liturgical Officer for the Episcopal Church. Clay's creativity and liturgical acumen promise interesting worship. Working in the Church Center, he provides staff support for the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. He assists the Presiding Bishop with tasks like planning liturgy for Convention and provides a communication link among the dozen or so national organizations.

He holds a degree in organ performance from Willamette



Clay  
Morris,  
Liturgist

University, a MDiv degree from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, and MA and Ph.D. degrees in theology from the Graduate Theological Union.

He was ordained priest in the Diocese of California in January of 1972. Over thirty years he has served variously as curate, rector, organist-choirmaster, and director of liturgy and music in several California congregations. He has also taught courses in church music. Dr. Morris is the author of *Holy Hospitality: Worship and the Baptismal Covenant* and co-author of *As We Gather to Pray: An Episcopal Guide to Worship*.

The NAAC Gathering is a great place to hear thoughtful and inspiring presentations, worship, and workshops, and is a venue for meeting other catechumenate practitioners. Telling stories, sharing experiences, and brainstorming ideas to address new challenges complete the Gathering event.

**A Gathering for an  
"I'm-spiritual-but-not-  
religious" World**

## JULY WORKSHOPS

ington. An examination of the principles of the Aural Bible Study method as it is practiced in the catechumenate with discussion of the benefits of this method of study in faith formation. One of the variations of the method will be experienced: reading the Gospel lesson for the coming Sunday.

● "Opening Rites in Use Across the Church for the Catechumenate: The History, Use, and Implications" by Pierson Shaw, Lutheran pastor. This workshop examines the biblical and historical background of the first rite used in the catechumenal process of several traditions including the signing with the cross. We will also examine the theological, practical, and ritual implications of such rites. Finally, we will discuss how one prepares a congregation, catechumenal team, and those being received for such rites while maintaining hospitality and ritual honesty.

● "Owned by Easter: Continuing

Conversion in a Mystagogical Context" by Jeff Anderson, catechist at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Durham, North Carolina. This workshop is designed to be a preliminary discussion and exploration of ways to extend the theology and reflections of mystagogy beyond the traditional focus on the newly baptized during the Easter season such that mystagogical reflection might be integrated into congregational life and Christian education throughout the year for all the baptized.

● "Adapting the Catechumenate for Adults with Special Needs and English Language Learners" by Tina Georgeson, catechist at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church. Three special needs adults came into the catechumenate program at Phinney Ridge in 2007. Tina developed a curriculum to prepare two of the adults for baptism and one for the affirmation of baptism. She will present her lesson plans and techniques in a

workshop that demonstrates how the catechumenate can and does meet people where they are and helps them grow in faith.

● "The RCIA in the Church — Twenty Years and Counting: Embrace and Resistance" by Daniel Benedict. He has served as Director of Worship Resources for The United Methodist Church for twelve years and now teaches online and consults from his home in Hawaii. His website is [www.strongcenteropendoors.com](http://www.strongcenteropendoors.com). Has the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) come of age? Or, is it still in its adolescence? How have the churches embraced and resisted the catechumenate? What can we learn from its adaptations and implementation in the churches? We'll explore these questions in light of recent research in the Roman communion and in other communions, including the Episcopal, Lutheran, United Methodist, Presbyterian, and other Protestant churches.

## RECOMMENDED

*Real Stories of Christian Initiation: Lessons for and from the RCIA* by David Yamane and Sarah Macmillen. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006.

Shirley Griffin writes: "Congregations can find new richness and vitality in their communal life as they explore the honest and sincere stories of real parish situations found in this book. The various stories show the responsibility of catechumenal teams and parish communities to welcome and support all whose baptisms make them fellow members of their faith communities."

Maxwell Johnson writes: "Yamane's and Macmillen's excellent case-study of five Midwestern parishes reveals what the RCIA actually is, how it is used (and abused), and how it functions in parish life."

■ ***"As Bryan Stone says, 'It is precisely in no longer playing by the world's rules that we discover a new openness to the world.' That is why we need the stranger, the outsider, the poor and marginalized as much or more than they need us. They can teach what it means to live on the outside, where the Spirit's future for the Church is!"***  
Dan Benedict, *Catechumenate*, Sept. 2006

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