

## Newmarket Lutheran Congregation Becomes First Congregation To Receive Justice-Seeker Award



A Newmarket congregation has been recognized for its outstanding commitment to queer justice in the Lutheran churches. On January 27, 2008, Reconciling in Christ Sunday, board members and Local Chapter Convenors of Lutherans Concerned In Canada (LCIC) were present to award Holy Cross Lutheran Church with the Reinie Heydemann Justice-Seeker Award, for being the first ELCIC congregation to call an openly queer-identified Vicar.

Lutherans Concerned in Canada created this award in honour of Reinie Heydemann. A long-time advocate for queer justice, Reinie has spent many years involved in Lutherans Concerned working towards the full inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities within the ELCIC. Reinie is currently enjoying her retirement from her involvements in long term care chaplaincy work and advocacy work within LC/NA. The Reinie Heydemann Justice-Seeker Award recognizes individuals and organizations which demonstrate outstanding commitment to queer justice in Lutheran churches.

In presenting the award, Walter Rothenburger, convener for the Lutherans Concerned/Toronto chapter, praised Holy Cross Lutheran Church for its courageous decision to call Lionel Ketola, an openly queer-identified candidate for ministry with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries ([www.elm.org](http://www.elm.org)), to a year long internship (April 1996 to March 1997). Following the completion of his internship, Lionel received his final approval for ordination by ELM's National Examining Panel and now awaits first call and ordination to an ELCIC parish setting. Also sharing in the first time presentation of the award were LCIC board members Karen Mathiasen, Peter Skalik, and LC/Kitchener–Waterloo chapter convener Lorre Calder. Jeremy Heinze, Vice-Chair of Holy Cross congregational council, and Pastor Dawn Hutchings received the award on behalf of the congregation.



During the celebratory RIC Sunday liturgy, Pastor Dawn Hutchings gave thanks in her sermon for the award while also acknowledging that the journey toward full inclusion in the ELCIC still continues: "Our work has only begun".

Through the creation of this award, Lutherans Concerned in Canada Society seeks to foster visionary leadership in our shared work of advocating for full inclusion in Lutheran Churches. On Reconciling In Christ Sunday, a small and courageous Newmarket, Ontario congregation - Holy Cross Lutheran Church – was recognized for being one such leader. The Board of Directors leadership for Lutherans Concerned in Canada offers its deepest and most heartfelt thanks!