

commentator on technology and human dignity, serves as president of the Institute on Biotechnology and the Human Future, as associate dean and research professor of bioethics at Chicago-Kent College of Law, and as director of the Center on Nanotechnology and Society. His talk is free and open to the public. Visit www.faith-and-life.org or call 763-475-7136 for more information.

Discerning a Shared Vision and Empowering Leadership to Implement it, January 26, 8:30 a.m. - noon, Wooddale Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park. The Minneapolis Synod Mission Table invites church leadership teams to attend a missional workshop that will help teams discern the leading of the Spirit in developing a shared vision for their congregations and the communities they serve. Teams will leave the sessions with practical ways to implement their shared vision for mission. Individuals are welcome also. Craig Van Gelder serves as a professor of congregational mission at Luther Seminary, St. Paul. Cost for the workshop is \$25 per team/individual because this is subsidized by the Mission Table. Contact Carolyn O'Grady in the Minneapolis Synod Office to register at 612-870-3610 or cogrady@mpls-synod.org.

Crossways International Living Word Workshop, January 28-30, 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., Crossways International Headquarters, 7930 Computer Ave, Bloomington. A training seminar for clergy and lay leaders using Crossways International's highly acclaimed courses and teaching visuals. Gain insight as you work through the biblical narrative using resources designed for teaching the Word within your congregation. Cost: \$200 plus materials; discount for early bird registration, repeat attendance, and seminary students/staff. Congregational group rate also available. For more information and to register call 952-832-5454.

Joint Ministerium, January 31, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon, Gloria Dei Lutheran, 700 Snelling Ave. S, St. Paul. For rostered leaders in the Saint Paul and Minneapolis Area Synods. David Rhoads, professor of New Testament, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, will present an oral interpretation of Galatians. Call 651-224-4313 for information.

Celebrating the Holidays with Returning Vets Brings Challenges

Even as the Advent and Christmas seasons promise joy, many people experience them with difficult emotions. Complicated reactions are particularly predictable among recently returned veterans and their families. Tips for veterans and families can be found at www.mpls-synod.org, "Healing the Wounds of War."

Ideas for those coping with recovery from the impact of war can also be helpful to the general population. The U.S. celebrations of the season tend to emphasize excess, consumption and alcohol.

Those who have returned from the discomforts and perils of war may be confused by their emotional reactions to what had been "normal" to them. While family members and even the veterans themselves may want to "make up for lost time" by celebrating with extra intensity, the contrast with their war experience may prove overwhelming, causing tempers to flare and harsh words to be spoken. Tragedies can occur, including broken relationships and misuse of weapons.



The shift from a world in which most people do not have reliable electricity or water to a situation where resources may be squandered can ring sour. The Coming Home Collaborative recommends that all those who care for recently returned veterans limit their expectations of the veteran's participation in activities according to the situation of that individual veteran. Veterans vary greatly in how they have been impacted by war and what they need.

The transition home from war takes at least as long as the veteran was away. The transition period can be confusing because the veteran is neither what he/she was before the war nor what she/he will be after thoroughly coming home. Sadly, some veterans from past wars never succeeded in being comfortable at home. They experienced a destruction of trust and never recovered.

The one caution that the older generation of war veterans wants to pass on to the next is to avoid the trap of alcohol. Too many veterans of previous wars used alcohol as a way of coping with uncomfortable feelings or nightmares, and then became caught in the destruction of addiction. It is much safer to deal with nightmares through therapy or the generic drug Prazosin, says psychiatrist Jonathan Shay, expert in the treatment of veterans.

The traditions of Advent preparation for Christmas can also be particularly helpful to families reconstituted after war. After having been separated, all members of the family need to grieve over the losses caused by the separation. At

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She wants her students to learn to read Scripture clearly so they can be moved and changed by it. "If you slide over the details, it becomes easy to make Scripture say what you want it to say," she declares. "We can't avoid imposing our own prejudices on Scripture, but the gift of careful reading is that it opens up the possibility of hearing a voice other than our own."

Jacobson also wants her students to develop a "biblical imagination," so they will think with Scripture as a partner. "We live in a secular world. Everything reminds us of a movie or television show. Jesus doesn't enter naturally into our conversations. A biblical imagination allows this to happen," Jacobson says. "When you experience challenging or joyous or frightening circumstances in the world, you can bring Scripture to the process of thinking about them. In other words, God becomes a player instead of being incidental to your experience."

A graduate of Connecticut College, Jacobson earned the doctor of philosophy degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York. She also holds a master of arts degree from Columbia University/Union Theological Seminary.

She embraced Lutheranism as an adult. "What started for me as an intellectual adventure deepened into a calling. I was attracted by the centrality of the theology of the cross and the liturgical traditions. I love the Lutheran capacity to embrace ambiguity: we're both saints and sinners. We walk that tightrope. We don't fall on one side or the other. As Lutherans we hold the ambiguity and rejoice in it. We don't try to solve it," she says.

Assembly dates to remember

CONFERENCE ASSEMBLIES

- **Southwest Conference** - January 27, 1:30 p.m., Location TBD
- **Crosstown Conference** - January 31, 7 p.m., Woodlake Lutheran Church, Richfield
- **Northern Conference**, February 3, 2 p.m., St. Andrew Lutheran Church, East Bethel
- **Northwest Hennepin Conference**, February 3, 3 p.m., Advent Lutheran Church, Maple Grove
- **Bloomington Conference**, February 7, 6 p.m., Transfiguration Lutheran Church, Bloomington
- **Northwestern Conference**, February 10, 2 p.m., Central Lutheran Church, Elk River
- **Central Conference**, February 10, 4 p.m., Grace University Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
- **North Minneapolis Conference**, February 11, 6 p.m., River of Life, Minneapolis
- **South Minneapolis Conference**, February 12, 6:30 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
- **Western Parks and Lakes Conference**, February 17, 3 p.m., Wooddale Lutheran Church, St. Louis Park
- **394 Corridor North Conference**, February 17, 4 p.m., Location TBD

PRE-ASSEMBLY GATHERINGS

Sunday, March 30, 2-5 p.m. – Christ Lutheran Church, Blaine

Sunday, April 6, 2-5 p.m. – Location TBA

2008 MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Friday, April 18, 1-9 p.m.

Saturday, April 19, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

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the time of the solstice, family members can write down particular regrets on a piece of paper, articulate them to each other, and then burn the papers as a symbolic manner of releasing them. More suggestions on this healing ceremony can be found at www.mpls-synod.org, "Healing the Wounds of War."

These suggestions are made in response to the 2006 Minneapolis Area Synod assembly resolution to develop resources for healing of veterans and their families. The Coming Home Collaborative is a voluntary association of helping professionals and veterans dedicated to helping veterans and their families heal from the impact of war.

Support Group Meets

A support group for veterans and family members is taking place at Calvary Lutheran Church, 7520 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley.

The group meets 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. on Thursdays through January. (No meetings December 20 or 27.)

Contact Jim Almquist at 763-522-8815 for more information.