

Briefly noted

News in the [December 15, 2009](#) issue

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America announced in mid-November that some 40 full-time jobs, of which six were vacant, will be eliminated in order to stay within a budget reduced by nearly \$7.7 million. The program and staff reductions reflected the struggling U.S. economy and the decision by some congregations to withhold or redirect mission support because of their disagreements with the 2009 Churchwide Assembly decision to open ordination and ministry positions to gay and lesbian Lutherans in committed same-gender relationships. M. Wyvetta Bullock, ELCA executive for administration, said that 23 administrative staff positions would be lost in the cuts and that salary increases were ruled out for the churchwide staff in 2010.

The United Methodist Judicial Council, the church body's highest court, has ruled that the Baltimore-Washington regional conference went too far this year in adopting a statement that "a more authentic and truthful representation of the United Methodist Church" is that "we disagree" on gay and lesbian issues. The judicial council, in a ruling released November 2, said that the effect of the regional resolution was "to negate the church's clearly stated position" that same-gender sexual intimacy is incompatible with Christian teaching. The council said the Baltimore-Washington resolution was similar to a proposed change in United Methodist Social Principles that would have put the 2008 General Conference on record as acknowledging church members' disagreement on homosexuality.

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has announced that an imam has been elected as its new chair, marking the first time a Muslim spiritual leader has led the Chicago-based interfaith organization. Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid, executive producer of a daily Muslim radio call-in talk show in Chicago, was elected chair at a board meeting in October and the announcement was made November 10. Mujahid, who was vice chair of the council, succeeds William E. Leshner, who had held the post since 2003. He will begin his term January 1, shortly after the council oversees the December 3-9 gathering of the nonlegislative parliament in Melbourne, Australia.