

Briefly noted

News in the [April 5, 2005](#) issue

The bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in early March, acknowledged that they were too divided to offer “a definitive word of advice” on a recommendation that regional synods restrain from disciplining churches that ordain gay clergy. The suggestion, made in January, has confused many church members, some of whom believe it lacks integrity given church policies that bar gay ministers, noted Mark S. Hanson, ELCA presiding bishop. Hanson did suggest an alternative to one recommendation by the sexuality task force. He said it may be helpful to “test” some language that could provide for a special roster or ordination to a specific place or synodically authorized ministry in order allow people who are gay and lesbian and in committed relationships to serve as professional church leaders. Hanson suggested a six-year testing period, according to the ELCA News Service. The bishop conceded that gays might view such a system as “second class” and unjust, while those defending the traditional stance would have “to stand down” to allow “space” for the innovation.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan has changed its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land to reflect the fact that five out of its six congregations are clustered around Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Most of the church’s 3,000 members live in the West Bank area, which formerly was ruled by Jordan. “We had to adapt with the situation because our church is serving in Jordan, Palestine and Israel,” the head of the church, Bishop Munib Younan, told Ecumenical News International.