

must help themselves before they can help others.

About 250 supporters attended a brunch at the Westward Ho Country

center traditional roles in the home to find careers and new directions in their lives. Although the center has changed the last 10 years to also help

its clients grow, particularly as rural communities change and service-

Catch 22: Me First or You First, focused on the dilemma women experience of feeling guilty when they try to satisfy themselves but feeling

Center/See 2C

Brookings woman to become state's 1st Episcopal priest

By LISA GUTIERREZ

Argus Leader Staff

BROOKINGS — The Episcopal Church of South Dakota will ordain a mother of four as its first female priest tonight.

In ordination services at St. John's Lutheran Church in Madison, Karen Elizabeth Hall of Brookings will become an Episcopal priest. The ordination comes 10 years after the national church began the process to allow women to become priests. It is taking place in a Lutheran church as an ecumenical gesture between the two denominations.

The bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, Craig Anderson, called Hall's ordination an historic event, one that will be observed closely within the national church and in the worldwide Anglican Church.

"Karen Hall's ministry as a full priest in this diocese will serve to expand our understanding of the ordained ministry and broaden our awareness of the priesthood of all Christian believers," Anderson said.

Not only will Karen Hall be the first female priest in the state, but she and her husband, Steve, a priest in Brookings, will be the first married couple to serve as Episcopal priests in South Dakota. She will be pastor of three churches: St. Stephen's in De Smet, Grace Episcopal in Madison and St. Mary's Our Blessed Redeemer in Flandreau. He leads the 150-member congregation of St. Paul's in Brookings.

Since April, Karen Hall, 44, has

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**— Craig Anderson
Episcopal bishop**

been an ordained deacon in the church, a cleric rank just below priest. As a priest, she will perform sacraments such as Communion, marriages and absolutions.

Earlier this week Hall said she was nervous but exhilarated about her ordination. Anderson has asked her to perform the Mass at the ordination, which will make the event even more special, she said.

"I'm not nervous that I will mess it up, but that that's priesthood," she said of the Mass. "And Stephen said he had those same feelings the first time, too. The whole meaning of everything I do in the church is wrapped up in that act. To be a priest is to preach and to teach and to celebrate Mass."

Active in the church several years playing the organ and helping with her husband's ministry, Hall said she

thinks that one of the reasons a woman hasn't been ordained in South Dakota before now is that active church women haven't realized yet their potential as active clerics. "It's taken some time for the rule of 1976 to catch up with the reality of today," she said. "I think there are enough of us now at levels of the church that now members can see what it's like to have a woman in that role."

As a priest, she will bring nurturing, intuition, sensitivity and creativity to the priesthood, she said. She quoted Bishop Desmond Tutu, who said the women of the church have taught the faith to young people for centuries, "not necessarily doctrinally or intellectually, but to feel it, to experience it," she said. "The Gospel can be relevant, the church can be relevant. I see my role as a priest to preach that and to show that."

A highly emotional issue that threatened to divide the church, the ordination of women to the Episcopal priesthood in the United States is still not accepted by all. Many in the church objected on the theological grounds that biblically, women were never priests. Others feared it would impair the church's relationship with other churches that don't allow women to be priests, such as the Roman Catholic Church. Unlike Anderson, who said when he became South Dakota's bishop that he would favor ordaining the first woman if the opportunity arose, there are some bishops who will not allow it in their dioceses.

Church/See 2C



Photo by DAVE BEHLE for the Argus Leader

Karen Hall of Brookings will be ordained tonight as South Dakota's first female Episcopal priest. Here she is seen at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brookings, where her husband, Stephen, also a priest, serves.

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The Rev. James Gundrum, dean of Calvary Cathedral in Sioux Falls, was at the historic convention when the national church voted to change its laws. He recalls the prophetic words of John B. Coburn, now bishop of Massachusetts, who said before the final vote, "Gentlemen, regardless of the outcome of the vote, the church will never be the same." The vote came from an all-male convention.

Hall says she believes her gender shouldn't be an issue anymore. It's been 10 years now since the church gave the go-ahead and she's spent the last five years preparing for ordination. "I think a lot of healing has taken place in the church," she said.

A native of Cut Bank, Mont., and raised a Lutheran, Hall joined the Episcopal church when she married her husband 15 years ago. Ten years ago, when the church was pondering the ordination question, she was a wife helping her husband through seminary school. She began considering the priesthood after typing some of his school papers, reading his books and talking with other seminarians.

A lover of the church's liturgy, Hall said she began to feel a sense that she belonged in the priesthood. When the couple moved to Brookings in July

1981, they wanted to share his ministry, so she began working in pastoral care.

Steve Hall, who will participate in the ordination tonight, says acceptance of his wife's calling wasn't easy and required much prayer and introspection. Born an Episcopalian, he said he and other Episcopals had no model for what a female priest would be like. Tonight will be the first time he sees a woman celebrate Mass.

When his wife said she wanted to be a priest, he did not accept it, he said.

"You're damn right there were problems," he said. "I went whoa. There's a lot of male chauvinism in me, as my friends tell me, smiling. ... The insight of the Lord helped us come into this thing."

He didn't object on any theological grounds, he said. But he worried that having two working parents would be hard on a young family. The couple has four children: Kirstin, 20; Jennifer, 18; Andy, 17; and Kathleen, 14. The three oldest are from Karen Hall's first marriage. She was widowed.

"I think Karen's ministry is a corrective to an overly male-dominated church," Steve Hall said.

Center

Continued from 1C

the organization has helped her find new goals.

"At that time, I was looking to taking a new direction," she said. "I did not pursue it at the time."

Six weeks ago, Wagner took tests at the center to see what type of career change suits her. She said she would like to be in public relations or communications, a decision the center has helped her make.

"They help you determine what you feel you might be comfortable with," she said. "They bring some things to light."

Nora Jacobson, a waitress in Sioux Falls, began at the center a year after it started, by taking classes to enrich herself. She still takes classes because of the challenge, but also because she enjoys her participation with the center.

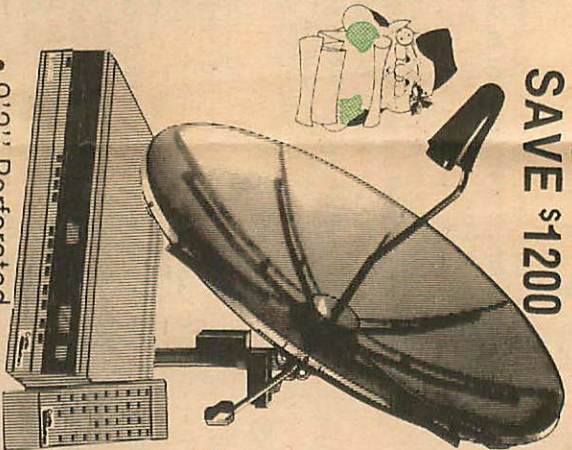
Adell Nickel, an advertising production manager in Sioux Falls, said she began using the center eight years ago for personal growth. The center has helped her emotionally, she said.

"I feel better about myself — that's really the main thing," she said.

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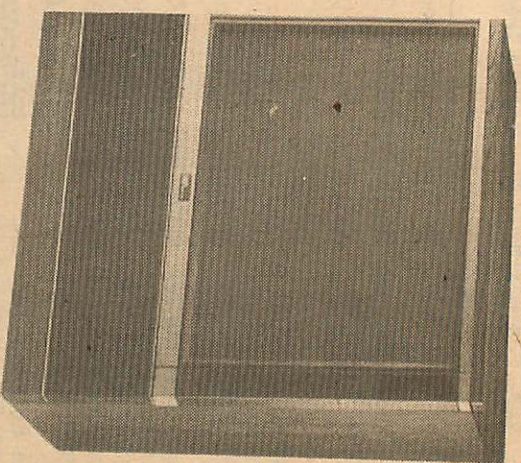
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