

## Section 4 - Reports of the Bishop, Vice Chair and Ministry Areas

### Report of the Bishop

Rev. Dr. Michael J. Pryse

Report to be distributed at Assembly.

### Report of the Vice Chair

Laurie Knott

It has been a joy to serve as vice-chair of the Eastern Synod for the last two years. I have participated in a wide range of activities – from reviewing and updating personnel policies to being involved in the strategic planning process – all of which, have broadened my understanding of the work and life of the Eastern Synod.

Leadership has continued to be a particular area of interest and I have remained on the Recruiting task force as we look for ways to identify, encourage and support new leaders for rostered ministry. It has been inspiring to hear the missional work occurring across our Synod through my participation on the Mission Committee and I am excited about the work being done to explore new ways of doing ministry.

As I write this report, I am preparing for a trip to Guyana to experience what it means to be Lutheran in our companion synod and to learn how we can best journey together in our ministries.

I have enjoyed working with the people in the Synod office and I am particularly grateful to my fellow officers – Bishop Michael Pryse, Keith Myra and Rev. Wendell Grahlman. They have guided me in my work and made it fun to serve! Thank you for this opportunity and should it be the desire of the assembly, I would be willing to serve another term.

### Report of the Atlantic Ministry Area

Atlantic Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Dr. Kimberlynn McNabb

The past biennium has been spent taking steps to create the Ministry Area envisioned in the future; a Ministry Area that is pro-active, healthy, and life-giving.

#### Significant Aspects of the work have included:

- Continued work towards Community Parishes- Congregational groupings were proposed at a Ministry Event and Consultation. Groups worked together to explore the possibilities of combining/sharing ministries. Some conversations have continued in the configurations suggested, others formed into different relationships. First Lutheran Community Parish is the first to be a Community Parish on paper, representing five congregations committed to doing ministry together.
- Pastoral leadership and succession has been addressed through:
  - Having a pastor with a Special Call to non-stipendiary work within the Ministry Area. The pastor contributes to the health of clergy and congregations, being versed in areas of trauma and counselling. The pastor provides pulpit supply,

consulting, and emergency on-call services to cover vacation times. The installation of this pastor included: First Nation's smudging/blessing, a delegation of bikers (yes, wearing their leather and arriving on bikes), firefights, and Lutheran congregation members.

- The Ministry Area, in partnership with the Atlantic School of Theology, WLS, and Synod Office, home-growing a Pastor (to be ordained later this spring), having a specific intention of possible call placement before their internship began.
- Clergy are participating in chaplaincy in the community. Two examples include: police, fire department.
- Clericus meets once a month and is intentional on building leadership skills. Ministry Area clergy read, study, and discuss books to help become better leaders. This biennium: Luther Snow's *Asset Making*, and Friedman's *Failure of Nerve*.

### Significant Events in the Atlantic Ministry Area:

- Hosted CLAY 2016 in PEI - as there are no Lutheran churches in PEI, this was quite an undertaking. Atlantic Canadian youth -Anglican and Lutheran- were able to access a larger tradition, meet Bishops and youth from across the country, bear witness to the work of Christ among them and in "holy" moments that could only happen interacting with the people and landscape of PEI.
- The 500<sup>th</sup> Reformation commemoration was an incentive to learn and grow together as a community, not just for ourselves, but, in partnership:
  - Inshallah East - The Inshallah Choir came to the East Coast. Their time with us included: workshops, concert, tree blessing ceremony in Lunenburg, First Nations relationship building. The event was planned by an ecumenical committee and partnered with the Atlantic School of Theology, Mahone Bay Three Churches Foundation, Town of Lunenburg, Boxwood Festival. Local artists participated as did the 36<sup>th</sup> Halifax Pipers, United Universalist Church Halifax, Lunenburg town crier.
  - Living Traditions Symposium - Oct. 2017 was held at the Atlantic School of Theology with a presentation of papers related to re-forming Christian tradition. Two local Lutheran clergy presented papers and will have their papers in the Symposium publication scheduled for Oct. 2018.
  - Common Prayer Service - This service was prepared in partnership with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax/Yarmouth. The event was at Zion Lunenburg, with participants from throughout the Ministry Area and RC Diocese. It opened with prayer from the Mi'kmaq community.
- Atlantic Lutheran Campus ministry continues to offer a chaplain presence on campus and to students in various Atlantic institutions. Some resources have been directed to Interfaith Harmony Week and the work of "Justice and Action" presentations by students hired to prepare the events.
- Camp Mush provides continued summer ministry. Meeting the needs of local families, a day camp option and a part week registration for first time campers, has been a welcomed addition to their ministry. EPIC, a weekend for older teenagers, has been a powerful ecumenical partnership and event for area youth work.

### Future direction and goal---

- Ministry Area congregations continue conversations and building relationships with neighbouring Lutheran congregations to implement the proposal of Community Parishes, fine tuning the idea into reality. As this report is being written some congregations are actively discerning divesting buildings and land.
- Partnerships continue with the Anglican Diocese of NS and PEI, and the Anglican Diocese of Fredericton. Currently there is a sharing of priests/pastors. The Diocese of NS/PEI has Lutheran clergy supervising Anglican interns, as well as, forums for students to learn about Full Communion and Lutheran liturgical rites.

### Report of the Central Toronto Ministry Area

Central Toronto Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Dr. Christian Ceconi

The Central Toronto Ministry Area is probably the most diverse ministry area of the Eastern Synod: 20 congregations preaching the gospel in nine languages in different urban contexts. We understand the new ministry area structure as a platform to bring congregations together to learn from each other, to be inspired by each other's perspectives and to cooperate wherever we can work together. Since the last Synod assembly we have tried to live out our Mission: "Working together: creating a vibrant church, relevant in our communities" in many ways.

The decline in membership in the past years can't be overlooked. In Dec. 2017 one of our congregations closed. Others are in serious condition or struggling. Only a few thrive. We think it's time to focus on re-formation. With conversations in our ministerial in January 2018, we began to look at ways to support each other more than we have. Our focus now is to find and pursue ways of reviving our congregations. We are tired of dying and we are longing for resurrection.

We will begin with a lunch & learn event for lay leaders and pastors on May 26. We invited Susan Bell, Missioner of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto and bishop-elect for the Diocese of Niagara, as our keynote speaker. Having eight years of experience in church planting in urban contexts we will benefit from her knowledge and wisdom. Following this event, we will help congregations to build partnerships, to visit each other, inspire each other and hold each other accountable to their plans for renewing the church. We will pray more and walk alongside each other in the complex challenges we are facing. Even though we don't know what the path and solutions will be, we are determined to find life-giving and relevant ways of being church.

If you are interested to learn and see more, please go to our website [LutheransToronto.ca](http://LutheransToronto.ca). We will report about our journey and share what we will learn.

In 2017 we hosted again an Area Workshop to share best practice. Several Workshops attracted around 40 participants.

Reformation Events held in our Area were Lutheran-Catholic Service in Commemoration of the Reformation, the Joint Area Reformation Service and a conference on Reformation Theology, hosted by our German congregations. The inspiring joint service for the area attracted around 500 participants filling St. James Anglican Cathedral. Under the theme "living justice" we were opened on new perspectives on how to be a church of the reformation in the 21st century. After an inspiring sermon from Jennifer Henry we marched to First Lutheran church, holding up

banners with the subthemes for the reformation year. The march concluded at First Lutheran where Bishop Mark MacDonald shared his perspectives on how we can work towards social justice.

Members of the Ministry Area Leadership Team are currently: Rev. Mavis Fung, David Berg and Andrew Slonetsky.

### Report of the Georgian Ministry Area

Georgian Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. John Polačok

<sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; <sup>4</sup>he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." <sup>5</sup>And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." *Revelation 21: 3-5a*

It's been a very difficult 2017 - 2018 for us in Georgian Bay. Two of our friends and colleagues died while serving. Rev. Edward Chad Honneyman and Rev. Robert "Bob" Bouchard. We love them, we miss them, and we trust the Lord is with them.

Both deaths were similar in their suddenness which made them all the more difficult to accept. Yet we've supported one another, and have received support from countless people throughout our church and others. On behalf of everyone in the GBA, I say thank you to all who reached out in love. Since then, we have done what we all do when grief visits - wake up the next day, take one foot, and put it in front of the other and have continued doing what we have to do.

The following is an outline of some of the projects and programs our Ministry Area was involved with in 2017-2018. As early as the fall of 2016, our Area Leadership Team began meeting to organize our Reformation Worship Event. It meant a lot of meetings, and a few logistical nightmares to get passed, but in the end it couldn't have gone any better. On November 12, more than 450 people gathered in the Neustadt Arena for worship and nearly 350 attended the supper afterward. It was wonderful to have Bishop Michael with us, along with our wonderful mass choir. The response of those in attendance was overwhelming and there seemed to be as one statement on their lips, 'we need to do this more often.' The Area Leadership Team is working on that.

The individual churches handled The Reformation anniversary and commemoration in a variety of ways. For any of them to come to fruition, however, many groups of dedicated women and men willing to take time out of their schedules were necessary. From the purchase of new banners for a sanctuary, to arranging a Luther Pub Crawl, to taking pictures with the Little Luther figurine all over the country world and posting them online, congregations came up with wonderful ideas on how to celebrate.

On a national and international level, the people of Georgian Bay succeeded in reaching the goals set out by the National Church as we helped settle refugees, planted trees, provided money to LWF and educational scholarships to young men and women in Jordan and the Holy Land. Today, all the GBA congregations remain committed to the wider church by being avid supporters of our local food banks, chaplaincy programs, ecumenical initiatives, affordable housing

programs, women's shelters, and by making quilts and teddy bears for CLWR and support the "Sleeping children Around the World" organization among others.

Right in the middle of all this activity are the women of the GBA. They continue to be an amazing part of our Ministry Area and 2017-2018 was no exception. They continued to take on new projects and bolster old ones with bake sales, dinners, lunches for funerals, supporting the ministries of the various churches and gathering to support one another on a regular basis.

The ministries of our churches, are of course, vitally important. From the education for our youth such as Sunday School programs, confirmation, the messy church and Godly play to our mid-week adult learning programs, people of all ages are actively involved in growing in their faith through education. Many of our congregations also offer movie nights, often around a theme, followed by lively discussion. Finally, we are involved in some way, both clergy and lay in reaching out to people in a myriad of ways. We are reaching people in our local nursing homes and extended care facilities. We are conducting regular worship and bringing communion to the residents and by calling on our respective shut-ins. We are assisting people of all ages with special needs and creating lovely quilts, blankets and prayer shawls for the sick and elderly, as well as stuffed toys for babies and young children. Some of these will go to local families and others overseas in cooperation with our many partner organizations. Many of our worship services can also be found on television as well and the GBA churches have embraced this as a wonderful way of engaging in outreach.

Blessings and peace to you from the folks in the Georgian Bay Ministry Area.

### Report of the GTA East Ministry Area

GTA East Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Suzanne Neville

What a great year it has been! Our area kicked off 2017 - 500 Years of Reformation with an amazing joint service attended by all five of the churches in our area. Services were cancelled in four of the churches and we gathered at Christ the King - Whitby, for a rousing worship that included a joint choir, guitar, violin and guitar anthems, followed by a traditional Lutheran pot luck. We were blessed to have Bishop Pryse preach and our offerings were designated towards Scholarships in the ELCJHL.

Our theme of 500 Years of Faith continued throughout the year as our congregations worked together to grow in community and in faith. The five women's groups gathered at Peace, Pickering, for a Ladies Day Away that had many reminiscing about spring ELW conferences. Christ, Peterborough hosted an GTA East Area picnic at the Peterborough Zoo. We welcomed 2 new pastors to our area and had a beautiful installation service at Peace, Pickering. As we got closer to October 31st we were thrilled to have our first joint OKTOBERFEST event at the local German Cultural centre - Club Lorelei, in Oshawa - with schnitzel, cabbage, strudel and a German DJ! There were many OOM PAH PAHs and polkas throughout the night.

Once again we gathered to worship together on Reformation Sunday. This time we were grateful to have Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson who spoke about where we have come from and where we are headed.

Spring 2018 brought the 5 GTA East churches together again for a joint service - which we plan to hold as an annual event travelling each year to a different host congregation. We are looking

forward to the 2nd Ladies Day Away in June - a day planned and hosted entirely by the women of the GTA East. In the fall (2018) we are hoping to have another Oktoberfest celebration as well as a Community Impact Event that will take place at each of our congregations simultaneously. And while a date has not yet been selected we are excited to be making plans for an old fashioned Tent Revival at a local Peterborough farm.

I'd like to thank the our area committee members as well the people and pastors of Epiphany - Scarborough (Rev. Rasma Caune), Peace - Pickering (Rev. Hilla Lahtinen & Rev. Ronnie Smith), Christ The King - Whitby, Faith - Oshawa (Rev. Denis Becker), and Christ - Peterborough (Rev. Scott Schellenberger) for all the work and cooperation that has gone into planning events and activities that have made our worship, outreach and fellowship so meaningful.

Here's to another 500 Years of Faith!

### Report of the GTA West Ministry Area

GTA West Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Nadine Nicholds

The GTA West ministry area is comprised of four congregations: Augsburg Lutheran, Brampton; Holy Spirit of Peace Anglican Lutheran, Mississauga; Grace Lutheran, Oakville; and St. Philip's Lutheran, Etobicoke.

Here are a few things that we have done in the past two years: two congregations meet together for weekly Bible study; the senior's groups from the congregations have met on occasion; there is an open invitation from one congregation to an annual Christmas carolling event; two congregations sponsored and settled a refugee family of five.

The clergy are a supportive group. We meet regularly to share information and are attentive to each other spiritually and emotionally. At the moment we are trying to decide what our next common congregational event will be: cultural? fellowship? education? A meeting has been set to discuss.

Peace to you.

### Report of the Huronia Ministry Area

Huronia Ministry Area Dean(s)  
Rev. Martin Giebel (current) and Rev. Ann Krueger (past)

Our ministry area, the smallest in the Synod, consists of three churches: St. David's Anglican-Lutheran Church in Orillia, St. Mark's Anglican-Lutheran Church in Midland, and Westside Evangelical Lutheran Church in Barrie.

Out of our common interest in learning more about our indigenous brothers and sisters, we hosted a learning event called "Connecting Our Roots" at the Huronia Museum in Midland on May 6, 2017. We welcomed an Ojibwe elder from Nipissing First Nation as our morning guest. We were all enthralled by her storytelling style, and the deep and wise answers to our many questions. In the afternoon, Rev. Karen Kuhnert, our synod's historian, helped us to better understand the connections between our peoples.

We are also beginning to make friendships between our churches through music. St. David's Anglican-Lutheran joined Westside at their annual spring concert in 2017.

The pastors in the area meet occasionally for mutual support. One change in the past year: Pastor Ann Krueger resigned as dean due to workload in the parish and her PhD, and Pastor Martin Giebel accepted the appointment of dean.

### Report of the Grand River Ministry Area

Grand River Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Stephen Weber

The Grand River Ministry Area now consists of 11 congregations serving Kitchener, Cambridge and Guelph. In the past 2 years, we have seen significant changes. Maranatha Mission, serving primarily Caribbean and African communities, concluded its ministry, as did St. James in Cambridge. St. Paul's in Guelph has become part of a Lutheran Anglican parish, now called All Saints. St. Philip's in Kitchener is merging with St. Luke's. St. Mark's and Reformation, both in Kitchener, are working on a merger with St. John's in Waterloo.

During the past biennium, the following activities have taken place:

- Clergy continue to meet monthly. Active clergy have been surveyed to find the best time to meet each month, and will have resumed their meetings by the time of Assembly. Collegiality and openness among clergy has provided opportunities to celebrate the high points of life and ministry, and to support one another in dealing with ministry challenges.
- Retired clergy have two gatherings from which to choose. They enjoy one another's camaraderie, and persist in finding ways to share their experiences and their knowledge.
- The Leadership Team continues to work well together. By the time we gather for Assembly 2018, we will have held our Second Annual GRMA Picnic. In 2017, more than 400 of us gathered for an outdoor worship and lunch. This year our Bishop will preach; we anticipate that over 500 will attend. In addition to the annual picnic, we are planning a Reconciliation event, likely held over two Saturdays.
- Confirmation Youth Activity Days were held several times over the past two years with nearby Ministry Areas and the Rev. Anne Anderson of thirdspace\_.
- Several congregations continue to gather together for fellowship and worship during the season of Lent, while others work with local churches in a ministry of community outreach.

I want to give a special word of thanks to the members of the Leadership Team - Rev. Richard Schwass (St. Stephen, Kitchener), Rev. Jennifer Hoover (now at Bethany, Woodstock), Fay Albrecht (St. Mark's, Kitchener), and Shirley Mitchell-Grumme (St. Paul's, Cambridge) - and to our former Dean, Pastor James Koellner (St. Luke's, Kitchener), for their ongoing support and guidance. By the time this report is published, we hope to have a representative from All Saints Lutheran-Anglican in Guelph.

### Report of the Montreal Ministry Area

Montreal Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. James Slack

The Montreal Ministry Area is comprised of nine congregations, which worship in seven different languages.

A great deal of our focus in 2017 was on the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. In May a concert featuring Connie Kaldor was held in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, complete with stories and songs about life in Lutheran congregations on the Prairies. In the same month a symposium on *Luther and the City* was held at Concordia University, with several Lutherans from across North America among the presenters. In October we organised a concert of Reformation music at a local Catholic church/concert hall, which was paired with by a concert/service of Evensong at the Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul. In November Bishop Pryse and Archbishop Christian Lepine presided over the service *From Conflict to Communion*, with a reception hosted by the German consulate. And in December Maestro Kent Nagano and the orchestra of the University of Montreal presented a concert of traditional and modern Reformation themes. Funds raised through these events, and from congregations have been directed to the Reformation Challenge. (A speaking tour, featuring the Bishop of Greenland, Sophie Petersen, was planned for the spring, but illness prevented her from being with us.)

The Ministry Team is supported by the Montreal Lutheran Council, a board of clergy and lay leaders from our congregations, which meets five or six times a year. We host a website, welcome the participation of the Ecumenical Officer of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, participate in the Montreal Christian-Jewish Dialogue, sponsor a spectacular Easter Vigil at St. John's, and hold an annual service and picnic in August (this year in Noyan). As dean I also sit as a member of the Diocesan Council, and attend synod gatherings.

In the year to come we hope to work together to nominate clergy, lay and youth delegates to the ELCIC convention. And will continue to meet among ourselves and synod leaders to consider new forms of cooperative ministry. Several of our congregations have also become part of the Lutheran-Anglican Refugee Alliance of Montreal (LARAM), which seeks to bring a family of six to Montreal from Rwanda.

### Report of the Niagara Ministry Area

Niagara Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Pamela Korman

My sisters and brothers in Christ, last fall I accepted the appointment of Dean of the Niagara Ministry Area. I have the honour and privilege of working with three devoted colleagues Rev. Julio Romero, Rev. Jukka Saarinen, and Rev. Dr. Doreen McFarlane within this Area and also presently there are five dedicated people Bette Rempel, Dianne Yungblut, Suzanne McClennan, Sheila Fretz, and Pastor Julio Romero, who serve with me on the Niagara Area Leadership Team! Since the beginning of the Niagara Ministry Area a number of years ago, we have had representatives from each of the congregations serving on this team at some point in time.

The Niagara Ministry Area is a small Area as far as the number of congregations and yet they are spread out into the Niagara Peninsula. This Area consists of seven congregations: Rev. Julio Romero serves as the Pastor to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fort Erie and also Faith

Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Catharines, Rev. Jukka Saarinen serves as the Pastor for St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Welland and First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Port Colborne, Rev. Dr. Doreen McFarlane is the Pastor for St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Niagara Falls, and myself, Rev. Pamela Korman the Pastor for Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Niagara Falls and St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ridgeway.

We seek to develop and strengthen loving and helpful relationships between the seven Lutheran congregations, their communities and the global community.

On September 24th, 2016, the Niagara Area ELCIC congregations hosted a Gala Family Concert for the people of the Niagara Peninsula. We were blessed with the participation of the Strong Water Woman of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, and also one of their sons, who lovingly gifted us an incredible experience with their drumming and singing. Emma Wright, a young upcoming soloist from Meaford, Ontario gave everyone a wonderful performance of her incredible singing. The very talented Niagara Area Lutheran Choir sang a number of beautiful pieces for those of us who were gathered together for the concert that evening. We had an intermission for a time of fellowship! A freewill offering of \$917.00 was gathered for the Reformation challenge to plant trees- of which part was gifted to Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls and part gifted to CLWR for trees to be planted in Africa and a part gifted to the ELCIC to be directed for trees to be planted in Palestine.

On April 22, 2017 trees were planted at Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls. A pine was planted in thanks to the Strong Water Woman of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre for their friendship and participation in our Concert the previous fall. Fruit and nut trees were planted there as a gift to creation and in response to the ELCIC Reformation Challenge.

On September 24, 2017, the Niagara Area ELCIC congregations came together at Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls for a 500th year commemoration of the Reformation with a Worship Service and Supper. Designated offerings in the amount of \$1,654.00 were collected that enabled one full Scholarship of \$1,400.00 and a bit more for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) Schools in response to the ELCIC Reformation Challenge. The Area Pastors and persons of all ages from each of the congregations worked together to prepare for this day, participated in the spirit filled worship which included a choir with people from the seven congregations, Bishop Pryse gifting us a sermon and presiding over communion, there were parts of the wonderful Luther Drama performed, and then all enjoyed the bounty of tasty dishes people prepared for the supper and helped to dismantle and clean-up! It was a wonderful time of worship and fellowship for the over one hundred people who attended!

We are currently working toward another gathering on September 29th of this year, 2018. Bishop Pryse has accepted our invitation to speak to those who will gather and then we will open up the floor to have an opportunity for questions from those who have gathered. We will have snacks and beverages available. Our hope is also to have an additional component to this gathering which has not yet been firmed up at this time.

We seek to be open to how the Holy Spirit guides us within our ministry to the congregations and communities of this Niagara Peninsula Area and within the larger Global Community!

Peace and Blessings.

### Report of the Nith Valley Ministry Area

Nith Valley Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Jeff Laustsen

The Nith Valley Ministry Area consists of fourteen congregations in portions of Perth and Oxford Counties and the Waterloo Region. These congregations were brought together from the former Kitchener-Waterloo and London conferences; during its first years of existence, Nith Valley has worked to establish its identity and discern the mission that we share in this part of the Eastern Synod. In the Nith Valley Ministry Area, we are **"Fourteen Congregations - God's love in action."**

One of the highlights of this past year was our commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. We gathered for a Reformation Ministry Fair and Feast on Saturday, November 18 in the Shakespeare Community Centre; on Sunday, November 19, our Reformation worship celebration was attended by over 250 persons from congregations throughout Nith Valley. This was the second conference-wide worship service that has gathered during our existence as a ministry area; both worship experiences were well-attended and well-received.

Thanks to a grant from the Eastern Synod Mission Fund, Nith Valley has been blessed with a Youth Worker who is serving with us this year. Heidi van Schaik brings a great deal of experience and enthusiasm to her role, and will be working with us through August, including the CLAY gathering in Thunder Bay. Congregations within the ministry area also cooperate in summer Confirmation camps and retreats and will continue to work to establish relationships and partnerships throughout Nith Valley. Several of our congregations hosted Vacation Bible School sports camps in the summer of 2017.

Several of our congregations have been in discussion on cooperative/shared ministries. The ACTION Committee ("Acting Courageously Together") is exploring models of ministries that will strengthen our ministry and witness both as congregations and as a ministry area. A steering committee consisting of members from congregations throughout Nith Valley has been formed to investigate how multiple congregations pooling resources to work together might strengthen ministries and promote church growth throughout the ministry area. Many of our congregations have committed to participating in this process.

We have experienced several transitions in ministry in the past two years, welcoming new partners in ministry as well as giving thanks for the conclusion of ministries:

- Pastor Tanya Ramer completed her ministry as pastor of Bethany, Woodstock as she began her new call as pastor of Trinity, New Hamburg.
- St. James, Perth East (North Easthope) called Pastor David Hammer to serve as its pastor.
- Pastor Barry Boeckner has served as interim pastor at St. James, Perth East and at St. Peter's, Milverton.
- Pastor Jennifer Hoover accepted the call to serve as pastor of Bethany, Woodstock.
- Pastor Bonnie Schelter-Brown of St. James, New Dundee completed her ministry as dean of the Nith Valley Ministry Area; Pastor Jeff Laustsen of Zion, Stratford has been appointed as dean.

Our rostered clergy meet monthly for mutual support and discussion in the ministry we share here in Nith Valley. Our gatherings include pastors under call, retired pastors, pastors under

special call, as well as two members of the Deaconess Community. In January, we welcomed Bishop Pryse to our monthly meeting, and look forward to working with our partners in ministry both in Nith Valley and throughout the Eastern Synod.

We are thankful to all of our sisters and brothers in Christ who have blessed us with their presence and the offering of their gifts during the first years of the Nith Valley Ministry Area's existence. We are looking forward to working together so that we all might experience "God's love in action."

### Report of the Northern Ministry Area

Northern Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Brad Mittleholtz

The Northern Ministry is one of the largest geographically reaching from Sault Ste. Marie in the west to North Bay in the east to South Porcupine in the north to Magnetawan in the south. In that area our 8 worshipping communities are served by a diversity of faithful rostered and lay leaders. Distance is a constant challenge as is weather (snow gear doesn't usually get put away until well into April or even May). Even with our challenges we commit to doing our best to connect and be in relationship with one another as often as is possible.

During this past biennium we have gathered a number of times. Our spring gathering in Magnetawan featured learning about Reformation principles by the Rev. Dr. Joy Philip and the work of the TRC and our role with the Rev. Karen Kuhnert. This event also foreshadowed an even larger event that celebrated the commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation: Nord500North. This event held in Sudbury in September 2017 had leadership from many denominations including: Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Free Methodist, Mennonite and Pentecostal. The two day event featured lectures, sharing and fellowship. A highlight was a Common Prayer worship service held at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Sudbury.

There have been several changes in our ministry area since the last Synod Assembly. We have welcomed the Rev. Mira Salmelainen to New Hope Lutheran in Sudbury, we joined the Rev. Charles Nolting whose interim call was affirmed when New Hope Lutheran invited him to accept a full call to ministry. Our faithful dean for many years, the Rev. Glenda Morrissette in 2017 chose to step down as the dean along with resigning as pastor of Trinity Lutheran in Sudbury. I thank Glenda for her dedicated and passionate service to the people of Trinity and to the Northern Ministry Area.

With a new dean and with a new member of the team we have agreed to focus on what we can do well in the north: gather when we can, connect as often as possible, and pray all the time.

### Report of the Ottawa Ministry Area

Ottawa Ministry Area Dean(s)  
Rev. JoAnne Lam (current) and Rev. Martin Malina (past)

#### 2017 Highlights

##### **Catholic-Lutheran Ecumenical Studies, Sept 27 - Oct 25**

Five sessions of discussions, presentations, and Bible studies were instrumental in bringing together Catholics and Lutherans who were open to discover the various components of the bi-lateral document of From Conflict to Communion. The average attendance ranged from 30-50 individuals from many Catholic and Lutheran parishes. The series were co-facilitated by Pr. Martin Malina of Faith Lutheran and Dorothy Wood of Canadian Martyrs Catholic Parish. The participants expressed interest to continue gathering and building on the momentum from this series to establish common ground for building relationships.

##### **Reformation 500 Documentary: Impact of the Reformation Today, Sept 30**

Several *Missouri* Synod Lutherans initiated an education event and it took place at St. Paul Presbyterian Church. There were more than 70 participants and the event was led by Rev. Jorge Rohl of Christ Risen as the Lutheran Scholar and also Rev. Dr. Rolland Miller as a retired professor from various Lutheran seminaries. Katie Luther made an appearance and several volunteers from Ottawa Lutherans participated in the planning and coordinating of this event.

##### **Reformation 500 Commemorative Event, Oct 29**

*With excerpts from St. Peter's Newsletter and notes from Anna Koolstra*

On October 29, 2017, our eight ELCIC congregations gathered to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. We started first at St. Peter's for the Music and Word of the Reformation and then we processed to Christ Church Cathedral for a Eucharist Liturgy led by National Bishop Susan Johnson and Synodical Bishop Michael Pryse.

Not only were we honoured to have join us that day, Nation Bishop Rev. Susan Johnson and the Eastern Synod Bishop Michael Pryse, but Minister of Parliament the Honourable Andrew Leslie brought greetings from the Prime Minister of Canada too. As well, the Ambassador of Latvia, His Excellency Kārlis Eihensbaums and his wife Inara Eihensbaums were also able to be with us in the morning, as well as Algonquin Elder Barbara Dumont-Hill who opened our day in a good and special way.

There were a few other special guests who came and shared a few words from their respective Ottawa ridings; Ministers of Provincial Parliament Nathalie Des Rosiers and John Fraser, as well as The Mayor Jim Watson and City Councillor Jean Cloutier.

The attendance of the day was remarkable. There were approximately 350 people at St. Peter's for the first service, and over 600 people who joined us at Christ Church Cathedral. All offerings will be calculated and forwarded to the ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land) Scholarships - one of the ELCIC's Reformation Challenges. Please feel free to visit the Ottawa Lutheran's website to see photos from the day. [www.ottawalutherans.org](http://www.ottawalutherans.org)

The liturgy for the day was a combination from the global commemoration liturgy from the Lutheran World Federation headquarters and various resources from other Reformation 500 commemoration liturgies used in Canada and in USA.

Our choir made up of members of our eight parishes as well as members from the Concordia Choir who rehearses at German Martin Luther Church.

The Reformation 500 event also produced thirty professionally prepared posters on the history and contemporary impact of the Reformation. These were produced in partnership with St. Paul University who eventually took on the full cost of printing the posters and are now the owner of these Reformation posters. There is a suggestion to engage the university to use these posters on an exhibition tour with a final destination of the posters to the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Further conversations are necessary to explore this suggestion.

We had a gathering of non-profit organizations who are active and partnering with our parishes at the Reformation 500 event. We hope to continue engaging these ecumenical advocacy partners in future activities and events.

Finances will be reported separately by our event's treasurer, Heather Bent.

The Reformation 500 Organisation Team members include Anna Koolstra (St. Peter's), Heather Bent (German Martin Luther), Saralyn Lichty (St. John), and Pr. JoAnne Lam (Mt. Calvary). Thank you to the team for picking up the project in April and to bring everything to a faithful completion.

### **Catholic-Lutheran Joint Common Prayer, Nov 25**

The Archdiocese of Ottawa and Ottawa Lutherans gathered at the Notre Dame Basilica for a prayer liturgy. This liturgy was based upon the Common Prayer used in 2016 in Lund, Sweden for the joint commemoration of the Reformation. Music selection included many songs from the ecumenical Taizé community in France.

The Cathedral Choir was joined by several members from Ottawa Lutherans to provide musical leadership. Bishop Michael Pryse and Pr. JoAnne Lam joined Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, Ecumenical Officer Fr. Jacques Kabangu of St. Gabriel Parish, and Deacon François Lortie to lead this prayer service. More than twenty volunteers participated by reading in English and French, and lighting the five commitment candles. Bishop Pryse and Archbishop Prendergast shared a joint sermon on the hopes of moving closer to a possibility of a visible unity among Catholics and Lutherans.

Reception was hosted by the Archdiocese of Ottawa and the Reformation posters were made available for this occasion by St. Paul University.

### **Advent Midweek Services, Dec 6, 13, 20 at 7 p.m., Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church**

We will continue to host midweek Holden Evening Prayers at Mt. Calvary this Season of Advent. We have opened this to participants of Catholic-Lutheran Ecumenical Studies. Our hope is that it will offer an opportunity for us to gather together to pray and to worship together.

### Youth and CLAY 2018 Planning, Aug 15-19 in Thunder Bay

*Notes from Ken Grahman*

- The gathering will take place at Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, August 15-19
- There is a transition in leadership from Ken Grahman who has taken on other commitments and will no longer be able to serve as the coordinator of youth events and especially participants for CLAY 2018.
- There is a remaining balance from CLAY 2017 at St. John. We will receive an update of the balance and then plan ahead to see how that will contribute to the expenses for CLAY 2018 participants.
- There was a bottle drive in the fall as an initial fundraiser.

### Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church and German Martin Luther becoming one community

As of January 1, 2018, the two faith communities will move to become one congregation. It has been a long process of getting to know one another and finding common ground. Mt. Calvary celebrated their 60th anniversary of serving the community near Elmvale. Bishop Pryse preached at the celebratory worship and the German Martin Luther Council Chair presented a plaque in honour of the ministries of Mt. Calvary to name the hall "Mount Calvary Hall." It was an end but also a beginning to a courage step forward to rebuilding a renewed presence at 933 Smyth Road.

### Transitions

During this past biennium, St Peter's Lutheran Church and the Ottawa Ministry Area bid farewell to the Rev. Barton Beglo who retired at the end of 2017. Over the past couple of decades, Pastor Beglo served faithfully the congregation of St Peter's as well as in the capacity of Dean of the former Ottawa/St Lawrence Conference and various Synod committees. He joins the company of retired ELCIC pastors living on the territory of the Ottawa Ministry Area: The Revs. Arthur Conrad, Ted Heinze, Stanley Johnstone, Jan Malina, Joanna Malina, Diane Raddatz, and Silvia Zalts.

Continuing to serve actively the congregations in the Ministry Area are: The Revs. Joel Crouse, Friedrich Demke, Mei Sum Lai, Martin Malina, Elina Salonen, Ed Bastian, Stephen Silverthorne and Ilmars Zvirgds; and, The Rev. JoAnne Lam, Dean.

### Report of the Ottawa Valley Ministry Area

Ottawa Valley Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Paul Roellchen-Pfohl

In the past biennium the UOVMA began to work on local ministry needs as we have come to face changing situations. As well most of the parishes have seen to local opportunities to serve our communities in which we live. There have been celebrations and sorrows, arrivals and leavings.

Like many ministry areas we celebrated the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation celebrating our unity with Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Anglican participation in a joint worship service following the Liturgy of the service held in Lund, Sweden. We were pleased to have Bishop Pryse and Father James Beanish of St. Columbkille Cathedral share the preaching. We were delighted with special unexpected guest Bishop Susan Johnson as she participated sharing with us the

benediction. A combined choir of close to 50 members led the congregation of close to 300 in spirited singing of praise to God for many blessings throughout the years. A freewill offering was received to support the local food bank. Following worship we continued to celebrate with fellowship in the cathedral's lower hall. During that time many people commented that they never thought a day like this could be possible! Many thanks go to Pr. Bruce Thompson for his coordinating efforts and ability to tie up loose ends quickly and neatly.

Some examples of parishes meeting local needs are taking place in Eganville and Pembroke. Grace, Eganville has opened the Soul Cafe. It is a worship experience for those who have found it difficult to feel comfortable in a regular worship service as well as an opportunity for a denominationally neutral setting. It is outreach to a segment of the community whose ideas of church and their relationship to church has been broken and wounded. Recently, Zion, Pembroke has become the home of Music Healing Veterans. MHV is a veteran run operation which seeks to offer veterans and others suffering from post traumatic stress the means of healing through the gift of music. Upwards of 40 people gather each week to learn how to play instruments in one to one lessons and group jam sessions. A highlight for Zion and MHV was their participation within our worship on Remembrance Day weekend as a group of Vets played and sang "Highway of Heroes." These are two examples of the church meeting the needs of the local community being church where you are.

We have welcomed Pr. Albert Romkema as pastor to St. John's Petawawa and Deaconess Pam Harrington to Pembroke. We are excited to have them among us as we work together. On March 21st we said farewell to our brother, friend and colleague Pr. Fred Haak who joined the saints triumphant!

### Report of the Seaway Ministry Area

Seaway Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Steve Hoffard

The Seaway ministry area formed logically from the old Seaway ministry cluster and geographically finds itself stretched along the St. Lawrence Seaway. We are made up of Holy Trinity - Belleville, St. Mark's - Kingston, Good Shepherd - Brockville, South Dundas Lutheran Community Church Parish (formed from the prior congregations of St. Peter's - Williamsburg and St. Paul's - Morrisburg), St. Luke's Dunbar and the specialized prison ministry of Rev. Sylvia Poetschke.

St. John's - Riverside Heights, which began in the late 1700s, was the oldest Lutheran congregation in what was once Upper Canada. They held their final service on Sunday, July 17, 2016.

The distance we are apart from one another is a challenge and we do not have the resources to engage beyond our own local contexts.

However, even with the challenges we stay connected to one another through the communication of the pastors. We also continue to host the annual "All Saints Clergy Retreat" for Eastern Synod Pastors which is always a time of learning and renewal for those who attend.

### Report of the Thames Ministry Area

Thames Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Laura Sauder

The Thames Ministry Area is made up of eight congregations from city, small town, and rural communities that span from Windsor and Leamington east to London and Aylmer, and north to Zurich and Brodhagen. We are a diverse group and geography makes it difficult to do many things face-to-face. In 2017 we made the difficult decision to disband our leadership team and we continue to discern how we might best pool our resources and support one another in ministry. Highlights from the past couple of years include:

- Our Thames Ministry Area Reformation 500 worship service which was held on September 25, 2016. About 150 people gathered to sing and worship, and a supper was held following. Enough funds were collected to cover one scholarship for ELCJHL schools for the ELCIC Reformation Challenge.
- A Thames rostered leaders Advent retreat in 2017, with two more retreats planned for 2018.
- Almost monthly get-togethers for our active and retired rostered leaders (for mutual support and encouragement).
- Steps forward in the Biennium Reconciliation Initiative: we've made some new contacts with one of the indigenous communities in our area and as of the writing of this report are planning a second area-wide Blanket Exercise on April 14, 2018.

Transitions and ministry changes: as of January 2018 St John's, Aylmer is now in a shared ministry partnership with Trinity Anglican, Aylmer, with Rev. John Goldsworthy serving both parishes. From June 2016 - August 2017 Rev. Laura Sauder was on parental leave. Thank you to Rev. Harold Brill who served as interim pastor at St Peter's, Brodhagen, and thank you to Rev. Steve Johnston who served as interim dean during that time.

### Report of The Bay Ministry Area

The Bay Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. Thomas Mertz

The Bay Area congregations in Burlington, Hamilton and Brantford continue to grow together as churches united in "Mission for Others." On many occasions our congregations came together to worship, work and play and a lead group of representatives from each church meets regularly to share about their local ministries, support each other and plan for the numerous joint events throughout the year.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January we hold our annual Sunday pulpit exchange with each pastor officiating and preaching at a different Bay Area church. Four Hamilton City congregations take turns hosting the Ash Wednesday evening service. In the summer we all come together for our Area Picnic at one of the local parks.

Many of our 2017 events commemorated the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. We welcomed Rev. Dr. Michael Pryse to an "Afternoon with the Bishop" in April. Earlier that month 70 volunteers from our various congregations gathered at Bow Park Farm in Brantford to plant 2000 trees as a response to the ELCIC Reformation Challenge.

The Bay Area initiated and helped plan two ecumenical services. Along with other protestant denominations we invited the public to an outdoors service at Gage Park, Hamilton in May. Guest

preacher on this occasion was Rev. Dr. Lois Wilson, the first female Moderator of the United Church of Canada and former president of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Bishop Pryse returned to Hamilton for the Common Prayer service at Christ the King Cathedral in November. He co-presided at the service with Bishop Crosby of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton. A dialogue sermon was delivered by Sister Eileen Schuler and Rev. Daniela Mertz of St. John's The Bay Area Massed Choir conducted by Heide Lang, Music Director of St. John's sang at this and other occasions in 2017.

For the third time we held the annual Lutherfest Dinner and Reformation Service at Faith, Brantford as Bay Area events and welcomed Rev. Dr. Oscar Cole-Arnal as our guest preacher.

The Reconciling Circle, a group of Lutheran and Anglican pastors in the area planned Treaties Recognition Week activities in Brantford, including a presentation by two survivors of the Residential School system, held at the Woodland Cultural Centre. We thank the Synod for a grant we received in support of this annual event.

Also with generous support of the Eastern Synod mission fund St. John's, Hamilton continues its community outreach project in Ward II of Hamilton for the third year. The funds allow the congregation to employ Rev. Chun Zhang as a part-time missionary.

Faith, Brantford called Rev. Brian Wilker as their new pastor and Redeemer, Fisherville welcomed Rev. Kevin McLeod as interim minister.

Grace Lutheran Church, Hamilton sold their property on Main Street - to be vacated in the summer of 2020 - and joined Transfiguration, Faith and St. John's Lutheran churches in amalgamation talks. The four churches appreciate the support of the Synod and particularly Rev. Doug Reble in this process. They also contracted Janet Marshall and Ron Ewart of the Toronto United Church Council Centre for Church Development and Leadership to facilitate the conversation. A work plan has been laid out with the goal of having a decision on amalgamation by the end of 2018.

### Report of the Two Rivers Ministry Area

Two Rivers Ministry Area Dean  
Rev. David Malina

The eleven congregations of the Two Rivers Ministry Area (TRMA) are located in the vicinity of the confluence of the Conestogo and Grand Rivers, on the original lands of the Six Nations. TRMA consists of both rural and urban congregations, from St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Linwood in the west, to Faith Lutheran Church in Fergus in the northeast, to St. John's Lutheran Church, Waterloo in the south.

I was appointed Dean in January 2017 when Pr. Elina Salonen concluded her call to Faith Lutheran Church in Fergus to accept the call to the parishes of Mildmay and Neustadt, Ontario, thereby stepping down as Dean, a position she held since the formation of Ministry Areas in 2014. We're grateful for her leadership in the first years of the Ministry Areas. Thank you Pr. Elina!

Since the beginning of TRMA, the Leadership Team consisted of members Barb Finn, Jackie Nunns, and Monika Wiesner, with ex-officio Scott Knarr. Today, the Leadership Team members are Barb Finn, Robyn Gromeder, and Mary Thompson, with ex-officio Scott Knarr. I'm very grateful for their wise and enthusiastic contributions. I'm also grateful to the people of my home

church, Christ Lutheran Church, Waterloo, who've let me exercise the role of Dean: attending TRMA events, meetings, synod Dean/Directors meetings, installations of pastors, council exit interviews, pastoral visits and attending to communication and administrative tasks for the MA. Specifically, I conducted in January 2018 the installation of Rev. Karen Kuhnert as pastor of St. James, St. Jacobs. In February 2018, I facilitated the exit interview of retiring Rev. Monika Wiesner at St. Matthew's, Conestogo.

On the whole, I've found this work energizing, particularly in the tasks of bringing people together, who'd otherwise have remained in their silos. As I see it, a major purpose of the work of the Leadership Team, and by extension, the MA, is to help excite the imaginations of all of our members for mission and ministry work that is happening, and can happen, beyond the walls of our own local congregations. The Ministry Area is by no means the only vehicle for such a purpose. Our personal involvements - church and otherwise - which help do this for us, are many. But the MA is one such vehicle.

The Leadership Team and I have helped convene a number of TRMA gatherings over the past year and a half - mainly for the purposes of education, mutual support, and prayer -- comprised of both rostered and lay members of TRMA churches. We gathered weekly during the month of May 2017 with Roman Catholics in the area to study together the Together in Christ resource prepared for the occasion of the 500th Anniversary of the Commemoration of the Reformation. We've pondered together, encouraged by the leadership of Deacon Scott Knarr and Henriette Thompson, what it means for us to have a reconciling relationship with indigenous people, and what watershed discipleship means. We visited the local masjid and imam, considering our relationship with Muslim neighbours. We've developed relationships with Anglican and Lutheran churches in the city of Waterloo during Lent 2018, praying, and studying together the relationship between Indigenous theology and the Christian Church. In January 2017, church councils of four TRMA churches came together to share their situations and consider their futures. In January and February 2018, we held a series of "clergy reunion" meetings of active and non-active rostered ministers.

We've shared, through the "Two Rivers Lutherans" website ([www.waterlooonorthlutherans.ca](http://www.waterlooonorthlutherans.ca)), the "Wading in the Water" e-newsletter, and periodic email fan-outs, the many learning, music, and service events happening in our churches and wider community.

The Two Rivers MA has been a major sponsor and supporter (through the receiving of Synod Mission Grants) of the work of Deacon Scott Knarr at Six Nations through his music ministry there, and as he's endeavoured to build bridges of understanding and relationship between members of Two Rivers, the wider Eastern Synod, and indigenous peoples.

Over the next three years, we hope to continue to support the work of education and relationship-building with indigenous people, particularly Six Nations, to continue informing and communicating with our member churches, to continue bringing us together for education, support and prayer, and to continue to excite our imaginations around mission and ministry possibilities.