

# Eastern Synod Newsletter

[www.easternsynod.org](http://www.easternsynod.org)



Dec 21, 2020  
Volume 102



On behalf of my colleagues here at the Eastern Synod office I want to wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas!

Although our celebrations this year cannot be all that we would hope or want, I am grateful to God that we can still experience Christmas in the place that matters most. In our hearts and in our souls.

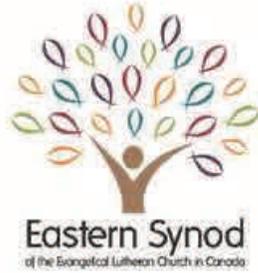
The miracle of the incarnation is more than some long distant event that we remember. It really can and must be part of our lived reality today!

For if the babe does not again take flesh in us, the Bethlehem star is just an optical illusion leading to nothing. If we are not empowered to look for Christ's presence in the lives of our neighbours and communities, then there really are no wise men searching. If there is no praise or joy within our hearts, then there are no angels singing; no shepherds watching.

Yes. This Christmas will be different. But it can be just as holy. Just as meaningful. Perhaps even more so.

Dear friends, may all the blessings of this holy season rest abundantly upon you and upon all who are dear to you. May Christ truly be born again, within you and among you! AMEN





## OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT **Assembly 2021**

*Eighteenth Convention of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada*

**June 25 - 26, 2021**  
(electronic meeting format)

*The Rev Wendell Caron Grahlman*  
Secretary, Eastern Synod of the ELCIC

### **Guidelines for Eastern Synod Congregations Holding Annual E-Meetings**

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has forced congregations to consider alternatives to in person meetings when holding annual and congregational meetings. Whether holding an in person meeting, an electronic meeting, or no meeting at all, this document outlines a number of guidelines and things to consider as congregations plan for those events. At the same time, it also does not pretend to be a “how-to” process of holding a congregational meeting; as each congregation has its own traditions and practices, there is no “one size fits all.”

The full document can be found at <https://easternsynod.org/resource/guidelines-to-hold-congregational-annual-e-meetings/>

Our prayers are with the family and friends of Verna Glebe as they mourn her death.

*The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,  
and saves the crushed in spirit.*  
*Psalm 34:18*

### **2020 YTD decline in Benevolence Offerings stabilizes in recent months**

#### **Financial Update (as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020)**

Over the entire eleven months of the year, benevolence offerings have decreased by 6% compared to the same period in 2019. In contrast, there has been a steady improvement in each of the last 3 months of 2020, compared with the corresponding month in 2019, from a decline of 14% in the month of September to a 4% decline in November. This stabilizing decline is a positive result considering we are now in our seventh month of the pandemic with a sense that there are still many more months of restrictions ahead.

Offerings designated for Canadian Lutheran World Relief saw a 50% decrease in November 2020 over November 2019, resulting in an overall decline of 25% on a year to date basis.

Even with a sense of several more months, perhaps even a year more, of living with the uncertainty of the pandemic, we still feel very grateful for the many members and congregations who are continuing to faithfully remit their offerings on a regular basis. The ministries that you support through your offerings have always been important, and as the pandemic continues, they are even more critical.

For details, refer to [Financial Update](#) on the synod website.

The Eastern Synod office will be closed for Christmas from Dec 24th—Jan 3rd incl.

We will be returning to work on Jan 4th but staff will be working remotely from home. We are confident that, as we did in the spring, we will be able to continue our core functions.

Feel free to contact any one of us either via telephone or through the contact page on our website, [https:// easternsynod.org/contacts](https://easternsynod.org/contacts)

Please be assured of our continued prayers for you and your dear ones.



## Christmas Videos Available

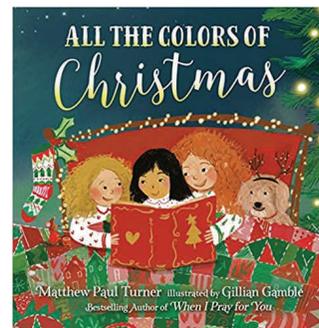
Bishop Pryse has recorded a Christmas greeting in which he shares the Christmas story and reminds us that the incarnation is more than some long distant event that we remember. He says, “It really can be part of our lived reality today! Indeed, it must!”

[Click here to view Bishop Pryse’s 2020 Christmas greeting.](#)

Bishop Pryse, along with his assistants, has also recorded a special reading of *All the Colours of Christmas*.

At a time when so very much is unfamiliar to us, this book reminds us of the unchanging promise that comes to us anew each Christmas. Used with permission

[To hear the story, click here.](#)



Love and prayers from our family to yours.

# Merry Christmas!

*Eastern Synod staff*



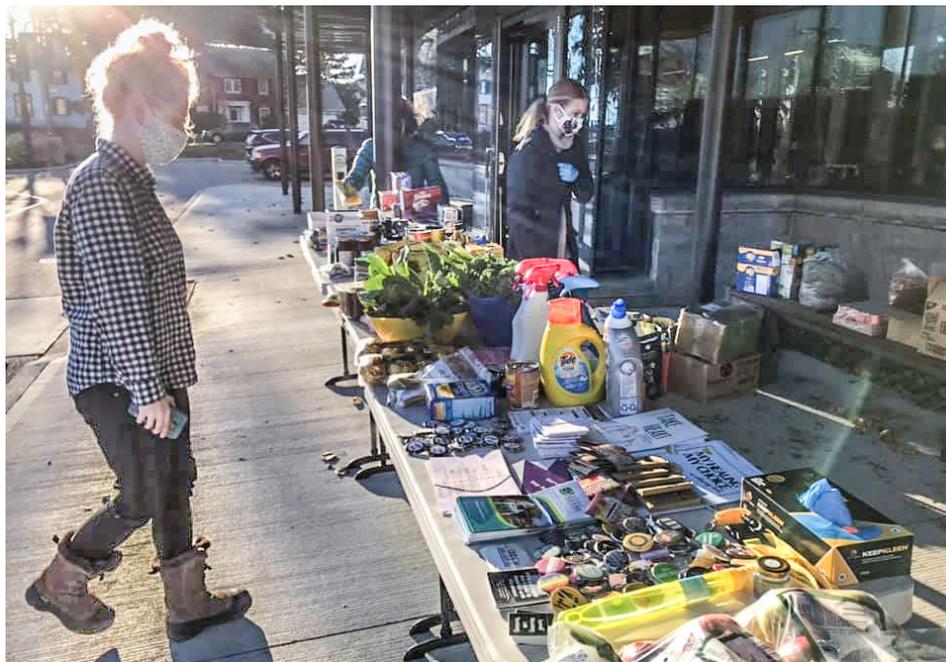
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# LUTHER

DECEMBER 2020

## Responding to students in need



### thirdspace\_ partners with campus and community groups to ensure food for students

As the pandemic drove Luther and Wilfrid Laurier University students off campus in March, Laurier's food bank service was disrupted. Yet many students who returned for the fall term continued to need help putting food on their tables. So thirdspace\_ partnered with Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group (LSPIRG) and the

Community Kitchen Co-operative KW, at Emmanuel United Church, to distribute food each week. About 60 students have been receiving groceries on Thursdays. The effort continues through the break. Students can sign up for a catered take-home meal for pick-up on Dec. 24. To sponsor a meal (\$20), go to our [donor page](#); in the text box provided for "other," write "holiday meal." To donate groceries, contact **Rev. Anne Anderson** at [ananderson@luther.wlu.ca](mailto:ananderson@luther.wlu.ca)

## Passengers wanted

Passengers wanted for a new life journey. If you or someone you know might be interested in studying at Luther, we will be holding an [information session](#) for all of our master's programs on Friday, Jan. 8. Feel free to take a spirited [video tour](#) of campus.

## Holiday gatherings

As students finish the fall term and disconnect from their daily routines and social interactions, some may feel negative effects from being more isolated. So the [Delton Glebe Counselling Centre](#) will be holding free online group sessions throughout the holiday break. The virtual gatherings are scheduled for 2-3 p.m. on Tuesdays Dec. 22, 29 and Jan. 5. For details, call 519.884.3305 or email [glebecounselling@wlu.ca](mailto:glebecounselling@wlu.ca)

## Ordinations

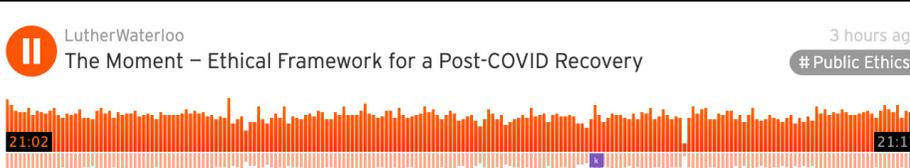
Blessings to **Sherry Coman** and **Jordan Smith** on your ordinations! During a [service](#) at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Hamburg, ON, Dec. 14th, Sherry was ordained a deacon. She serves as an associate professional faculty member at Luther, and produces the Lutherans Connect devotionals. Jordan begins his first call as pastor at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Toronto. He is a member of Luther's fall Class of 2020.



Sherry Coman



Jordan Smith



**Public ethics podcast**  
Check out [The Moment](#) podcast series from the Centre for Public Ethics as **John Milloy**, the centre's director, and colleagues try to re-imagine our post-pandemic life together after our COVID-19 life apart.

Vol. 3 Issue 11 *Luther* is a collection of news from Martin Luther University College in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. **Website:** [luther.wlu.ca](http://luther.wlu.ca) **Events:** Dorinda Kruger Allen [dkrugerallen@luther.wlu.ca](mailto:dkrugerallen@luther.wlu.ca) **Stories:** Mirko Petricevic [mpetricevic@luther.wlu.ca](mailto:mpetricevic@luther.wlu.ca)