

Eastern Synod Newsletter

www.easternsynod.org



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A Christmas message from Bishop Michael Pryse

“The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.” As a child, I was always mystified by this line from the carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem. I understood something of the hope of Christmas. But what role could fear possibly play in the wondrous and beautiful story of the first Christmas?

But in time, I learned. I learned something about the fear of a young mother about to bear her first child, under far from normal circumstances, alone in a cattle shed. I learned about the fear of a poor father unable to provide his family with proper shelter. The fear of simple shepherds startled by the unexpected appearance of heavenly emissaries. The fear of a jealous and vengeful king whose terrors would soon force the young family to flee to a distant land as refugees.

Hope and fear did, indeed, meet on that first Christmas night. And they’ve been meeting there ever since! And for most of us, that will again be the case this year. But fear cannot get the final word for this Christmas any more than it did for the first! Despite our quite understandable anxieties and fears, it is not a message of fear, but rather one of hope, that we will again proclaim and celebrate this Christmas – and perhaps with a deeper integrity than might be the case under less challenging circumstances.

At Christmas we celebrate a God who loves creation so intensely that he chose to enter into the very heart of our creaturely existences, for good or for ill – not just one day of the year – but for all three hundred and sixty-five!

Fear not, dear friends. The light of Christ’s presence still shines

bright. It is the light of divine hope, a light that casts out fear and scatters the darkness.

Fear not! Christ the Saviour is born!

A Christmas Story

“The world was about to change forever. And it almost went by unnoticed...”

In this special recording, Bishop Michael is joined by Pastors Christie, Doug and Adam (as well as the Morrow-Wolfe & Snook kiddos) in a reading of “Song of the Stars: A Christmas Story” by Sally Lloyd-Jones and illustrated by Allison Jay.

<https://elcic.app.box.com/s/4a6sjlyo66kmntzrqpevrqc571uaa4jh/file/897860504167>

ELCIC Taskforce Survey - 2SLGBTQQIA community

The taskforce addressing homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) is inviting people in the 2SLGBTQQIA community to share stories and experiences in order to help form the taskforce's report and recommendations.

Information on how to complete the survey and a link to an invitational video can be found here:

<https://www.elcic.ca/taskforcehbt/>

Ministry Opportunities

Christ the King, Whitby, ON

Christ, Peterborough, ON

St. Peter's, Cambridge, ON

Faith, Port Elgin, ON

Faith Lutheran &

St. Peter's Anglican, Elliot Lake, ON

Lutheran & Anglican

Ministries of the Bruce, Warton, ON

For more information please contact Rev Douglas Reble, Assistant to the Bishop, dreble@elcic.ca

2021 YTD-The year is ending, where did it go? Financial Update (as of November 30th, 2021)

In no time, another year will come to a close. We often find ourselves asking 'where did the time go'? As we wind down the year, we, at the Eastern Synod, are grateful that, though our benevolence receipts are lower than in previous years, there are still many members and congregations who continue to faithfully remit their offerings.

The year to date benevolence offerings as of November 2021 were down from 2020 by almost 4%. The month of November 2021 were down over November 2020 by just over 2%.

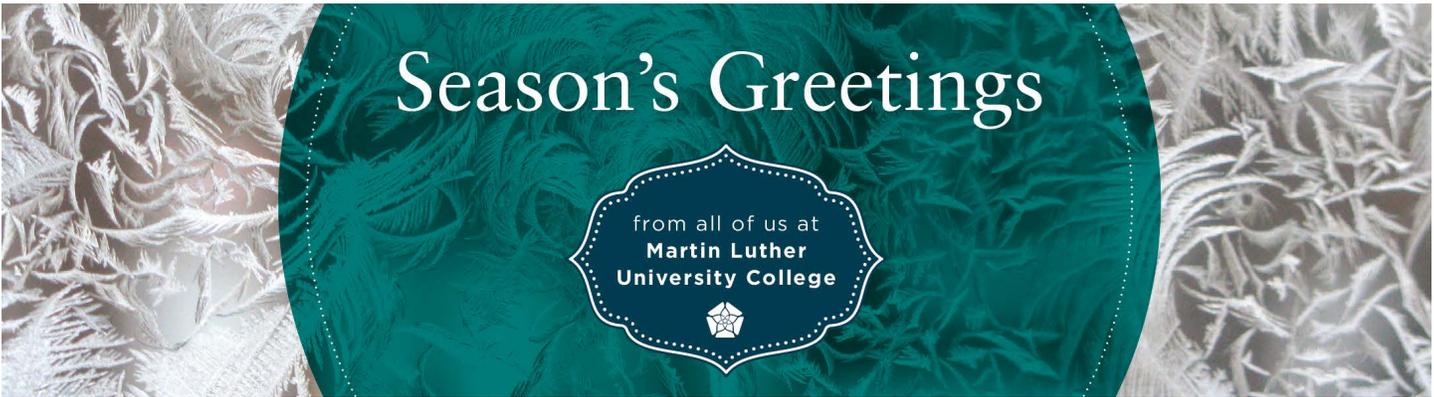
Offerings designated for Canadian Lutheran World Relief that were received by the Synod office saw an increase of 18% over November 2020. There was an increase of just over 9% on a year to date basis.

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

Reminder: The Eastern Synod office will be closed from December 23rd at noon till January 3rd at 8:30 am.

The Eastern Synod staff would like to wish you and yours a very Blessed Christmas





Season's Greetings

from all of us at
**Martin Luther
 University College**

Illustration by Dawn Wharnsby, Photo by Andrew Huff



Photo courtesy of Kathy Waybrant

Centre for Spirituality, Disability, and Care

Luther continues its work to foster inclusive communities by launching its sixth research centre on Dec. 3.

The Centre for Spirituality, Disability, and Care hosted a conversation with Laura MacGregor, associate professional faculty at Luther and the centre's founding director, with guests Amy Pantan and Rev. Miriam Spies, co-editors of *The Canadian Journal of Theology, Mental Health and Disability*. Research and other activities undertaken by the centre are designed to help faith community leaders and volunteers become welcoming communities for people with disabilities, their



Laura MacGregor

families and caregivers. The centre will nurture the organic strengthening of community among diverse people including those with lived experiences. View the launch event [video](#), visit [the centre's web page](#) or read the [announcement](#).

The launch of the centre follows the start of a new continuing education program led by MacGregor. For more on the Certificate in Disability, Inclusive Ministry and Christian Faith, go to the [information video](#) or contact lmacgregor@luther.wlu.ca. Visit [this page](#) for more about Luther's six research centres.

Longest Night Service

Rev. Anne Anderson, Luther's community pastor, will lead a Longest Night Service for those who may not be feeling festive at this time of year. Online at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 21. Please contact ananderson@luther.wlu.ca for the Zoom link.

Glebe drop in for students

Campus mostly empties for the holiday break, but students seeking support are welcome to join the drop-in group sessions hosted by [The Delton Glebe Counseling Centre](#). Help for the Holiday Season series takes place 2-3 p.m. on Dec. 21, 22, 29; Jan. 4, 5. [View the calendar](#).

Distro featured on CBC-KW

CBC-KW's annual Sounds of the Season broadcast included a [feature story](#) on the free weekly "Distro" hosted at Luther. The project is a collaboration led by Rev. Anne Anderson, community pastor, and Karly Rath of the Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group (LSPIRG). The service will be open to students throughout the holiday break.



New videos now online

[Prayers and Pints](#), with Bishop Susan Johnson and Rev. Dr. Matthew Anderson. [Open Door service dedication](#) for the [Centre for Earth Consciousness and Gender Justice](#).

December 2021 Vol. 4 Issue 10 *Luther* is a collection of news from Martin Luther University College in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. **Website:** luther.wlu.ca **Events:** Dorinda Kruger Allen dkrugerallen@luther.wlu.ca **Stories:** Mirko Petricevic mpetricevic@luther.wlu.ca

2021 in Pictures

As we approach the end of the year, it's a good time to look back and reflect. Visit our 2021 in Pictures photo album on Flickr.