



Eastern Synod  
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

# 2021

## Our Ministry Story



*Beginning at top left:* St. Philip's, Etobicoke ON; St. John's, Ottawa ON; Bethesda, Unionville ON; Resurrection, Halifax NS; Trinity, Hamilton ON; Zion, Sault Ste Marie ON; Mt. Zion, Waterloo ON; Rhenish, Markham ON; St. Peter's, New Denmark NB

**Thank You for your faithful partnership and continued support in the common mission that we share for the sake of the Good News!**  
**This is *OUR* ministry story!**



## GOAL 1: Provide Vision, Leadership, and Support to the Synod Community

35%

\$926,000

### Pandemic Response

Rev. Adam Snook, Assistant to the Bishop

In early 2020, as the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality for congregations across the territory of our Eastern Synod, a **Task Force for the Resumption of In-Person Worship** was established to provide vision, leadership and support to our synodical family. Over the course of the months which followed, and in collaboration with our ecumenical partners as well as various health authorities, the role of this task force became an integral part of our pandemic response. The Task Force published a series of resources including a phased approach and guidelines for re-opening. Support continued in the forms of seasonally specific worship resources, online information sessions, a virtual shared library to encourage collaboration, as well as ongoing emotional and spiritual support for rostered ministers, lay leaders and congregations. Thank you, truly, for your deep and meaningful engagement with this process, and for your commitment to love, serve and protect your neighbours!



## GOAL 2:

### Develop Capable Leaders

24%

\$619,000

### Leaders for a Changing Church

Rev. Doug Reble, Assistant to the Bishop

The Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is a church In Mission For Others. As a church we recognize the emergence of a renewed emphasis upon God's mission in the world in the 21st century. Christians enter into partnership with God's work in the world through baptism into the body of Christ. Every faith community is a mission field. Every baptized Christian is to be an ambassador for God's mission in the world. Through Word, Sacrament, and service, individuals and communities are strengthened for mission. **Rostered leaders, ordained pastors and ordained deacons, are called to equip the saints for the work of ministry** ( Ephesians 4:12 ). Developing these capable leaders does not just happen though. The candidacy process provides educational and formational opportunities through our partnership with Martin Luther University College. This enables our developing leaders to integrate skills, knowledge, and tools for ministry. That would not happen without you and your gifts of prayers and financial offerings. We all have a hand in developing capable leaders for our church.



Photo Credit: Mirko Petricevic

## GOAL 3: Connect the Synod Community with the Wider Church through Effective Partnerships

**20%**  
\$516,000

### Your Gifts Keep On Giving

Rev. Christie Morrow-Wolfe, Assistant to the Bishop

One of the many intentional partnerships the Eastern Synod engages in, is with our national church, the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada** (ELCIC). Never has the effectiveness and necessity of this partnership been so evident as during the COVID-19 pandemic. During 2020, the National and Synod Bishops came together to write joint letters to the church to offer care and reassurance to congregations. Synod Treasurers and the National Treasurer worked together to provide timely financial advice and updates. We were invited to read the Scriptures together through the Bible Book Club initiative. We were encouraged to keep being generous with our many partners the world-over who have also been impacted by the effects of COVID-19. In 2021, 16% of the budget in the Eastern Synod is designated for benevolence to the ELCIC (just over \$400,000). These funds help to support the operational budget of the ELCIC which in turn, strengthens our tangible expression of faith across Canada and the world. We are many parts but belong to the same church; a church built on effective partnerships and a church in mission for others.



Photo Credit: ELCIC

## GOAL 4: Live as a Healthy Synod

**21%**  
\$557,000

### Taking The Bishops' Company Online

Laurie Knott, Vice Chairperson



The Bishops' Company for Mission is a community of lay people who provide financial support to fund special initiatives within the synod. These projects include leadership training, work with our global mission partners and ministry area visits. Fundraising for the Bishops' Company generally occurs in the fall (although donations are welcome all year round!) and has traditionally been centered around

a dinner hosted by Bishop Michael Pryse. In pandemic times, plans had to be changed. This created an opportunity for a wider synodical gathering of people using Zoom during three different sessions.

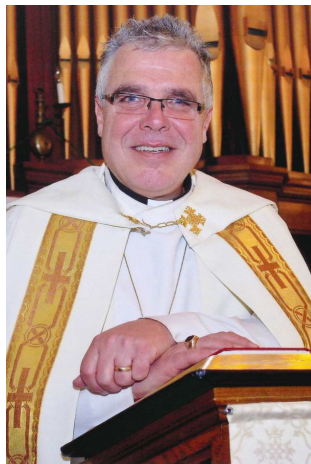
The time together opened with a video, including a prayerful reflection from retired Bishop William Huras as well as, stories of individual congregational responses to the pandemic. **Bishop Michael Pryse expressed his gratitude for the donations of Bishops' Company members and shared how these funds enable the synod to support new ministries during times of tightening budgets.**

While we weren't able to share a meal together, it was a wonderful opportunity to connect with some familiar and not so familiar faces across the synod. Our conversation revolved around how we are changing and adapting in response to COVID 19. We left the Zoom session feeling hopeful having heard about the work that has been initiated as we learn how to be neighbour in a time of pandemic.

Interested in learning more or becoming a supporter of the Bishops' Company for Mission? To hear Bishop Michael's message, please visit: <http://bitly.ws/aAnn>.



# Adieu...'To God'...2020!



I'll be glad to see the end of 2020. January and February were standard form, but from then on, it's been pretty much awful. I'm happy to say good-bye and good riddance to 2020. "Don't let the door hit you in the ass!"

But a new calendar year is on the horizon and a new liturgical year has already begun. And while I'm praying and hoping that Advent will help me to turn a proverbial page, both psychologically and spiritually, I know that I dare not miss this year end opportunity to give thanks for the rich insights and new learnings that have been gifted to us in the midst of an admittedly miserable time.

In the last nine months I have learned that:

**Our church has a much greater capacity to change than I ever thought imaginable.** We pivoted and established new models for ministry in a matter of weeks. We figured out new ways to engage in worship, learning, pastoral care and outreach ministries! I was amazed! And I hereby pledge to never again utter the words "how many Lutherans does it take to change a lightbulb." "Change?" The last nine months have proven that we can and we did! So let's quit with the excuses.

**Physical distancing does not have to mean social distancing or soul distancing.** In many ways I feel more connected with our synod's rostered ministers and lay leaders than I ever have. Many of you report the same dynamic has happened within your congregations. We need to ensure that these newly forged connecting points -whether high tech, low tech or no tech - are strengthened and enhanced moving forward.

**We are not as bound to bricks and mortar expressions of church as I thought we were.** Our understanding of what it means to "go to church" has been fundamentally altered and expanded and I hope it sticks. The truth of that old Sunday school song has been made plainly apparent. "The church is not a building. The church is the people!" As Luther would say, "this is most certainly true!"

**Crises really do create new opportunities.** Flowers really can bloom in the midst of a desert. As the scope of this crisis became apparent, I was assuming that the best we could do was to hold on and maintain some measure of normalcy in church life. I never imagined that so many of us would experience an awakening of new gifts for ministry. But as hard as it's been, many of our ministries and ministers have been newly enlivened by this sudden change of context. We've learned that when "same old" is no longer an option, new things can come to expression. That's frightening for some of us but liberating for others. While tending to the former, we must continue to give space to the latter.

Adieu! Translated literally it means "to God." In bidding adieu to calendar year 2020, we commend it to God. We commend all of it; our fears, hopes, pains and yearnings. We commend it to the God who has been present and blessed us so richly throughout these strangest of days. We commend it all to the God who also awaits and will assuredly offer new and unexpected blessings in the year to come! Adieu and Amen!

+ Michael

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