



Eastern Synod Newsletter

www.easternsynod.org



Mar 17, 2020
Volume 94

Dear friends in Christ,

As coronavirus disease (Covid-19) continues to escalate domestically, so does the requirement that we continue to review and adjust our current practices. With new information being received daily, we have received requests for further communication, specifically with respect to the most recent pastoral letter issued March 13, 2020.

With the information we have today, we feel it is both prudent and responsible that our congregations suspend all public worship services and other gatherings effective immediately. Some of you have already made this decision. It is our hope that we will all be strongly encouraged to do likewise.

We understand how difficult some of these unprecedented decisions may feel. These important considerations reflect a deep concern for those most vulnerable – particularly elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

At the Synod and National offices, we are looking at how we can make alternative arrangements for upcoming meetings and gatherings. Questions we are asking ourselves include: can these meetings be held differently (via web conference), or do they need to be postponed or cancelled?

Your congregation members may be asking a lot of questions right now. We all have a lot of questions. This is uncharted territory for us all. Please know that your synod office is available to contact and support you in your work.

While social distancing may be required at this time, we must do all we can to avoid social isolation. Each of our synods are looking at what this means within their own context and will communicate with you as there is more information to share.

Please continue to be vigilant in your prayerful support of those who are ill and those who are most fully engaged in the public health efforts that are underway across the country and around the world. May God grant us generous gifts of courage, faith, and compassion.

Blessings in your ministry during this time.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Susan Johnson, ELCIC National Bishop

The Rev. Dr. Greg Mohr, ELCIC British Columbia Synod

The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Synod of Alberta and the Territories

The Rev. Dr. Sid Haugen, Saskatchewan Synod

The Rev. Jason Zinko, Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod

The Rev. Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod

Stations of the Cross in downtown Kitchener, Good Friday 2019.

By Rev Marty Levesque

Photos by Davor Milicevic
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At vestries this past year Bishop Linda Nicholls challenged congregations throughout the Diocese of Huron to Stand in Solidarity with those living in poverty. This Good Friday, All Saints Anglican Church Waterloo joined with Christ Lutheran Church to participate in the Stations of the Cross in downtown Kitchener.

The theme for the stations was, *Against the Forces of Death; Embracing the Faces of Poverty.*

The two churches embraced the opportunity to draw attention to the unjust structures of society and to be a visible presence in the community. Stations included banks, the courthouse and jail, regional government headquarters, the statue of the begging Jesus, Money Mart, luxury condos, war memorial, Mary's place and the Working Center.

The two communities made their way from station to station carrying the cross, reading scriptures and praying at each location. Discussions unfolded at each station.



The theme for the stations was, Against the Forces of Death; Embracing the Faces of Poverty: Kitchener, Good Friday 2019



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At Regional Government Headquarters, Steven Izma noted “the choices politicians make surrounding transit are far too often for the privileged, the high tech sector and to get the rich too and from shopping quickly. Transit to factories or poor neighbours is just neglected.”

When reflecting on the predatory lending practices of Money Mart and other payday lenders, Sharon Summerville noted that “we have lost any sense of community morality allowing these places to exist.”

Oz Cole-Arnal, professor emeritus from Martin Luther University College reflected upon the gentrification of the downtown core, stating, “It isn’t urban renewal, its urban removal of the poor.”



Pastor Marty Levesque of All Saints Anglican Church noted that gap in social housing versus the abundance of student housing is an indication of a class divide. “We readily build student housing for middle and upper-middle-class folks who can afford to send kids to university, but we refuse to build the most basic social housing, seeing no profit in it.”

The Stations of the Cross concluded at the Working Center, world-renowned outreach ministries, which provide a myriad of services throughout Kitchener/Waterloo. Margaret Nally remarked that the Working Centers mission is “to help return dignity, reliance and humanity to each person who walks through the doors.”



While the rain held off for the two communities to finish the stations, each participant couldn't help reflect that when it rains, or snows, many of the invisible population in the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo simply must endure. To date this year, as presented at the mayors' dinner for St John's Soup Kitchen, there have been over 25 deaths in the region to the population that calls the streets, jails, and The Working Center home. In 2018, the number of deaths for the entire year for this specific population was 35.





Novel coronavirus: A letter on Luther's response

Dear Luther community:

Deborah MacLatchy, president of Wilfrid Laurier University, recently announced that the university has discontinued in-person instruction for all courses for the balance of the Winter Term. Similar steps were taken by universities across Ontario in order to minimize transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

We all have a part to play to flatten the curve of transmission. At Luther, we are fully supportive of Laurier's actions and have been involved in the decision-making process.

Students at Laurier and Martin Luther University College will continue to receive academic instruction through alternate means. Outside of the classroom, all Luther and Laurier events that are not required for students' academic progress — extra-curricular events that were scheduled for March 13 through to April 30 — have been cancelled.

Luther's cancellations include:

- Something Sacred (midday Monday-Friday)
- Inshallah, and Inshallah Kids and Families practices (Tuesdays)
- Open Door worship (Wednesdays)
- Chilling With Dogs (Thursdays)

- thirdspace_ worship (Sundays)
- Singing With Our Neighbours (scheduled for Sunday, March 29, 2020)

Luther's building is closed until further notice.

Laurier buildings serving students living in residence remain open. [The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre](#), a community service provided by Martin Luther University College, will remain open as long as possible.

For updates about Luther events, please monitor the Laurier-Luther [calendar](#), [our Facebook page](#) or [Twitter](#) account.

For details regarding academic matters, please refer to this [statement](#) issued by Laurier. For updates on Laurier's continuing response to the novel coronavirus pandemic, check the university's [Novel Coronavirus Information web page](#).



Mark W. Harris

At this time of unprecedented adjustments to our academic life, I would like to thank all students, staff, faculty and friends for your patience, understanding, and perseverance. I urge you to be mindful of your health, and the health of those around you, as we navigate this unprecedented situation. I am confident that we will handle these challenges with personal grace, and emerge grateful for the way we worked together as a community.

Counselling centre offers virtual therapy sessions

Clients receiving therapy at [The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre](#) have additional options to participate in sessions by telephone or online. The centre, a community service provided by Martin Luther University College, offers sessions through the secure video chat platform [doxy.me](#). "It increases accessibility for some clients who cannot get in to see a therapist for various reasons," says Neta Deonarain-Gear, the centre's executive director. "It allows for the therapist to maintain the



the Delton
GLEBE
COUNSELLING CENTRE

supportive, therapeutic relationship." The option is available to all clients including students who have been receiving in-person counselling but return to homes outside Waterloo Region after Laurier discontinued in-person instruction. Kristine Lund, the centre's clinical director,

said she doesn't believe the technology reduces the quality of therapy. "It's different. But just because it's different, doesn't mean it's not helpful."

Vol. 3 Issue 3 *Luther* is a collection of news from Martin Luther University College in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

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Stories: Mirko Petricevic, mpetricevic@luther.wlu.ca

Eastern Synod of the ELCIC
RACIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PRESENTS A WALK THROUGH HISTORY:

COME EXPERIENCE 150 YEARS OF A UNIQUE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
COMMUNITY AT BUXTON HISTORIC SITE & MUSEUM IN NORTH BUXTON, ON

21975 Ad Shadd Rd
North Buxton, ON N0P 1Y0
Canada
[View Map](#)



**Join us as we tour this remarkable
Canadian landmark!**

Date: Saturday, April 25, 2020

Destination: Buxton National Historic Site &
Museum

Tour includes return bus ride, soul food lunch and museum
fee (Gluten free option available)

Bus leaves from **Mount Zion Lutheran Church,**
29 Westmount Rd., Waterloo, ON at **8:30 am sharp!**
Lunch and tour begins at **12:00 Noon.**

Costs: All inclusive - \$45.00 per person
Lunch and museum fee only (if driving) - \$30.00 per
person

Please register and pay by March 16, 2020


Click on the link below:

[Footsteps to Freedom](#)

Questions or more information:

Pastor Joanna Miller: joanna.e.miller@gmail.com

Or: 519-754-2434

<p style="text-align: center;">ST.PETERS</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1845 - 2020</p>	<p>Please join us at St. Peters Lutheran Church Heidelberg, as we gather together to celebrate the 175th anniversary of our church.</p> <p>It will be a great year filled with celebration, with various musical performers on the second Sunday of every month.</p> <p>The main anniversary event will be held on Sunday, May 3, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>We hope to see many former friends and families at this special event to join us in praising the Lord for his many blessings at St. Peters.</p> <p>In Christ Jesus,</p>
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The Synod's 2019 Financial Story – What an Amazing Year!

2019 was an amazing year!

After providing funding for an impressive list of synodical ministries, the Synod's Operating Fund ended the year in the black. The surplus of approximately \$98,000 that was realized in 2019 negated a worrisome deficit that was incurred in 2018.

From a revenue perspective, benevolence remittances from congregations increased by 2.7%, a welcome change from the generally declining trend that has been evident over the past quarter century or more. This income was further augmented by exceptional 2019 investment returns on funds that donors over several generations have designated to support a variety of synodical ministries.

From an expenditure perspective, the Synod's 2019 operating budget funded a wide variety of ministries in Eastern Canada. In addition, through our financial gifts to the ELCIC National Church, we support ministries in other areas of Canada and the rest of the world. Initiatives funded by our operating budget include both long established, highly valued ministries, as well as a number of newer, innovative and experimental forms of ministry.

For a more detailed review of the past year from a financial perspective, click on this link: [The Synod's 2019 Financial Story](#).

The Synod is very grateful for the benevolence offerings and other funding that we receive from congregations, individuals and other sources. On behalf of those who carry out synodical ministries in your stead, and on behalf of those congregations, individuals and other organizations who benefit from these ministries, please accept my sincere thanks for your generous financial gifts over the past year. Your partnership, along with your gifts, are vitally important and very much appreciated!

Keith Myra, Treasurer

Tell us Your Story

Members of the ELCIC Vision Statement Task Force are working to excavate stories of our faith, life and identity with hopes of gaining new clarity into our work and eventual recommendations. We are seeking your input as we discern together who we are as a church and what God is calling us to be for the future. We want to hear from you. Tell us your story by engaging in an exercise of imagination. We hope you can take a moment to explore the information gathering questions in our online survey <https://form.jotform.com/200365842139050> and offer your feedback. These questions can be answered individually or in a group. Our hope is to have stories gathered from across the ELCIC - coast to coast to coast. Please note the deadline for responses is March 31, 2020.

INTRODUCING PROJECT STORY

Project Story is an ELCIC Eastern Synod Racial Justice Advisory Committee initiative that aims to hear the stories and share the experiences of the voices in our church around race, ethnicity and culture.

Join in the conversation using [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and our [website](#).

Using #ESProjectStory and [prompts provided on our website](#) we're raising the level of engagement in these discussions through you!

Send in your submissions and share the invitation widely!

Our prayers are with Rev Lori Pilatzke and her family as they mourn the death of her father as well as Rev Steve Johnston and his family as they mourn the death of his father-in-law.

Upcoming Events

Bishop's Spiritual Retreat for laypersons
April 17- 19, 2020

A Walk Through History
Saturday, April 25, 2020

Grant Workshop- Ottawa
Saturday, May 2, 2020

175th Anniversary Celebration
St. Peter's Heidelberg
Sunday, May 3, 2020

Generous Giving Practicum
June 22- 24, 2020

For more information and to see further events click [here](#).

Transitions

Rev Riitta Hepomaki finished as Assistant to the Bishop.

Interims

Rev Jeffrey Hosick began at Our Saviour, Dartmouth

Rev Rebecca Klages began at Trinity, Walkerton



Welcome!

There's a new face around the synod office these days.

We welcome Cindy Stubbs to our Eastern Synod family. Cindy, a mother of two, comes to us with plenty of administrative experience and a willingness to try something new.

Welcome Cindy, we look forward to working with you.