

# The Eastern Synod Lutheran

Feb 18, 2015

Volume 38



Pastor Riitta Hepomaki

## A Place to Retreat

*Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. (Matt. 17)*

It is a tradition in our synod that at this time of year Bishop invites pastors and laity to retreat. Again this year there was a pastors' conference in White Point, Nova Scotia in February. About fifteen pastors – some with spouses - attended. Another opportunity was the annual spiritual retreat in Niagara Falls, Ontario, where 50 pastors gathered a couple of weeks ago. Both of these retreats are designed for spiritual growth and renewal with a component of training.

This year the key note speakers at these retreats were Rev. Dr. Dwight Biggs in White Point and Rev. Dr. Stephen Larson in Niagara Falls. Dr. Biggs invited the participants into an exploration of the special spiritual care needs of the terminally ill and their families. He shared some of his Doctor of Ministry research that involved extensive interviewing of terminally ill patients and their closest caregivers.

Dr. Larson helped participants to explore the 500th Reformation Anniversary theme *Liberated by God's Grace* through the lens of congregational worship. What aspects of our worship help participants to experience grace and liberation? How does our worship either help or hinder us as we seek to share grace and liberation in the world?

There used to be an annual Pastors' conference for the former Northern Conference and Ottawa Valley pastors held in Sudbury and another fall conference in Niagara Falls, as well. Unfortunately, because of low attendance and financial limitations these conferences have discontinued.

One more spiritual retreat, however, is

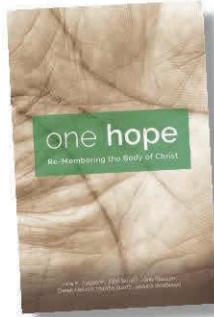
coming this spring! This is a getaway retreat for lay people. This year the Spiritual Director at the lay retreat will be Rev. Bob Shantz, Honorary Assistant at St. John's West Toronto Anglican Church. Bob has graduated from Regis College at University of Toronto with a Diploma in Spiritual Direction. He has, with artist Sarah Hall, written "Windows On Our Souls: A Spiritual Excavation" – reflections on the art of the Catacombs as depicted in Sarah Hall's stained glass windows.

The worship director at the retreat will be Vicar Hilla Lahtinen Smith.

The Spiritual Lay Retreat will be held in Niagara Falls April 10-12.

I'm looking forward to seeing you there!

Rev. Riitta Hepomaki  
Assistant to the Bishop



## A New Resource for Lutheran/Catholic Dialogue

*One Hope: Re-Membering the Body of Christ* is a rich ecumenical resource designed to help Catholic and Lutheran communities mark the approaching 500th anniversary of the Reformation. By gathering together to reflect on and discuss its contents, Christians will foster the church's unity on a grassroots level and grow in their awareness of the ways that unity already exists.

ISBN 9781451496529, \$14.50

Quantity pricing available. Prices subject to change.

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## Ebola Aid For Liberia

Pastor Steve Johnston  
Trinity, London ON

On December 6<sup>th</sup> Trinity, London hosted a Praise Band Concert to raise funds for Ebola Aid for Liberia. Our first goal was to raise money and we did ... \$1255 plus some donations of soap and medical gloves.

Our second goal was to praise in an ecumenical mood. This too we did. We had praise bands from London Christian Fellowship International (LCFI), Community Bible Church and Trinity Lutheran, along with song and music from Sonja Dennis of Colborne United Church and our own Trudi Johnston and Ross McDonald. The assembly was filled with members, friends and family from the gathered congregations. The final musical set was the joyous sounds of London's Liberian Community leading us with their traditional dance and song. As Leo Johnson said "Worship is an attitude" and that night we danced and sang many praises to God.

My favourite part of the evening was leading the praise with Trinity's band and hearing the assembly's voice louder than our amplified band.

Many thanks to the sound crew and band from LCFI, Community Bible Church's band, the members of Trinity's band, George Cooper, Brady Hough, Hannah and Susan Johnston, Emily Kmith and Laura Manners. Also thanks to Ross, Sonja and Trudi for sharing their musicality. Thanks to the Trinity helpers for greeting and set up duties and finally to the Liberians and others in Trinity's community for the wonderful treats at the intermission.



## PEACE MISSISSAUGA & HOLY SPIRIT ANGLICAN VOTE UNANIMOUSLY TO MERGE

submitted by Rev. Susan Clime

Sunday, February 08, was a historic day for two congregations in Mississauga - one Lutheran, one Anglican - who voted unanimously to become one.

The relationship between Peace Lutheran and Holy Spirit Anglican began three years ago. Peace was forced to leave their home in Square One Shopping Centre due to mall renovations, and Holy Spirit graciously agreed to share their building some 5 km away. Separate weekly services were the norm at first, with some joint worship and outreach activities.

Then, after Holy Spirit encountered some financial challenges and had to give up their full-time priest, the two communities began to explore how they might worship, work and serve even more collaboratively.

To start, the combined community worshipped together alternating using purely Anglican and purely Lutheran liturgies. People were invited to comment on their favourite parts of each service, and what questions or challenges they had; this helped a joint working group craft a combination liturgy blending the best of both traditions. Joint outreach and social events continued; the existing Holy Spirit Bible study/prayer group grew larger as members of Peace joined in. Lay leadership and Pastor Susan travelled to Orillia to meet with leaders of St. David's Anglican Lutheran Church, and Pastor Susan also met with Rev. Catherine Barley of St. Mark's Anglican Lutheran Church in Midland to learn more about how their merger was structured.

Lay leaders from both congregations began meeting regularly last fall to discuss day-to-day parish activities as well as the possible structure of our own merger. Twice during the past year, both congregations were invited to take part in a wider discussion about merger, including a review of the draft merger agreement and merged 2015 budget.

The years of prayer, research and discus-

sion culminated in a formal vote at the Annual Meeting / Vestry Meeting. The vote was held separately in each of the congregations by secret ballot. A vote of at least 80% in favour was required in order for this motion to pass: the vote was unanimous in both congregations! Those gathered gave thanks to God for all the love, guidance and encouragement received along this journey so far, and celebrated with hugs and good wishes all around.

This tremendous vote of support is just the start of the two congregations' process to become a legally merged new ministry. They ask for your prayers as this exciting journey continues!



Our thoughts and prayers are with Rev. Tuula Van Gaasbeek and her husband Gary as they mourn the loss of her father, and also with the family and friends of the late Rev. Earl Anderson, former Eastern Synod pastor.

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## STORIES OF CONFIRMATION

### Witness

Pastor Richard Schwass  
St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Kitchener

I saw God this week. I saw God working in ways that were so joyful and hope giving that I knew immediately and certainly that I was witnessing the "something new" that we say God is always doing.

I saw young people, confirmation classes gathered from six of our local churches to learn more about their faith, to explore as a group what it means to be Christian in this world and discover a larger church community of others like them.

This month we met to get to know each other and to begin to get to know the bible and some of its wealth of stories given and shared by God's people. John Epp, a biblical story teller came to speak with us and prepared our kids to lead and participate in sharing the Word at worship at our closing. They told the story of Jesus, calming the winds and waves during a storm on the Sea. And through the story they heard the voice of the Holy Spirit say to them in their own words, "Trust me. I'll always be there. Stay calm. I'll take care of you. I want you to live!" We all heard the "good news" through them.

It was a first for many of our confirmation kids to participate so fully in worship. A number of family members joined us for closing worship and it was moving to see them all stand together in a large circle, receiving and sharing communion with each other.

As they left to go home with family, they said goodbye and see you next month to new friends and all of us pastors sighed a collective sigh in awe of the day that God made for us all.

Joint Area Program for Confirmation Study came into reality as a group of us recognized the need for something different to actively provide for confirmands in a more engaging fashion. Many of our area churches have small classes, but together we have much more opportunity for events and activities that are not practical on smaller scales. Six churches are participating so far and the door is open for others to join in. Please pray for this new ministry and for those who are exploring and learning about themselves and their faith in the coming months.



Bethesda Lutheran Church, Unionville, Ontario

On December 21, 2014 Bethesda had the privilege of confirming seven young people to our Congregation. The seven young people confirmed were Avery Schellenberg, Janet Marandola, Jacob Marandola, Xavier Schickedanz, Caroline Nowaskey, Kadin Isa and Katarina Matthiessen. These young people come from families with long roots in the Christian faith and Lutheran church and considerable history in the Bethesda congregation. Katarina Matthiessen is a good example of that history.

Katarina's confirmation had special significance to the Congregation. She is an eighth generation member to be active in this congregation. Her original ancestor, Francis Andrew Schmidt, arrived in Markham in 1794 with the noted leader William Moll Berczy and was a founding member of the Congregation at that time. He was active in supervising the construction of the first church in 1819. Katarina's direct ancestor line has continued to be involved in the congregation since then. Her great grandfather served on council as treasurer for 25 years, her grandfather served as treasurer for 30 years and her mother has been organist for almost 20 years.

Shown here is Katarina standing beside the heritage stain glass window honouring her ancestors who have served Bethesda Lutheran Church for over 220 years.

Submitted by Pastor Roy Thakurdyal

**Anglican-Lutheran Confirmation**  
submitted by Rev. Catherine Robar  
Associate Parish Priest

On January 11, the Baptism of the Lord, Roger Zinck was confirmed at St Andrew's Anglican Church, West Northfield, Nova Scotia, in the Parish of New Germany. Retired Lutheran Bishop Stephen Kristenson, who is currently serving as the Parish's Priest-in-Charge, administered the Confirmation. It was the first time in our Diocese, and, we suspect, in the Canadian Church, that a Lutheran Bishop officiated at an Anglican Service of Confirmation. It is interesting to note that in the small community of West Northfield, there are two churches named St Andrew's, one Anglican and one Lutheran.



Bishop Stephen Kristenson presents Roger Zinck with his Confirmation Certificate

## Diaconal Sunday- February 22, 2015

This day is set aside to honour those people who serve as diaconal ministers.

Our Eastern Synod is blessed to have with us:

Deacon Pamela Harrington

Sister Anne Keffler

Sister Sue Lembke

Sister Jean Niemeyer

Diaconal Ministry Candidates

Scott Knarr

Bill Macintyre

For more information about Diaconal Ministry and Diaconal Sunday go to

[http://elcic.ca/Leadership/For-Ministers/  
DiaconalSunday.cfm](http://elcic.ca/Leadership/For-Ministers/DiaconalSunday.cfm)

## Healthy Leadership Workshops

Saturday March 7

Agricola Finnish Lutheran, Toronto

Saturday May 23

Nova Scotia, location TBD

Saturday June 13

New Denmark, NB location TBD

Saturday September 19

Sudbury, ON location TBD

Saturday October 24

Resurrection Lutheran, Orleans

For information or to register for any of these workshops please contact Liz, [ezehr@elcic.ca](mailto:ezehr@elcic.ca) or 519-743-1461.

## The Prayer Shawl Ministry at St. John's,

Petawawa

submitted by Joyce Layman

In the spring of 2014, the concept of a Prayer Shawl Ministry was introduced at a meeting of St. John's Lutheran Women. There was immediate interest by a few members who were ready to recall and put to work earlier-learned skills of knitting and crocheting.

Before long, shawls started appearing at the church as members were eager to show their creations. Names were suggested of who would benefit from the warm hug of a Prayer Shawl lovingly made. It seemed we all knew people who had burdens to bear and our Prayer Shawl Ministry began.

On Sunday, October 5, 2014, members of St. John's Lutheran Women, brought forth 17 shawls for a blessing during the morning service.

After the service the shawls were displayed in Luther Hall. At this time, several people came forward to request shawls for loved ones.

There has been much excitement and enthusiasm for this project. We have recruited more people to crochet or knit; even some people who are not members of our congregation have become involved. Many have also contributed funds for the purchase of materials to continue our outreach. To date, about 40 shawls have been distributed to those in nursing homes, hospitals, retirement homes, or who just need the comfort a Prayer Shawl brings. Our shawls have found homes across Canada and the United States. A record book, with photos, is being kept as our Ministry continues .

This is a Ministry which is bringing joy and satisfaction to both the creators and the recipients. As one Thank You card stated, "Yours is a generous spirit; ours is a grateful heart". Another Thank you card from a young man who received a Prayer Shawl before going for Chemotherapy treatment said, "I am overwhelmed at strangers praying for



## Vacancies

Trinity, Ayton, ON

Grace, Eganville, ON

St. Timothy's, Pembroke, ON

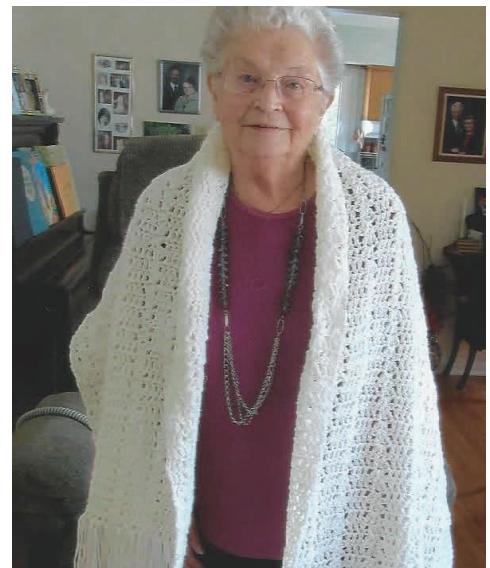
St. Paul's, Richmond Hill, ON

Mount Calvary, Ottawa, ON

Augsburg/Bonnechere Parish, ON

## Ministry Changes

Janaki Bandara begins at St. Peter's, Cambridge on March 1



## Our National Magazine



For subscription  
information contact  
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## Enrich Your Relationship on a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend!

March 20 - 22, 2015

Arden Park Hotel,  
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Apply now at  
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Or contact Irene Glab at  
[ireneglab@rogers.com](mailto:ireneglab@rogers.com) or 519-622-1398 for more information.

But hurry! Applications are being accepted only through March 15 - don't miss out!



## Report of the Treasurer 2014 Final (Pre-Audit)

"Thank you", congregations of the synod and members, for the partnership you have demonstrated through your generous offerings to the Eastern Synod throughout 2014!

In addition to almost \$375,000 raised for Canadian Lutheran World Relief and almost \$40,000 designated for the ELCIC Praise Appeal, over \$1.4 million dollars was given in support of the various synodical ministries that are funded through regular (undesignated) benevolence offerings. Smaller amounts were also designated for ministries provided by ELCIC global missions, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, our three synodical camps, campus ministry, the Eastern Synod Lutheran, Canadian missions, St. Peter's Kitchener Television Ministry as well as several other causes.

A special "thank you" to those sixty-one congregations that increased their offerings to regular benevolence over 2013 and to those fifty-one congregations that went above and beyond their 2014 commitment!

Stay tuned for more detailed 2014 financial reporting in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, here is a summary of remittances to the synod's three largest causes over the past year:

### Offerings Received

	Regular Benevolence	Canadian Lutheran World Relief	ELCIC Praise Appeal
2013	\$1,500,179	\$346,758	\$39,431
2014	\$1,444,978	\$374,034	\$37,166
% Change (2014 vs. 2013)	-4%	+8%	-6%
2014 Budget (% increase vs. 2013)	+1%	na	+9%
2014 Budget (\$)	\$1,518,000	na	\$60,000

Your offerings support a variety of vibrant and important ministries of the Eastern Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, extending the reach of your congregation's mission across Canada and the world.

For details of these ministries, refer to:

[2014 Eastern Synod Narrative Budget](#)  
[It's A Wonderful Synod](#)  
[CLWR Website](#)  
[ELCIC Praise Appeal](#)

*Thank you for your continued partnership,  
generosity and support!*

**Congregational Treasurers:** Please remember to remit your offerings on a regular (monthly) basis.

Keith Myra  
Eastern Synod Treasurer