

# The Eastern Synod Lutheran

Aug 18, 2014

Volume 32

*"The following letter was written by Synod Assembly Youth delegate Isabel Hilgendag to her congregational family at Faith, Brantford. I can't imagine improving on her description of Our June Synod Assembly, so for this month's editorial, it's over to you Isabel!"*

Bishop Michael J. Pryse

## A Letter to Our Congregation:

I would like to thank you Faith Lutheran Church (Brantford) for sending me on this amazing adventure! I was sent to this conference not really knowing what to expect. I was a little skeptical at first and truth be told I was a little scared. But in these few short days I have grown so much in spirituality. I have a new excitement in the work and the efforts of the church.

There is so much I want to write but I will try to express my excitement in as few words as possible. The theme was truth and reconciliation. We talked a lot about the indigenous people in Canada and how they were very unfairly treated in the residential schools, Brantford's Mohawk Institute being the longest running one in Canada. Although the Lutheran Church was not directly involved with it, we are still under the category of Christians, making it our mission to form better relations with Canada's indigenous people. History forms the future, so it is important for us to acknowledge the past, learn from our mistakes, and ensure that history does not repeat itself.

Love. That is what we as Christians stand for. Although we are all human and none of us are perfect, we must try to have an enormous capacity to love and understand others and learn to listen to one another. I learnt that truth is the sound that comes out when speaking from the

heart. We need to be true to ourselves as Christians and answer the calls God frequently sends us. As a wise friend once told me: it is important that we as Christians make ourselves uncomfortable and vulnerable as we reach out to others, it's the only way the church will keep moving and fulfilling its purpose.

We have the power to make a difference and change the world! If you think about it, this is an amazing opportunity to fulfill not only our spirits but the spirits of those around us; from a local community to a global community. We need to utilize this power in positive ways and direct our energy unanimously. It may be overwhelming, when standing back and looking at all the things that are wrong in our world and need to change, but if we as Lutherans or even as citizens of the world stand together, then a lot can be accomplished.

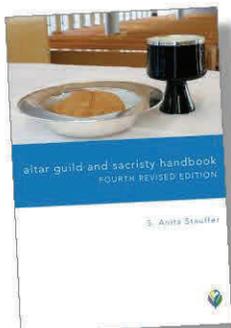
I learned so much and made so many new friends. I got to meet with many people that truly inspired me, two of them being our national Bishop Susan Johnson, and our Eastern Synod Bishop Michael Pryse. Bishop Susan taught us that we should: Pray, Worship, Read, Study, Serve, Give, and Tell! Both bishops shared amazing advice with us. Others that inspired me were those that came as speakers throughout the conference. They really ignited a light for me and opened my eyes to the world. Dr. Marie Wilson is someone who worked as a journalist and fought for the rights of the indigenous people in the north. The group KAIROS delivered a wonderful presentation that allowed us to feel and understand how Aboriginal people feel and their perspective on things. There were two people from Liberia that came and spoke on behalf of their community and their thanks to the Eastern Synod in making it possible for them to study in Canada.

There was also a man, Bishop Moses Prishad, who is the national bishop in Guyana who came to Can-

ada for his first time and talked a little bit about the church life in Guyana. There was also a man that spoke on behalf of CLWR. I was shocked when he told us that there are around 50 million refugees in the world today, he explained that the country Jordan is to take about 500,000 in the coming years and Canada, one of the world's richest and safest countries, is to receive only 10,000. It really excites me that our church is contemplating to help in this situation by supporting the Sero family. Think of the difference we can make in those people's lives by giving them a chance to feel the safety and freedom of Canada. It may seem insignificant since it's only a few people out of thousands, but all forms of change start small. I truly believe in CLWR's efforts and hope to one day be a contributing factor in this organization in some way. I learned so much from all the people I met and from hearing about their experiences; I hope that I won't forget their wise words and inspiring stories.

Lutherans are truly amazing people! I am so grateful for having been sent to this conference: it has truly opened my eyes to the world and the difference we are making. I may have been a bit frightened at first but in the end I have come out knowledgeable and faithful. I have new found excitement in being able to say that I am Lutheran. And I am part of a change. I am very excited for the upcoming CLAY trip, and I know it will be beneficial for all our youth participating. Thank you for all your amazing contributions, we wouldn't be going on this trip if it wasn't for you! The church is built on God and depends on people, like you, to spread the word and as Jesus told Peter and all Christians alike: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). Don't be selfish and spread your good-natured faith with others!

-Isabel Hilgendag



## A must-have resource for every congregation

The fourth edition of the Altar Guild and Sacristy Handbook reflects recent developments in liturgical practice and gives attention to the Evangelical Lutheran Worship family of resources.

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NEW

## How could this happen?

by Rev. Deborah Ann Taylor

pictured here with Bishop Pryse & Jackson



Between the establishment of the first residential school in 1831 and the closing of the last in 1996, roughly 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Me'tis children were impacted by Canada's policy of assimilation through education. In its most positive light, the policy was not intended to be cruel. Many of those involved in its implementation had what they sincerely considered to be "good" intentions, based on the assumption that assimilation was a positive and necessary goal. In the minds of many Christians, this process of assimilation was in keeping with the teachings of the Bible and the will of God. In obedience to Jesus' call to "make disciples of all nations,"<sup>1</sup> the residential schools were seen as a vehicle by which Indigenous children were taught the truth of the Gospel and made members of Christ's church. To be Christian and civilized was presumed to be one and the same. Thus, one who was not Christian was *uncivilized* by default. To be uncivilized was to be in an inferior state to that of Christian/civilized Canada.

Such sincere beliefs, misguided though they be, were held for the most part without a conscious sense of malice or will to harm. Yet, harm was done, the measure of which defies our comprehension. Nor is the damage limited to the generation of children who were forcibly enrolled in the residential school system. The damage echoes in the lives of their children and will impact the lives of their children's children for generations to come.

How did this happen?

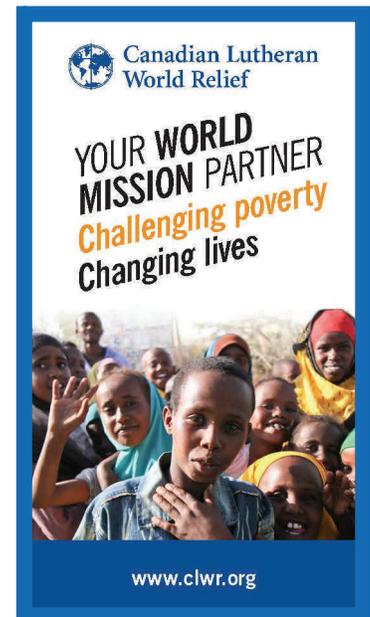
How could it be that good people thinking they were doing a good thing have enacted such incalculable harm?

If White Canadians – if White Lutherans – are to seek an answer to these questions we must begin by looking not at indigenous

peoples, but at ourselves. The cultural assumptions that led to this tragedy are part of our past and of our present. They center on how we see ourselves and on how we see others in relation to us. They rest in values and attitudes buried deep in our subconscious, absorbed through our years of passage through a culture and society that doesn't encourage us to think intentionally about our place within it or to examine our perceptions about those who are different from us.

The values, attitudes and perceptions to which I refer are not as simple as matters of personal prejudice. We all have those, regardless of our ethnicity, religion or cultural identification. Prejudice colours our perceptions and blurs our reason and objectivity. Acted upon, prejudice leads to acts of discrimination in which persons or groups are treated unfairly in relation to other persons or groups. As opposed to racism, prejudice rests primarily in the purview of individuals. While a component of racism, prejudice is not its equivalent. Racism is more complicated than the biased opinions and attitudes of individuals that may lead to discrimination. Racism is more profound than repeating ethnic slurs or hurling epithets and insults. Racism is manifest in collective and systemic ways and infiltrates society in a broad, comprehensive manner, while all the while remaining largely invisible to those of us who are not directly harmed, who even benefit, by its existence. Racism not only operates from the assumption that one race is superior to others, but exercises the power to impact persons of other races in negative and harmful ways.

That word, "power," is a tricky one. We may be accustomed to think of power in terms of physical strength or civil and political authority. We may not see ourselves, as ordinary White Canadian Lutherans, as people who possess power. But if we think about it, we can identify our power in a more accessible context: To apply for a job without fear of discrimination, to enter a store and not be suspect because of the colour of our skin, to go to church expecting to worship in a way that accommodates our cultural tastes in music and liturgy, to be identified as part of a dominant culture with access and authority over material and natural resources, to sing "O Canada" with a sense of belonging, are manifestations of power. To see these things as such becomes easier if we imagine what it would be like if we were not able – if we were powerless – to do and expect them.



As Canadian Lutherans seek to understand the factors that led to the residential school tragedy; these definitions of racism, power and prejudice provide a helpful framework. They help us recognize that something more substantial than individual prejudice led to the abuses brought to light in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The establishment of the residential schools was an outgrowth of something more significant, more "powerful," than individual sentiments. There was a collective component that utilized its power to devise and carry out the removal of First Nations, Inuit and Me'tis children from their families and forcibly enroll them in schools against their parents' wishes and without their consent. Through systems run and owned by a White government and managed by White churches, deeply held assumptions about the supremacy of White culture and the inferiority of indigenous cultures did to indigenous families what would have been unthinkable in regard to White families.

Not many Canadian Lutherans consciously choose to be racists. Few among us engage in racial slurs or epithets. We oppose discrimination and stereotype. But let us not be deceived into thinking that the same collective exercise of prejudice and power was not among the forces that shaped and defined us. The privileges we candidly assume as our right result from our participation in and allegiance to the same systems of power that imply the

Cont'd from page 2

superiority of our race to the devaluation of others. We cannot change that this is the case or disown the troubling effect it brings us. But we can name it. We can speak the truth about it, and thus, about ourselves.

We can own and acknowledge that truth before the one who is, Himself, the Truth; whose name we bear, and by whose cross we have been... we will be... freed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Matthew 28:19

<sup>2</sup>This Article is indebted to the words and work of Jonathan Schmidt, Phil Heinze, Allen Jorgenson and Joseph Barndt

### What's In A Name?

by Rev. Sebastian Meadows-Helmer

I often joke that I inadvertently cause people to hang up on me when I answer the church phone, because I begin with a hurried: "Good-morning-this-is-Pastor-Sebastian-Meadows-Helmer-and-you-have-reached-Christ-the-King-Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Lutheran-Church-in-Thornhill-how-may-I-help-you?" I imagine the "click" as some busy or confused soul (or some novice telemarketer not knowing what hit them) simply hangs up on me after a greeting like that.

Many people do acknowledge the humour in a pastor with a relatively lengthy name serving a congregation with perhaps the longest name in the ELCIC. Informally, for example when youth from our congregation attend youth events, they are greeted with an "Oh yeah, you guys are from 'that church with the long name!'". On synod forms we are dressed down, due to spreadsheet cell length requirements, to "Christ/Bonhoeffer". This sometimes leads my colleagues to ask in jest: "What would Bonhoeffer have said about being to referred to as the Messiah in this way?" On the other hand, the aforementioned abbreviation is better than the alternative: "King/Dietrich"!

Our long name stems from the merger of the "Christ the King-Thornhill" congregation with "Dietrich Bonhoeffer-Willowdale", a process which was completed at the end of 1988. It seems there wasn't enough time to spend on a lengthy new name discernment, and the compromise of simply hyphenating the names together was accepted.

It seems that there long have been some murmurings of discontent about our church name, but only since last year have we begun to do something about it. The seeds for our most recent discussion were planted when in my 2013 annual report I raised the question:



"What are the barriers that are inadvertently placed that make it more difficult for people to enter the doors of our church?" At the annual meeting we discussed how (although we are a friendly and welcoming bunch of people) we can unknowingly make it harder for others outside the church to imagine ever coming in. Having a lengthy and complicated church name was seemingly not helping us any.

First of all, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer" is difficult to read and pronounce for people not familiar with the German language. Also, although probably one of the most important martyrs and theologians of the 20th century, Bonhoeffer is still relatively unknown in Canada. Additionally, "Christ the King" as a church name seems to evoke a time in our country's past of "love of king and country" that is ill-suited for the spiritual realities of the 21st century. Furthermore, some people believe the juxtaposition of "Christ the King" and "Dietrich Bonhoeffer" is puzzling, if not downright absurd.

In 2013, we had begun to discuss a possible merger with nearby St. Paul's, Richmond Hill. When this investigation ended, our Council decided to use the momentum generated to keep on asking big questions about our identity and mission. As our 25th anniversary approached, we thought it a good time to revisit the question of our name. A task force was struck to guide the process.

Firstly, we needed to research the legal issues. Supposedly, no church in recent memory in the ELCIC had ever changed their name without some kind of realignment or merger. However, we discovered the Canada Revenue Agency requirements were pretty simple... a letter from Synod Office would suffice. Furthermore, we would require a lawyer to reassign the name on our property deeds.

Next, our constitution required two consecutive congregational meetings to change our name (the second with a 2/3 majority). The name change task force got to work and dis-

tributed two congregational surveys, narrowing down the potential names from over 50 to two names: "Christ the King Lutheran" and "Hope Lutheran". At our 2014 annual meeting we held two votes: the first whether to change our name (which passed with 90%), and the second on the names themselves, which selected "Christ the King" as the candidate. However, the second ratifying vote a month later, narrowly failed to reach the required supermajority. Thus, our name remains unchanged.

What have we learned? While we thought we had a sound process, we probably should have had a few town hall meetings leading up to the first congregational vote. I've learned that with big issues you can never communicate enough. Additionally, we learned (after the fact!) that our constitution does not allow for proxy votes. I think this makes sense as it allows for people to change their minds based on the discussion at the meeting. Altogether, I recommend to any church with a difficult name to consider the question we asked: "Does our name help or hinder people to come in and share in our ministry?"

Our thoughts and prayers are with Rev. Laura Sauder and her husband John as they mourn the loss of his father.

We also pray for the families of Rev. Earl Albrecht, Rev. Elizabeth (Bette) Pugh and Rev. Dr. William "Bill" Kurschinski as they deal with the loss of their loved ones.

We remember Rev. Loretta Jaunzarins and her family as they mourn the loss of her father.

Our prayers also go out to Rev. Mark Van House and his wife Kara as they work through the loss of his mother and to Rev. Dr. Mark Harris and his wife Connie as they mourn his father's passing.



A \$1000.00 donation to 2014 Praise Appeal has been made on behalf of Bishop Pryse's Ministry from the Undesignated Gift and Bequest Fund.

We're still a long way from our goal....Have you made your donation yet?

### How to become a missional congregation

NEW VISIONS is a training program for congregational leaders. Its primary purpose is to prepare these leaders in establishing a mission school within the congregation. The intent of the mission school is to raise awareness about mission vitality and action among church members.

Fri., Sept. 19, 2014 – Sat. Sept. 20, 2014  
Resurrection Lutheran Church of Orleans  
1325 Gaultois Ave  
Orleans, ON

### Register by Aug. 29/14.

Please register here <http://newvisions.us/register/standard-individual-registration> as soon as possible.

The workshop will run from 1pm-5pm on Friday and from 9am-2pm on Saturday.

Complimentary lunch will be provided on Saturday, other meals and accommodation are the responsibility of the participant.

Congratulations to Holy Cross, Burlington on their Greening Sacred Spaces Award presented by the Halton-Peel Chapter of Greening Sacred Spaces.

Receiving the award from Holy Cross are Peggy Read, Patti Eix and Bill Kuehnbaum.

Greening Sacred Spaces is a partner of the Halton Environment network and Community Environment Alliance.



### Leadership for Healthy Congregations

Hosted by Pastor Riitta Hepomaki & Jeff Pym

Sat. Oct. 4, 2014  
Faith, Hamilton, ON

Sat. Oct. 18, 2014  
St. Matthew's, Kitchener, ON

Sat. Nov. 15, 2014  
St. Mark's, Kingston, ON

To register please contact Liz, 519-743-

### Report of the Treasurer (to July 31, 2014)

Much of eastern Canada has experienced lower than normal temperatures in 2014. As of July 31<sup>st</sup>, offerings remitted to the synod by congregations and individuals in support of church-wide ministries are also tracking lower than normal, falling short of the budget that was adopted overwhelmingly by delegates to Assembly 2014 in early July.

Although we can't do anything about the cooler temperatures, there is still time between now and the end of the year to give generously to regular (undesignated) benevolence, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the ELCIC Praise Appeal and other-synodical/church-wide causes to ensure that these important ministry needs are fully funded.

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

### Congregational Treasurer's Workshops

Hosted by Keith Myra

Sat. Sept. 13, 2014  
St. Matthew's, Hanover, ON

Sat. Sept. 20, 2014  
St. James, St. Jacobs, ON

Sat. Sept. 27, 2014  
Trinity, Sudbury, ON

Sat. Oct. 18, 2014  
St. Paul's, Bridgewater, NS

Sat. Nov. 1, 2014  
Redeemer, London, ON

Sat. Nov. 8, 2014  
St. James, New Dundee, ON

go to [easternsynod.org](http://easternsynod.org) for details



### Pastoral Vacancies

The following Eastern Synod Congregations are seeking pastors. If you are interested please contact Rev. Douglas Reble, Assistant to the Bishop.

St. Paul's, Montreal, QC  
St. Mark's, Kitchener, ON  
St. John's, South Porcupine, ON  
St. Peter's, Cambridge  
South Dundas, Williamsburg

### Offerings Received

	Regular Benevolence	Canadian Lutheran World Relief	ELCIC Praise Appeal
Month of July: 2013	\$106,487	\$21,930	\$11,684
2014	\$134,144	\$28,532	\$6,630
January to July: 2013	\$672,747	\$129,978	\$18,030
2014	\$649,589	\$116,702	\$17,114
% Change (2014 vs. 2013)	-3%	-10%	-5%
2014 Budget (% increase vs. 2013)	+1%	na	+9%
2014 Budget (\$)	\$1,158,000	na	\$60,000

On June 7th, Pastor Sebastian Meadows-Helmer (on the violin) and his father Paul (on the piano) took part in a concert at Christ the King-Dietrich Bonhoeffer church in Thornhill. Over \$2000. was raised to benefit the church's local mission partner *Evergreen Hospice*. The father-son duo played two masterpieces from the French Romantic violin repertoire: Gabriel Fauré's first sonata, and the *Poème* by Ernest Chausson.

The second half of the programme featured Order of Canada recipient and former University of Toronto professor, pianist William Aide. This is the second benefit concert organized in the past two years at the church, the first benefitting The Yellow Brick House, a York Region centre which helps abused women and children.



Those were the days! The congregation of Bethany Lutheran Church in Woodstock worshiped 'Retro style' on Sunday May 11 as part of a year-long celebration of events for their 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Liturgy was taken from the 'Red Service Book and Hymnal' with many old-time hymns being sung. Pastor Tanya Ramer impressed us with her pulpit thumping. Gents were dressed in their Sunday finest and ladies were adorned with the prettiest hats in town.

Afterwards, Mrs. Douglas Allen, assisted by Mrs. Lawrence Moore, poured tea, from a silver tea service. Delectable hors d'oeuvres were served by the ever so elegant Messieurs Allen and Moore.

Upcoming 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events – All are welcome!

September 21 – Rally Day with an emphasis on family

October 18 – Oktoberfest dinner and dancing with live entertainment

November 15 – Entering a float in Woodstock's Christmas parade

November 23 – Cantata Memories

December 7 – 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary worship service and dinner.

the Delton Glebe  
Counselling Centre

strengthening emotional & spiritual well-being

Call us: 519.884.3305

glebecentre.wlu.ca

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, "In any given year, one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health problem or illness..." Mental health issues touch us all whether through personal experience or seeing loved ones who suffer, and as followers of Christ we are called to serve them, walking with them to help find ways to alleviate their suffering as best we are able.

**The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre** offers both compassion and help to those struggling with mental health issues. Established in 2013, the counselling centre is a collaborative initiative uniting the work and shared vision of the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, Eastern Synod and Campus Ministry. Together, there is a shared belief that the centre could be a source of healing, change and peace for those who seek and need it most.

The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre is a not for profit, multi-faith counselling agency committed to strengthening emotional and spiritual well-being. The centre is rooted in the belief that faith and spirituality are important resources for healing and change. The centre embraces diversity and cultural inclusivity and offers counselling to all individuals. The centre provides trained therapists who qualify for membership in the College of Seminary.

Psychotherapists of Ontario and supervised graduate students. The counselling services are offered at very affordable costs as fees are based on what individuals can afford. At the centre we work with individuals, couples, families, children and groups to help deal with issues such as depression, anxiety, grief, couple and marital problems.

Kristine Lund, Clinical Director at The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre shares, "The success of the *Spiritual Care & Psychotherapy (Counselling) Master's program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary where we train therapists and the establishment of The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre addresses a growing need in our communities. Dealing directly with issues of mental health will benefit not only the individuals suffering but will create stronger families and healthier communities for all. We are privileged to be able to do this work*"

Contacting The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre is always confidential. If you are looking for counselling support, have any questions or simply want to learn more please contact us at; 519.884.3305 or by email at [glebecentre@wlu.ca](mailto:glebecentre@wlu.ca). You can also visit us online at: [www.glebecentre.wlu.ca](http://www.glebecentre.wlu.ca) The centre is located at 177 Albert Street in Waterloo, Ontario directly across the street of the Waterloo Lutheran



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The Magazine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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Nurturing Faith  
Engaging our children

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PLUS: Sex and Sexuality • Our Godliness • Dealing with Hell