



# The Eastern Synod Lutheran



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## Don't Call Them Strangers!

Bishop Michael J. Pryse

My dear mother, who I particularly miss at special times of the year like Christmas, never quite got it. "How was the Christmas Eve service, mom?" Her answer, invariably, went according to script. "It was lovely. And there were a lot of strangers there!" My response, too, was according to script. "For heaven's sake, mom, would you please not call them strangers? They are guests in God's house, just like the rest of us." It was the same every year. But, like I said, she never quite got it.

In just a few days' time it will be Christmas Eve. And, God willing, our churches will be populated by a whole lot of people – strangers, if

you will - that we don't see very often, if ever at all. There's just something about the season that still calls to people, even if they haven't given church a single thought for most of the other 364 days of the year. Call it sentiment, call it tradition, call it what you will! It is a great blessing and we should be deeply grateful that some otherwise "not particularly religious folks" somehow recognize that there is something sacred and holy at the heart of this wonderful, mad monstrosity of a modern North American Christmas. And, miracle of miracles, they turn to us. Who would imagine? Dare we not trust, or at least hope, that they have been drawn by the Spirit?

As St. Paul enjoins us, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers – *there's that word again* – for by doing so, some have entertained angels without knowing it." That's right. Angels. God's special agents. Agents of blessing.

So, friends, remember this! When you show up on Christmas Eve only to find that your usual spot - three from the back, left hand side - is inhabited by somebody you don't know; someone whose kids are more unruly than

yours would have been "back in the day"; someone who you suspect has already partaken of a few samples of Christmas cheer; someone who clearly wouldn't know their way around a hymnal if their life depended on it – you may have just encountered an angel! The Book says so!

And should you encounter such a creature this year - at your very own church and in your very own pew - instead of just standing there slack-jawed, seemingly lost, dazed and confused, I challenge you to take a risk. Put on your best and biggest smile, boldly stick out your hand and wish this potentially angelic visitor the very merriest and happiest of Christmases! Tell them you are delighted that they came, and then, sincerely and warmly thank them for doing so. I dare you! I *double dog* dare you!

At the very least you will have made a nervous visitor feel just a little more welcome; or bewildered some smug cynic whose convinced himself that church people are just a bunch of self-righteous, self-serving prigs. Or, brothers and sisters, you may have just entertained an angel! I'd say it's a chance worth taking! Don't you?



## IT'S JUST WHAT THEY NEEDED!

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## Candles, Coffee and Communion

The verdict is in! When the taster-testers from Faith Lutheran Church Ottawa sampled the brew following the first of our worship services together, it was resolved: Anglican coffee is just as good as Lutheran coffee!



There we have it -- the third sacrament of the Lutheran church (coffee, of course!) is honoured as well among our neighbours at Julian of Norwich Anglican Church in Nepean. Of course, coffee is just coffee; it's not easy to see the difference.

But when you have Lutherans and Anglicans participating together in an All Saints Sunday liturgy, the differences can be more pronounced.

When, for example, the assembly was invited to come forward carrying candles remembering loved ones who are the saints, perhaps the arrangement of the candles revealed another difference among the two communions sharing weekly worship space and time until February. What can the arrangement of the candles suggest about the character of the Lutherans? And Anglicans?



We have to laugh, of course. And whenever the Lutherans express pride in the their robust singing and passionate engagement with the Word, an Anglican will quickly point to the paschal candles standing side by side now in the chancel at Julian of Norwich Anglican Church, and quietly say: "Our Paschal Candle is taller than yours, and we use bells in our liturgy!"



Indeed, even though the size of the congregations are closely matched, the worship space at Julian is more than twice as large as the smaller, circular-shaped sanctuary at Faith (43 Meadowlands Drive West), which is now undergoing a major renovation project started in late October.

The renewal of Faith's worship area has opened up the opportunity for Faith to reach out to their Full Communion partners. Under the Full Communion agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), signed in 2001, members of both Communions can share in ministry, resources and leadership.

"We couldn't do this with any other non-Lutheran Christian denomination so naturally and easily -- actually worship together. This is so much more vital and enriching for us, than if we ended up renting a room in a church basement, school gymnasium or community centre on Sunday afternoons -- all by ourselves," says Pastor Martin. "And we, at Julian, are enriched by the differing nuances of the Lutheran rite that remind us of the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition. It is good to immerse ourselves in the richness of diversity," says Mary Ellen. So, Pastors Mary Ellen Berry and Mar-

tin Malina take turns preaching and presiding over the hybrid, Sunday morning assembly. One Sunday, the liturgy follows a Lutheran rite, and the following Sunday the liturgy follows the Anglican rite. "We are both guests and hosts to each other."

There is no pressure for the two congregations at this time to enter into any formal partnership, which makes this experience a wonderful, joyous, extended "family visit." The members of Faith expect to return to their renovated facility at the beginning of Lent, and soon thereafter look forward to inviting their new found friends to a celebration service at Faith. "And, we'll have air conditioning for the hot summer," boasts Pastor Martin. "And we'll bring lemonade and cookies," counters Mary Ellen, "just because."

Indeed, the Faith membership has been overwhelmed and appreciate the welcome and kindness extended to them by the people of Julian of Norwich. Relationships among the laity are being formed. Even the Sunday Schools are working together weekly and for the Christmas program. Seeds are being sown for future cooperative and collaborative initiatives. And the way is being paved for opportunities which may sooner than later present themselves.

Every Sunday morning, the paschal candles tower in the chancel area, and chalices from both altars are being used to announce and bear witness to the unity we already have in Christ.

written and submitted by  
the Rev Martin Malina &  
the Rev Mary Ellen Berry





# GIFTS FROM THE HEART

## IT'S JUST WHAT THEY NEEDED



Change lives this Christmas



Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief

Find your catalogue at  
your church or online  
at [clwr.org/GFTH](http://clwr.org/GFTH).

### One Church, Two Concerts

submitted by John Polacok

On April 17, 2016, St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hanover, ON, played host to a mass choir comprised of people from throughout Grey and Bruce Counties. The Hanover concert, was one of 41 performed throughout Canada in order that people might "Spring into Song" in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The series of concerts were conceived and organized by Ron Klusmeier and Christina Bogucki, and featured the music of Klusmeier, a well-known Canadian choral composer. The Hanover concert, which was well received, was spearheaded by conductor, Linda Finlay, of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, with the support of St. Mat-



thew's, the vocal talents of many of her members, and singers from other area churches and choirs in the region. More than 200 people in all participated in the concert, and more than \$4000.00 was raised for Canadian Foodgrains Bank. In total, concerts across Canada brought in more than \$80,000 for the Foodgrains Bank's Conservation Project in East Africa. And after a 3:1 match from the Government of Canada, a total of \$320,000 was made available to the project to help 50,000 farm families in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania adapt to a changing climate and increase yields through crop rotation, minimizing soil disturbance and covering the soil.

On September 9, 2016 St. Matthew's hosted a fundraising concert for the people of Fort McMurray. Special thanks to recording artist Naomi Bristow, as she lent her considerable singing talents to the effort. We are also most thankful for Canadian Lutheran World Relief's continuing work in the devastated region and to the more than 150 people who attended the concert. Thanks to them, more

than \$2000. was raised for the continuing relief efforts.

Pictured above: April concert in support of Canadian Foodgrains Bank  
Below: Naomi Bristow with Pastor John Polacok.



The following is a paid advertisement.

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## Looking to Our Financial Future

At Assembly 2016 in Toronto several months ago I reported that in recent years a notable number of the Eastern Synod's 191 congregations have been able to increase, or at least maintain, the level of offerings they designate in support of synodical ministries. I also reported that unfortunately the majority of congregations have not been able to keep pace. As a result, total benevolence offerings received by the synod have been on a declining trend. After peaking at almost \$1.8 million in 1992, benevolence has fallen below \$1.5 million dollars in each of the last few years. This in itself represents a significant decrease. The ongoing impact of inflation and hence, reduced purchasing power, makes this situation even more acute.

At its recent meeting in November, synod council approved a Strategic Plan that, among a number of other benefits, is intended to provide guidance for making budgetary decisions during the 2017 – 2021 planning period. This new, exciting plan identifies four strategic goals for the synod, goals that you'll hear more about in the months ahead:

1. Provide Vision, Leadership and Support to the Synodical Community
2. Develop Capable Leaders
3. Connect the Synodical Community with the Wider Church through Effective Partnerships
4. Live as a Healthy Synod

Guided by the directions laid out in this new plan, the council made a number of difficult decisions to balance the budgets for 2017 and 2018. These actions included:

- 1) A \$50,000 (13%) reduction to the synod's grant to Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in 2017, followed by a further \$50,000 reduction in 2018. It is important to note that this most recent action in no way affects the \$1,000,000 that Assembly 2016 delegates overwhelmingly committed to the seminary's capital funding campaign during the period 2017 – 2020.
- 2) A reduction to the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Director's role, from a 50% to a 25% position, effective in 2018.
- 3) A \$19,700 (17%) reduction to the Youth and Young Adult (YAYA) Ministry Committee budget. This reduction was made after taking into consideration that YAYA's funding requirements should decrease in future years due to an unrelated decision to close Edgewood Camp and Conference Centre.
- 4) Elimination of the \$7,500 budget line that has provided moving subsidies to qualifying congregations when they call a new pastor.
- 5) Reductions to several budget lines in the Office of the Bishop totaling \$5,000 in 2017 and \$13,000 in 2018.

These difficult decisions reflect not a lack of value or a diminished need in these budget lines, but rather synod council's intention to exercise responsible stewardship and sound fiscal management in light of existing financial realities. It goes without saying that all of these ministries are highly valued and greatly needed! Although synod council's intent was to minimize the impact of any budget reductions to as great an extent as possible, we anticipate that considerable pain will still be felt from many of these decisions.

Remaining shortfalls will be covered by approximately \$75,000 of investment income that is expected to be earned by the Undesignated Gift and Bequest Fund in each of these two years as well as a \$95,000 contribution of capital from this fund in 2017 to help ease the transition.

Although the primary focus of this article is to communicate budgetary reductions, it is also important that we remind ourselves of the many meaningful, impactful ministries that the synod continues to carry out. One of these is our ongoing commitment to the ELCIC national church. Budgets for the upcoming 2017 – 2018 biennium call for us to continue to increase our commitment to the national church by a minimum of 1% annually, always ensuring that the synod's remittance represents at least 25% of congregational benevolence offerings.

For an update on congregational Benevolence, CLWR and ELCIC Praise Appeal offerings received by the synod as of November 30th, 2016 refer to the Report of the Treasurer on the Treasurer-Financial Information page on the Eastern Synod web site (<http://www.easternsynod.org/>).

Keith Myra,  
Treasurer, Eastern Synod of the ELCIC



## 73 YEARS OF CHURCH MUSIC

submitted by Carol Gaim

June (Craigie) Hartwick was a member of the first Junior Choir at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ottawa. Ethel Ann Schaus, wife of Pastor Lloyd Schaus started the choir in 1943. Mrs. Schaus had a beautiful contralto voice and was June's inspiration. She encouraged June to take private singing lessons.

In 1948-49, June directed St. Peter's Cherub and Junior Choirs, while still singing as a member of the Senior Choir. When she and her mother moved to Lachine, Quebec to be with her sister, she joined the choir at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Westmount.

Bill Hartwick was in the choir there, and June asked if anyone was interested in learning the bass part of the last concert song she sang in Ottawa in 1951, as she wanted to tape it. Bill said he would like to try it, and so began the romance. The duet was "La ci darem la mano" from Mozart's Don Giovanni. After their marriage in 1955, they joined Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, a new mission congregation in Lachine. June directed the adult choir until they were transferred to Toronto. June, Bill and their four children were all members of Humbervale United Church choirs in Toronto.

When they were again transferred to the Montreal area, they settled in Beaconsfield on the West Island. Unfortunately, Our Saviour's had been closed, and the family relocated back to Redeemer, where June and Bill again sang in the choir. In addition, June joined a larger choir called The Lakeshore Singers, under the direction of Ewan Edwards. It provided wonderful opportunities to sing great Cantatas and concerts until 1978, when the family returned to Ottawa.

The Hartwick family were prominent members of St. Lucas Lutheran Church in New Edinburgh, but Bill agreed that they would attend St. Peter's as June's mother was still a very active member there. They joined St. Peter's Senior Choir, and the children still at home participated in all the musical activities they could.

June retired from the choir in the spring of 2016. In recognition of her 73-year participation in church music, the Senior Choir at St. Peter's planned a celebration. At the fellowship time after



church on June 9th, 2016, they gave her flowers, and sang the following "hymn" to the tune St. Peter. (To explain the second verse, it is probably worth mentioning that for the last few years, June attended choir with a service dog.)

*St. Peter's music misses June,  
The Senior Choir's bereft.  
They can no longer sing in tune,  
Now that the choir she's left.*

*June brought her husband to sing  
bass,  
And also daughters fine:  
When they no longer took their place,  
She brought her own canine.*

*Join hands then, brothers, sisters,  
and  
Those who sit in a pew;  
Now that June's left, the choir-  
planned  
To sing a grand "Thank-you!"  
(A-men)*

June wrote a lovely thank-you note to the choir, which read in part:

*"Church Choristers are a unique  
group of people who come together  
faithfully every week to learn and sing  
music which will enhance the ser-  
vice...Choir members are also a  
cheerful lot, and it has been my good  
fortune to have a good long run at  
making music together with you and  
other churches over the  
years....Keep singing with happy  
hearts and I will join you from the  
pews to raise my voice in joyful song  
as long as I can."*

## From Grateful Hearts

**Dear Bishop,** It's been over six months since last time we met at the church in February. Thank you again for standing by us. Your care and support to our church make a tremendous impact on us. Thank you! God has been good to our church and He always is. With your love and care for our church, any kind of support is much appreciated.

– Ms. Esther Au

### **Dear Jeff and Benevolence Task Force,**

Thank-you for the event at Geneva Park. I have four pages of thoughts and to-do notes. It was chalked full of info and ideas. All of your participation and personalities made it all that much better. – Rev. Kimber McNabb

### **Dear Bishop, Doug and Riitta,**

I want to thank my colleagues in the Synod office for your careful attention to our community in recent months. When we were in our call process, you were supportive and attentive to our needs. When we were resettling refugees from Burundi, and ran into some unexpected challenges, you went above and beyond anything we might have expected to help us out. Most recently, when you convened a gathering of rostered ministers serving under call, you helped to make it easy for our new pastor to experience the collegiality of Dean Elina and folks in the Two Rivers Ministry Area.

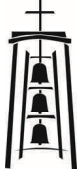
These are not easy days to be church. From one moment to the next, and with many others, we struggle to figure out our place in God's mission. But we persevere. And our journey is made all the lighter for such examples of pastoral support as we have received from you three. – Rev. André Lavergne

### **Pastor Riitta and Jeff,**

Many thanks for a great workshop yesterday. Cathy and I certainly enjoyed the discussion. I plan to fit the asset mapping process and mission ideas into our visioning (direction finding!) exercise that we have launched.

–Lawrence and Cathy Lupton

**Everyone at the Eastern Synod office  
wishes you a Blessed Christmas.  
Thanks for keeping us in your hearts  
and prayers as we keep you in ours.**



## Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

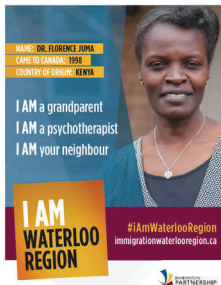
### An Advent surprise

[Canada Lutheran](#), a few months ago, asked us if we could contribute photos for a story on Advent music. To our surprise, the magazine featured a picture taken at an event with [Inshallah](#) at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, on its cover!



### Celebrating our people!

The [#IamWaterlooRegion](#) poster campaign celebrates remarkable immigrants who have chosen to live in Waterloo Region. We're honoured to have [Florence Juma](#) on our faculty and are delighted that she's the face of this month's poster campaign!



### Consensus

Our faculty, staff, and other contributors explore the intersection of faith and art in the current issue of [Consensus](#). *Consensus* is an online journal of Canadian Lutheran theology co-sponsored by Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon.



### Contact us

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## Beauty in a time of darkness



Despite the days growing shorter, Advent at the seminary is a time of beauty. In addition to the candles lit during services, our Women's Auxiliary has hung gorgeous quilts in our hallway gallery and in the chapel. Feel free to drop into the seminary to see [Stitching Our Prayers](#) weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., until the end of Dec. 20.

## Blue at Christmas?

thirdspace\_, the synod's alternative worshipping community based at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, is hosting a [Blue Christmas service](#) in Keffer Chapel at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 21 — the longest night of the year.

At this time last year CBC KW, the regional CBC radio station based in Kitchener, broadcast an interview with Kristine Lund, director of the seminary's spiritual care and psychotherapy programs. Kristine

shared some of her observations and tips for those feeling sad and/or lonely during the holidays. You can listen to the [seven-minute podcast here](#).

The bottom line? You are not alone! If you're feeling sad and lonely during the holidays, or beyond Christmas, talk to a friend or a relative. And remember that the [Delton Glebe Counselling Centre](#) exists to serve our community.



Our gratitude to Sheri Longboat and Hind Al-Abadleh (pictured above between Mark Harris, principal-dean, and Allen Jorgenson, professor of systematic theology) for sharing their time and knowledge with us during [Circle of Dialogue: Indigenous and Islamic Perspectives on Water](#). About 100 people gathered in Keffer Chapel to hear presentations by the two featured professors.