



# Eastern Synod Newsletter

[www.easternsynod.org](http://www.easternsynod.org)



Dec 18, 2018  
Volume 80



## Hopes and Fears

“The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”

As a child, I was always mystified by this line from the carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem. I understood something of the hope of Christmas. I knew something of how that hope was expressed in Jesus. I had good Sunday School teachers, parents; a fine pastor! But what about the fears? What role could fear possibly play in the wondrous and beautiful story of the first Christmas?

The nativity images that most of us carry from childhood are similarly weighted. A smiling Mary; a beaming Joseph. Kindly looking animals; polite and gentlemanly shepherds. All surrounding a chubby, ‘no crying he makes’ baby who lies contentedly and comfortably in a soft bundle of golden hay. It’s a carefully edited image that evokes little of the fearfulness that would have characterized that first Christmas night.

The fear of a young mother about to bear her first child, under far from normal circumstances, alone in a cattle shed. The fear of

a poor father unable to provide his family with proper shelter. The fear of simple shepherds startled by the unexpected appearance of heavenly emissaries. The fear of a jealous and vengeful king whose terrors would soon force the young family to flee to a distant land as refugees.

But this was the context in which God acted in a way that was so powerful and profound that in a few day’s time, hundreds of millions will gather in churches all around the world to retell the story of Christmas. We will gather to be reminded that God entered into the world in a very special way through the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In the midst of so much that is dark and frightening, Christ comes as Saviour to reveal anew the good news of God’s gracious and loving intention toward the world.

Hope and fear did, indeed, meet on that first Christmas night. And they’ve been meeting there ever since! And while some of us don’t know what it’s like to experience feelings of fearfulness at Christmas time; many of us do. There are many whose lives are insecure, many who lack what many of us take for granted; people who are sick, who are poor, who are lost, who are lonely or fearful about their futures. There are many people, both far and near, whose candles of hope have very dimly burning wicks, many for whom life does not seem at all ‘calm or bright!’

But fear will not get the final word at Christmas! Once again we will be reminded that God is alive

and well and doing great and wondrous things on planet earth. That is the heart and soul of the Christmas story – the story of a God who loves creation so intensely that he chooses to enter into the very heart of our creaturely existences – not just one day of the year – but for all three hundred and sixty five! And the evidence is all around us!

It is there in people who are kind; people who are generous; who serve their neighbours with grace and humility. It is there in people who work for justice, who advocate on behalf of those who have not voice. It is there in people whose sacrificial service goes even to the point of laying down their life for another! This is the light of Christ’s presence in the world today. This is the light of divine hope, a light that casts out fear and scatters the darkness. This is the call of the angels who bid us “Fear not!”

On behalf of your friends and colleagues who serve the Eastern Synod and its ministries, I wish you and your dear ones a holy and blessed celebration of our Saviour’s birth. It is our great honour and privilege to be partners with you. Thank-you for your faithful witness to the Gospel and for shining forth the light of God’s presence in your ministries. You are precious and your service in the Lord is not in vain!

Have a very, merry Christmas!

Bishop Michael Pryse

## New Director of Worship Ministries

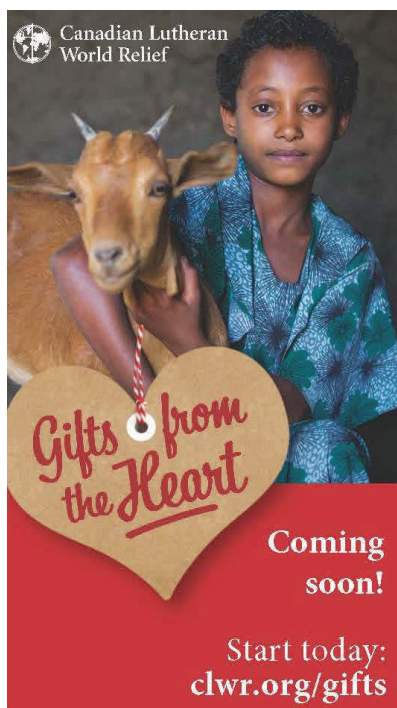
Bishop Michael Pryse is pleased to announce that the officers of the Eastern Synod have appointed the Rev. Hilla Lahtinen (HBMus, MDiv) to serve as the Synod's Director of Worship Ministries effective January 1, 2019. In this part-time position, Hilla will serve as a resource person and consultant to our congregations and Ministry Areas and serve as coordinator for synodically sponsored services of worship. She succeeds Debbie-Lou Ludoph who has served in this role, with great distinction, since 2008.

Pr. Hilla currently serves as co-pastor of Peace Lutheran in Pickering, ON with her husband, Pr. Ronnie Smith. They are the parents of two children. Before entering into parish ministry in the capacity of a pastor,

Hilla served congregations of the ELCIC as well as the United Church of Canada as a music director, choral conductor, and leader of contemporary worship ensembles. She is always seeking new and varied ways to deepen individual's and communities' relationship with God and our neighbours through worship and liturgy. While respecting and upholding traditional models of worship, Hilla is passionate about exploring alternative models of worship ministry that engage people of all ages in the act of worship. She is excited to embark on a journey as Director of Worship Ministries with the Eastern Synod and continue exploring what it means for us to be Christians in this particular time and place as we face a unique set of challenges, but also opportunities as people of God.



Bishop Pryse writes, "While I am incredibly grateful for the many contributions that Debbie-Lou Ludoph has made to the worship life and culture of our synod in this position, I am eager to experience the new perspectives and gifts that Pr. Lahtinen will bring to this work. She will be a wonderful addition to the Eastern Synod's leadership team!"



### Transitions

Rev Chun Zhang began as interim at St. Luke's Ridgeway and Good Shepherd, Niagara Falls

### Upcoming Events

Liturgy Canada Conference  
February 2, 2019

Atlantic Conference for Rostered Ministers  
February 10-13, 2019

Bishop's Spiritual Retreat for Clergy  
February 24-27, 2019

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

### Report of the Treasurer (To November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018)

Well, it was a nice ride while it lasted! I reported last month that benevolence offerings received by synod office during 2018 were running 2% ahead of last year. Due to lower remittances during the month of November, benevolence receipts for the first eleven months of 2018 are now virtually on par with those received for the comparable period in 2017.

2018 offerings to both Canadian Lutheran World Relief and the ELCIC Praise appeal continue to track well behind last year's pace.

For details click on [Report of the Treasurer](#) or go to <http://www.easternsynod.org/> and click the orange Treasurers/Financial Info button.

If you or your congregation are able to consider making an additional contribution to any of these causes, your "second mile" gift would be very much appreciated!



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## A New Year– A New Beginning

The closing of one of our congregations, while sad in one respect, has led to a new partnership with Anishnabeg Outreach, a charitable organization dedicated to helping First Nations, Metis and Inuit people with training and employment services.

The former St. Philip's, Kitchener will become the home for a new Indigenous drop-in centre, a hub for various programs and services.

Recently I asked Stephen Jackson, Executive Director, how the renovations were going. He explained that they were covering the block walls with stone and cedar to give the space a warm nature feel. The hope is that this



*A look at the sanctuary before the renovations begin.*

will encourage a sense of belonging so they can begin the process of healing with our local Indigenous people. The pews are being repurposed to make lovely oak tables.

As a synod, we are committed to working in the spirit of reconciliation, and we welcome this chance to work together serving our community. How can you help?

Donations made to Anishnabeg Outreach will be used for their Indigenous Child and Family Centre to provide food, diapers, formula and some winter clothing items for Indigenous children and their families. Anyone who would like to donate can contact Stephen at [stephen@aocan.org](mailto:stephen@aocan.org).

To learn more about the Anishnabeg Outreach go to <http://aocan.org/>

Liz Zehr



*Above: Early Years Office at 236 Woodhaven Road*

*Right: The transformation into a new healing place begins.*





# LUTHER

December 2018



## New Glebe director

Mark Harris, principal-dean of Martin Luther University College, is pleased to [announce](#) the appointment of Neta Gear as the new executive director of the [Delton Glebe Counselling Centre](#).

"We welcome Neta into a pivotal role as the centre continues to grow and serve students and the broader community," Harris says.



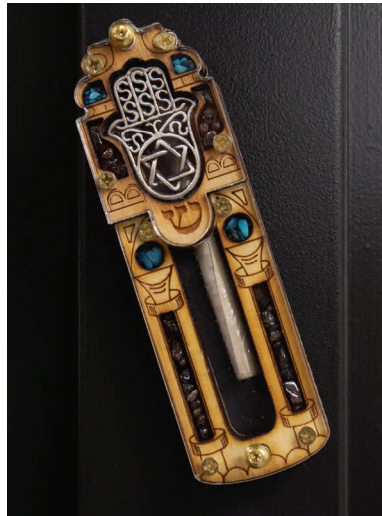
Gear is a registered social worker (RSW) who has served in numerous managerial roles. She assumes her new role on January 1. Gear is replacing Janet Howitt, who is retiring to spend more time with her family after serving as the centre's executive director since June 2016. "My heartfelt thanks go out to Janet for her dedicated service," Harris adds.

## Blue Christmas service

The [thirdspace](#) community at Luther will be holding a [Blue Christmas service](#), for those who are feeling sad during the holidays, Friday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. All welcome. [View more upcoming Luther events online](#).

[Inshallah](#), Luther's 130+ voice community choir, promoted peace at Kitchener Public Library on Dec. 8 (above) and, the next day, sang hope at nearby St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church where they helped raise \$2,900 for the [Glebe centre](#). The Dec. 9 event will be broadcast on CTV at 11:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Photos: [Facebook](#) and [Flickr](#).

## Mezuzah



Daniel Maoz, Luther's Jewish scholar in residence and professor of Hebrew Scriptures, affixes a mezuzah on one of his office doorposts. Rabbi Moshe Goldman, Jewish chaplain at Laurier, helps as Mark Harris, principal-dean, looks on. The mezuzah contains Scriptures, handwritten by a scribe in Jerusalem, from the Book of Deuteronomy (6 and 11) including "HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE." Observant Jews touch mezuzahs/mezuzot while passing through doorways, then kiss their fingertips. It's a way to honour God and the Scriptures, Maoz says. Goldman adds, "It's an expression of love."

*Vol. 1 Issue 5 Luther is a collection of news from Martin Luther University College in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.*

**Website:** [luther.wlu.ca](http://luther.wlu.ca) **Events:** Dorinda Kruger Allen [dkrugerallen@luther.wlu.ca](mailto:dkrugerallen@luther.wlu.ca)

**Stories:** Mirko Petricevic, [mpetricevic@luther.wlu.ca](mailto:mpetricevic@luther.wlu.ca)

## Ministry Area Deans

Bishop Michael Pryse is delighted to announce the appointments of the following persons as Ministry Area Deans for a three year term beginning January 1, 2019.

Atlantic	Kimber McNabb
Central Toronto	Christian Ceconi
Georgian	John Polacok
GTA East	Suzanne Nevile
GTA West	Rick Kwiatkowski
Huron	Martin Giebel
Grand River	Steve Weber
Montreal	Jim Slack
Niagara	Julio Romero
Nith Valley	Jeff Laustsen
Northern	Brad Mittleholtz
Ottawa	JoAnne Lam
Ottawa Valley	Bruce Thompson
Seaway	Steve Hoffard
Thames	Laura Sauder
The Bay	Thomas Mertz
Two Rivers	David Malina

"Our Ministry Area Deans are key leaders in the life of the Eastern Synod. They provide an important linkage between the synod and the Ministry Areas, assist in call processes, perform representative functions on behalf of the synod, and lead regionally focussed mission initiatives. I am very grateful for the willingness of these colleagues to serve the wider church in this capacity and for all they contribute to the Eastern Synod's leadership team!" says Bishop Pryse.

## Vacancies

Eganville, Grace/ Augsburg, St. John's/ Bonnechere, St. John's Kitchener, St. Luke's Richmond Hill, St. Paul's Toronto, Redeemer Orleans, Resurrection

For more information please contact Rev Douglas Reble, [dreble@elcic.ca](mailto:dreble@elcic.ca)



## On a Knitting Mission

How can a small village church make a huge difference? How about knitting one?

For several years now the congregation of St. James, Williamsford has been busy knitting teddy bears and winter hats, as well as making home-made quilts which they then donate to CLWR.

This year, on Mission Sunday, Pastor Darlyne Rath blessed 129 knitted teddy bears, 35 knitted winter hats and 64 quilts.

Anyone wanting a copy of the teddy bear pattern can get in touch with Pastor Darlyne, she's always happy to share and loves to hear from others who have picked up their knitting needles and accepted the challenge.

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# LITURGY CANADA

## a Rediscovering Liturgy conference

# Real Presence: GOD SENDS US IN MISSION

FIFTH OF FIVE CONFERENCES

ON RENEWING EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP, FROM *GATHERING* TO *SENDING*

Saturday, February 2, 2019, 9:00 to 4:00

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

3455 Lakeshore Road, Burlington, Ontario



A Rediscovering Liturgy conference designed for parish worship teams — for all who serve in the liturgy.

To register and pay, visit <http://realpresence5.eventbrite.ca> and submit name(s) and the name of the parish. Cost: \$35 per person, or \$125 for a parish team (up to 5; \$25 for each person beyond the first 5); \$25 for students. Lunch is included.

For the list of workshops and directions to Holy Cross Church, visit us at [www.liturgy.ca](http://www.liturgy.ca). Sign-in, coffee, & workshop registration at 9 am.