



The Eastern Synod Lutheran

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Two coins, two sides

Rev Riitta Hepomaki

He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.' (Luke 21:1-4)

With this lesson many of us have been taught and encouraged to be generous. The poor widow is set as an example for a pure and self-denying love and extraordinary trust in God. She gave all she had to live on, not knowing where her next meal would come from. She didn't need to give this gift at all or she could have kept one coin for herself but out of love for others and God, she gave both. The lesson of the story seems to be to explain what true discipleship is; to give everything you have for the sake of God and others.

A coin has two sides; so has this story. If we read carefully, the story does not tell what the widow's motive to give was. Did she give out of benevolence or did she feel com-

pelled to give? Modern theologians see this story more as a lament for injustice systems than praise of sacrificial giving.

Sarah Dylan Breuer writes: "Where do you see any suggestion at all in the text that Jesus thinks it's a wonderful thing that this poor widow put her last two coppers – all she had to live on – in the Temple treasury, going away destitute? It just isn't there. If anything, the text suggests the opposite. The passage starts with Jesus warning his followers to beware of those who like to walk around in long robes, receive the seats of honor, put on a good show of prayers, and DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES. That last bit is particularly important because of what follows: Jesus watches a bunch of guys in long robes take a widow's last two coins – all she has to live on." [dylan's lectionary blog](#)

I don't think we can apply this story straightforwardly to our synod benevolence offering. None of our congregations have given all they had. Neither are there congregations who are boasting about their giving. This having been said, in previous years we have duly recognized those congregations who have given the largest amount to the common ministry of the synod and the wider church and we have encouraged each congregation to increase their giving.

We have taken Jesus' words to our hearts "truly this poor widow has put in more than all of them". More recently, we have set benevolence goals for our congregations according to what we call a **Fair Share** principle. We believe that this is the fairest and healthiest practice to carry our common ministry responsibly in our context.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize, with gratitude, those 20 congregations who have given most based on **Fair Share** (percentage of total revenue) in 2016. They are in alphabetical order:

Epiphany, Toronto, ON
Faith, Deep River, ON
Lithuanian, Toronto, ON
St James, Renfrew, ON
St John Estonian, Montreal, QC
St John, Ottawa, ON
St John's, Bonnechere, ON
St John's, Petawawa, ON
St John's, South Porcupine, ON
St Matthew's, Newburne, NS
St Michael's, Montreal, QC
St Paul, Neustadt, ON
St Paul's, Guelph, ON
St Paul's, Listowel, ON
St Peter's, Gads Hill, ON
St Peter's, Neustadt, ON
St Peter's, Warton, ON
St Philip's, Toronto, ON
Trinity, Sudbury, ON
Trinity, Tavistock, ON

Please, check your own congregation's contribution to benevolence at [2016 Congregational Remittance Report](#) (Column "Benevolence Remitted")

I have served the Church in three countries: Finland, Tanzania and Canada. There are many differences between these churches but I will mention only one: In Finland the nation is wealthy and the church is wealthy. In Tanzania the nation is poor and the church is poor. In Canada the nation is wealthy and the church is poor. The first two make sense even though it saddens me that there is such an inequality in our world. But what puzzles me most is the third one – our church. Our Church does not seem to reflect its people. What do we need to do?

It Was Quite A Picnic

submitted by Rev James Koellner
Dean of Grand River Ministry Area

Sunday, June 11th, 2017 was a gloriously hot and sunny day when parishioners of ten of the thirteen churches in the Grand River Ministry Area gathered at St. Luke's in Kitchener for its first ever Ministry Area service and picnic. With their sun hats and lawn chairs, people began gathering at 10:00 a.m. for social and coffee time to the music of St. Stephen's famous band "The Rock". By 10:30 a.m. over 400 parishioners were sitting and waiting for the anticipated start of the service!

This vast crowd was welcomed by Rev. James Koellner, host pastor and Dean of the Grand River Ministry Area. The message of the day focused on Pentecost under the leadership of Rev. Jennifer Wirt, St. Paul's Bridgeport, Rev. Richard Schwass, St. Stephen's Kitchener, Rev. Stephen Weber, St. Paul's Galt, Cambridge and Rev. Mark Ehlebracht, St. Peter's

Kitchener, and "The Rock" band, and became an interactive experience that included running, making wind sounds, re-creating fire with crepe paper, shouting out words in various languages and singing some very favourite Pentecost hymns. This was followed by a sharing of the Peace, Holy Communion, and prayer petitions accompanied with the singing of "Listen to your Children Praying." At the end of the service there were many comments of it being "quite a spiritual occurrence" when sharing the experience with so many fellow local "Lutherans"!

A small but mighty Picnic Committee (Fay Albrecht, Dilys Miehm, Kim Schaner, Bev Roeder, Jan Hansen, Kathleen Robert, Krista Ogonowski and Shirley Mitchell (Chair)) envisioned inviting everyone just to come and enjoy the day with the food being provided in exchange for a free-will offering. A menu included hot dogs complete with fried onions, sauerkraut and condiments, pota-

to salad, coleslaw, chips, carrots and pickles; for dessert everyone got to enjoy some wonderfully delicious, hot, freshly-made apple fritters by the Fritter Haus. Refreshments of coffee, lemonade, and water were provided for the social time and throughout the picnic. The left-over food was donated to the Community Ministry Supper initiative at St. Mark's. After the meal, children and adults alike enjoyed a variety of games and activities.

The many positive comments that were received have spurred plans being made for another service and picnic in 2018.



2018 Companion of the Worship Arts Call for Nominations

The Program Committee for Worship, on behalf of the National Bishop, calls for nominations to the Companion of the Worship Arts. This is an honour conferred in recognition of significant contribution to the worship life of the ELCIC at a local, synodical, and national level. The honour recognizes the recipient's ongoing inspiration and encouragement to others, together with service to God through worship, spirituality, and the arts.

Please include these supporting materials with your nomination:

1. Reasons for the nomination; i.e., biographical material with a listing of the person's specific contributions to the worship life of the ELCIC (examples should include national, synodical, and local involvements)
2. An indication, with examples, of the ways the person continues to inspire and encourage others in the worship life of the church
3. A minimum of three letters of support for the nomination from others familiar with the individual's contributions.

The honour will be conferred at the ELCIC/ACC National Worship Conference in Victoria, BC, in 2018.

(www.nationalworshipconference.org). Current members of the Program Committee for Worship are not eligible for nomination.

Send nomination materials by February 15, 2018 to

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**Report of the Treasurer
(To September 30th, 2017)**

As a result of shortfalls in benevolence offerings received by the synod office during August and September, we are currently tracking 3% behind the comparable period for 2016 (and 4% below budget requirements).

Donations to Canadian Lutheran World Relief (both designated and undesignated causes) improved slightly but are still almost 13% less for the first nine months of 2017, compared to the same period in 2016.

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

FYI, the Eastern Synod's 2016 audited financial statements are available on the synod website. To review these, click on the following link: [2016 Audited Financial Statements](#).

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who mourn the loss of a loved one including:



The family and friends of Rev Chad Honneyman.

Pastor Eric Dyck on the loss of his mother.

Rev. James Slack on the loss of his mother.

Rev. Barry Boeckner on the loss of his brother.

Rev. Debra Johnston on the loss of her mother.

Rev. Thomas Zumbrock on the loss of his mother.

**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.

Vacancies

Faith, Fergus-Elora

St. Peter's, Ottawa

Advent, Toronto

Bethany, Woodstock

For more information please contact

Rev Douglas Reble,
Assistant to the Bishop,

dreble@elcic.ca /1-877-373-5242.

2nd Annual BBQ

submitted by Bob Karn

The 2nd annual BBQ held at St. Matthew's, Kitchener saw crowds of about 300 people enjoying free food and drink as well as some live entertainment provided by a congregation member's band. This event is proving to be a good and successful way to reach our local neighbours.



Webinar: Responsible Investing for Individuals

As part of Canada's 4th Annual RI week

Details:

Date: Thursday Oct 26

Time: 12pm – 1pm, EDT

Location: Your own computer desk! We are hosting this session online.



Join us for a [free webinar](#) to get answers to the questions "How can an individual investor be a responsible investor? What options are available, and what are the steps to take?" Brian Barsness, CIM, Director of Investment Services at Kindred Credit Union will provide the expertise and insights to becoming a Responsible Investor.



Register by RSVPing to Krista at kkuehnbaum@elfec.ca.

The Seaway Ministry Area Annual Workshop & Retreat for Rostered Leaders

The Words from Our Lips

Join us from 5:00 PM Sun. Nov. 5th until Noon on Wed. Nov. 8th, 2017
At the peaceful Camp Lutherlyn in the beautiful Ottawa Valley.

Retreat Director Rev. Rob Wiesner through workshops and plenty of reflection time will help us explore in what ways the words of the rites, rituals, liturgy, and hymns form us and why that matters.

\$25/person covers registration and accommodation.
Participants share in providing food and preparation for meals.
To register or for more information send an email to steve.hoffard@gmail.com

To find out about all the upcoming Reformation Celebrations and other events check the [synod calendar](#) at our website <http://www.easternsynod.org/calendar>



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Want to know more about what Lutherans are doing across the country? Contact Barb bwiebe@elcic.ca

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

 Canadian Lutheran World Relief



IT'S JUST WHAT THEY NEEDED!

Find your catalogue at your church or online at clwr.org/GFTH.



Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

October 2017



WLS board changes

Welcome to three incoming members to our Board of Governors, and our thanks to those departing. Members recently elected James Phillips as chair, and Susan Heard as treasurer. Click [here](#) for caption.

Worship with us

The seminary holds a brief time of prayer and reflection Monday through Thursday at 12:30 p.m. On Fridays the time is dedicated to reflecting on Indigenous art. All are welcome to smudge beginning at 12:20 p.m. On Wednesdays we hold communion services at 5 p.m. The [thirdspace](#) alternative worshipping community gathers Sundays at 11 a.m. All welcome.

Please note: Consult our [online calendar](#) for up-to-date information on the location of services.

Upcoming events

Nov. 5, [Inshallah and Inshallah Kids](#);
Nov. 6, [Circle of Dialogue](#); **Nov. 15,** [Abrahamic Faiths Forum](#).

Sing Fires of Justice

Sing Fires of Justice participants raised more than \$1,700 to support Indigenous students at Wilfrid Laurier University. With his words and music Tom Jackson, acclaimed First Nations singer and actor, brought his message of peace and justice to the festival.

Contact us

Events: Dorinda Kruger Allen,
dkrugerallen@wlu.ca

Seminary stories: Mirko Petricevic,
mpetricevic@wlu.ca



A cyclist rides by the new capital campaign banner on the fence around the seminary.

Campaign pledges reach \$1.1M

Raising the rest expected to be more challenging

Pledges to the Reform Capital Campaign — to raise \$1.5 million toward Waterloo Lutheran Seminary's \$9-million renewal and modernization project — have topped \$1.1 million.

"We are extremely grateful to everyone who has made a donation to help upgrade the school for students today and in future generations," says Rev. Dr. Mark Harris, the seminary's principal-dean.

But while the response has been impressive to date, there is still a long way to go before meeting the goal, Harris

adds.

"Our campaign coach, whom we've hired to lead us through the fundraising process, assures me that the last portion will be the most difficult to raise," Harris says.

So during October the seminary is making a concerted effort to inform parishioners, pastors and alumni throughout the Eastern Synod about the campaign and is inviting them to participate. As a result,



The view from under the steel structure built for the new entrance, offices and foyer on Bricker Avenue.

the school is forgoing its annual general appeal during Advent.

For more information, please visit reformcapitalcampaign.ca