



The Eastern Synod Lutheran

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Volume 45



Debbie Lou Ludolph

She said it was the *silence* in the service that invited her to be engaged. She said it was the *silence* that made her realize worship wasn't a spectator sport. We often think of words and songs as the way to engage others, or to do the "work of the people", the *liturgy*, but I wonder how often we think of silence as a component of engaged worship. And I wonder how much we nurture this, and model it, in our worship practice.

Two events in my work at the seminary this fall have made me think more about silence. On Fridays at Keffer Chapel, when we read from the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations as part of our daily prayer service, we practice being silent. The Christian tradition teaches us to love our neighbour and to do justice; the TRC recommendations help us to see ways this might be possible. In this service, we hold a silent space to ponder how the TRC might impact our teaching and preaching, our studies and our collective action in the public square. The intent is to learn to listen deeply and to hear what the

Spirit is saying to us as people of faith who long to be in right relations. What I'm finding, is that the silence set next to the reading with this prayerful intent is making more room for me to keep our indigenous neighbours integrated into my thoughts, which will inform my actions.

The second nudge to think more about silence in our worship practice came from the student I quoted above. She was referring to the service at the Sing Fires of Justice word and music festival where as part of the service we asked five questions focused on issues of justice (climate change, indigenous relations, refugee rights, poverty, sustainable global peace), each one followed by intentional silence.

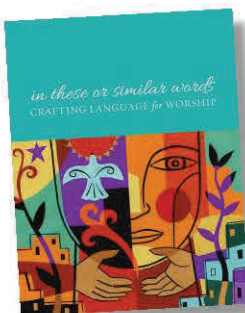
For my student, the silence was not just a big empty space when nothing was happening, but it was a time within the service where she had been invited to reflect upon the intersection of faith and justice for her life and for society. It mattered to her that we were reflecting in a sacred space, and that *everyone* was doing it. It mattered that the worship planners seemed to think that her reflection was important, even required, and so they made space for it. As I thought about this, it was a powerful message to me that pondering serious questions together – knowing everyone in the room is potentially bringing their unique understanding to the question – speaks of the work of the people. It leaves room for the questions to stay lively, for ambiguity not to be resolved too quickly, and for a diversity of answers. The agenda for this silence is

to nurture a baptismal intent to wrestle with what it means to live in right relations with God and each other and all of creation.

I remember Patrick Kiefert (author of *Welcoming the Stranger*) saying at Luther Hostel that in our culture one of the greatest gifts we can give people in Sunday morning worship is the gift of time and spaciousness, breath and contemplation. For starters, in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (I had to go look) there are two places that speak of silence in the Holy Communion liturgy: before the prayer of the day and after the sermon – what if those were taken seriously?

There are challenges, of course, for communities to learn to be silent together. And there is a time to be silent and a time to speak. What my experience and my student's experience have prompted me to consider is that including silence more intentionally in worship creates a potentially transforming listening space where we can hear deep down the Spirit's whisper of welcome for ourselves and for all our relations. I invite you to ask along with me if in our worship practice there is space to breathe out the busyness of life and breathe in the gift of the Holy and the gift of being together in community? Is there space to reflect on the pastoral and prophetic words offered in the sermon? Simply put, how much is silence a planned part of our worship practice?

Peace be with you.



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Ethiopians find 'spiritual home' in Breslau

Courtesy of Waterloo Region Record
By Liz Monteiro

The purchase of a new home is exhilarating for most first-time homebuyers.

And that's how it feels for Gebre Berihun, Zewditu Wolde-Semayat and Dawit Teklemariam.

They, and the local Ethiopian Orthodox community, are ecstatic that they finally have a home of their own for their congregation — the Debre-Sina Kidane Mihret Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahado Church.

Their new home is the former Trinity Lutheran Church on Kramp Road in Breslau.

"I'm very happy with this. I cried when we got this church," said Wolde-Semayat, a mother of three who came to Canada from Ethiopia in 1999.

"It was a gift for us. God gave it to us," said Teklemariam, who came to Kitchener last year with his family as a refugee.

"We are leaving a legacy for our children," said Gebre Berihun, president of the church board, who came to Canada in 1999 to study at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Trinity Lutheran was donated to the group by the Kitchener-based Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Trinity Lutheran Church has had a long history in the area, starting as the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1860. The church closed in 2011.

The 1,800-square foot building was donated to the congregation but now begins the work to renovate the heritage building.

The group has volunteers in the sanctuary renovating the church entrance and building a three-door archway at the altar for the blessing of the church on Sept. 26.

"It's not big but for us it can accommodate us," said Berihun. The

church can sit about 100 people. Berihun said the church has about 25 active members in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph. With children, the congregation numbers about 70 to 80 people.

The local Ethiopian Orthodox community formed in 2000 and used space at St. Mark's Catholic Church and then held worship at the Reformation Lutheran Church in Kitchener.

The opportunity for a new church came up earlier this year and the group jumped at the chance to have its own building.

"Our short-term goal is to have weekly worships while our long-term goal is to transform this place," said Berihun, who hopes to renovate the multipurpose room at the back of the church for Sunday school and spiritual conferences.

"There is potential to grow. We would like to make it a religious centre," he said. The church sits on 1.5 hectares.

Later this month, the group will kick off its \$100,000 fundraising campaign when it welcomes the Toronto bishop for the Canadian Ethiopian Orthodox community to the Breslau church.

Berihun expects about 150 guests and a tent will be erected outside on the property.

"When you have something people can see, they are motivated to help. People have mobilized," said Berihun of the Ethiopian community who have donated money and time to renovate the building.

Berihun said most of the Ethiopians in Waterloo Region arrived as refugees and for them a spiritual place brought comfort.

"Religion is not only on Sundays. In Ethiopia, we pass a church and walk in and pray for five minutes and then we would go to work. Losing that here was hard for many Ethiopians," he said.

"Getting this totally changes everything," he said. "It's our spiritual home. There is a lot of satisfaction and we are very proud."

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Report of the Treasurer (To Sept 31st, 2015)

After a summer lull, benevolence offerings remitted to the synod office in September picked up nicely, pulling us 5% ahead of amounts received to the same point in time in 2014. How fantastic it would be to maintain this pace over the final three months of the year!

Offerings to CLWR have fallen behind last year's pace due to a large \$81,000 one-time congregational donation in 2014.

More details about 2015 receipts are posted in the [Report of the Treasurer](#) on the synod web site.



Abundant Giving

by Jeff Pym

Since 1997, when we started tracking this information, hundreds of ELCIC members have told us about special gifts to the church that they have arranged. And we know that for every person who comes forward, there are numberless others who have created gifts but remain anonymous. Many of these are gifts in a will, although an increasing number take effect during the giver's lifetime.

In the book of Hebrews there is a passage that speaks of "a great cloud of witnesses" who give us encouragement to run the race that is set before us. Witnesses in a court of law give testimony, a word that is closely related to the word testament. When a person includes a gift to their church in their last will and testament, he/she is literally giving witness to their faith and providing encouragement to the rest of us at the same time.

The following Friends of Lutheran Planned Giving have come forward within the past year and have given us permission to publish their names. Our hope is that you, after seeing a familiar name on the list, might be inspired by their example to make a gift of your own.

Ralph and Brenda Bastian	Otonabee, ON
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Jim and Lois Stark	Waterloo, ON
Marguerite Van Die	Kingston, ON
Bill and Margaret Barlow-White	Waterloo, ON

In addition to these donors there are ten others who have chosen to remain anonymous.

In the Eastern Synod we are blessed by the presence of all givers—known and unknown—and the abundance of their gifts. We give thanks to God for their faithfulness and generosity.

Blankets and Teddies

St. James, Williamsford had a great deal to celebrate on Sept 27th. The women of the congregation, with the help of St. Mark's in Chesley made 34 afghans and quilts and 145 teddy bears which were given to Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). One woman, Mona Le Maitre made 95 teddy bears herself. That is a lot of knitting! Jennifer Ardon, of CLWR said that the children in the refugee camps will absolutely love the teddy bears; they will hug them and give them names. She said that the children have few toys to play with and these teddies will bring them comfort. This service was special indeed, as the children of the congregation presided over the entire service. Two boys chose a scripture and then gave a five minute sermon each, there were ushers, musicians, bell ringers and five children read the prayers. The congregation prayed that the people who received the quilts would find peace in their lives and know that there were people who cared about them. We hoped they would feel the love from us as they wrapped the blankets around themselves.

The ladies had been making the quilts and teddy bears for about a year. They will be shipped to CLWR for the refugee camps.

If anyone is interested in knitting pattern for the teddy bears e-mail Pastor Dar Rath and she will send the pattern along. rath65@bmts.com



Faith in the Great Outdoors

by Rev. Matthew Anderson

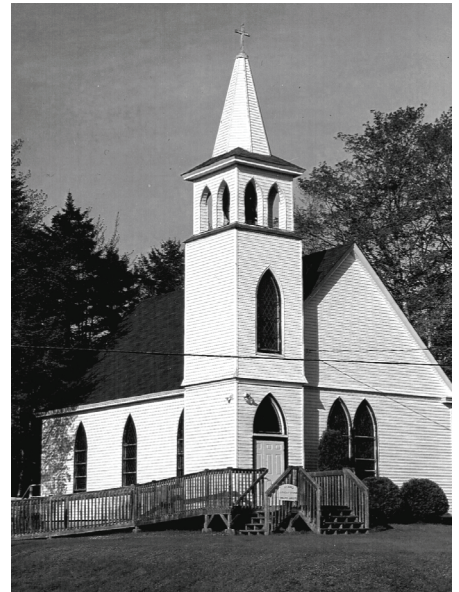
Getting out of the big city is a special treat for us Lutherans in the urban context of Montreal. Perhaps that's why, once a year for well over a decade, the Montreal Lutheran Council (our ministry area) has held an annual combined church picnic in St-Lazare Quebec. Over the years we've faced it all: rain – inches of solid downfall, on one occasion when the tail feathers of a southern hurricane were brushing Montreal – wind, cool and hot conditions. But through it all we've worshipped and enjoyed each others' company in picnicking and playing. This year, as we normally do, we began with a worship service under the open-sided roof of the picnic grounds. Pastor Jim Slack, our dean, presided, and Pastor Eric Dyck preached, while lay readers and prayers, music and offerings were provided by members of all congregations. We sang verses of our hymns in French and English, Spanish, Finnish, German, Estonian, Danish and Latvian. St. John's Lutheran, downtown Montreal, provided a popular bean-bag toss and the youth to run it, and Christ the Redeemer, the other of the two largest Montreal Lutheran congregations, organized a mini-putt golf course

for young and old alike. The pool was in great demand with the younger participants, while elders kept to the shade and the picnic goodies. The day ended with a tug-of-war and a raffle, whose proceeds go to Canadian Lutheran World Relief's refugee work.

More and more we hear about ecumenism, and we know how important it is to hear Jesus' prayer that "all be one". Dialogue with other churches is truly a blessing and a richness. But we also need to learn to get to know, and to learn from, the – sometimes very different – members of our own family, and the Montreal Lutheran Picnic has been our chance, once a year, to do just that. We're thankful.

The Montreal Lutheran Council's website can be found at: <http://montreal-lutheran.org/>

The Rev'd Dr. Matt Anderson is the treasurer of the Montreal Lutheran Council and one time came close to winning the bean-bag toss.



90th Anniversary Service

submitted by Alice Wile

On Sunday, August 30, 2015 St. James Lutheran Church in Branch La Have, Nova Scotia celebrated 90 years of Praise and Worship. The day was spectacular weather wise, and members from the two other churches comprising the Northfield Parish (West Northfield and Upper Northfield) joined in our celebrations. The service was conducted by Pastor Catharine House, and our organist Ina Weldon led us in some old time hymns. Four members of our congregation, namely Barbara Kelly, Vivian Feindel, Alice Wile and Arthur Young, spoke to the congregation about what St. James has meant to them. Pastor Catharine spoke to us about the church being a gathering place, but the real church being the people and what their beliefs stood for. We are the church. The building provides a place to meet, refresh and learn.

Following the service many congregated at the community hall for a pot luck meal and fellowship. A display table was set up with pictures from the past as well as a bit of St. James history. A picture showing the first five church council members from 1925 was the focal point of the display.

While the day was an event of celebration, a bit of somber news was received when our Pastor Catharine announced that she would be retiring at the end of the year. While we are saddened to see her go, we appreciate her wanting to be closer to her family in Ontario, so with heavy hearts we will bid her a sad adieu the end of December, 2015.



Martin Luther Church Daycare Reopens

by Liz Zehr

In 1970 Martin Luther Church, Etobicoke began the Martin Luther Church Day Care. They purchased the vacant house next door where subsidized daycare has been provided to children in the diverse Mimico community for 45 years. It has remained a non-profit community service welcoming children of all denominations and backgrounds since its inception.

Former Martin Luther church pastor Eberhard W. Schwantes came up with the idea for the daycare after watching children playing in the parking lot because they had nowhere else to go. When speaking in support of the project Pastor Schwantes was quoted as saying "The church must move out of the four walls of the building of worship, we must be involved in the community."

After much discussion and plenty of fundraising there was still lots to do- that's when the volunteers took over. Many church members offered their considerable talents- carpenters, painters and plenty of labourers to get the building ready and in May 1970 they opened the doors to the community and began caring for 26 neighbourhood kids.

Soon they were licensed to care for 76 children and expanded to include a pre-school, toddler, kindergarten and before and after school program and even spread to the church basement.

Disaster struck, however, in October 2013 when a fire destroyed most of the interior



at 5 Superior Ave. Thankfully no one was hurt in the fire but the building was badly burnt and the toddler program had to be suspended till repairs could be made.

Just like 45 years ago, many church members have spent a lot of time getting things back up and running. They set up fundraising and donation accounts and helped overcome construction hurdles. They reached out to neighbourhood partners and local officials to ask for their support. In late August a team of 7 children and 17 adults filled a 12 yard garbage bin to the brim as they transformed the yard and playground around the house and the church from a jungle into an outdoor paradise.

On September 1, 2015 the Martin Luther Church Daycare once again opened its doors to the public. Their mission is what it has always been- to ensure that excellent care is provided to as many of the neighbourhood's children as possible. The organization fol-

lows a government mandated curriculum and focuses on learning with family and children to find out how to best encourage the individual child. There is space for 56 kids- lots of room for both the preschool and toddler programs.

One last part of the renovation is planned for after the opening. Fundraising efforts are now underway and soon the plain grey walls on the exterior of the daycare building are to be transformed with the painting of a mural that hopes to bring the vibrant life inside the building to its outside walls. Church president Iris Schweiger says "We are living in a vibrant, active and culturally rich neighbourhood along the lakeshore that shows passion for the arts. This is the perfect opportunity to add to that spirit."

To learn more about the daycare program go to <http://martinluther.ca/community/news-of-the-church/>

Financial donations can be made to Martin Luther Church for the 5 Superior Trust.

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