



# The Eastern Synod Lutheran

Sept 25, 2015

Volume 44



Rev. Riitta Hepomaki  
Assistant to the Bishop

Christianity was first a movement, not an organized religion. Persecution after persecution was brought to suppress it. So how did this movement survive? And not only survive- but grow in numbers and in mission. What was their geographic expansion strategy?

The strategy was very simple. First, it started in big cities, it was an urban faith. In big cities there is not much private space; neighbours are near. People see each other and hear each other. You know pretty well what your neighbours' values are. You know how they use their leisure time. You know their life style. You know if they are nice people or not so nice. So, it is our daily life, faithful presence as we call it that proclaims what our faith really is about.

An early Christian theologian, Justin Martyr, in his First Apology, which he addressed to Emperor Antonius Pius explained Christian faith and believers: *"We formerly rejoiced in uncleanness of life, but now love only chastity;*

*before we used the magic arts, but now dedicate ourselves to the true and unbegotten God; before we loved money and possessions more than anything, but now we share what we have and to everyone who is in need; before we hated one another and killed one another and would not eat with those of another race, but now since the manifestation of Christ, we have come to a common life and pray for our enemies and try to win over those who hate us without just cause."*

Even Emperor Julian (who was the last non-Christian ruler of the Roman Empire and against Christianity) once wrote: *"Christianity has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers and through their care of the burial of the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar and that the godless Galileans [Christians] care not only for their own poor but for ours as well; while those who belong to us look in vain for the help we should render them."*

The Early Christians were known as people who cared and prayed.

The other thing that I think made the Early Church spread fast was the sense of urgency. Christians were earnestly waiting and longing for the Lord's return. They wanted to accomplish the mission as soon as possible. Because of the persecutions it was very likely that they would die, be killed, at any time. So they had that urgency to pass the good news on before it was too late.

How different were the first Christians from us? Why are our churches declining and not

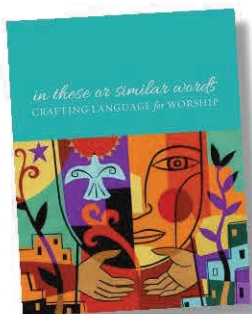
growing? Don't we have enough faith? Don't we love the Lord?

I don't think that's the reason. You have faith, and you love the Lord. The first Christians were just ordinary, humble believers, just like you.

What we miss as a church, I think, is the sense of urgency. Is it because we don't think of dying? If we want to pass the good news on, we have to do it now, because we don't know about tomorrow. If we want our next generation to know Christ we need to act now.

The other thing that we lack, I think, is the sense of movement. Our western church and especially our generation has adopted a "we have arrived" mindset. If we have arrived, we don't need to move. If we don't move, we are stuck. The feeling of being stuck often leads to hopelessness. So let's try to change our mindset from "being arrived" to "being sent" and "being in movement". After all, if we don't move, we cannot follow. Aren't we called "followers of Jesus"?

Now, you may think that this is easy to say for a person like me, who has moved 27 times in her life. Not everyone can move. No, I don't mean that you need to start packing and find another place to live in. Perhaps, we can make little moves; from a church hall to the streets, from our own kitchen to a community kitchen or where ever God is sending you. Giving up the "we have arrived" mindset means also that we are willing to move from my little world to other people's world. It is challenging. But we can do it because we have faith. And we have each other. We have fellowship. We have a new way of life. And because we are confident that our God will guide and provide.



## In These or Similar Words

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St. Timothy's, Pembroke officially welcomed their new pastor, Rev. Bruce Thompson at his installation in late August. Pictured here are, l-r, Rev. James Goos, Rev. David Metzger, Rev. Norine Gullons, Rev. Bruce Thompson, Rev. Doug Reble, Father Michael Read.

#### Report of the Treasurer (To Aug 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015)

Although regular benevolence offerings in August fell by more than \$10,000 compared to those received in August, 2014, benevolence receipts for the entire year have increased by almost 2%. While the latter is encouraging news, it will be important to maintain this trend over the remaining months of the year. CLWR offerings in 2015 continue to run well ahead of those received for the comparable period in 2014 due to ~\$46,000 that has been received for the Nepal Earthquake Relief Appeal. To date, ELCIC Praise Appeal offerings are well below those 2014 levels, however, with November 15<sup>th</sup> designated as Praise Appeal Sunday, there is still ample opportunity to get back on track. More details about 2015 receipts are posted in the [The Report of the Treasurer](#) on the synod web site.

#### Reformation Challenge: Plant Tree Seedlings

Part of the ELCIC Reformation Challenge is to **plant 500,000 trees**.

To help reach this goal, Canadian Lutheran World Relief invites you to consider a donation to conservation projects overseas. For example, in Lalibela, Ethiopia, more than 90,000 indigenous and drought-resistant trees will be planted on degraded land to reduce erosion alongside irrigation canals that water farmers' crops. In Adjumani, Uganda, farmers are learning to care for nurseries of fruit trees and trees whose branches can be harvested for shelter and fuel (yet keep on growing). This helps reduce deforestation, teaches new agricultural skills to the farmers involved and provides a healthy food source.

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## Reimagining Our Mission and Our Buildings

*Submitted by Keith Myra, LHKW Strategic Initiatives Committee*

The temptation to stay at home to garden or relax on a beautiful Saturday morning in early June wasn't sufficient to deter more than sixty people representing a dozen congregations in the Kitchener-Waterloo area from gathering at Trinity Village, a not-for-profit organization owned by Lutheran Homes Kitchener-Waterloo (LHKW), to learn more about twenty-first century mission opportunities for their congregation.

Bishop Michael Pryse's opening remarks, as well as his closing call to action, re-enforced that we are truly blessed with an abundance of riches that we steward in His name, and that as our physical churches age, our attendance declines and the needs of the community change, we need to seek new and different ways to live out our collective vision and mission.

A recently initiated project, a joint venture of the Eastern Synod and Lutheran Homes Kitchener-Waterloo, is aimed at making services available to congregations that are designed to do just that! Services offered to congregations will help them explore their mission in the community, identify potential partnerships, and unlock the economic value of their building or other property assets by identifying opportunities to provide housing or other forms of ministry to those with low income, senior citizens with low/modest income, those with disabilities and others. Although the initial phase of this ambitious initiative is restricted to

Lutheran congregations in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, the intent is to ultimately make these services available to congregations across the Eastern Synod. Seed funding for the start-up project is being provided both by the synod and LHKW.

During his informative presentation, Mr. Jeffrey Schumacher, representing Regional Municipality of Waterloo Planning, Housing & Community Services, summarized various programs that are currently provided by the region's housing arm, identified needs that are not currently being filled, and shared demographic and other projections for the future. Various LHKW representatives, including current chair Randy Gondosch and former board members Rev. Dr. Mark Harris and Rev. Fred Ludolph, complemented Mr. Schumacher's presentation of community needs by describing the rich expertise that LHKW has acquired over the past two decades through the re-development of the Trinity Village campus in Kitchener, a supportive and caring retirement community offering a continuum of care including life-lease town homes, an assisted living retirement residence, a long term care centre, and an adult day program. How exciting that all of this collective expertise is now

being made available to congregations!

Participants spent the remainder of the morning listening to representatives from four local congregations as they offered personal perspectives on journeys that are currently underway in their respective congregations and by participating in table discussions to assess opportunities in their own congregations. While many congregations still have questions and a need to further explore their vision, most of those present were keenly interested in moving forward to look at ways to reinvent their way of living out their mission. Furthermore, most attendees felt they needed a trusted ministry partner to serve and support this transformation - assistance that LHKW is only too willing to provide!

LHKW is planning further follow-up with congregations in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. If you would like additional information, please contact Debby Riepert, [driepert@trinityvillage.com](mailto:driepert@trinityvillage.com) 519-893-6320 ext 250.

Below: Attendees listening intently to a series of informative presentations about transforming congregational ministry and buildings/property



## The New Creation at Camp Edgewood

submitted by Rev. Janaki Bandara  
St. Peter's, Cambridge

Inherently the life in Christ Jesus is a life of waxing and waning, of dying onto new life, just as it is the very death of Jesus that has made our new lives of grace possible. For this reason when I hear the death bells ringing, especially on ministry or church initiatives, I immediately go on the alert for the signs of new life; the new life I know accompanies death and birth into ever re-newing life in Christ.

As such, when I heard about the dire situation at Camp Edgewood at the beginning of my call to St Peter's I did a couple of things in earnest:

- Prayed for God to show the signs of and for new life at Edgewood.
- Celebrated, by writing and talking, my personal witness of good, life-giving, spirit-feeding ministry, at Edgewood.
- Dreamt (also known as deep, internal scheming) about what St Peter's might be able to do to help Edgewood if only disciples came forward.
- Prayed for disciples to come forward (and of course asked, and asked, and asked and then prayed and prayed and prayed some more; one can nag God something fierce when one sets one's mind to it).

In early June, Victoria Roth and I had a Very Good Conversation Indeed about our beloved Camp Edgewood. I had been given a fundraiser flag kit by Pastor Bonnie Shelter-Brown from St James New Dundee. I had been waiting (in a praying, scheming, God-nagging kind of way) for the Person to Show Up, who would fly this flag kit so to speak. In my conversation with Vicky Roth, it became clear Who That Person Was Meant to Be at St Peter's. (This is not me being typographically inept, trust me, these words I am capitalizing deserve to be capitalized, because signs of new life deserve capital treatment).

I believe that God equips us when we show the will, and we were equipped by the Holy Spirit. Before long, the old scout flagpole was in our narthex with streams of fundraiser flags flowing down. The next step was our decision as a community to volunteer our resources (namely Pastor and Pastor's Dog) to be Chaplain (and Canine

Chaplain) for a week at camp. I was blessed to be there for the very first week ... a week when our "weak" camp began without a Camp Director which had been our normal format for a long time. Instead we had a fantastic seasonal Camp Manager, Adrian Mercer, and two super-duper summer Camp Coordinators, Nathan Mantey and our very own Vicky Roth. The counselors were energetic, loving, good-humoured leaders and I got to see the New Creation at Camp Edgewood being born.

Our new generation of camp leadership do not do things the way they were done before. I got to witness the care and love they offered to children from diverse contexts, some of whom asked me their chaplain "who is this Jesus dude anyway?" The counselors and their youthful leadership team made good use of things that were not in perfect shape, reminding me that it is the love and intention of our relationships with each other, rather than the perfection therein that spells out our lives of faith. I saw how Adrian, Vicky and Nathan encouraged counselors, and set an example for them of encouragement and speaking life into doubts, fears and anxieties. I felt so honoured when I was called back to help with communion worship a few Thursday nights including the closing Thursday for summer camp. In church life we talk about the body of Christ so often – I saw that body, alive, well, with the various parts of it respect-

ing and cherishing each other, giving affirmation, encouragement and support where it was needed in the form of "shout outs".

Our own young people got to enjoy the gifts of Camp Edgewood in the last week of summer when four campers, your pastor and your pastor's dog went to Contract Confirmation Camp. We had much more intentional, Bible-based teaching time, and our whole model of camp was different: different from the old that is dying and on its way out, and again different from the new that got born this summer before we got there at the end of August. From all these life forms at Edgewood, I witnessed the variety of ways in which we can be Christ together.

The nature of death is that old ways of doing things will pass away. The nature of new life is that it will spell into being its own, new ways of doing things. When death, new life and ongoing life are happening at the same time, there is a rub, a friction and I believe the best balm for that friction is love and grace – the kind Jesus is made of. I know the Camp Edgewood Board is doing their very best to keep our sacred place going. I know the new visioning team for Camp Edgewood includes some of our very own young people from St Peter's. And I know, beyond any shadow of a doubt that there is a New Creation in Christ at Camp Edgewood. This is my witness - What is yours?





## **Singspiration - A Hit!**

Submitted by Seija Hyhko

"Sing to the Lord, oh sing God a new song..." refreshed, renewed and inspired! Without a doubt that is the feeling of all those who participated in "Singspiration", the Eastern Synod Women's Ministry Conference from Friday, May 29 to Sunday, May 31, 2015 in Cambridge.

The inspiration began at the In-shallah Concert on the Friday evening, where we were treated to inspiring messages and traditional songs from varied cultures, in particular those of Canada's indigenous people. The Good Hearted Women were central in drumming and singing songs from their tradition. Ending the concert by drawing us all to be one in a human chain, singing and moving, down the aisles of the church, was an appropriate start to the weekend where we came to learn more about peace and reconciliation.

Under the lively and inspiring leadership of Debbie Lou Ludolph, we had many opportunities to retell, reflect, and rejoice about the meaning of reconciliation in our lives and in our country. The message was always affirmed by songs that rang in our ears long after the singing had ceased.

We were all spellbound as we enjoyed the traditional music presented by the Good Hearted Women. Whether we chose to sight see and shop at the quaint town of St. Jacob's or attend a wide array of possible breakout sessions, our spirits were not dampened by the showers on the Saturday. It was so difficult to choose a session to attend because they were so diverse and so interesting – all infused with the theme, "making a joyful noise".

The highlight of the scrumptious Saturday evening buffet banquet was the visit by Uncle Willy. He amused us with wild stories and

hilarious versions of familiar songs. If laughter can take years off your life, as they claim, we all certainly left a few years younger after laughing so heartily during his performance.

During the conference our souls were fed by meaningful music-filled devotions and a thought-provoking Worship Service to finish off the weekend.

We are grateful to Debbie Lou Ludolph, Pastor Heather Spencer and the Good Hearted Women and all the workshop leaders for making it such a meaningful and memorable weekend for all 115 women who attended the conference.

I encourage all of you to mark your calendars right now. The committee is already planning the next conference on the last weekend in May 2017. The theme is "H.U.G.S., Helping us Grow Spiritually". Make sure you do not miss it. It is bound to be another phenomenally enriching event. You will come out refreshed, renewed and inspired.

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## **Coming Together**

submitted by Elaine Nicholls

June 22, 2015, marked the signing of a formal Agreement to amalgamate St. Mark's Anglican Church and Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church to become one church: St. Mark's Anglican Lutheran Church.

Bishop Peter Fenty of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto and Rev. Wendell Grahman representing the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC, participated in this very significant occasion. The amalgamation is the fruit of many years of getting to know and appreciate each other as denominations and as individuals. Perhaps the seed was planted in 2001 when the two denominations signed the Waterloo Agreement that

brought the two denominations into full communion. One of the benefits is that clergy can function in each other's churches.

Despite different historical backgrounds, structures and traditions, an appreciation grew that Anglicans and Lutherans have much in common. Then came the time when Holy Cross had to acknowledge that it would have to seek a new direction. With an aging congregation and declining membership, there were no longer sufficient revenues to continue. Pastor Wendell and Rev. Catherine Barley, Incumbent at St. Mark's, talked and prayed together about the possibilities and challenges of merging. Serious discussions took place among parishioners. What would the new church look like? Will we lose our identity? No one will forget the Sunday when both churches voted separately, almost unanimously, to become one body. A formal bringing to and accepting of treasured objects belonging to Holy Cross was an event which affected all. Seasonal paraments, communion ware, the steeple bells, which in Holy Cross tradition, were rung during the saying of the Lord's Prayer, all have found their place.

Over the following two years, with the encouragement of Bishop Fenty and the Diocese of Toronto, and Bishop Michael Pryce and the Eastern Synod, work was done to construct a set of By-Laws which would reflect the Anglican Canons and the Lutheran By-laws. Rev. Catherine Barley, with the assistance of Rev. Rachel Dart, who had been Interim Pastor at Holy Cross, Pastor Wendell Grahman and others, led this significant undertaking.

We, the people of St. Mark's give thanks to Almighty God for planting that seed, nourishing it and bringing it to fruition. May He continue to guide and encourage us as we look outward to spread the good news of His unfailing love.

Jesus said, "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness." (John 12:46) May we be His light!

## **Companion of the Worship Arts**

The Companion of the Worship Arts is an honor bestowed on individuals in recognition of significant contributions to the worship life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Anglican Church of Canada (ACC).

Conferred in the ELCIC since 1996, the honour recognizes ongoing inspiration and encouragement to others, and service to God, through worship, spirituality and the arts. The honour is presented at the every-two-year National Worship Conference.

In 2014, in recognition of our growing full-communion relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada, two Companions were honored, one from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and one from the Anglican Church of Canada. This pattern continues for 2016.

The 2016 ELCIC Companion of the Worship Arts will be conferred at the joint ACC - ELCIC National Worship Conference, FORMATION & REFORMATION, to be held in Waterloo, Ontario, July 24 - 27, 2016 ([www.nationalworshipconference.org](http://www.nationalworshipconference.org)).

### **2016 Call for ELCIC Nominations**

On behalf of the ELCIC National Bishop, the Program Committee for Worship calls for nominations for the 2016 Companion of the Worship Arts. Nomination material must include:

- \*Biographical material locating the candidate in the life and ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.
- \*Reasons for the nomination including a list of the person's specific contributions to the worship life of the ELCIC. Examples may include international, national, synodical and local involvements.
- \*An indication of the ways the person continues to inspire and encourage others in the worship life of the church.
- \*Three or more additional letters of support from people familiar with the individual's contributions.

*Note: Current members of the Program Committee for Worship are not eligible for nomination.*

### **The Companion of the Worship Arts Medal**

The Companion of the Worship Arts medal was commissioned in 1995 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. It is the work of acclaimed artist, the Rev. Michael Mills, OSA, CWA. The image on the obverse is entitled "The Dance". The reverse bears the name of the recipient and the year.

### **Companion of the Worship Arts Laureates**

- 1996 - Paul F. Bosch, Waterloo, Ontario
- 1998 - Donald Johnson, North Vancouver, British Columbia
- 2000 - Margaret Harms, Calgary Alberta
- 2002 - Michael Mills, Toronto, Ontario
- 2004 - Eduard Riegert, Waterloo, Ontario
- 2005 - Elaine Nelson, Medicine Hat, Alberta
- 2006 - Debbie Lou Ludolph, Waterloo, Ontario
- 2008 - Karen Johnson-Lefsrud, Victoria, British Columbia
- 2010 - Robyn Simpson-Mohr, Camrose, Alberta
- 2012 - Jann E. Boyd, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- 2014 - Joy Berg, Edmonton, Alberta (ELCIC) and Graham Cotter, Warkworth, Ontario (ACC)

### **Nomination Process**

ELCIC nominations should be received by March 31, 2016. A parallel process is taking place in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Please send ELCIC nomination material to:

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