



The Eastern Synod Lutheran

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Volume 41



Reflections In The Dark

Rev. Riitta Hepomaki

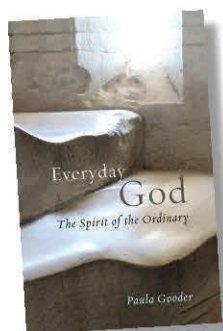
When I planted tulip bulbs late fall in the frosty soil, I was hoping that they would survive and beautify my garden the next spring. They did; they are hardy. They were the very first ones blooming after the snow had melted and they were as beautiful as I had imagined. What I couldn't envision, though, was how stunning they would look in the darkness. Sometimes on a sunny, warm day, while still beautiful, they look a little weary and I'm worried if they will start withering soon. But when the day light fades and the darkness falls, they fold in their petals and straighten up their posture. Their stems stand up-

right and the blossoms turn luminous.

While watching this astounding beauty and transformation in my backyard, I've been wondering if those times in our lives that we call "a valley of the shadow of death" can sometimes miraculously become a restorative to our faith. It is my hope that my faith, and yours, can turn luminous in the times of darkness. And even if we ourselves cannot see it happening, I pray that the little faith

that we have could miraculously reflect Christ's light to someone else.

"And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5.3-21)



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NEW!

ELCIC Praise APPEAL 2015

The theme for the 2015 ELCIC Praise Appeal, Liberated by God's Grace: Creation - Not for Sale, echoes The Lutheran World Federation theme for the commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. It invites us to explore the Lutheran understanding of the doctrine of justification and sets us free to serve our neighbours, to be responsible citizens in the world and faithful stewards of all God's creation.

Through your gift to the Praise Appeal, you help us fulfill this work through:

Our partnerships with KAIROS and the Anglican Church of Canada as we work in the areas of homelessness and affordable housing and responsible resource extraction;

Our partnership with The Lutheran World Federation and Canadian Lutheran World Relief as we work to support refugees around the world;

Our partnership with churches in Argentina and Peru as we help support ministry in indigenous communities within these churches;

Continuing the Call to Spiritual Renewal, working to deepen the discipleship of all our members and learning new ways to reach out in faith to those around us; and

Building better relationships with other denominations and faiths here in Canada, through the Canadian Council of Churches, and around the world through the World Council of Churches.

ELCIC congregations are asked to designate one Sunday to highlight this appeal. Eastern Synod office suggests Sun. Nov. 15, 2015 but feel free to choose a time that works best for your local circumstances. Our Eastern Synod goal this year is \$50,000.00.

For more information and resources go to <http://www.elcic.ca/PraiseAppeal/2015Resources.cfm>

Vacancies

St. Timothy's, Pembroke
St. Paul's, Richmond Hill
Mount Calvary, Ottawa
Peace Latvian, Ottawa
First Lutheran, Toronto
St Marks Midland Anglican-Lutheran
Grace, Eganville along with the parish of
Augsburg/Bonnechere

For more information please contact
Pastor Douglas Reble,
Assistant to the Bishop
dreble@elcic.ca



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Report of the Treasurer (To April 30th, 2015)

Offerings to Benevolence and Canadian Lutheran World Relief as of April 30th, 2015 continue to show modest increases compared to the corresponding period for 2014.

At its spring meeting, Synod Council established a \$50,000 target for the 2015 ELCIC Praise Appeal. More information about this national appeal appears elsewhere in this issue.

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

Our thoughts and prayers are with Rev. Ralph Weigold and his family as they mourn the loss of his mother, with Rev. Steve Weber and his family who are grieving the loss of his mother and with Rev. Mei Sum Lai and her family as they also mourn her mother's passing.

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Commemoration of Shoah

submitted by Jette Blair

On Sunday, April 12, St. Ansgar Church in Montreal had the honour of hosting the 36th Annual Christian Commemoration of the Shoah. The Holocaust is referred to as the Shoah which means the devastating storm. Every year on this day, Yom Hashoah, the Jewish community remembers this tragedy and shares their experiences. We were reminded that during World War II, the Nazis exterminated six million Jews. The speaker of the day was Judith Black, herself a Holocaust survivor. She told us about how she and her parents survived against all odds.

The event was organized by the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal (CJDM) with Pastor Samuel King-Kabu and Rabbi Ellen Greenspan presiding. Since 1999 the CJDM has held this event in a different location each year. Yom Hashoah has been officially recognized by the Quebec National Assembly since 1999.

We were honoured with the presence of MNA Kathleen Weil; NDG-Cote des Neiges borough mayor, Russell Copeman; Consul-General of Israel, Ziv Nevo Kulman, and many others.

After the service, which featured both Jewish and Christian segments, 7 candles were lit by seven representatives to remember all those lost during World War II.

We were then invited into Beck Hall where a feast of Kosher goodies was laid out for us all to share.

Pictured Judith Black



Check this out!

Here's a website recommendation from the Institute for Ecumenical Research forwarded to us by Rev. Sebastian Meadows-Helmer.

"It's a free online community for reading and discussing Luther's theology as preparation for the Reformation jubilee in 2017. We hope that actually *reading* Luther, as opposed to spouting off uninformed opinions about him, might help raise the general level of discussion in the next several years!" Sarah Wilson

<http://www.lutherreadingchallenge.org/>

Ministry Changes

Rev. Randy Liedtke retires from St. Timothy's, Pembroke on May 18.

Rev. Charlse Nolting finishes at Augsburg/Bonnechere parish on May 30.

Rev. Heather Spencer-Stoltz finishes at St. Ansgar & Redeemer, London on May 30 and begins at Trinity, Ayton on June 1.

Refugee Sponsorship in Hamilton

submitted by Wilma Seville

On Tuesday, April 21st, St. John's, Hamilton "Frauenhilfe" warmly welcomed the Canadian family of Zahra Muhsin who we are sponsoring through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees programme. Falastin Yassin, Zahra's sister-in-law gave a brief talk about the origin of their family group. Originally from Ethiopia, they transplanted to Somalia where the family lived for a long time. Other members of the family also spoke, including Fidel and Omar, who read the words Zahra wrote to an appreciative audience. Jennifer Ardon of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) was with them to explain about the sponsorship process.

Zahra and four of her children will be sponsored by St. John's for a one year sponsorship through the CLCW which is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder with the Canadian Government. Zahra is currently in Syria awaiting her interview with the visa office in Amman, Jordan. Once that is done, the visas will be issued and their flight out of Syria arranged. They will come to Canada as permanent residents and will be able to get OHIP right away. The church family is to befriend them and help them settle here. It is a lengthy process with many documents and background checks. CLWR will be given two weeks' notice of their arrival.

Zahra's family graciously provided some food from their Somali culture for us to enjoy. The tasty Somalia food, the yummy German tortes and the general acceptance of new people in our midst made an extremely pleasant afternoon for all those concerned. We welcome this Somali family of Ethiopian heritage to our church family. We look forward to meeting our sponsored family when they arrive.

