

The Eastern Synod Lutheran

Nov 20, 2014

Volume 46

Encouragement Welcome

All my years in the ministry I have been sensitive to the influence of the rhythms of life in the church and how I view my ministry.

For example, when November rolls around, it is possible to strike a responsive chord with many people by simply acknowledging how pressured one is feeling. Then it all comes out. The schedule for the majority of us is such that at this time of year our nerves are frayed, our patience is growing thin, and life feels too often like it is out of control. For years I would associate November with my annual cold. It hasn't happened yet but when it does I am sure it is my body speaking to me. Okay, full disclosure. I had my cold in September this year.

But that annual November cold was trying to tell me something that my head was unwilling to recognize. What I am learning lately is that this is not just an issue related to rhythms of life in the church. No, this phenomenon is common to life in general. For any number of reasons, we have a way of turning up the pressure on our lives in that space between September and December to the extent that our stress

thresholds are seriously threatened. By November, it becomes patently clear that we are pushing the envelope too hard. It can have a significant effect on the way our bodies react and on the way we view life. One more new challenge or one more new demand on our lives can evoke a response that we could very well regret later on. Recruiting volunteers should probably be outlawed in November - at least in a perfect world. And, yet, this is the time in many congregations when we are looking for those extra voices to help prepare the music of Advent or Christmas, people to help with the Sunday School Christmas program and more.

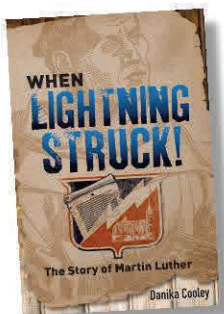
When life starts to feel like it is rocketing out of control - at home, at school, at work, at church - how does one rein it in? When it seems impossible to complete any task that you start because there are just too many demanding your attention, what do you need to hear that will bring stability back into the equation? In this self-help age, it is tempting to think that the answer to our struggle depends on ourselves and our own will power. But is it possible

that even in the management of our own lives, we fail to see the liberation that God has brought to us through Jesus? When life starts to feel like it is running out of control, we are usually too trapped to be able to help ourselves. In these times, we usually need the help of a voice outside ourselves that will give us the permission we need to stop the vicious cycle we get ourselves into.

We need the comfort of a gospel that reminds us that we are saved by grace and not by how fast we run. We need the words and music of the coming Advent season to pour over us and remind us that God did bring light into our darkness so that we can see the world differently. We need the encouragement of our sisters and brothers in Christ giving us permission to take a moment to catch our breath and know that the whole enterprise of our lives won't collapse because of it.

Even the rhythms of life can be demonic at times. They ought to be redeemed with the help of the grace of God more often than they are.

Peace to you all,
Rev. Douglas Reble
Assistant to the Bishop



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NEW

Mission Committee Approves Over \$360,000 Grants for 2016

Liz Zehr

The Eastern Synod Mission Committee met in late October to review the 80+ grant applications they received this year. Though the task at first seemed daunting, this dedicated group was able to read each application and approved funding for 55 of the applications, resulting in a total of \$369,350 of grant money distributed.

This year's applications covered a wide range of projects aimed at helping people from all walks of life. The following is a small selection of the short term projects being funded:

Children's Snack Pack Program
Support for Impoverished Seniors
Good Food Box Program
Newborn Necessities
Community Faith and Film
Interfaith Climate Change
Reaching out to Neighbours
Area Helping Hands
Community Meal Outreach
Strengthening our Community
Welcoming the Stranger
plus many more.

Long term partnership support is ongoing for several ministries with some new ones added this year including a three year mission outreach among immigrants and a partnership with the Six Nations Anglican Parish in response to the Eastern Synod Biennium Reconciliation Initiative.

During their two day meetings the mission committee also had a chance to spend time at thirdspace_ Community Ministry at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and at St. Peter's, Kitchener to hear about their TV ministry. Both of these ministries currently receive partnership funding through the Eastern Synod Mission Committee.

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

Benevolence receipts for 2015 continue to track modestly ahead of amounts received for the same period in 2014.

Offerings to CLWR are behind last year's pace due to a large \$81,000 one-time congregational donation in 2014, a decrease that has been partially offset by strong donations to the Nepal Earthquake (and more recently the Syrian Refugee) appeal in 2015.

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

Vacancies

Mount Calvary, Ottawa
St. Mark's, Midland
Trinity, Walkerton
St. Ansgar, London
South Dundas, Williamsburg
Faith, Port Elgin

For further information regarding these vacancies please contact Rev. Douglas Reble, Assistant to the Bishop.

dreble@elcic.ca

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WHAT
THEY
NEEDED**



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your church or online
at clwr.org/GFTH.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Rev. Christine Rehkopf and her husband Rob as they mourn the loss of her father, John Mussar.



2016 Bishop's Spiritual Retreat for Clergy

Reflections on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

January 31st – February 3rd, 2016

Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre

7021 Stanley Avenue, Niagara Falls ON L2G 7B7
(905) 356-4113

Spiritual Direction:

Bishop Michael Bird, *Anglican Diocese of Niagara* & Bishop Michael Pryse, *Eastern Synod, ELCIC*

Chaplains:

Bishop Susan Johnson, *National Bishop, ELCIC* & Dean Peter Wall, *Anglican Church of Canada*

COP21 CALL FOR BRAVE ACTION AND BOLD DECISIONS FOR THE WHOLE OF NATURE GOD SO LOVED

Just before Canadian Thanksgiving this year, forty people from the global North gathered above the Arctic Circle in Storforsen, Sami Territory, Sweden, to raise-up stories of how climate change is currently impacting lives of people in the Arctic. Why? Because it is understood that climate change evidence from the Arctic reveals what is to come for the rest of the planet, and that the experiences of the people of the North will become experiences common to all people if climate change is not checked. The hope is that the stories of lived impacts of climate change *today* would move to action the 40,000 participants expected at the upcoming world conference called COP21 in Paris.

What is COP21? Most adults have heard of the Kyoto Protocol (2005) and the Copenhagen Agreement (2009). These are outcome documents from meetings of the 196 International State governments and other parties working together on sustainability for the world. The "Paris2015" meeting is the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21).

The Parties have recognized how far reaching the implications of this particular November- December Convention might be and have been mobilizing "business leaders and investors" to draft a succinct outcome document (a protocol or agreement) that aligns with their interests. Yet these industrialized-nation COP21 representatives are disproportionately urban delegates living daily with mere ripples of climate change. Alternately the Indigenous Peoples who live closer to the land and are already experiencing waves of climate change are under-represented at COP21.

The Arctic delegates told important stories in Storforsen that few COP21 attendees have access to. They described food-chain insecurity all across the Arctic: fish flesh turning from healthy pink to a sickly yellow, caribou and mammals changing migration routes due to rising air and water temperatures and shifting ice conditions, herds of reindeer starving

in the pasture due to vegetation changes, deformed berries shriveling before ripening. And it's not just that food is harder to find, but it is also more dangerous to seek out food as travelling on the land, water and ice has become dangerously unpredictable. Increasingly people are eating overly expensive, salty, pre-packaged foods that deplete physical, mental, cultural and spiritual vitality. Both traditional knowledge keepers and scientists have described the devastating changes that are occurring.

We saw the connection between the suffering of the land and its effects on traditional livelihoods, the mental health, identity and well-being of all who live there. We were moved by the concerns youth have for their future and their cultural way of life. We heard of the ongoing dispossession of the peoples of the land from the land and acknowledged the responsibility to include peoples of the land in decision-making that affects the future of all.

There was a request to ask faith communities and people everywhere to rededicate themselves to stand in solidarity and support the peoples in the North, who are now already survivors and leaders in responding to climate change. There was a call to take brave action and make bold decisions on promoting climate justice.

At Storforsen we Christians were reminded that John 3:16 reads in the Greek *that God so loved the cosmos, the whole of nature, that God sent his only beloved Son...* We believe the spiritual roots of climate change point to a need for conversion, to repent from individual and collective patterns of consumption that put the creation and life at risk. This aligns strongly with testimonials from coast to coast in Canada throughout the 2015 Church Leaders Justice Tour, that climate change, Indigenous rights and poverty are inseparably intertwined and of concern to the Church today.

Climate Justice for the Arctic is a spiritual issue. We heard that all the land, all the cosmos is sacred, a sacrament, infused with meaning. Each being has a purpose. The purpose of each human being then is to be a responsible caretaker. All human beings are called to this priestly vocation.

The COP21 outcome document is already in pre-negotiation and will lead to international laws and policies that will affect us all. International Chief Wilton Littlechild pointed out in Storforsen that protections for the inclusion of the voices of women, intergenerational equity (youth and elders) and indigenous peoples may get dropped from the Paris outcome document in the effort to be succinct.

As such, Chief Littlechild, a TRC Commissioner, and member of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with colleagues in the Arctic Caucus, the Pacific Caucus, and the Women's Caucus, want the following paragraph made operative in the Paris COP21 outcome document:

All Parties shall, in all climate change related actions, respect, protect, and fulfil human rights for all, including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality and the full and equal participation of women, food security and intergenerational equity as well as a just transition of the work force that creates decent work and quality jobs and upholds the integrity and resilience of natural ecosystems

We are being asked to take action now with them to stand up for the voices of women, youth, seniors and Indigenous Peoples and realign COP21 for the sake of justice.

Readers are asked to please go to your email and send #MakeltOperative to MakeltOperative@aol.com. Or tweet, post, send out #MakeltOperative through your Twitter, Facebook or Instagram along with Chief Littlechild, Bishop Susan, Karen and Kata. Readers are encouraged to ask their contacts to take the action as well.

The intergenerational Future of Life in the Arctic Conference was sponsored by the Church of Sweden in partnership with the Canadian Council of Churches. National and Synodical Social Media will be providing updates from COP21 or friend the ArcticFuture Facebook page.

Rev. Karen Kuhnert

New Beginnings

submitted by Grace Saabas

Oct 4, 2015 was a day of new beginnings for a group of Lutherans in Montreal. The Finnish congregation had to move out of their church building and the proper closing service had been held. The question of where they would go was a problem until the Estonian church invited them to share their building. Rev. Matthew Anderson led the first joint service for the two congregations. Bulletins were prepared in Finnish, Estonian and English. Members of both congregations shared in the well-attended service which included communion, a baptism and of course lunch after. The service was definitely one of celebration and thanksgiving.

Moving forward, Pastor Anderson will have separate services for each group although there will be some shared services as well.

Previously, the Synod had organized meetings for Montreal Lutheran churches to discuss their mutual problems and to encourage the sharing of buildings and pastors. This sharing of space was a result of some of those meetings.

Over twenty years ago two congregations had joined together – Redeemer and Christ. Their pastors – Saabas and Anderson encouraged this union and it seems to be a good one. They share not only assets- but life- with all its ups and downs and they have learned, that for the union to work concessions must sometimes be made.

This article has been written so that the church at large can understand that change can happen but it does take some work and some adjustments may need to be made, but the Lord's work can go on.

Pictured upper right, Pastor Matt Anderson leads the first joint service.



OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sixteenth Biennial Convention

June 23 - 26, 2016

International Plaza Hotel
Toronto, Ontario

The Rev Wendell Grahman
Secretary, Eastern Synod of the ELCIC

The Finns of St. Michael's Church sponsored a meal at the old brewery mission. They paid the mission \$1500 to sponsor the meal and 10 of them helped to serve it to about 350 people.



2016 Atlantic Pastors' Conference

Liberated by God's Grace

Sunday, February 7 – Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Featuring: The Rev. Dr. Stephen Larson

Hosted by: Bishop Michael Pryse

White Point Beach Lodge Resort & Conference Centre

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*To register, visit: www.easternsynod.org.

Balance Owing \$00

St. Paul's Niagara Falls announced on Sunday November 15 that the remainder owing on the parking lot adjacent to the church, purchased in July 2014, had been paid in full. Together with the owner of the restaurant on the opposite side of the property, St. Paul's had made an offer to the city of Niagara Falls to buy the 30 car parking lot and after some negotiating, the offer was accepted. On Sunday the church re-joined, having paid off the debt in such a short time.

St. Paul's has been without a permanent full time pastor for over five years and is presently served by interim pastor Doug Schweyer on a part time basis. Now that they are debt free they will be able afford more complete pastoral services and concentrate their efforts on outreach to the community.

St. Paul's was founded in the late 1920's when the English District or the Lutheran Church Missouri synod sent Rev. Max Weisbach to explore the possibilities of establishing a Lutheran Church in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The church was indeed founded and Rev. Weisbach served St. Paul's for over 40 years. In the late 1970's St. Paul' joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada and in 1986 joined the newly formed Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Submitted by interim pastor Rev. Doug Schweyer.

Threat of Emergency Room Closure

Liz Zehr

When Rev. Ralph Weigold (New Denmark Parish, NB) heard through the local media the intentions of the hospital board and the Government of New Brunswick to close the local emergency department at Grand Falls General Hospital from 10 pm to 6 am he knew something needed to be done. If this were to happen critical emergencies of any residents during those hours would have to be sent to the regional hospital in Edmundston, an hour away.

He contacted a member of the Community Health Committee and after some discussion realized there

was no real plan to address the issue. He advised them that a petition would be one way to make the people of the area aware and to offer them, by means of their signature, a voice. Pastor Weigold then proceeded to start a petition in New Denmark. The committee then circulated petitions in other areas served by the hospital.

During a 2-3 week period, 11,500 signatures were collected. The petition was presented to Chuck Chiason, Victoria-La Vallee MLA who then in turn gave it to the Premier and the Minister of Health.

At time of writing, no final decision has been made regarding the closing of the ER.

Syrian Refugee Relief



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Find more information at www.clwr.org