

The Eastern Synod Lutheran

March 15, 2016

Volume 50



A Life Worth Living

It's interesting that while the Western Christian world speaks of Thomas as "doubting Thomas", the orthodox church of the east calls him "believing Thomas" in reference to his exclamation "my Lord and my God" after having seen Christ and touching his wounds! They choose to honour his exclamation of faith rather than his quite understandable – and temporary – expression of doubt.

Jesus, of course, honoured Thomas' questioning in a very special way! Think about it for a moment. He came back, just for Thomas! He'd already visited the others. He returned just for Thomas and said, "Peace be with you. Touch my hands touch my side. See and believe."

Friends, never, ever be ashamed of your doubts and questions. And let's be honest; if you don't have any, you are either kidding yourself or have fallen asleep. Frederick Buechner tells us that "doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving!" Indeed, more faith is often expressed in an honest doubt or question than in a pious platitude ut-

tered with barely a minimum of thought or conviction.

The disciples of old could not reveal Christ while they remained safe and hidden behind closed doors. Their witness couldn't even convince Thomas, one of their own companions! Neither will our witness convince modern day Thomas's so long as we claim a similar posture. Those who are seeking a new experience of faith will not be easily drawn to churches that comfortably assume the fact of their own relevance or give too-easy answers. Folks who are seeking a deeper experience of theological inquiry will struggle to maintain connections with faith communities that are intolerant of their questions.

We need to follow Jesus' example and open ourselves to the honest questioning of those who come seeking a new truth. We need to equip ourselves with the tools needed to engage in responsible and mature theological reflection, confident in the knowledge that our faith tradition is robust and strong enough to bear the weight of our critical self-reflection. Indeed, if that faith tradition is to carry any real authority, beyond mere lip-service, such reflection is of absolute necessity.

An old saying tells us that ships that remain in the harbour are safe ships. But that isn't what ships are made for! The same is true for the ship that is the church. It can remain safe in the harbour; disciples can remain safe, locked away behind closed doors. But that's not what this ship has been made for and that's not what disciples are made for.

Like Thomas, a spiritually hungry world is pleading "Show us your wounds." They are looking for a body of believers that resembles Christ's

Body, a church that is visibly following Him in the way of the cross. And unless we are serious about providing that kind of a witness, all our busy chit-chat about evangelism and outreach is really just a lot of self-serving, empty talk.

We are about to enter the season of Easter – the season of resurrection and new life. It's an opportune time for us to take a good hard look at the witness we are providing. It's an opportune time for us to join with Thomas in His great confession "My Lord and my God!" It's an opportune time for us to reveal the crucified and risen Lord and thereby reveal a life truly worth living!

Bishop Michael Pryse



**Eastern Synod Assembly 2016
Watch for Details!**

Online Registration now open. Go to easternsynod.org and click on the Synod Assembly button.

NEW!!! Election of Eastern Synod Delegates to the 2017 ELCIC National Convention will take place at Assembly 2016. Nominating info and forms available on our website.

Just 5 weeks left!

Deadline is April 23/16.

Our Oldest Living Donor

submitted by Jeff Pym
Evangelical Lutheran Foundation of
Eastern Canada, Executive Director

Our database said the year of birth was 2013 – that couldn't be right! But could it really be 1913? Did we have a donor who was 102 years old?

Indeed we did, and since then Della Kilbey has celebrated her 103rd birthday. As far as we know, that makes her the oldest living planned giving donor in the Eastern Synod, if not the entire ELCIC.

Della moves around her home in a retirement residence in Cambridge, ON with the aid of nothing more than a cane. In spite of severe vision loss, she finds her way to the dining room and common areas by counting the number of steps, which she has memorized. It was only four years ago, at age 99, that she moved from the house that she had lived in by herself ever since her husband Eddie died some 25 years ago.

Born in Chesley, ON and raised in Kitchener-Waterloo, Della moved with Eddie to Preston (now part of Cambridge) in 1954 "following the work". Both husband and wife found employment in the shoe factories that were once a prominent industry in the area.

In those days life revolved around the church: St. Peter's in Preston. With a group of women who became close friends, Della served in a variety of ways. "We cooked food for the church suppers, we taught vacation Bible school – we were the hands and feet of the church", she says with a laugh.

Her niece reminds Aunt Della that she was always careful about spending money. "We paid cash in those days for everything, and if we didn't have the money for something we just did without." Asked why she decided to include a gift to the church in her will, Della replies "I just thought I should do it."

Behind that simple comment lies an obvious affection for the church she has belonged to for more than 60 years. Although her near-blindness makes it difficult to attend St. Peter's, she keeps up on church news by

having someone, either one of her nieces or a visiting communion minister from the congregation, read her the monthly newsletter.

At age 103 Della Kilbey's general health is good. With normal hearing, a remarkable memory and a ready laugh, she is a delightful person to chat with. More than that, she gives every indication of remaining our oldest living donor for some time to come.



Report of the Treasurer (2015 Final)

Last month Eastern Synod Treasurer Keith Myra provided a high level summary of 2015 offerings that were remitted to the synod office for Benevolence, Canadian Lutheran World Relief and the ELCIC Praise Appeal. In this issue Keith has included a more complete overview of 2015 from a financial perspective, including operating fund income, operating fund expenditures and the good news of a small year-end surplus.

Click on this [2015 Financial Summary](#) link for details.



ETHIOPIA DROUGHT APPEAL

*Without urgent help,
millions of people are
in danger of starvation.*

*Please donate today.
clwr.org/donate*



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

Our thoughts and prayers are with Rev. James Dookram and his family as they mourn the loss of his wife Lucille.



Have you checked out the worship blog recently?

There you will find:

- Holy Week and Easter resources compiled by Kathryn Smith
- Continuing Education Ideas:
 - National Worship conference July 24 – 27
 - Festival of Homiletics, May 16 - 20
 - Valparaiso, Vocation & Worship, April 4 – 6
- Augsburg Fortress resources website
- Inshallah.ca

Check it out!

<http://easternsynod.org/ministries/worship/>

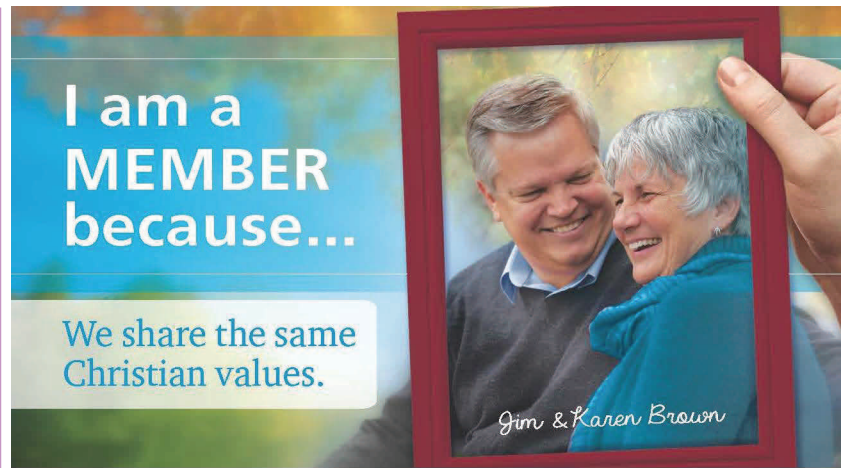
Vacancies

St. Mark's, Midland
Grace, Oakville
Faith, Port Elgin
First, Toronto
Christ, Waterloo
South Dundas, Williamsburg

All Saints, Newcombville
St. Luke's, Rhodes Corner
Mount Olivet, Upper LaHave

St. Matthew's, Sudbury
St. Timothy's, Copper Cliff

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



To learn more visit
faithlifefinancial.ca

 **FaithLife**
FINANCIAL

Chilly Half Marathon submitted by Peggy Read

For many years the Chilly Half Marathon has run past Holy Cross Lutheran Church on Lakeshore Road. A few years ago we decided that instead of being upset about getting hassled about driving down Lakeshore on our way to church we would offer to do something for the runners. Kelly Arnott offered to let us be a food station for the runners, handing out chunks of banana and oranges to help hydrate and keep up the runners' energy. It turned out to be a great success! The runners really appreciate the boost of energy and encouragement from our team on the road, and Pastor Colin comes out after worship to feed the flock as well. We are a team of young and not so young members who have enjoyed serving our community and caring for the runners. This year, to add to the fun and get others involved who can't stand on the road with us, we decided to yarn bomb the trees in front of the church. Volunteers knitted and crocheted many metres of leftover yarns into scarves for trees. We hope that the scarves will also put a smile on the faces of the motorists driving by the church.



The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine is inviting young women to spend a year living in "God's rhythm."

A limited number of women aged 22 to 40 are invited to live with the Sisters at St. John's Convent in Toronto where they will experience a life of prayer, study, recreation and service to others.

Beginning in September 2016 the women will live in the convent's guest house and take part in the Sisters' daily life including four worship services a day. They will also spend part of each day in study either at the convent or at Wycliffe College. Their room, board and daily expenses will be paid by the sisterhood and they will have Mondays off.

This is an amazing opportunity for young women wondering about their vocation to grow in their spiritual life and to develop skills that will be useful in whatever ministries they may be involved in.

For more information about "Spend a Year Living in God's Rhythm: Companions on the Way,"
<http://www.ssjd.ca/companions.html>

spend a year living in
God's Rhythm

*Do you have a desire to experience
life in community,
rooted in prayer and service?
Do you want to learn monastic values
that will profoundly shape your spiritual life?*

*The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine invites women
aged 22-40 to travel as companions along an
ancient path for one year, beginning September, 2016.*

For more information and application forms
contact Sister Constance Joanna
cj@ssjd.ca or 416.226.2201 ext.316
www.ssjdcompanions.org





More than 20 confirmation candidates from 10 Eastern Synod [congregations gathered](#) at the seminary recently to have some fun while learning about Holy Week. Cameron, of St. Mark's in Kitchener, plays the role of Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross for Jesus during one of the activities.

Towards right relations with our Indigenous neighbours

Skulking through hallways and dark places that were the breeding grounds for countless haunting memories, two-dozen seminary students recently got glimpses into the lives of former Indian residential school students.

On a [daylong exploration](#) of various sites around the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory and Brantford, Ont., seminary students wound their way through the Mohawk Institute, a former Indian residential school that housed about 15,000 children from the time it opened in 1831 until its closing in 1970.



WLS photo, Courtesy of the [Woodland Cultural Centre](#)

The field study was just one of the seminary's most recent efforts to forge closer relationships with our Indigenous neighbours. During the Eastern Synod Assembly in 2014, delegates made pursuing closer relations with Aboriginal Peoples a

synod-wide priority.

At the seminary, our outreach to our Indigenous neighbours has led to many warm friendships and wonderful collaborations. To name only a few, we have: Incorporated content by Indigenous authors into our courses; hosted Indigenous speakers in many of our classes; included Aboriginal Peoples in our [liturgies](#); have been regularly reading Truth and Reconciliation recommendations at midday prayers; and are offering an Indigenous Spiritualities course this spring.

But, in truth, the list is incredibly long!

As your seminary, we are happy to be a resource for your congregation. If you would like our thoughts on how you can forge closer relationships with your Indigenous neighbours, feel free to contact us at seminary@wlu.ca



[Lenten Meditations](#), on display until 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 23, is part of the Art on the Wall program run by the seminary's [Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song](#). Our worship leaders and faculty members often draw from this artwork during their services and for their classes. Lenten Meditations is open weekdays 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., and some weekday evenings.

Photo (detail) by Mary Lynn Muir.



Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

Events

Big Sing!

Join us in Keffer Chapel at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16, for an evening of singing, fun, and fellowship in the spirit of Iona Community songfests. Students will be leading [an eclectic, ecumenical evening](#).

Organized by course instructor **Hilary Seraph Donaldson** and hosted by the Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song.

Faith and Politics Matters

John Milloy, assistant professor of public ethics and co-director of the seminary's Centre for Public Ethics, delivers a [public lecture](#) in Keffer Chapel at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22. Building upon arguments outlined in Faith and Politics Matters, a collection of essays edited by Milloy, he highlights the value of ensuring that faith-based perspectives are welcome in the public square. David Pfrimmer contributed a chapter to the book. A reception following the lecture will serve as the local book launch.

Publication

Congratulations to **Brice Balmer**. Brice, assistant professor in spiritual care and psychotherapy, has a chapter in the recently published book [Conversations on Fethullah Gulen and the Hizmet Movement: Dreaming for a Better World](#) (Lexington Books, 2016). Brice's chapter is entitled A Muslim and Christian Interfaith Imperative: Stewardship of Creation: Islam in the Contemporary World: The Fetullah Gulen Movement in Thought and Practice.

Contact us

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Seminary stories: Mirko Petricevic, mpetricevic@wlu.ca

We Care...

N E T W O R K



ONTARIO BALING DAYS

April 4-6, 2016

Donated goods and volunteers are urgently needed!
Help send necessities to families seeking safety in
Mauritanian refugee camps.



Beginning April 1, 2016, We Care kits, quilts and blankets can be dropped off any time at the back loading area of the **Christian Aid Ministries of Waterloo (CAM), 3260 Bricker School Line, Wallenstein, Ontario**. Please include a We Care shipping label on all boxes of donations. This year's shipment will support the Lutheran World Federation's Mauritania program.

Volunteers are needed to help sort, pack and load the container on April 4-6. Contact CLWR to sign up!



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

Creating a world where people live in justice, peace and dignity

1.800.661.2597 (CLWR)
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clwr@clwr.mb.ca

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 youtube.com/CLWRvideo