



# The Eastern Synod Lutheran

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## Safety Pin

Rev Riitta Hepomaki



You may have seen someone wearing a safety pin and if you are not active

on social media you may wonder why. Safety Pin is a silent campaign against racism. It's a symbol of solidarity with immigrants. According to Guardian.com Allison (whose last name remains unknown), an American woman who lives in London as an immigrant, started this campaign after the Brexit vote in Britain saw the rise of hate crimes toward minorities.

After the US election the safety pin campaign landed on our continent and we see posts on Facebook and tweets on Twitter. Wearing a safety pin says that with you people are safe regardless of their background, race, sex, sexual orientation, social status etc. The pin, however, is not meant to be just an empty gesture. By wearing it you promise to stand up against any form of racism.

I have to say I was a little perplexed with this symbol at first. I thought wear-

ing a cross, showing that I am a Christian, would show clearly where I stand. That's naïve of course. I know that the symbol that is meant to represent all-inclusive love and grace of God, all that Jesus promoted and fought for, does not speak to all the same way it does to me. Sadly, quite the opposite, sometimes it is used to exclude, marginalize and ostracize. I have to relent that wearing a cross may not be enough. Maybe I should start wearing both a cross and a safety pin; saying that I am a Christian and you are safe with me.

I am an immigrant in this country. Even though Canada is one of the friendliest countries to immigrate to the immigration process is quite exhausting. It took two years for us to complete the process. The first year went to gathering all the necessary documents. They wanted certificates from all the schools we had graduated from, names of the employers we had worked for, birth certificates, a divorce certificate, and police checks from all the countries we'd lived in for more than six months. They wanted to know the names of our parents and siblings and where they reside. We had to list all former addresses since we were 18 years old. They also

needed to know how much money we had. I cannot remember how many pictures of a certain size we had to take. We needed references from people about our language skills. We needed a certain number of points to be called "skilled workers". And after all this we needed to go through a thorough medical checkup.

I think because of this rather arduous process I became more thankful to God. I reflected spiritually on the process with its misfortunes and I could see that it is indeed much easier to "immigrate" to God's kingdom than to the countries of this world.

In order to enter God's kingdom, you don't need to worry if your passport is valid or if you have enough money in your bank account. You don't need to be in good health or have a good reputation. God doesn't ask for resumes or references. God doesn't count points or care what language you speak or even if you speak at all. God just welcomes you simply because God loves you. There is no quota of how many people God can take to the kingdom- the more the better. There is no waiting list, no processing times, and no uncertainty.

For that reason- with me you are safe.

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FROM THE  
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WHAT THEY  
NEEDED!**

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at [clwr.org/GFTH](http://clwr.org/GFTH).

**One Refugee Family and Five Churches At Work**  
 submitted by Barry Parsons

In 2015 the call to open Canada's door to refugees fleeing from their tormented lives in the Middle East was clear. Government, churches and private groups responded to this appeal. Christ Lutheran, Peterborough, with financial assistance from our Eastern Synod, became part of this movement. We had some experience in doing this having sponsored a Vietnamese boat family in the 70's and a Somali family in the 90's in partnership with St. Barnabas Anglican church. This time we became partners with four Anglican churches in Peterborough, and with representatives of the United Church. Working through AURA (Anglican United Refugee Assistance) in Toronto we were given the Naseri family of 4 who had fled Iran and had been living in Turkey for about 2 years. After months of sending off paperwork, organizing our committee members to deal with the many tasks to assure that all essential needs of a newly arrived refugee family were in order, and fund raising, we welcomed the Naseri's when they arrived in October 2015. They have lived, until recently, in a home provided by the Sisters of St. Joseph, but are now in their own rental home, which they really love. Ahmad (father) and Nasrin (mother) have been attending English classes at Fleming College, Nadir 15 year old son goes to TASS high school, and Nadia 11 year old daughter goes to King George Public School where they get extra help in English. All are doing very well, and are becoming part of the community. There are challenges that are still to be dealt with, some minor health issues, job searching,

and accommodating their religious needs. The Naseri's are Kurdish, who follow the Yarsan branch of Islam. This makes them "infidels", like us, in the eyes of true Muslims, and consequently they are not part of that growing community in Peterborough. The refugee committee has been conscientious in keeping in contact with the family, celebrating birthdays, Canadian holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Canada Day), and also sad times with the death of Ahmad's mother in Iran. Fortunately there are a handful of other Iranian families in Peterborough that have become true friends to the Naseri's. Members of the refugee committee have become extended family members, always welcomed in their home, always offered the traditional tea, and sharing a meal.

The refugee committee has successfully managed the arrival and settlement of this delightful family. We have made decisions that are working well, finances are not a problem for our year long commitment, and we have made some plans for the future.

That future is something to contemplate and pray about. We hope that Ahmad, Nasrin, Nadir and Nadia will stay in Peterborough, that they feel they are contributing citizens not only to Peterborough but to Canada. We hope that Ahmad, who recently got his temporary driver's license, will find employment which he really enjoys, that Nasrin adds to her already great homemaking skills, that Nadir and Nadia get as far as they can in their formal education.

We have worked hard and well at this, but our inspired effort was worth it.

Pictured right: The Naseri family

**GIFTS FROM THE HEART**

**IT'S JUST WHAT THEY NEEDED**



Change lives this Christmas

 Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Find your catalogue at your church or online at [clwr.org/GFTH](http://clwr.org/GFTH).



The following is a paid advertisement.

**Celebrating 500 Years of the Reformation & Life of Luther Tour**  
 with Waterloo Lutheran Seminary Prof. Dr. Bob Kelly  
 May 12-21, 2017, 10-day tour in Germany.

[www.Tourmagination.com/tour/luther500](http://www.Tourmagination.com/tour/luther500)





## Vacancies

Faith, Brantford, ON  
St. Matthew's, Kitchener, ON  
Trinity, New Hamburg, ON  
St. John's, Petawawa, ON  
Peace, Pickering, ON

For more information please contact  
Rev. Douglas Reble, Assistant to the  
Bishop. [dreble@elcic.ca](mailto:dreble@elcic.ca)

Our thoughts and prayers are with the  
family and friends of Elaine Grosz,  
wife of the late Rev. Roy Grosz as  
they mourn her passing.

Rev. Riitta Hepomaki, Assistant to  
the Bishop will be going on sabbat-  
ical beginning April 13, 2017 for 3  
months.  
Upon her return in the fall, she'll fill  
in on all she achieved.



Canada Lutheran-  
a gift that lasts the  
whole year through.

Contact Barb  
[bwiebe@elcic.ca](mailto:bwiebe@elcic.ca)

## 2016 Murray Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations and blessings!

Malcolm Allcorn  
St. Matthew's, Welland

Alexander Arth  
First, Port Colborne

Arianna Christenson  
Zion, Sault Ste Marie

Alexander Emrich  
St. Peter's, Cambridge

Kristiina Frechette  
St. John's, South Porcupine

Katelyn Inch  
Trinity, London

Jessica-Lea Weichenthal  
St. Stephen's, Palmer Rapids

Thank you to our donors.

The following is a paid advertisement.

## EUROPEAN REFORMATION TOUR 2017



**Oct. 28-Nov. 9, 2017**

Join Pastor Kevin & Gail Baglole

in Wittenberg on **Oct. 31, 2017** for the  
**500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation.**

We will travel over 11 days from Berlin to Munich,  
following the development and the lives of the the 16<sup>th</sup>  
Century Reformers, their cities and notable sites,  
including being in Wittenberg, Germany on Oct. 31, 2017.  
Renew your Baptismal vows in the Church where Martin  
Luther was Baptized!

\$3419 per person with a 10% discount if you book  
**BEFORE** Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Includes: 11 breakfasts, 7 dinners, guided tours, luggage  
transfers and many opportunities for free time  
to explore on your own.

Excluded: flights\*, meals not specified, gratuities,  
and items of a personal nature.

**CONTACT** Kevin – [kjbaglole65@cogeco.ca](mailto:kjbaglole65@cogeco.ca) or call  
905.865.4686 for more information or to book your spot



*\*Group Flights may be arranged in January 2017*

# Sing the circle wide!



## Inshallah celebrates 10th anniversary

Congratulations to every member of the Inshallah community choir during the past decade; to everyone involved in the creation of the songbook *Sing the Circle Wide*; to all who participated in the celebration and book launch at St. John's Lutheran Church in Waterloo on Nov. 5 (especially those adorable [Inshallah Kids!](#)); and, of course, to Debbie Lou Ludolph for bringing this amazing choir and community into the world! The day included reminiscing, workshops, a banquet and evening celebration. The \$3,000 in donations collected will go towards sending songbooks to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and for scholarships for Palestinian students. View [more pictures in our album](#) or at [inshallah.ca](#)



## Government House leader speaks on faith in public life



Our thanks to Bardish Chagger, MP for Waterloo and government House leader, for speaking at our Nov. 8 breakfast. Chagger shared personal stories of being raised in the Sikh religion, and how her faith helped her through difficult times on the campaign trail. About 30 people attended the event which was organized by the seminary's [Centre for Public Ethics](#). Visit our Facebook [photo album](#) to view more pictures.



## Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

### Holy Land study tour

Every second year we lead the Face to Faith study tour of the Holy Land. Experience the places, explore the Scriptures, and meet the people of three Abrahamic faiths. In 2017, our tour will take place April 30 to May 14. For details or to register for information visit our [study tour web page](#).

### Stitching Our Prayers

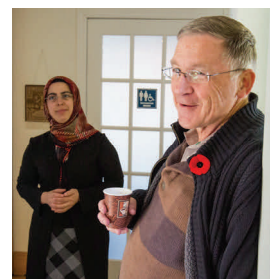
Quilts from parishes across the synod will be [exhibited at the seminary](#) starting Nov. 30.

### Circle of Dialogue

We host the next instalment of our twice-yearly Circle of Dialogue on Dec. 12 from 2-3:30 p.m. This year's theme is [Indigenous and Islamic Perspectives on Water](#).

### Glebe Centre open house

The Delton Glebe Counselling Centre thanks everyone who attended our friend-raising breakfast on Oct. 20, and all who dropped in during our Nov. 4 open house.



Selda Sezen, one of our therapists (pictured above), toured Ken Seiling, Chair of the Region of Waterloo, through the centre.

### Contact us

Events: Dorinda Kruger Allen, [dkrugerallen@wlu.ca](mailto:dkrugerallen@wlu.ca)

Seminary stories: Mirko Petricevic, [mpetricevic@wlu.ca](mailto:mpetricevic@wlu.ca)