



The Eastern Synod Lutheran

www.easternsynod.org



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Boosting Our Quotient of Courage and Imagination

Bishop Michael Pryse

In this time and place, the contexts in which we engage in ministry are undergoing massive change in virtually every regard. Our churches don't exist in spiritual bubbles and changes within society and culture will, by necessity, change our ministry context. It can't be avoided. Whether it be shifts in population patterns, the rapid pace of technological change, socio-economic dislocation, changing immigration patterns, generational shifts in spiritual priorities or our 24/7 media culture; we and our ministries are impacted. And it really can't be otherwise.

As I visit with our synod's congregations and rostered ministers I am experiencing steadily increasing levels of anxiety and fearfulness among us. A great many of our congregational systems and their leaders are both stressed and distressed. Participation levels are decreasing. Financial capacity is declining. Physical assets are crumbling. A lot of us are afraid that "the ship is going to go down on our watch," a prospect that interjects a toxic whiff of shame into an atmosphere already chilled by the

deadening emissions of our collective fears and anxieties.

In the face of such realities, there is a great need for us to work at rapidly cultivating two character traits - courage and imagination - which, admittedly, are not the first characteristics most of us would identify as being particularly dominant in our present church culture!

The theologian Karl Barth described courage as being "fear that has said its prayers." Some of the fearfulness we experience is quite understandable. There is much about present circumstances that are scary! That does not mean, however, that fearfulness is an acceptable posture that should be allowed to stand unchallenged. Left unchecked, fear is paralyzing. It can, however, be prayerfully transformed into courage by diving deeper into the well of our tradition's primary spiritual practices - by "saying its prayers!" Do you live within a too-fearful congregation? If so, I would suggest that you seriously engage Bishop Johnson's call to Spiritual Renewal. You can learn more about it at this link. <http://elcic.ca/csr/default.cfm>. My guess is that you will see a significant change in the ratio of fear to courage in your congregation's life.

I also maintain that these spiritual practices can spark a much needed rejuvenation of our churchly imagination as we seek to renew the nature of our shared discipleship. And do we ever need it! Nineteenth century American clergyman and abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher once described faith as being "spiritualized imagination." Faith-filled people are spiritually imaginative. The Scriptures and the pages of

church history are rife with countless such testimonies. Think about the Reformation whose 500th Anniversary we are commemorating this year. What an incredibly courageous and imaginative response to the most fearful of times! Conversely, there are as many examples wherein a fearful and anxious people experience a reduction in their capacity to courageously imagine new possibilities and options. Which end of this imagination spectrum is most representative of the churches that you know best?

Here's the deal, folks. Most of the societal changes that have challenged the status quo of congregational life in the past fifty years are due to forces and circumstances that are well beyond the capacity of any individual Christian or congregation to change or alter. We can't replicate the 1950's. But you know what else is true? This has always been the case. Societal and cultural change is a constant that always has and always will be.

Where the church has historically distinguished itself in its engagement of that ever changing context for mission has been in those times and places where it's been most courageous and imaginative. Our forebears in the 1950's actually did that and addressed their new post-war context with great courage and imagination; it's an amazing story! It remains to be seen whether we will similarly distinguish ourselves in this time and place. I suspect that a committed effort toward experiencing renewal in our primary spiritual practices might be a place for us to begin to find that out.

Mark Your Calendar!

Earlier this year, Bishop Susan Johnson sent out a letter advising of proposed changes to the **Letters of Call** and of new documents that better clarify the relationship between rostered ministers and congregations. These documents are posted on the ELCIC website.

<http://www.elcic.ca/Leadership/lettersofcall.cfm>

The letter stated, "It is our hope and expectation that these proposed changes will enhance the quality of our vocational relationships and deepen our bonds of mutual care and accountability."

We invite Congregational Council Chairs, Congregational Treasurers and Rostered Leaders to a 75 minute presentation to review the content of these documents, chaired by Bishop Michael Pryse and facilitated by Lisa Thiessen, ELCIC Group Services Inc.

Please choose one of these options to attend at

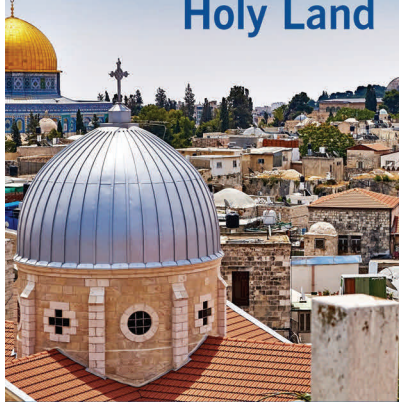
Christ Lutheran Church
445 Anndale Rd,
Waterloo, ON N2K 1P8
Monday June 19, 2017
at 1:30 pm (EST) or
at 7 pm (EST)

or join us via Facebook live stream. You can find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ESynodELCIC/>

Report of the Treasurer (To March 31st, 2017)

It's still a bit early to predict that current trends will continue over the remainder of the year, but as of the end of the first quarter, offerings remitted to the synod office for Benevolence are tracking 4% ahead of the comparable period in 2016 while offerings to Canadian Lutheran World Relief are 25% behind. For details refer to [Report of the Treasurer](#) or go to <http://www.easternsynod.org/> and click the Treasurers/Financial Info button.

Global Encounter to Jordan and the Holy Land



JANUARY 18 – FEBRUARY 1, 2018
Visit clwr.org for details



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

Vacancies

Faith, Brantford
St. Matthew's, Kitchener
St. Peter's, Ottawa
Advent, Toronto
Bethany, Woodstock

For further information please contact Rev Douglas Reble, Assistant to the Bishop, dreble@elcic.ca or call 1-877-373-5242.



**We wish you all a
Blessed Easter**

Training Opportunities Available

Apple Tree:

This is a one day workshop tailored for congregations who are interested in enhancing their mission.

It's purpose:

- * raise mission consciousness
- * help develop mission-focused congregations
- * help congregations implement new mission activities

Workshops are done in Ministry Areas where a cluster of congregations are invited to participate.

Communication Workshop:

Newsrooms across Canada are shrinking. So how can we increase the chances of our stories being picked up and told by journalists?

Mirko Petricevic, Director of Communications and Public Affairs at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary provides tools that can help us spread our stories through the traditional news media and, in turn, across social media platforms.

Mirko has already facilitated one workshop in the Atlantic Area and is set to go to the Ottawa Area in May.

Turning Point:

There comes a time in the life of a congregation when people realize the future is not going to look like the past.

Turning Point is designed to help congregations identify their options. Guided by facilitators, congregational leaders and members participate in methodical exploration of choices:

- * people– will we stay together as a congregation
- * pastor– will we have a pastor under full-time call
- *property– will we keep our current land and building

If you are interested in learning more about any of these opportunities please contact Rev Riitta Hepomaki, Assistant to the Bishop. rhepomaki@elcic.ca

COMMON PRAYER ~ *from Conflict to Communion*

submitted by Karen Bowman



On March 26, 2017, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Listowel was filled to capacity as congregants from St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Listowel, gathered with members of the Listowel/Wallace Lutheran Parish, to commemorate the 500 years of the Reformation. Under the direction of Rev. Ralph Dwarika and Father Keith Morrison, adult members from each congregation participated in thought-provoking readings depicting how mutual understanding and trust between Lutherans and Catholics have grown over the years. As the ecumenical journey continued throughout the service, Lutheran and Catholic communicants participated in the lighting of candles, meaningfully emphasizing the commitment between both faiths to grow in communion with one another.

The creative humour and wit, genuine friendship, and mutual respect both Pastor Ralph and Father Morrison share with each other was truly evident as they opened the service, immediately drawing each congregation in with the other. The people then joyfully entered into the spirit of the day, 'raising the roof' of St. Paul's with exultant singing of familiar hymns of praise, love and faith. A bonafide sense of exuberant joy prevailed throughout the service; at the end the Lutherans and Catholics together enthusiastically visited with each other discussing their feelings of genuine delight in how joyously the two faiths united as fellow Christians. A time of comradeship and refreshments followed in St. Joseph's Parish Hall at which time the members from each parish once again chattered incessantly with one another discussing how joyful, personally rewarding and uplifting the day had been, many expressing thoughts of reuniting in a year's time to once again join in worship together. It was indeed a day of celebration of the Christian faith all will remember and treasure for many years to come.



VISUALS FOR WORSHIP — FREE

Submitted by Debbie Lou Ludolph

Images of beautiful linoleum block prints by Elizabeth Steele Halstead available free for use in worship.

Each image of the 27 images is an original linoleum block print resulting from a printmaking process in which an image is drawn on a block of wood covered with a thin layer of linoleum and then hand-carved to expose areas that will be white. Ink is rolled onto the block, covering the surface not cut away. Paper made from the mulberry tree is laid on top and hand rubbed with a Japanese barren or wooden spoon. In transferring the ink to the paper the resulting image is a reflection of the design placed on the block. All first appeared in the book *Visuals for Worship* (Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2006) which is no longer in print.

[linoleum block prints](#)

When using an image please include the following acknowledgment: "Linoleum block print by Elizabeth Steele Halstead."

Go to easternsynod.org/Faith in Action/Worship Ministries Blog





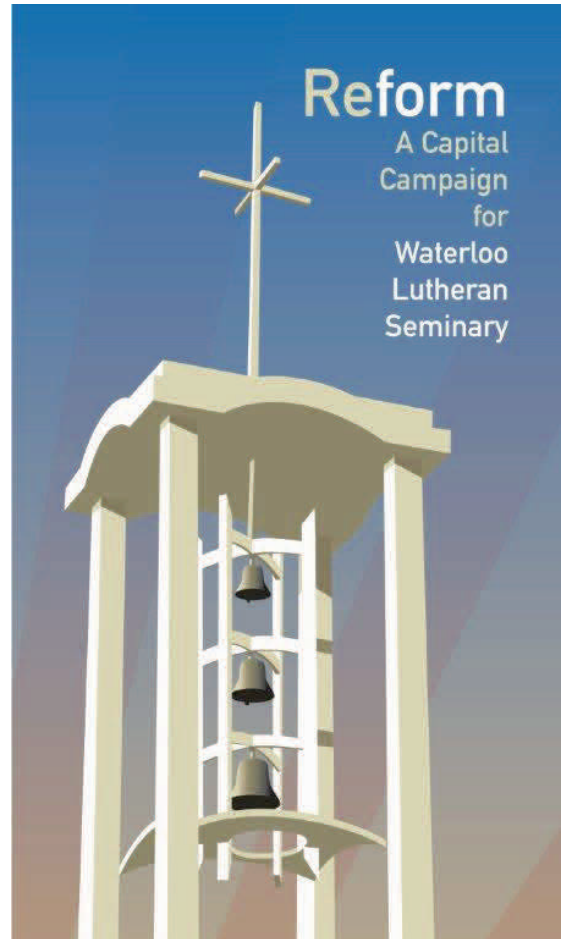
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

April 2017

Reform Capital Campaign underway

We're delighted to announce the launch of our Reform Capital Campaign! The campaign is designed to raise \$1.5 million toward the \$9-million renewal and modernization [announced in TESL](#) in June 2016. **Don Stockman**, below left, is our Reform Capital Campaign chair. **Heather Main**, right, is deputy chair. They have deep roots at the seminary: During the early 20th century Don's grandfather, pastor Otto Stock-

mann, served as an officer of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada. Heather's grandfather, Ray Houser, served as seminary principal when the current building was built in 1963. Our thanks to them and also to **Tom Bishop**, a board member and media professor at Conestoga College, for designing our campaign materials (brochure at right). For details about the renewal project, visit reformcapitalcampaign.ca



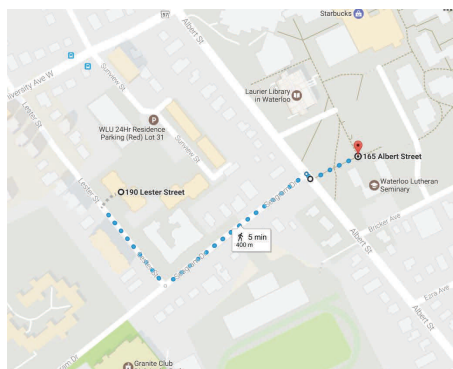
Seminary office to relocate until summer 2018

At the end of April our faculty and staff will be moving out of the seminary building, which was dedicated in 1963, so that work crews can begin the construction phase of our \$9-million renewal and modernization plan.

We're planning to move back into the refurbished, and slightly expanded, building in the summer of 2018.

In the meantime, our business office will be located at [190 Lester St.](#) above the Beckett School at Laurier, about two blocks from the seminary.

For more about our new location, office hours, construction project timeline, parking and more, please visit our information [web page](#).



Golf tournament suspended

We regret to say that, due to the demands of preparing to relocate to our temporary offices, the annual Friends of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary Golf Tournament is suspended for this year. While we are sorry to disappoint those of you who have so avidly supported us over the years, we hope you will join us on Thursday, May 24, 2018, when the tournament resumes.

Contact us

Events: Dorinda Kruger Allen, dkrugerallen@wlu.ca

Seminary stories: Mirko Petricevic, mpetricevic@wlu.ca