



The Eastern Synod Lutheran



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Something Christ-like

The version of Christianity that appears in the media often embarrasses me. It's narrow, sectarian, exclusive, and sometimes mean-spirited. So it was a joy to find in a back issue of the "New Yorker" magazine an article by American novelist Ian Frazier about a church being a church in the best sense.

Frazier conducts a weekly writing workshop at a church soup kitchen in New York City and he regularly encounters gifted men and women who, for one reason or another, are homeless and hungry. The Church of the Holy Apostles is a landmark, with a high arched ceiling and gorgeous stained glass windows. Over the years the Episcopal congregation (what we call Anglican in Canada) dwindled in size as the neighbourhood changed until the 200 members could no longer afford to pay the bills to keep it going. A new rector suggested that "if Holy Apostles is going out of business, it might as well do some good before it does."

So in 1982, the church launched a free lunch program. Thirty-five people showed up. The program grew and attracted more people and outside support. In a few years the church was serving 800 lunches daily and bursting the seams of its mission house.

In 1990, during roof repairs to the main sanctuary, a fire broke out that caused major damage. During insurance covered restoration and renovation, and while the pews were out, members came up with an idea. Why not leave the pews out and use the worship space, which was empty and unused Monday through Friday, for the lunch program?

Now the church is serving 1,200 meals a day. Volunteers do most of the work. They take the tables down on Friday afternoon and set up folding chairs for the weekend. The budget is now \$2.7 million, which come from businesses, foundations, the city - and 200 members who, instead of closing down a church, are part of a vital and compelling community of faith.

The program rules are simple : no proselytizing and no one turned away. If anyone wants more food, that person can go outside, stand in line, get another ticket and eat again. Frazier asked Elizabeth Maxwell of the Holy Apostles' staff about the religious motivation behind the program. She said: "Well, we do this because Jesus said to feed the hungry. There's no more to it than that. Jesus told us to take care of the poor and hungry and those in prison. In all the intricacies of scriptural interpretation that message - feed the hungry - could not be more clear.

Those of us at Holy Apostles feel we have a Sunday - Monday connection. The bread and wine of the Eucharist we share on Sunday becomes the food we share with our neighbours during the week."

There has long been an important debate in the church about whether its mandate is to feed the hungry or to address the social, economic, and political structures that cause people to be hungry. We are in a major global food crisis, the reasons for which are complex. I got only a sense of that when I was in Ethiopia last January with the CLWR Global Encounter. It is a crisis that ultimately will not be addressed by food aid alone. If you want to take Jesus' moral imperative seriously, sooner or later, you have to think about politics and economics.

In the meantime, it is important that the world see in the church something of the kindness, compassion, and justice of Jesus which is behind the advocacy for social, economic, and political change. It's a matter of both/and.

Maybe the world would find churches more interesting and compelling if they showed something of the love of Jesus in their lives and practices. Maybe there is no more important and life-giving strategy for every church than finding something Christ-like to do. Something for us to reflect upon as we begin a new calendar year. Something for us to act upon as a church being in mission for others.

Grace and peace to you all,

Rev. Douglas Reble
Assistant to the Bishop
Eastern Synod, ELCIC

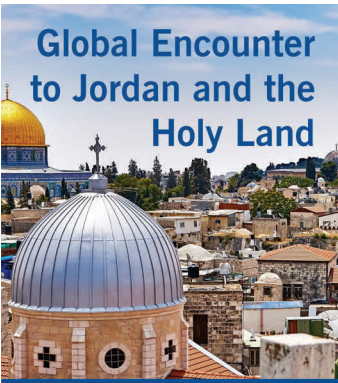
Recognizing Outstanding Contributions of Rostered and Lay Members in the ELCIC

The ELCIC *In Mission for Others* Leadership Award recognizes the outstanding contributions of rostered and lay members in service to the wider church. This award will be introduced at the 2017 ELCIC National Convention as part of our commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and will be presented to individuals committed to advancing the mission and ministry of the ELCIC and demonstrating leadership *In Mission for Others*.

For information on the criteria, nominations and other details, please visit:

<http://elcic.ca/In-Convention/2017-Winnipeg/LeadershipAwards.cfm>

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Rev David Granskou who passed away Dec. 19, 2016.



Global Encounter to Jordan and the Holy Land

Experience the religious, cultural, social and political context of Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian West Bank. Visit clwr.org for details.



Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Bridging Communities Through Song

Saturday, March 4, 2017

1 pm—3 pm

For more information go to

<http://www.easternsynod.org/calendar>

Diaconal Sunday

February 26, 2017

Resources will be available soon at www.elcic.ca

We welcome Edwin Jack Wiesner to our synod family. Born Dec 30th to proud parents Pastor Rob and Kyla Wiesner.

H.U.G.S.

Helping Us Grow Spiritually

A weekend retreat for women of all ages. Sponsored by Women's Ministry of the Eastern Synod.

May 26-28, 2017

The event takes place at the Kempenfelt Conference Centre located just off Hwy 400 in Innisfill, ON (Just outside Barrie). Two guest speakers will be featured; Ruth Smith Meyer, an inspirational writer and speaker and Brenda Byers, a story teller by profession.

The conference centre, on beautiful Lake Kempenfelt, is situated perfectly for outdoor activities which are included in the weekend (weather permitting).

For registration information check the calendar on the Eastern Synod website at easternsynod.org

The cost for the weekend including meals is \$250.00 per person based on double-occupancy. If you do not wish to share a room you can elect to have a single room for an additional \$100.00 for the weekend.

Every woman welcome.

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Art on the Wall



Our thanks to Catherine Dallaire for sharing her artwork with us. The exhibition [Inawendiwag - They Are Related To Each Other](#) will be on display through Jan. 26. Here's what she says about her work: "The pieces in Inawendiwag are all very different to each other, yet the connection between all of them can clearly be seen. The harmony between all the pieces despite their differences not only points out their connection to one another, but is symbolically representative of the relationship between nature and ourselves. Humanity is part of the natural world despite its attempts to separate itself from it, or see itself as a separate

entity." The piece above is titled Teachers of Harmony. View the exhibition weekdays from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., and some weeknight evenings. Upcoming exhibitions include Art and Vespers: The Crack Where the Light Gets In from Feb. 1-22 with vespers on Feb. 12 at 4 p.m.; and Living Water: Photographs by Members of the Foto:RE Collective from March 1-29, with brief introduction on March 1 at 5:50 p.m., immediately after the Open Door service. The Art on the Wall program, a project of the [Kanata Centre for Worship and Global Song](#), is designed to stimulate conversation in our exploration of faith and justice through visual art.

Protecting water

Our thanks to Elder Myeengun Henry

(left) and Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald (right), National Indigenous Anglican Bishop for the Anglican Church of Canada. They spoke at [Protecting Water Through Prayer and Resistance: Witness from Standing Rock and Line 9](#) on Monday, Jan. 16. About 80 people attended to event.



Catherine Fife's dog chills

Catherine Fife, MPP for Kitchener-Waterloo, and her dog Ollie will be joining us for Chilling With Dogs at the seminary Wednesday, Jan. 25.

Abrahamic Faiths Forum

[Abrahamic Faiths Forum](#) will explore the concept of suffering from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives. All welcome. Wednesday, Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. The forum will be preceded by a [multifaith service](#), held in conjunction with United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week, beginning at 5 p.m.

Office closures

In order to help us prepare to vacate the seminary building by the end of April, ahead of construction for our \$9-million renewal and modernization project, we will be closing the seminary office at noon on Fridays until further notice. For more about our renewal project, see the June 2016 [TESL](#).

Contact us

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