

Canadian
Association of
Lutheran
Congregations

CALC

— Proud History of
Canadian Lutherans Who
Chose to Take a Stand

In 1986, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC) and the Lutheran Church of America - Canada Section (LCA-Canada Section) merged forming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). The ELCC was both conservative and evangelical. The LCA was more liberal both theologically and socially. Some felt that it should have been a merger of the ELCC and much more conservative Lutheran Church Canada-Missouri Synod (LC-C). The ELCC had emerged in 1966 as an autonomous body arising from the Canadian congregations of the American Lutheran Church (ALC). Article 3 (Confession of Faith), the “unalterable” portion of CALC’s Constitution came from the ELCC/ALC constitution, word for word the same as the Confession of Faith of the American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC). The AALC was formed on November 7, 1987 as an alternative choice for churches in the American Lutheran Church (ALC) denomination who did not want to be part of the merger with two other Lutheran church bodies, Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and American Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC), which formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Shortly after the merger creating the ELCIC in 1986, groups of pastors and laypersons came together in an organization called the Confessional Lutheran Fellowship (CLF)¹. CALC shares an affinity with this pre-existing Lutheran evangelistic movement. These folks met together a number of times in dynamic yearly conferences seeking to speak for Biblical ethics and morality and against the new merged Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada’s (ELCIC’s) convention motions proposing to adopt a general pro-abortion stand.

CLF distributed quarterly a publication called “Table Talk”. Biblical pastors and laypersons presented articles to CLF-subscribing individuals and congregations promoting a Biblical and Lutheran confessional theology, Biblical pro-life and pro-family values. Conservative and evangelical pastors and laypersons participating with the CLF saw these issues as part of a far greater issue - the affirmation of a clear Biblical position, without apology. The minimizing of the authority of Scripture was the real issue for ELCIC conservative and evangelical pastors and laypersons. Maintaining a stand on the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions became increasingly difficult - even with the continuing leadership of folks such as former ELCC

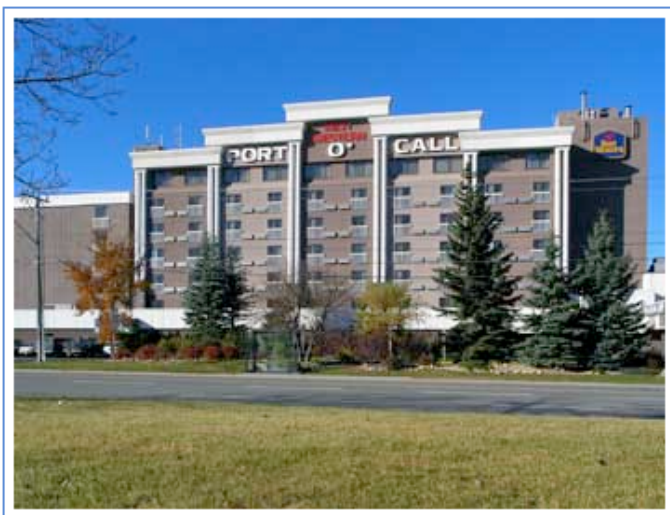
president, Rev. Dr. Ted Jacobson, former CLBI president, Dr. Arnold Hagen, “The Good Shepherd” editor, Pastor Oscar Summerfelt, psychiatrist and medical doctor, Dr. John Lefsrud, and former missionary, Ella Loberg.

This was in the contrast to the pro-gay blessings propaganda and ordination of gays propaganda promoted by individuals and some members of the church hierarchy in the ELCIC using gay rights organizations like Lutherans Concerned/North America to promote their agenda. At that time, all pastors and congregations were asked to participate in “studies on homosexuality”. Instead of strong Biblical presentations, their presentations sought to glorify sociological aspects of abortion, homosexuality and subtly minimized or sought to excuse the Biblical content. The key issue dividing conservatives and liberals was clearly their differing views and understandings of Scripture and Scriptural interpretation.

Those involved in the early formative years of CALC included Rev. Ken Wilsdon, Rev. Verne Roste, Rev. Norm Miller, Rev. Terry Sauder, Rev. Daniel Deyell, Rev. Dr. Arnold Hagen, Rev. Dr. George Evenson, Philip Brose (lawyer), Olive Kieler, Bill Anhorn, Dr. Garth Wagner and several other laypersons. CALC began informally on 7 October, 1991 when a group of concerned Lutherans, about 50 laypersons and pastors, representing 15-20 Lutheran congregations in western Canada, gathered together in Calgary with a vision for a kind of Lutheran church different from what they were experiencing. Those who came together at that meeting desired to establish a middle-of-the-road, theologically conservative church with an emphasis on Scriptural authority and the Lutheran Confessions. A model was seen in the center ground previously held by the former Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC). Several seminary students present at the meeting shared concerns about the teaching and practices at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon. Five seminarian students had documented examples of teaching by various professors being contrary to Scripture and Lutheran doctrine. As a result, the students were subjected to removal or notification that there would be no provision of an internship position (a prerequisite for becoming a pastor in the ELCIC) upon graduation. Subsequently, four of the five students who had taken a stand challenging the seminary’s teaching left the

seminary. A motion was made that an association be formed, with the older ELCC constitution being used as a model, and, as well, a motion to pursue federal incorporation. A Steering Committee was formed to develop a constitution and bylaws. Members of the Steering Committee included Rev. Vern Roste, Dick Harvey, and Olive Kieler from BC, Rev. Norman Miller, Garth Wagner, Guenther Mook, and Rev. Arnold Hagen from Alberta, and Rev. Ken Wilsdon, George Cooper, and Richard Zimmerman from Saskatchewan. The minutes for this formative meeting concluded with the following notation by Olive Kieler, who acted as secretary, "Here we stand, we can do no other! Praise the Lord."

The participants' vision for a new Lutheran Synod included such values as the importance of autonomy for local churches, conservative social ethics positions, a commitment to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant Word of God, a commitment to the church's evangelistic mandate, and an openness to the sovereign working of God's Spirit. In drafting a new constitution, the designers endeavored to take into account what was learned from problems experienced within the ELCIC so as to possibly avoid going down the same path. An information meeting was held March 27-28, 1992 in Calgary.



On the 30th and 31st of October, 1992, a constituting convention was held, appropriately, at the "Port of Call" Inn in Calgary, attended by over 100 delegates. Thereby, an unincorporated national church body, calling itself the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregation was established, composed of congregations and individuals wishing to come together for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Saviour and risen Lord, to hold fast to the

Scriptures, rightly to administer the sacraments, and to live lives of faithfulness and service, all in accordance with Lutheran tradition, teachings and confessions.

The opening service, "A New Beginning", began with the following prayer that for CALC, "Coming together in Christ is a beginning; keeping together in Him and His Word will be progress; serving together in love and humility will be success". The message was brought by Rev. Dr. Duane Lindberg, the first president (1987-1999) of the American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC). Greetings were brought by Rev. Jim Winters on behalf of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations-Canada (AFLC-Canada). A letter of greetings was read from Rev. Edwin Lehman, the first national president of Lutheran Church-Canada (LC-C), which was autonomously organized in 1988. Special thanks were expressed to lawyer, Phil Brose, for all he had done on CALC's behalf.



CALC's first Executive: Left to right: Rev. Terry Sauder, Rev. Vern Roste, Olive Kieler and Bill Anhiorn.

Officers elected at the constituting convention were Rev. Vern Roste, President; Rev. Terry Sauder, Vice-President; Olive Kieler, Secretary; and Bill Anhorn, Treasurer. Elected to the Board of Elders were Dr. Garth Wagner, Harold Stedel, and Lavera Erickson. Elected to the Board of Trustees were Dennis Petersen, Henry Wiebe, and Joyce Bergh.

The first meeting of CALC's National Council was held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, an LC-C church, in Calgary on January 16, 1993.

The guest speaker for the 2nd Annual Convention (Nov. 1993) held at the FCJ Christian Life Centre in Calgary was Dr. Norman Lund, President of the AALC Seminary in Minneapolis, MN. Another

special guest, Pastor Arnold Hagen, gave an update on the Confessional Lutheran Fellowship (CLF).

Rev. Vernon Roste was the president of CALC from the beginning of the life of the church body. He guided the organizing and the development of CALC for two years before the constituting convention. Part of his duties took him to Ottawa with Edmonton lawyer Phil Brose where they guided the Charter Bill for the organization through Parliament.

The original petitioners for an act to incorporate CALC, as well as being the provisional governing body, were Garth Wagner, Harold Stedel, Olive Kieler, Rev. Vernon Roste and George Cooper. On June 15, 1994 Bill S-5, an act to incorporate the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations received Royal Assent, becoming a truly “made in Canada” Lutheran body and not a branch of another country’s church body.

This resulted from a private member’s bill (S-5) originally introduced in the Senate by the Honorable H.A. “Bud” Olsen (1925-2002) who later became the 14th Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, 1996-2000. Mr. Olsen also provided invaluable assistance in arranging appointments for Rev. Vern Roste and Phil Brose to meet many members of parliament from various parties in order to ensure support and quick passage of the bill. Mr. Art Hanger, who at the time was a member of the Reform (now the Conservative) Party of Canada and represented the riding of Calgary Northeast, introduced the bill in the House of Commons. Ms. Deborah Grey, Reform MP for the riding of Beaver River outside Edmonton, moved the bill in place of Mr. Hanger for second reading in the House of Commons. She concluded her speech in the House of Commons as follows: “The organization is intended to have two functions. First, it will act as a denomination for congregations wishing to join it. As well, there may be associate members, either persons or congregations, agreeing with the goals, aims and theology of the association. This association seeks a return to Lutheran roots with its emphasis on Scripture, missions and Lutheran theology”. In summary, within two weeks the bill cleared the parliament of Canada - the Senate (June 8, 1994) and House of Commons (June 14, 1994) - and received Royal Assent (June 15, 1994). Rev. Vern Roste gratefully reported, “Phil and I met for prayer several times and it was truly a delight to work with Phil and see the Lord open doors”.



H.A. “Bud” Olsen



M.P. Art Hanger



M.P. Deborah Grey

The following are excerpts from the message of CALC’s first president, Rev. Vern Roste, contained in the first (Jan./Feb. 1993) issue of CALC’s (at-that-time-unnamed) newsletter:

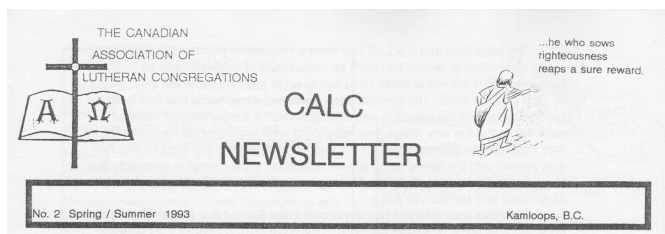


“Many things have happened since our Constituting Convention (October 30/31, 1992). I have been busy with numerous phone calls, personal visits and letters as clergy and lay people have contacted me regarding CALC. There were two negative letters received, but neither had any names attached. Otherwise, it’s been with much interest and great approval for CALC. My estimate is that nearly 100 contacts have been experienced.

One evening I had so many calls that I realized that there were many unhappy people in difficult situations crying out to God for an organization such as ours. (Read Acts: 6:1-10) Many are convinced that the ordination of practicing homosexuals is an eventuality. Others claim that they haven't heard a gospel message for a long time. While most are lamenting the erosion of the authority of Scripture, the rapid spread of extreme use of Inclusive language and New Age teachings, repeatedly the conversation concluded with, 'We are just waiting to see what transpires at the '93 ELCIC Convention in Vancouver'...Let all of us be captured by a sense of mission in the Lord's service. Just think that we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. There are no accidents in the Lord's economy, but there are glorious opportunities. Interestingly, one ELCIC Executive phoned and said to me, 'Vern, I believe that CALC is timely in that so many of the ELCIC congregations are in tension.' He spoke of two camps being at loggerheads so that neither can pursue its agenda He continued, 'It would be good to go separate ways and get on with our different programs.' So let's dare to be Daniels and take our stand for the authority of Scripture, for renewal and for evangelistic outreach. To God be the glory."

The "eventuality" referred to by this missive from CALC's first president finally was realized some 18 years later at the 2011 ELCIC National Convention in Saskatoon.

The following excerpt from *The President's Epistle* appeared in the second (Spring/Summer 1993) issue of CALC's newsletter:



"My adventure into C.A.L.C. has been an incredible journey. There had never been plans to launch into such an undertaking. However, I was so dismayed at the silence of those I had looked up to and had expected to be pillars for God and His word. The consternation deepened when some that had been avowed conservatives began to switch allegiances...What a freeing experience it has been to no longer have to contend against the radical vision of the liberals but simply to press on with the task of the church and preach His word in

truth and purity. Thankfully, I can remember former pastors, teachers and leaders who have now gone on to be with the Lord. Their stand upon the Word, their love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and witness in their walk, stir me afresh. When I went to church under such men of God, it was with the expectation to hear from God and be given a needed challenge. As we pick up the threads of C.A.L.C., once for all delivered to the saints, we continue the tapestry of the church the fathers planned. A church woven into God's design is our desire and prayer. Join hands with us prayerfully and perhaps once more we will be able to sing, 'Faith of our fathers, living still'."

The minutes for the 3rd Annual Convention held Nov. 2-5, 1994 in Kamloops recorded, "Much thanks and praises to God for our lawyer Phil Brose



Philip H. Brose, LL.B., today

and MP Bud Olson for their invaluable help. God answers and walls fall away. We now have our National Federal Charter." At that convention, Rev. Dan Deyell became Vice-President, succeeding Rev. Terry Sauder.

Due to health reasons, Rev. Vern Roste retired as the president of CALC and Rev. Terry Sauder was elected president at the 4th Annual Convention held at Christ Lutheran, Sexsmith, Alberta, October 27-28, 1995. Also elected was Lowell Lovrod, replacing Bill Anhorn as treasurer. The guest speaker, Rev. Arnold Hagen, spoke on the convention theme "Let God Arise" based upon 2 Chronicles 6.



Rev. Terry Sauder during his term as President of CALC (1995-1999).



Members of CALC's 2003 National Council: Left to right (back row): Dave Muir (Vice-President), Art Kroeker, Bob Becker, Roger Plested. Left to right (front row): Fred Krause (Treasurer), Janet Muir (Secretary), Rev. Daniel Deyell (President) and Garth Wagner.

The 7th and 8th Annual Conventions were held July 1998 and July 1999 at the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute (CLBI), Camrose, Alberta. For its 2012 General Convention, held for the first time in Ontario (Toronto), to enhance the time for teaching and fellowship, the format was changed to include an extra day (Friday) as a time for education.

Past presidents of CALC:

- Rev. Vern Roste (founding) - 1992-1995
- Rev. Terry Sauder - 1995-1999
- Rev. Daniel Deyell - 1999-2003
- Mr. Dave Muir - 2003-2006
- Mr. Roger Plested - 2006-2009
- The current president, elected in 2009, is Rev. Edward Skutshek (Grace Lutheran, Kelowna, BC).

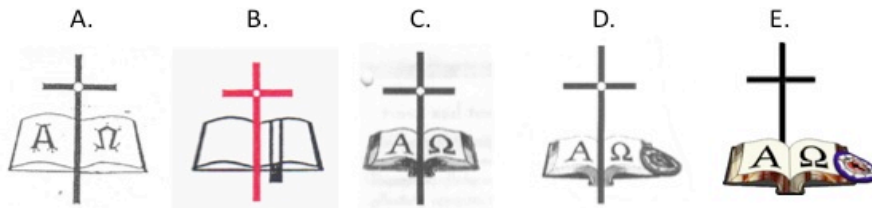


Above, CALC President, Pastor Ed Skutshek, making a point at a recent National Council meeting in Calgary. Board of Elders member, Art Kroeker, in the foreground listening attentively.

In issue No. 11, 1996, of CALC's newsletter, *The Lutheran Connector*, CALC's President at that time, Rev. Terry Sauder, advised, "We need patience for the present; it is in age that fruit is produced. Our organization is young. In time the fruit will come. In the Lord we flourish, expecting fruit to come in the Lord's season". Over the last seven years CALC has grown from four congregations to thirty-three with congregations now in five Canadian provinces: BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

Name	Member Since
St. Andrew's, Kamloops, BC	1992
Christ Lutheran, Sexsmith, AB	1994
Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB	1997
Journey's Lutheran, Grande Prairie, AB	2006
St. Peter's, Cochrane, AB	2007
Grace Lutheran, Kelowna, BC	2009
Faith Lutheran, North York, ON	2009
Martin Luther, Vancouver, BC	2011
Resurrection Lutheran, Pembroke, ON	2011
Peace Lutheran, Wainwright, AB	2011
Sharon Lutheran, Irma, AB	2012
Golden Valley, Viking, AB	2012
Trinity, Leader, SK	2012
Good Shepherd, Toronto, ON	2012
All Saints, Ottawa, ON	2012
Basel Hakka, Vancouver, BC	2012
St. John's, Preeceville, SK	2012
St. Matthew's, Cornwall, ON	2012
Bardo Lutheran, Tofield, AB	2012
Immanuel Lutheran, Stony Plain, AB	2012
Emmanuel Lutheran, Edmonton, AB	2013
Good Wood Uxbridge, Uxbridge, ON (A CALC mission congregation)	2012
Vancouver Chinese Lutheran	2013
Salem Lutheran, Kingman, AB	2013
Trondhjem, Round Hill, AB	2013
Calvary Evangelical, Wetaskiwin, AB	2013
St. Peter's, Sullivan, ON	2013
Mount Calvary Lutheran, Mission, BC	2013
Asker Lutheran, Ponoka, AB	2013
Immanuel, Parkside, SK	2014
Bethel Luthertan, Marwayne, AB	2014
Faith Lutheran, Calgary, AB	2014
Victory Lutheran, Medicine Hat, AB	2014

CALC was formed to provide a quality Biblical Lutheran home denomination for ELCIC pastors and provide a totally Canadian Lutheran ministry opportunity that is comfortable and familiar to ELCIC pastors and congregations both in structure, polity, worship and fellowship. CALC was formed to be unapologetically Biblical, conservative, confessional, evangelical, mission-oriented, prayer focused, and accepted as a part of the greater conservative and evangelical Lutheran world.



History of CALC's Logo

As shown in Figure 1, CALC's logo evolved over time.

Figure 1. Evolution of CALC's logo over time.

CALC's first secretary, Olive Kieler, provided the first draft of a logo (A.) for CALC (circa 1993). This logo design was likely modeled after an early logo (B.) used by the American Association of Lutheran Churches (AALC).

By circa 1995 Rev. Dan Deyell had improved on the design so the logo (C.) had a more three dimensional form and alpha and omega symbols placed on the two sides of the open Bible, an appellation of Jesus in the Book of Revelation ("I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" - Rev. 22:13). Within the same year, Rev. Dan Deyell had further improved on the logo (D.) by adding the Luther rose on the right hand side, which brings us, with some positioning of the cross, to CALC's logo as it exists today (E.).

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- 1) The brief history of the Confessional Lutheran Fellowship (CLF) was provided by Pastor Norm Miller.

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Contact Us

Anyone wishing further information about CALC or wishing to join, please contact us. Written copies of the Constitution and its by-laws, additional educational and informational materials and copies of our newsletter *Lutheran Connector* are available from the address below. As well, additional information can be found at CALC's web site www.calc.ca. Our members are available to meet with your congregation to answer any questions and to provide any further information.

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