

The Lutheran Connector

The Official Publication of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)

The Spring Edition – May 4, 2012

2012 CALC NATIONAL CONVENTION, FAITH LUTHERAN - NORTH YORK, ON



*CALC is a Community of Independent
Congregations Living Together*

*The Word of God Created Us
The Word of God Sustains Us
The Word of God Redeems Us*

*We are servants of one another
We share one another's burdens
As Jesus served us and bore our burdens*

As one we proclaim Jesus to the world

Being the host church for the CALC National Convention is not a small endeavor. While it is a significant undertaking, it is also a wonderful privilege and joy to serve our brothers and sisters across this great country with whom we are united under Christ.

Pastor Harry Huff of Faith Lutheran anticipates a fantastic convention and shares the following:

'The 2012 CALC national convention, is being held in Eastern Canada for the very first time this year, from Friday, Nov. 2 to Sunday, Nov. 4th. It will be co-hosted by Faith Lutheran Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, in North York, Ontario (Greater Toronto Area).

The local committee has been meeting during the last few months, and has come up with the theme: Shepherding the Faith (the importance of equipping the saints to do the ministry of the church).

A leadership learning event will be held in conjunction with the convention, also taking place in North York, on Friday, Nov. 2nd.

Registrations Brochures will be made available and distributed at a later date.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Times Are Changing

Change is all around us. We see it every time we look in a mirror. The mirror tells us that our appearance changes a tiny bit every day and over a lifetime the change which occurs is phenomenal. We begin life completely dependent on our parents. We have no recollection of our birth and have dim recollections of our very early years. However, our minds and bodies change incredibly over those first five years of life. Our bodies and roles in life continue to change as we grow into our role of son or a daughter. During the next thirteen years we mature into a young adult. We move from being dependent to becoming more independent. In the next phase of life we take on a job, trade or profession. We become a bride or groom and we take a spouse. We become a couple, intimate partners, who build a life and family together and vow to be faithful to one another and share all that life will bring. We become parents and raise a whole new generation of people. As our years advance, we reach a tipping point, and from that point on our bodies begin to deteriorate. Hips, knees, teeth and other body parts may be replaced. Medication regulates our blood pressure, blood-sugar and blood cholesterol and thus keeps us going. However, despite all this intervention, we become weaker. Depending on our constitution and lifestyle, as we age we become dependent (some more and some less) once again on the kindness of family and others for life. Then one day the heart stops, as does the breathing, and we leave this life. Christians believe that a very big change occurs at this point: *we see the face of God and eternity begins.* Civilizations and cultures change in the same way our bodies change. Our world is littered with the remains of civilizations which rose and fell before us. The fall of one superpower gives rise to the next superpower. Our North American culture has risen and it will fall, unless the Lord returns before that end comes.

The Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC) came to be as a direct consequence of change. Beginning in the early 1990's, the leadership of the ELCIC put forward teachings which called into question their continued commitment to the authority of the Word of God over matters of faith and life as set forth in the Lutheran Confessions and the ELCIC's governing documents. Many within the ELCIC did not hear the Good Shepherd's voice in these teachings. The charter members of CALC fled the leadership and teaching of the ELCIC as a consequence of these teachings. CALC began with two charter congregations in 1994. The charter congregations were St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Kamloops, British Columbia and Valhalla Lutheran Church, Valhalla Center, Alberta. In the intervening years our membership has grown. We are at sixteen (16) congregations, as of the date of this edition of the Connector. CALC's ranks grew by eight congregations during the period from January 2011 to April 2012. In view of the rapid growth that CALC has experienced over the past sixteen months and the continued growth which is on the horizon, it is necessary for us to talk about "**change.**"

Change is not optional – it is inevitable. It is inevitable that CALC will change in the decades to come. This change will be shaped by forces outside of CALC, including the actions taken by other church bodies and the ebb and flow of societal life. Changes in CALC will also flow from the changing internal dynamics of our Association. As new congregations join, they will bring with them new gifts and opportunities for growth in our Association. However, as exciting as change is, as new congregations and individuals join CALC, a potential for the creation of friction exists which can impede our growth. While change is inevitable, how we respond to change is optional. It is thus necessary to incorporate how we deal with change in the very mission and vision of our Association. To this end we must first look at how we respond to inevitable changes. We respond to change in one of four ways, we either: ignore it, embrace it, avoid it, or resist it.

Ignoring Change: It takes time and energy to confront change. We do not have the time and energy to address every change in attitude and behavior in our society or church. Some changes in attitude and behavior turn out to be mere fads that disappear without any effort from those who may in principle be opposed to the change. We simply have to ignore some changes relying on the fact that they will go away by themselves. However, there are several problems associated with ignoring change.

Some changes in attitude and behavior do not fade away with time. Some changes in attitude and behavior actually catch on, and when they do, can possibly alter the fabric of our society and the faith and life of the church. We ignore such changes to our peril. The new teachings in the ELCIC on human sexuality, marriage and ordination began as teachings on the fringe of the Church, among the radicals. We believed that the Scriptures and our Confessions were clear and unequivocal. We believed the normalization of homosexuality could not happen in the Lutheran Church. These radical new teachings were taught in the ELCIC's seminaries in name of "good academic practices." These teachings caught on and moved from the fringe to the very center of the faith and life of the Church. The new teachings trumped Biblical witness which flowed from the very creation of our world.

Some change can actually be good for us and ignoring this change can also be to our detriment. This quote penned by Reverend Douglas Horton (1891-1968) speaks of the perils of ignoring a positive change: "*As the fly bangs against the window attempting freedom while the door stands open, so we bang against death, ignoring heaven.*" In many ways Martin Luther was like the fly Pastor Horton described. Luther wanted to avoid death and eternal damnation. He was taught by the Roman Church that salvation was won from God by a life which conformed to the law. He tried to conform his life to the law and failed again and again. In holding to the teachings that salvation came through obedience to the law, Luther ignored the Gospel of grace and forgiveness through faith. God did not leave Luther in his miserable state. One day, God permitted Luther to experience true righteousness, which came from faith in Christ (Romans 1:17). This revelation changed Luther, he stopped flying into the glass and instead turned and walked through a door that had been opened to him. Sometimes ignoring change can mean we lose sight of an opportunity for a new way of living and new freedom.

Embracing Change: Niccolo Machiavelli (1479-1527), made the following observation about change: "*Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times.*" Machiavelli was an Italian historian, philosopher, humanist and writer based in Florence during the Renaissance. He was a founder of modern political science. He was a diplomat, political philosopher, playwright, and a civil servant of the Florentine Republic. Machiavelli was a good politician, and we follow his advice today. Politicians who want to be popular accept change, embrace it and conform their conduct to it. However, it is not that simple; some change is good for us and should be embraced. Advances in medicine, engineering and production techniques have revolutionized our lives and have made life better for billions. Those who encouraged positive change have become our heroes and have paved the way for more positive change. However, accepting and embracing change has its downside. Change sweeps us along into uncharted waters. We very often cannot know where change will lead. Some change, while seemingly good and progressive, has turned out to produce side effects which wipe out any benefits. Drugs that were given to pregnant mothers to combat morning sickness performed without fail and took their nausea away. However, these same drugs caused birth defects in the developing babies. The anti-nausea drugs were eventually banned. If change hurts rather than heals, those who accepted and embraced the change and urged others to follow them become villains and have caused people to question even positive change.

Avoiding Change: Have you ever heard this quote from your mother, father or grandparent as a response to your announcement that you were going to try something new: *'If your friends jumped off a cliff, would you, too?'* The roof is high up and gravity is a harsh mistress. The first step off the roof is painless. The pain starts when your body hits the second step, the ground. Your parents want you to be

your own boss and make a conscious choice. They want you to avoid the new behavior your friends are embracing based on an understanding of the logical consequences of the behavior. This advice seems bullet proof. However, there must be a caution placed even on this golden rule. If avoiding negative consequences was always the golden rule that was followed, even the Church could have died out. Jews who embraced Jesus as Messiah were considered to have embraced the teachings of a blasphemer and thereby became heretics. They would have been thrown out of their families and their synagogue. They would have been considered dead and mourned by their family as forever lost. Every "good" Jewish parent would have counseled any of their children who were considering becoming a Christian that their actions were the equivalent of jumping off a cliff. The Christian faith was eventually seen as a threat to Rome. The Roman Empire eventually persecuted Christians. Christians were routinely imprisoned and martyred as a consequence of their faith. For a Roman, to become a Christian was the equivalent of jumping off a cliff. Good Roman parents would have told their children to avoid even contact with Christians. The New Testament teaches us that there are times when we must embrace change, even if it hurts us, for the sake of the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of many.

Resisting Change: Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, who served from 1913 to 1921, penned this phrase about change: *"If you want to make enemies.... try to change something."* He would have experienced these words day after day. Civil government was established by God to ensure that the needs of the people of the earth are met, peace prevails and evil persons and systems are rooted out and punished. The mandate of civil government often requires that the laws and customs of a nation are changed from time to time so that the wheels of commerce may turn more freely, citizens may reach their full potential and criminal behavior is eradicated. However, President Wilson knew full well that no matter how hard he tried, he could not please everyone. Every time a new law was passed, some would object to the new law vehemently. The opposition would fight the ruling party during the parliamentary debate which led to the new law's implementation and thereafter would continue to resist the changes by all means, some legal (court challenges and elections) and some illegal revolt. President Wilson would also tell you that there are times when it is necessary to take a stand against those who want to pass a new law despite the dire negative consequences of opposing the change. There are times when we must become the enemies of those who intend to bring about a change and oppose it. President Wilson would be the first to admit that it is the duty of every American citizen to become the enemy of the civil government and oppose it when that government passes a law or follows a course of action which violates the Constitution of the United States. While resisting change may be noble, it has its negative side. We see this in our New Testament scriptures. Following Jesus' resurrection, the Jewish Sanhedrin, the highest authority in the Jewish nation, believing that they were acting for God, declared Christianity heresy and systematically persecuted Jews who became Christians. The Sanhedrin empowered Saul of Tarsus, who would later become the Apostle Paul, to systematically persecute Jewish Christians. Saul was completely convinced that the members of the Christian sect were heretics and he was in the right when he persecuted Christian Jews. Paul stood by and held the coats of the Jews who had accused Steven, the first Christian martyr, of heresy and summarily stoned him. (Acts 7:57-58). Paul and the Sanhedrin, men of God, actually worked against God when they failed to heed the call of the Gospel and persecuted the members of the fledgling Church.

As God leads CALC into the future, we will encounter hardships, challenges and growing pain. We will encounter forces from within our Association and from the outside that will demand change within CALC as an Association. We cannot avoid these changes; however, we have a choice in how we respond to that call to change. God does not call us to stick our heads in the sand and ignore change. We cannot avoid *all* calls for change and seek only to keep things as they are. In the same way, God does not call us to accept and embrace any and all changes that come along. God calls us to resist change that goes against Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions; however, God calls us to use our God-given gifts to discern whether the call to change in fact violates the Scriptures and the Confessions. The consequences

associated with ignoring, avoiding, accepting or resisting change are monumental and can profoundly affect the lives of people and their salvation. The consequences of accepting or rejecting change should therefore severely chasten us, and most importantly, turn us to God and put us on our knees before Him. Acceptance or rejection of any change should not be undertaken unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear and love of God.

We can accept or reject change reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear and love of God, only if we understand why we are at times challenged to change. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote to a congregation that was faced by a call to change. They were Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah and had thereby become Christians. The world around them was changing fast. They were living in a place and under a government that was growing increasingly hostile to Christians. The potential for individual persecution for practicing their Christianity was driving some in the congregation to consider renouncing their faith in Christ. The author of the letter declared that their present hardship was discipline from the Lord. He wrote: *“God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”* (Hebrews 12:10b-11) If we take the Letter to the Hebrews seriously, every challenge we face is an opportunity to experience God’s grace, grow in faith and experience the peace that passes all human understanding. Every hardship is a path to greater faith and trust in God and peace with God and one another.

In the months and years to follow, I guarantee that we will be called on to make changes in the way we relate to one another as individuals and congregations, educate and call pastors, and fulfill the Great Commission. Every time we are faced with a challenge that calls for change, I pray that that we stop, drop to our knees and ask God for guidance with this prayer:

*“God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,
The courage to change the things which should be changed, and
The wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.”
Amen.*

In Christ,

Pastor Edward P. Skutshek, President.



PRESIDENT'S ITINERARY

Congregations of the ELCIC located in our four western provinces and the province of Ontario have recently voted or are in the process of voting to sever their ties with the ELCIC. Some of these congregations have chosen to remain as independent Lutheran congregations. Others have sought union with another Lutheran Church body. Congregations interested in realignment with another Lutheran body have many questions. Their congregants want to know how each church body with which they might align is organized. They want to know how many congregations call each church body home. They are always interested in a church body's stand on the authority of Scripture. They want to know how each church body understands and administers Holy Communion. They want to know about each body's understanding of mission. They want to know whether women can serve on the same terms as men in the life of the congregation, including, as pastors and members of church council. They want to know how each body discerns God's call of a candidate to the pastoral ministry and thereafter walks with the candidate as he or she is trained, encouraged and equipped for ministry. They want to know how the church body ordains and rosters pastors, and thereafter provides for their continuing education, mentorship and encouragement. They want to know how their pastor will be licensed to marry under the laws of their province. They want to know the process of severing the ties with the ELCIC, including, paying for their proportional share of the unfunded liability in the ELCIC's defined benefit retirement account. They want to know whether the church body has a pension fund and provides other employee benefits. They want to know about the changes they must make to their constitutions and bylaws if and when they sever their ties with the ELCIC. CALC has prepared a manual that answers these and other questions and have distributed this manual to many interested congregations. However, congregations interested in realignment are not satisfied with manuals and written information, they typically invite representatives from the various Lutheran church bodies to make a presentation which answer these and other questions. CALC's President Pastor Ed Skutshek and Trustee Ron Voss have been invited to make such presentations.

Saturday, April 14th, Pastor Ed and Ron Voss made two presentations on CALC. The presentations were made to a church just outside Edmonton and to the congregations of a two-point parish located south and east of Edmonton. April 19th Pastor Ed and Ron Voss flew to Regina and drove to Preeceville, Saskatchewan, in order to make a presentation on CALC to a congregation in the process of severing their ties with the ELCIC. Subsequently, the congregation at Preeceville successfully voted to leave the ELCIC and will vote to join another body soon. Saturday, May 5th Pastor Ed will make a presentation on CALC to a congregation located near Ottawa, Ontario. Friday, June 1st Pastor Ed will make presentations on CALC to members of a two point parish located near Calgary; Saturday June 2nd CALC's National Council will meet in Calgary; Sunday June 3rd pastor Ed will preach at Valhalla Lutheran Church at Valhalla Center, Alberta; and later make a presentation on CALC to a congregation in Northern BC, close to the border with Alberta. Other congregations have expressed interest in hearing about CALC.

Sunday, April 15th Pastor Ed and Ron Voss attended and participated in the ordination of Pastor Alvin Sorenson. Pastor Sorenson asked Pastor Ed to preach and preside at his ordination and Holy Communion. Pastor Sorenson was duly-called by the congregation of Golden Valley Lutheran Church, in Viking, Alberta and has been fulfilling that function for 10 years. Golden Valley Lutheran voted to join CALC in January of this year. More information on Pastor Sorenson's ordination is provided in an article below. April 16th to 18th President Skutshek and Ron Voss attended the Rocky Mountain Theological Conference in Canmore, Alberta. The topic of the conference was "Orders of Creation." More information on the conference is provided in an article below.

Sunday May 6th Pastor Ed will lead a rite of installation that will affirm Pastor Zakaria Mandara's call by the congregation of All Saints Lutheran Church in our Nation's capital Ottawa, Ontario. The congregation

voted to join CALC in March of this year. All Saints Lutheran congregation will also be celebrating their 50th Anniversary the same Sunday. All Saints has bestowed an additional honor on Pastor Ed; they have invited him to preach at their celebratory service.

ALVIN SORENSON ORDAINED

Alvin Sorenson was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the Church of Jesus Christ, on Sunday April 15th by the congregation of Golden Valley Lutheran Church, in the city of Viking in the Province of Alberta. CALC's representatives at his ordination included Trustee Ron Voss and our President, Pastor Ed Skutshek. Pastor Sorenson asked Pastor Ed to preach, preside at his ordination and preside at Holy Communion. The Gospel text for the Sunday was John 20:19-31. These verses recount Jesus' appearance to the ten on the first Easter evening and his appearance to Thomas the following week. This Gospel lesson evokes these words: "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). The first Easter evening Jesus found the ten Apostles behind locked doors. They believed and trusted that Jesus was dead. They did not believe and confess that Jesus was resurrected, as he promised them. Like his fellow Apostles, Thomas was equally, convinced of Jesus death. When confronted with the good news of the resurrection; he put Jesus to the test: unless I see Jesus and the marks of his death, I will not believe. Jesus answered his challenge and appeared to Thomas and revealed the scars that healed us. The appointed Gospel lesson declares that Pastor Alvin's ministry at Golden Valley Lutheran and the ministry of all the pastors called to lead in the Holy Christian church is based on Jesus promise: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29) Faith would come through the work of the Holy Spirit through proclamation of the Gospel, the good news that: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)



During the rite of ordination, Pastor Ed invited pastors present (Pastor Herald Rust, President of CLBI and Pastor Paul Knudtson, a professor at Rocky Mountain College Calgary and Alvin's brother-in-law) to come forward and lay hands on Alvin together with Pastor Ed. Pastor Ed also asked all others present who felt moved to lay hands on Alvin's shoulders. Every member of the congregation stood and laid hands on one another's shoulders so that all were linked to Alvin and one another. Pastor Ed then said: "Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ, pour out your Holy Spirit upon Alvin Sorenson, and fill him with the gifts of grace for the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Bless his proclamation of your Word and administration of your Sacraments, O Lord, so that your Church may be gathered for praise and strengthened for service. Make him a faithful pastor, patient teacher, wise counsellor. Grant that in all things he may serve without reproach, that your people may be renewed and your name be glorified in the

Church; through Jesus Christ our lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen." This was truly a moving time for all who attended. Musical accompaniment for the service was provided by Pastor Sorenson's wife Lois Sorenson. Alvin's daughter-in-law Lynne Sorenson sang a solo at the end of the service.

The service of ordination was followed by a delicious catered roast beef dinner. The following written greetings were shared: a member of the local Roman Catholic diocese read a moving greeting from their Priest and a written greeting from the Pastor of the local Alliance congregation. Both written greetings thanked God for Alvin's pastoral leadership in Viking and the surrounding community over the past ten years. Following the dinner, a quartet, four siblings of the Rete family (son and three daughters), serenaded those present on their violins.

The festivities did not stop at church. Pastor Ed and Ron Voss were invited to take in a concert in the Viking Community Hall which featured Canadian performers: vocalist Emma-Lee and headliners, Luke Doucet and Mellisa McClelland, husband and wife vocalists and guitarists who perform under the name White Horse. Pastor Alvin was the emcee for the evening's event which was hosted by the Rocket Theatre.

Pastor Alvin has two sons. Son Andrew who is married to Lynne. Andrew and Lynne are the proud owners of the Rocket Theatre, a 50's style Ice Cream Shop, 5-lane bowling alley and 100-seat movie theater, scheduled to open soon in Viking. The concert was a fundraiser for the Rocket. Son Mike lives on the farm. Mike is confined to a wheel chair and must use a communication board to communicate. These limitations have not stopped Mike. He is prolific writer (also edits the parish's newsletter) and an artist. Pastor Sorenson's wife Lois teaches piano and is Alvin's rock and indispensable helper in his ministry at Golden Valley.

Golden Valley Lutheran Church left the ELCIC and joined CALC in January of this year. Pastor Sorenson was rostered by the Synod of Alberta and the Territories as a Licensed Lay Pastor. In this capacity he performed all the duties of a pastor. He served Golden Valley as a Licensed lay pastor for the last ten years. He has taken the following educational training. A year of sciences at Augustana University. He earned a two-year diploma of Biblical Studies at Canadian Lutheran Bible institute (CLBI) in 1978. His father passed away before he finished CLBI so the decision was made for him to return to the farm and help care for his mother and sister. He farmed with his brother the next for 21 years. He went through the CTCL process of the ELCIC in the fall of 2000. CTCL recommended Alvin for seminary studies. He took six courses in residence at Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) in Saskatoon. He took four more courses from Toronto School of Theology (Wycliffe College). He also taken an online course on Church History from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, South Carolina, as well as an introductory course to basic psychology from Athabasca UC. In conjunction with this he completed one unit of CPE at the Rosehaven Psychiatric Hospital in Camrose, Alberta. In conjunction with these courses he has attended a great many theological conferences, family and marriage workshops, etc, and worked on a Lutheran/Reformed theological task force back in the early 90's. He has also taught several courses at the CLBI for a number of years, and has mentored three of their students who are in the pastoral ministry track. He served on CLBI's board of directors for 13 years, including a term as the board's chairman. He currently chairs the board of Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camp, as well as Mission to Many. In view of Pastor Sorenson's ten-year ministry at Golden Valley and his educational background, CALC's Board of Elders concluded that if the congregation of Golden Valley Lutheran Church wished to ordain Pastor Sorenson, the Board of Elders would affirm their decision and, if called upon, would assist in the rite of ordination. Speaking for the congregation, Golden Valley Lutheran's church council requested CALC's assistance with Alvin's ordination.

We welcome Golden Valley to CALC's family and look forward to Pastor Alvin's and Golden Valley's contributions to the life of CALC.

CANADIAN ROCKIES THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Members of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) and Lutheran Core in Canada had invited interested pastors, people and leaders of Canadian Lutheran church bodies to the “Canadian Rockies Theological Conference,” from April 16-19, 2012 in Canmore, Alberta. The conference theme this spring was ***The Orders of Creation***. President Edward Skutshek and Trustee Ron Voss attended the event on behalf of CALC.



The event included morning and evening worship services. About sixty attended the conference. The conference was attended by two other CALC pastors and four members of CALC congregations. The schedule included time for enjoyment of the Canmore area and conversations with one another. The organizers intended this to be the first of an annual event. The conference for 2013 is scheduled for April 8-11 in the same venue with Lutheran Theologians, Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson as presenters. Additional information on next year’s Canadian Rockies Theological Conference will be provided in the Connector, and our website, as it becomes available.

Keynote presenters of this year’s conference included Dr. Nathan Yoder and Dr. James Nestingen. Dr’s. Yoder and Nestingen presented lectures under the theme: “*Orders of Creation*.” Their presentations were stimulating and were aimed at those with an extensive knowledge of scripture, theology and philosophy. However, that being said, the presenters reminded those present of many gems of Lutheran Theology which we would like to pass on to our readership.

Both presenters reminded those in attendance that Luther was not a theologian as we understand that term. Theology is defined as speaking or talking about God or the divine. We were reminded that many theologians, from the early church fathers (like St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas), through to today, applied principles of humanistic philosophy (including Aristotle and Plato) to the study of Scripture, God and God’s presence and work in creation. Most all of these theologians observed that all of nature worked in accordance with principles which were observable, measurable, predictable and certain. Day after day and year after year, the earth, sun, moon and stars moved with precision. Seasons changed from winter into spring, summer and fall and then started all over again. Birds, animals, fish, insects and birds migrate around the globe to reproduce and thrive. All this happens without the assent and effort of man. They were sure that our earth and the cosmos worked in accordance with natural laws. Many theologians were, and continue to be, convinced that God has placed the same kind of natural law in human society. They were convinced that the application of reason, philosophy and logic would allow them to find these natural laws in human behavior. They were equally convinced that the proper identification and understanding of the natural laws which relate to human society would permit them to use these laws to change and transform human society.

Both presenters reminded us that Luther rejected this approach. He would not use philosophy to interpret Scripture or discern God’s presence and work in the world. Luther would look only to Scripture and believed that Scripture alone revealed God’s presence and work in the world around us. Luther believed, trusted and confessed that Scripture revealed the following: (1) God has endowed the world with three estates: Marriage, the Church and Human Society for our good; and (2) God’s Ten Commandments were a proper summary of the natural law in the world. The three estates and the Ten Commandments as natural Law are set forth below.

The Three Estates:

Luther confessed that God gave marriage, and the family which follows, as a gift to humanity. Marriage is the building block of every human society. See Genesis 1: 26-28 and Genesis 2: 20b-23. Jesus affirmed God's gift to humanity in the estate of marriage:

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

God gave government and human society as a gift for humanity so that the basic human needs would be provided for and people may live in safety, peace and security. The Apostle Paul revealed God's hand in human society as follows:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. (Romans 13:1-2).

God calls Christians to serve in all the institutions and structures of the society of which they are a part; and individually and corporately to promote justice and reconciliation, meet human needs and alleviate suffering. However, that being said, Christians are not required to submit to and obey the state if the state directs one to behave in a way which violates God's word. *"Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29).*

The Scriptures reveal that both the estate of Marriage and estate of Human Society have been distorted and disabled by sin which arose as a consequence of the fall of mankind (Genesis 3:1-24). It is for this reason that God gave the world Jesus Christ and his bride the Holy Christian Church. By his innocent suffering and death, Jesus redeemed us from our sins and the power of death. By his glorious resurrection Jesus opened to us the way of eternal life. St. Peter described the church as follows:

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4-5).

St Peter declares that God takes His redeemed and integrates them into a community of faith, the church. It is in the church that people are baptized in the Triune name, are taught all that Jesus taught and encouraged and exhorted to obedience of Jesus' teachings. Spiritual sacrifices are obvious, worship, praise, prayer, the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, evangelism and missions.

Luther argued that spiritual sacrifices do not stop with worship, learning and propagation of the faith within and outside the church in the Church; Luther saw spiritual sacrifices to God as applying to the Estate of Marriage and the Estate of Human Society. Luther argued that God has endowed each person with gifts and skills which can be used to build up, enhance and adorn society. According to Luther, God calls Christians to use, practice conduct, and exercise their vocations, their trades, businesses and professions in a way that brings glory to God. It is obvious that Luther is talking about honest trades, businesses and professions. It would not be possible to give glory to God by practicing robbery, thievery and treachery. Luther said that an honest business conducted with deceit is also a blot on society (as when a merchant uses false scales). We are also to speak out against injustice perpetrated, encouraged or ignored by the state. Luther encouraged Christians to participate in society at all levels and bring their faith to bear on their service. God wants spouses in a marriage to live together in peace and to love and

submit to one another. God wants parents to raise children who are obedient to God and parents. God wants to use Christians to make the world a better place.

The Ten Commandments as Natural Laws: Luther saw God's Ten Commandments as the *"natural law"* that is active in God's creation. The Ten Commandments are based upon a critical understanding about who we are and who God is. We are creatures and God is our creator. We receive our life and being from God. God is revealed to us and we are to respond to that revelation. Each commandment describes a specific revelation from God and our human duties which arise from that revelation. A summary of God's revelation and our response in each of the Ten Commandments follows.

The First Commandment: *"I am the Lord Your God, You shall have no other gods."* In this commandment God reminds us that we are creatures. In the same way the created world testifies that God created it and is our creator. (Romans 1:20) *God created us; therefore He is our Father. Luther asked the question "What is it to have a God?" His answer: "It is whom we trust to provide all that we need run to in a time of trouble."* We sin against God and violate this commandment when we put our trust in persons and/or things other than God to provide for our needs and run to in a time of trouble.

The Second Commandment: *"Don't take the Lord's name in vain."* In this commandment God reminds us that when someone's name is revealed to you, a relationship is thereby created. If you know someone by name you are able to speak to them, you are able to call upon them when you are in trouble. This is precisely why God revealed His name to human beings. He has revealed His name to us: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This name is Holy and Sacred and must be used only for prayer, praise and thanksgiving. God's name shall not be used for any reason other than for worship, prayer and praise.

The Fourth Commandment: *"Honor Your Father and Mother."* Our belly button reminds us that we did not come about by our own will and effort. We are the product of our mother and father and dependent upon them. For this reason God calls us in this commandment to honor or have high respect for our parents and treat them with honesty, integrity and the respect due to them by virtue of their bestowal of life. The command to honor parents survives past one's youth; it continues as long as the parent lives. Parents need honor, love and respect of their children as much at the end of their lives (when they may be unable to care for themselves), as when we their children are young.

The Fifth Commandment: *"You shall not kill."* God gives life; therefore no one should take life unless God, by His Word, permits the taking of such a life. We thus have a duty to love and care for our neighbor that his/her life is not taken intentionally or negligently.

The Sixth Commandment: *"You shall not commit adultery."* God created the Estate of Marriage. He created men and women with a desire for one another. God created men and women to have a desire for an intimate relationship, which includes a desire for physical, familial, economic, social and spiritual union. God wants to bless that union and bind the couple together (Genesis 2:24). We thus have a duty to refrain from taking actions which will result in the breaking that relationship. We should even take steps to help the couple strengthen that union.

The Seventh Commandment: *"You shall not steal."* God's creation provides all that humankind needs to live. He enables us to hunt, gather and/or earn what we need from creation to live. To the extent that we steal from someone, we not only take money or property, but we also steal the time, effort and resources the victim has to expend to replace what has been stolen. God thus abhors thievery and robbery as it hurts a person twice and imperils their ability to live. We thus should not only refrain from stealing from our neighbor, but also make an effort to protect our neighbor's property from theft.

The Eighth Commandment: *“You shall not bear false witness.”* Each one of us is responsible for his or her actions and must give account for our actions and take responsibility for the injuries we have caused. A man or woman is accused of committing a wrong must be proved guilty by the testimony of witnesses. Witnesses must tell the truth so that justice is served. This commandment imposes a duty to give only truthful testimony in any case against a person. This commandment also imposes a duty to protect another person’s reputation by refusing to gossip about a person.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandment: *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or servants or any of your neighbor’s property.”* Coveting can be a form of idolatry. It involves a false hope. The coveter believes that he/she cannot live without that person or thing. A person begins to see a person or thing as so desirable that the person will do anything (legal or illegal) to possess the person or thing. Sin generally begins with a covetous desire. God imposes a duty in this commandment, the duty of each of us to refrain from placing a false hope on a person, place or thing that belongs to another and to counsel others not to do the same.

The Third Commandment: *“Remember to Keep the Sabbath Holy.”* In this commandment, God reminds us that just as He rested on the Sabbath, we must rest weekly. Each week God invites us to cease working so that we can regenerate, that is, recharge our batteries. Bodies that are rested can meet the joys and the challenges of the next week. This commandment recognizes that the joys and challenges of any week tax much more than one’s body. The joys and stresses of the week challenge one’s mental resolve and our faith. God also invites us to take a rest so that our heart and mind and soul may be rested, renewed and transformed. This rest, renewal and transformation can only come from one source, as we rest in His Word.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

PROFILING OUR PASTORS OF CALC

These are truly exciting days for our Association. There are constantly new congregations and new people who are investigating and inquiring whether CALC may be a suitable home for them. There have been congregations joining us and we are grateful for the privilege of partnering together with them. We will do our best to keep our existing membership informed of who they are by profiling the pastors of these new congregations.

PASTOR HARRY HUFF – Faith Lutheran (North York, ON)



Pastor Harry is a Leaf fan, but we love him anyway. Here is a bio of Pastor Harry that will help us get to know him better ...

Pastor Harry Huff was born in Grattan Twp., just outside of the village of Eganville (in the Ottawa Valley). This is where he went to public and high school. From there it was on to Waterloo Lutheran University (changing its name to Wilfrid Laurier Univ. in the middle of the year) for a year of sciences; then on to the University of Ottawa where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, in German. This was followed with teachers' college, at Acadia Univ., in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

While travelling, by train, for a summer job in Vancouver, B.C., Harry dropped in at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, in Saskatoon, Sask., for a visit. After a warm reception and the many affirming voices within Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, in Ottawa, Harry began to ponder being called-in to ministry. He took a year off from his studies to work, and be more active in his home church, in Eganville. He started a youth group, sang in the choir, and volunteered in a variety of groups. During this year he decided to put his future in God's hands by saying, *'if you want me to be a pastor, affirm this during my first year in Seminary, in Saskatoon.'* And God did.

Upon graduation, and ordination in Waterloo, Harry accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church, in Edmonton, Alberta. What would a Toronto Maple Leaf fan do in Gretzky country? St. John's was a bi-lingual congregation, German and English. Since he was called to be the assistant pastor, he had to resign less than 2 years later, when the senior pastor accepted a call to a church in New York City.

Returning to eastern Canada, Harry married Hilli Wagner, and took a call to Faith Lutheran Church, in North York (the church where he has now returned to, 20 years after leaving). Both their boys were born in Greater Toronto: Jeffrey (now in teachers' college) and Joshua (a Business & Finance grad, working towards his chartered accountancy). The family was in Toronto for 6 years, Hilli working as a medical doctor.

In 1991 Harry accepted a call to the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, in Owen Sound, Ontario. He pastored there until 2005. His strengths were: work with youth, social outreach, missions and discipleship. The last five years Harry developed a grief counseling ministry, supply preached and assisted Hilli in her medical practice.

In 2011, he returned to Faith Lutheran Church, as a *'recycled pastor'*, 20 years after leaving. He serves part-time, driving from Owen Sound to Toronto (2 hr. drive), to live in Toronto from Friday to Sunday, 3 out of 4 weeks every month.

In the broader church, Harry has served 2 terms on the LAMP (Luth. Assoc. of Missionaries & Pilots), and will be volunteering to teach Vacation Bible School for the 5th summer, for 1 week, in a fly-in community in northern Ontario, Kingfisher Lake. The team consists of Harry and Hilli, Pastor Sheilah & Dr. Andy Fletch, and 2 native young people from northern Sask.

Hobbies include: managing a men's soccer team (on which his sons play); following the local junior hockey team; and avidly cheering for the Leafs.

Harry also represents CALC in eastern Canada, when congregations show an interest to know more about CALC - saving President Ed Skutshek valuable miles.

He looks forward to hosting many of you when you come to celebrate our 2012 national convention, Nov. 2-4th, in Toronto.



PASTOR NICHOLAS HOPMAN – Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church (Vancouver)

Pastor Nicholas Hopman has recently joined Martin Luther in Vancouver. We are grateful for his arrival in Vancouver and into CALC. We pray for many wonderful years for Pastor Nicholas and his family in Vancouver.



*Pastor Nicholas & Mary Hopman
Solveig & Inga*

I was born in the United States and baptized at Zion Lutheran Church in Tinley Park, Illinois. I had a very good pastor for confirmation, who graduated from Luther Seminary in Minnesota and was greatly influenced by Professor Gerhard Forde while a student there. We also had a pastor who was a family friend. He bought me a compendium of Martin Luther's theological writings. As a young adult I began to read Luther and Forde more and more.

I graduated from Luther Seminary in 2007 where I was taught by Forde's colleague and co-author, Professor James Nestingen, and their student Professor Steven Paulson. I then served as Pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at First Lutheran Church in Dollar Bay, Michigan, and Grace Lutheran Church in South Range, Michigan. Both congregations are in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, separated only by a few miles from Lake Superior. *(The average annual snowfall in this area is close to 10 meters!)* At the end of November my wife, Mary, and I with our two-year-old daughter Solveig and our four-month-old daughter Inga drove from Michigan to Vancouver. Mary's brother Anders drove a U-Haul truck right behind us. The trip was over 3,200 km. We had incredibly good weather coming over the Rocky Mountains in December.

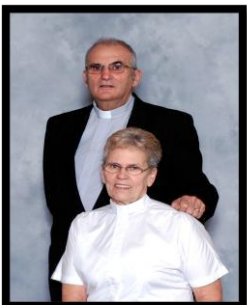
For me the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations and Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church have been a great refuge from the constant turmoil of the ELCA. I am very appreciative that the CALC has maintained Lutheran confessional theology and Martin Luther Church has maintained Lutheran theology and forms of worship. I have always been very interested in the history of the Lutheran Reformation and the theology of Martin Luther. I very much enjoy the fact that the congregation at Martin Luther Church knows and sings often the great chorales of the Reformation. I look forward to my time at Martin Luther Church and in Vancouver and to working with everyone in CALC.

In Christ,

Pastor Nicholas Hopman

PASTORS RON & ELAINE HOBDEN – Peace Lutheran (Wainwright, AB)

Pastors Ron & Elaine Hobden serve at Peace Lutheran Church in Wainwright, AB. We thank God that He has brought them and Peace Lutheran to us in CALC. Here is a look at their journey ...



How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Romans 10: 14,15

Ron and Elaine Hobden have been a ministry team for over thirty eight years. Ron's service began while serving as an Ontario Provincial Police Officer in White River, Ontario. When the pastor succumbed to a heart attack, Ron was asked to take on parish responsibilities as a lay supply. With O.P.P. approval Ron was permitted when on duty to take his lunch hour at service time, visitors were often surprised when a uniformed police officer hurried into the church, up to the pulpit to conduct worship. Following a two

year stint in White River, Ron was asked to volunteer for Canadian northern mission's service, while Elaine had accepted a teaching position.

The next three years proved to be both a challenge and a blessing in the isolated community of 1,400. Along with Ron's appointment came the responsibility of keeping the diesel generators that supplied electrical power to the village working, traveling at times over a 160 Km by snow machine, delivering mail, serving the holy sacrament to the native trappers and logging several hundred hours delivering groceries and supplies in their family aircraft. After completing three years, they accepted an appointment as co-pastors to Kenora, Ontario.

After another three year term the Hobdens again accepted another mission appointment; this time to pastor three congregations in the Hazelton, B.C. area. This was a challenging time: within the space of one year, the eldest son lay in a coma in hospital with a ruptured appendix, their second son diagnosed with leukemia, and their car lost its brakes on a logging trail. Ron jumped from the vehicle as the car plunged hundreds of feet to the Canyon bottom. Yet the Lord in His wisdom had placed a tree on the edge of the precipice allowing him to escape with only a couple of broken ribs. It was about a month later when a fire destroyed the parsonage leaving Ron, Elaine and their seven children with only the clothes they were wearing.

Following a year's service in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, the Hobden's felt a call to commence studies leading toward their ordination. Of future significance was the one year that Ron took at the Lutheran Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Ron was ordained in 1988 and Elaine in 1989. Following a three-year appointment to Roblin, Manitoba, the Hobdens, with some trepidation, succumbed to a plea from the mission board to accept a two year appointment to Nishinomiya, Japan. At the conclusion of the two years Ron and Elaine reluctantly returned to Canada to serve in Golden, B.C. After the three years of blessed service in the beautiful mountains, Ron and Elaine felt a strong leading to return to Japan, they opted for early retirement making it possible for their return for a three-year appointment, to the Land of The Rising "SON", to Osaka International Church.

At the conclusion of the third year, the Hobdens looked forward to the commencement of retirement and volunteer service to Christian camping in Canada and the U.S. However after only two years, again came a passionate call from Japan. Following three more years, this time at Nagoya, Japan, the Lord called their third son Brent to take on those responsibilities and they returned again to Canada, this time anticipating full retirement. However, only six weeks after returning to Canada, The Church of the Nazarene in Wainwright, Alberta asked Ron and Elaine if they would fill in for a couple of months until they were able to call a pastor. Although never having been in a Church of the Nazarene to this point, after committing the proposal to the Lord the "couple of months" became eighteen months before a pastor was secured.

It was during this time in Wainwright that a friendship developed with Pastor Bart Erickson, of Peace Lutheran Church. This association would later become very significant in the Lord's leading. Following the interim service at the Church of The Nazarene they returned to Japan for an additional 6 months.

Upon their return to Canada to assume retirement for the third time they settled in the Wainwright area once more plans were thwarted by the Lord's intervention. At Pastor Bart's suggestion, six days after their arrival home in November of 2006, they were invited to meet with the Peace/Sharon Lutheran Church Council who were in the process of a pastoral search. As they are now into their sixth year of blessed service here at the Sharon/Peace parish they truly see that the Lord works in mysterious ways.

Following the Saskatoon National Convention decision this past summer, both Peace and Sharon voted overwhelmingly to sever from the E.L.C.I.C., the Hobdens were rostered and Peace-Sharon admitted into C.A.L.C. membership. They look forward to however many years of service our Gracious Lord will permit.

With 53 years of marriage, Ron and Elaine count their greatest blessings to be 7 adult children, 4 of whom are in the professional ministry, 19 grandchildren, 3 Great grandchildren and awaiting a fourth in April.

HI-LITES FROM CHURCH

(Martin Luther-Vancouver, Grace Lutheran-Kelowna, St. Andrew's-Kamloops, Christ Lutheran-Sexsmith/Journeys-Grand Prairie, St. Peter's-Cochrane, Christ Lutheran-Morden, Faith Lutheran-North York, Resurrection Lutheran-Pembroke)
**The congregations listed above had been notified with a request for a report of their ministry highlights. CALC is now comprised of 16 congregations. The additional growth in this New Year has been encouraging and we are excited to hear from these new bodies within CALC in the next publication of the Lutheran Connector.*

Martin Luther – Vancouver



Well, the most important item that happened in our church was the installation of Pastor Nicholas Hopman on January 15, 2012. Pastor Ed Skutshek was the presiding minister. Ron Voss and his wife were our honored guests. It was a great celebration followed by a luncheon in the lower hall of our church.



We are All enjoying Pastor Hopman's English and German services and the combined services.

If you come to Vancouver this summer please come to Martin Luther Church. We would love to meet you. If you call 604-325-0550 the times and direction will always be on the answering machine.

Hope to see you at Martin Luther Church!



Grace Lutheran – Kelowna

A Great Way to ‘Reach Out’!



We had never seen the likes of it before. Towering over our heads, Goliath epitomized the feeling of immensity familiar to small children as they look up at an adult. Thankfully, the only ‘real’ part of this Goliath was his maker, standing underneath the giant paper maché puppet that would star, along with our Biblical hero David, in our summertime Vacation Bible School program. This was the second VBS program we utilized from SOLA Publishing, having enjoyed a great response to the previous year’s Brave Queen Esther.

This year, we are once again participating in our community Canada Day Parades, where our larger-than-life puppets, worn by our equally brave and fit walkers (including our Pastor Ed and Pastor Karen), receive terrific response from children and adults alike. Our Queen Esther and crew won a ‘Best Club’ ribbon from the Peachland Parade officials in 2010! As we did last year, our ‘act’ will include a decorated float carrying children and adults from our congregation, our decade church van, and our chairperson’s vintage convertible. The parades are not only a ton of fun that we all look forward to, but more importantly has become a wonderful vehicle to show support for our community, celebrate our country’s birthday, and get the message out that Grace Lutheran Church is vibrantly active with programs for children and families.



We are now in the process of refitting our puppets for this year’s VBS program, the Adventures of Paul, and are looking forward to the painting, planning and preparations! We wish all our CALC sister congregations a summer filled with warm memories and relaxation, and great success with your summer Christian programs. If you would like more information on VBS or Sunday school programs available through SOLA, check out www.solapublishing.org.

*Respectfully Submitted by,
Karen Emmond, Secretary*



Pastor Karen and husband Mike (in front of puppets) before the start of the Westbank Parade in June 2010. Pastor Ed (hooded puppet) was the narrator! Mike and PK made all the puppet heads and a Sunday school mom sewed the puppet ‘clothing’.

St. Andrew's Lutheran – Kamloops



BUILT ON THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF GOD'S WORD WITH JESUS CHRIST AS THE CORNERSTONE. (Ephesians 2: 19-22)

That's the theme for St. Andrew's 50th Anniversary this year. Final plans for a special weekend of worship, celebration and reunion are pretty well finalized with Sept. 15th and 16th set aside for the event. Saturday will be a time of reunion with a banquet followed by a program of music, recognition and a look back at the past 50 years. Five of the six former Pastors who have served St. Andrew's over the years are still with us and have been invited to join present Pastor David Schumacher for the celebration.

The Sunday Anniversary Service will be a special worship to the glory of God in praise and thanksgiving for providing 50 years of his presence with us here in Kamloops at St. Andrew's Lutheran. The Communion Service will be followed by a lunch with Anniversary Cake for dessert.

The program times have been set to allow visitors from out of town easy travel times. Invitations are in the mail to as many former members and friends that we can find. Anyone wanting to take part in the celebration or needing more information can contact Dennis or Elaine Kujat at (250) 376-0707 or email dekujat@shaw.ca.

The New Year has brought on continued growth at St. Andrew's both in numbers and spirit. Attendance for all programs has been on the up and along with this; the presence of the Holy Spirit is certainly felt and taken in by those participating. A long time member noted that the Good Friday and Easter Sunrise Service attendance was the largest in his recollection. The Sunday Sunrise Service was followed by a special breakfast put on by the men's breakfast group and served to a full house. A wonderful Easter celebration service with Pastor David ended with most of the congregation staying for coffee and goodies. It seemed that the glory of Jesus' rising had people not wanting to leave the Church. PRAISE THE LORD!

A special video/discussion program of 5 faith lessons from Focus on the Family, "*That The World May Know Series*" was presented leading up to Lent. The weekly sessions were held on Tuesday afternoon at the church and Wednesday evenings at Pastor and Kathy's home for those who could not attend during the Day.

The video lessons, entitled "*The Path to the Cross*" were presented by Ray Vander Laan and provided us with an in depth look at the intense devotion of God's people in Biblical times. We discovered how their permanent faith prepared the way for Jesus and his ultimate act of obedience and sacrifice of the cross. The program certainly prepared the participants for this year's Easter week!

*God Bless,
Dennis Kujat, President.*



Journeys – Grande Prairie/Christ Lutheran – Sexsmith Parish



CALC Spring Newsletter

Christmas I received a gift which had been a lifelong desire. It was much larger than I expected, almost three feet long, but it was my first remote control helicopter. I have built many aircrafts in my time, but I have never flown any of them. This gift has been sitting in its original package until now. The snow was gone and the weather was beginning to allow for the possibility of outdoor flight. Tuesday, I charged the batteries. Wednesday, I applied power to the rotors, while in the house, to ensure the remote and helicopter could

communicate. Friday, because of rain, I applied lift to the helicopter, while in the garage, to begin getting comfortable with the controls. Like the Wright Brothers, I was able to experience my first controlled flight which was a few feet off the ground and lasted for a few seconds. Saturday we received 10 cm of snow, further delaying my desired progress.

Christ and Journeys Lutheran churches continue to move forward with the gift which God has given us. It's a slow process and sometimes I get impatient that God isn't growing His two churches faster. But, numerical growth should never be the criteria used for judging the success of a church. As challenging as it may be, I have learned over time to only move as quickly as God would have us go – otherwise we crash into the wall. It's more important for the Christian Church to learn to move in sync with God, especially when we celebrate what God has done in His church. Last year, I was invited to celebrate in the 100th anniversary of my first parish in Saskatchewan. This year, my home church of All Saints (new member of CALC) celebrates their 50th anniversary. Although the congregation is older, Christ Lutheran Church, Sexsmith gives glory to God this year for our building, in which we have been worshipping God for the past 75 years. *"To God be the glory, great things He has done"* is central to our lives as post Easter Christians. We have a wonderful gift which God has given us on Good Friday and Easter – God the Son through whom we have salvation, forgiveness and eternal life. But, many church people leave the gift stored away in its original package. They never open the gift or explore the possibilities it offers to them and to their life. Others tear open the package and shred the wrapping paper and celebrate what God has given, without ever taking into account the cost – creating an empty faith. Some, slowly unwrap the gift and allow it to change their lives – however slowly, one step at a time. God's timing is not ours and God continues to work miracles in the life of His church that are worth celebrating.

The past three month in the life of the Christ and Journeys Lutheran Parish has been a slow but steady move forward. The two congregations re-affirmed their commitment, at our annual meetings, to continue to explore the various ways in which we can serve our Lord Jesus Christ in the community and become more visible to those looking for a Lutheran church home. The two churches will be having a joint meeting in the next few weeks to discuss how we can better share in the doing of the business and mission work of the parish together.

Throughout Epiphany we looked at how Jesus is the Light who shines in the darkness of our world and our lives and how the darkness did not overcome the Light – not even on Good Friday. We began the season of Lent with the wonderful celebration of Holy Baptism, as Ashlin Kait Gagné (Rude) from Journeys church was received as child of God at Christ Lutheran church. This was our first baptism in many years. With this in mind, we spent the remainder of the season studying God's covenant and what it means for us to have a God who desires to be in relationship with us. Throughout Lent, we gathered for a mid-week bible study at the church, walking with Jesus through His Passion as witnessed through the eyes of all the people who encountered him during His walk to the cross. This year, we observed the Three Great Days of the church, beginning with the Maundy Thursday service. Good Friday was a joint Tenebrae service at Christ, followed by Easter Sunday which began with a 6:30 am sunrise service, followed by breakfast and a joint parish celebration of the Resurrection at Christ. Later that afternoon,

Journeys had an Easter Supper together followed by praise and worship and a meditation on the meaning of Easter in the midst of the secular holiday. Now, as we turn to the season of Easter we will be exploring what the post resurrection church looks like according to the Acts of the Apostles and what we can learn and apply to our own lives as members of Jesus' body and what we can do to help each other to further mission of His church – one step at a time.

Christ church continues to be very involved in and I have been re-elected for a second term as the chair of the Peace Lutheran Bible Camp board which promises 2012 to be another exciting year in the life of God's camp. The camp season is filling up quickly as we are planning a VBS, youth retreat and our third annual Adult Bible camp, with guest speakers, Rev. Johnson (Dawson Creek) and Rev. Dibaba (Fort St. John). The camp is a joint venture between the CALC and ELCIC congregations of the Peace River Valley. This year, we are also initiating a new joint capital project to construct a prayer chapel for the camp.

We have a very strong ecumenical ministerial in Grande Prairie, who meet monthly for lunch and business. We have been working slowly and carefully on crafting a unity service that would have all the Christian churches gather in order to worship God together. Mary and I continue to be involved in the community and care homes and I am in the process of being approved to volunteer for Alberta Health's Northern Addiction Center as a Fifth Step Volunteer.

Finally, we continue to gather weekly to worship our Lord, study God's Word and pray for direction, the needs of the community and the leadership of CALC. No concrete plans have been made in the life of the church for the summer months as we continue to move forward together calling on God to provide the direction. In May, I will be attending a seminar at CLBI on "Dealing with Division in the Church" by Rev Dan Sattelmeyer. As I sit completing this report and look outside, I hope for the warmer days of summer to melt the snow so that I can fly my helicopter. In the same way, I daily look to the cross of Christ and the empty tomb, the sure and certain hope of the resurrection from the dead, when the light of Christ will vanquish all darkness and I will live in the joy of the promised eternal life with my Lord.

Peace, Love and Joy of the Risen Christ,

Rev Marc Lapointe

St. Peter's Lutheran – Cochrane



A warm Spring Welcome from St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Cochrane, Alberta

One of our goals for this year was to start making better use of the writers we have in our congregation. So shortly after the New Year we started work on a Lent Devotional written by folks from St. Peter's. We are pleased that the Lent Devotional was very well received with many comments about particular devotionals that ministered to the readers.

Also part of getting writers involved was doing an Intentional Series – for the six Sundays of Lent. Each Sunday we were given a new Intentional to explore as part of our spiritual journey: Sacred Pathways, Journaling with Scripture, Studying the Word, Practicing the Presence of God, The Armor of God, and Praying for Your Family.

On March 18 we had the privilege of hosting a Prayer & Healing service with Pastor Andreas Hernquist from Sweden. We were certainly blessed by his ministry to us. One of our members, Melody Herbert,

was healed of neuropathy during a healing session with Pastor Andreas in Calgary that Saturday. It was exciting to see her walking without her cane for the first time in several years.

Easter Week was special. On Maundy Thursday we were blessed to have a Rabbi from a Messianic Synagogue in Calgary take us through a Seder Passover Meal.

Good Friday morning we joined the other churches of Cochrane for our annual Walk of the Cross through the downtown streets of Cochrane. Friday evening Pastor Paul and Elaine Knudtson lead us through a moving Tennebrae service.

Sunday morning we met at our Cochrane Ranche for a Sunrise Service, followed by a breakfast brunch at church, and then the Easter Service with Communion. The Cochrane Alliance Church joined us for the Sunrise Service and it was great to share that with them.

Something new for us is a men's ministry we call The Barn – since we meet in a “barn” belonging to one of our members. This is a ministry that asks men to come and walk with each other through things that are unique to men. The first meeting in March was well attended and guys left with some challenges to think about and work through.

We are very blessed to have with us Erica Phare-Bergh, Pastor Rick's wife, who is a very talented choral director (formerly with McGill University in Montreal). Erica, along with Elaine Knudtson presented a children's musical on Sunday, April 22, called, *Cool in the Furnace*, based upon the life of Daniel. The kids did an amazing job!

Also new is Pastor Rick being lead into a deeper ministry to those who are dealing with death, dying and grief. Time and time again God has put him in the path of people who are facing this and has given him the words and counsel that have been needed. Pastor Rick has just returned from doing several workshops with a health region in northern Alberta where he gave them practical ways of helping patients that they work with. One attendee commented that this was the first time in all her research that she had heard this way of looking at grief and found it very hopeful and helpful.

Pastor Rick will also be sharing a workshop on Grief with the chaplains of the Canadian Football League in May and another workshop with a group in Montreal in July. He will be presenting his full Grief Friend training program here at St. Peter's this fall.

We are also moving ahead with our Faith at Home focus, as well as preparations for a Faith Friend mentorship program we plan to implement this fall.

So there are lots of exciting things happening here at St. Peter's.

Submitted by Evelyn Marinoski



Christ Lutheran – Morden



It would appear that winter has passed. Although this past winter was not at all what we are used to here in the Prairies. Now spring is here and there is always something that feels fresh when spring arrives. The flowers begin to bud and bloom, more people are out walking and enjoying the warmer temperatures ... it's like new life has arrived.

These past few months seemed to have passed quickly and here are few highlights from Christ Lutheran:

1. Ash Wednesday had been a wonderful service for us. Very meaningful and reflective. The rich symbolism when personalized is very moving and thought provoking.
2. Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask – This was a webcast that Christ Lutheran ordered. We met in the home of one of our attending couples. Very informative 3½ hours of information in dealing with 6 of the most common questions asked about Christianity.
3. Maundy Thursday was a great service for us too. With St. Peter's Lutheran in Cochrane being a valuable resource to us, we were able to reach back into the past by trying to describe the emotion of the Upper Room and in the Garden. This service made Easter Sunday all the more celebrative.
4. Easter Sunday was a service that had a bit of everything from drama to readings to music. It was a festive and celebrative service. A great service to conclude Holy Week with.

That gives a window's look into some of our hi-lites. We wish you all well and God's best as you continue to serve Him in the towns and cities that you reside in.

Resurrection Lutheran – Pembroke

Here's what we're up to at Resurrection:



Spread the Word: Bible Reading 2012

The first Public Bible Reading was coordinated and hosted by Resurrection Lutheran Church, Pembroke, Ontario, in August 2002. The idea arose out of a small, newly formed church. We knew it was a challenging and "out-of-the-box" idea, but we were willing to put in the effort because we knew that God's Word has great power.

A Bible verse that inspired this reading is Revelation 1:3 - "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near." God's Word itself blesses those reading as well as those who hear it!

It was successful for a variety of reasons. First, God was behind it! Second, local churches wanted to participate in the reading. And thirdly, our city council supported the idea and let us set up in a local park for four days.

The format used for the past nine years was to have the Bible read from Genesis to Revelation day and night for 82 hours straight - about 3 ½ days. Local churches would sign up to read portions, with each person reading for a half-hour to an hour. We set up at a local park so that it was an open and public event that passers-by could see and get involved in.

We wanted to do something special and different for the **10th Anniversary**. We thought, could we read through the whole Bible in one day? Could we truly **“Spread the Word”** though the community by reading in a variety of locations? Could we even have churches across Canada in every province get involved? The answers we came up with were “Yes”, “Yes”, and “Yes”!

Our **local vision** is to have a church in every section of the Pembroke-Petawawa area read a portion of the Bible on Saturday, June 23, 2012. As the Word is read outside of each church, God’s power and love will be made known in the whole area. In the evening, we will gather together at the Pembroke Waterfront Chapel to read the final chapters of Revelation, and worship and celebrate together.

Our **national vision** is to have a church in every province across Canada get involved. Starting in the Maritimes and ending in British Columbia, churches will read a portion of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. That way, the Word of God will pour forth across the nation. **We truly believe that God’s word is living and active and can powerfully impact our nation.**

The Word... Like a wave ... From sea to sea to sea !

Check out our website: SpreadtheWord2012.wordpress.com

If your congregation would like more information or to get involved, contact us at: resluth@hotmail.com

NATIONAL COUNCIL UPDATE

Since the last (December 2011) edition of *The Lutheran Connector*, CALC’s National Council has met once, in person in Calgary on February 25, 2012. At this meeting:

- “Guidelines for Effective National Council Governance” were adopted and posted on the National Council web page at CALC’s web site.
- A report was filed re visitations to congregations considering CALC and pastors having expressed an interest in being available to serve in a CALC congregation.
- The Board of Elders authorized Pastor Ed to ordain Alvin Sorenson as the pastor of Golden Valley Lutheran Church, Viking, Alberta on April 15th.
- A report and discussion took place on the work towards developing an agreement with Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton to receive CALC candidates for pastoral ministry training.
- Discussions are underway with Sola Publishing which would allow CALC to be the Canadian distributor for their material, thus facilitating the availability of their resources in Canada.
- Discussion and review of the 2011 General Convention, resulting in the decision to include “Rules of Order” as part of the Bulletin of Reports for the 2012 General Convention.
- National Council supported the idea for the first time to have a full-day theological/teaching conference on the Friday before the General Convention. Rev. Jaynan Clark, former President of WordAlone, has been invited and has accepted to lead the Friday session.
- The Board of Trustees discussed the possibility of liability insurance for National Council members and retaining an investment advisor for CALC pastors.
- The National Council authorized funds to pay for extra provincial registration of CALC in BC as part of the process of moving forward with securing marriage registration for CALC in BC. As the process for obtaining marriage registration in Ontario is expected to be more laborious and time-consuming, other interim options are being considered.
- The National Council accepted the application by Golden Valley Lutheran Church, Viking, Alberta and Sharon, Irma, Alberta for full membership. As well, Rev. Harry Vibe, Renfrew, Ontario was



accepted as an Associate Member of CALC. Subsequently through online correspondence, National Council accepted applications for full membership received from Good Shepherd, Toronto and All Saints, Ottawa, as well as, application for Associate membership by Trinity, Leader, SK and Basel Hakka, Vancouver.

Next meeting (in-person) of the National Council is to be held in Calgary on Saturday, June 2, 2012.

MESSY CHURCHES ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES

By Mags Storey, Ontario Editor for Christian Week
(permission to print this article granted by Christian Week)

THORNHILL, ON—We need to messy-up the way we do church in order to reach young families, say Sue Kalbfleisch and Nancy Rowe of *Fresh Expressions Canada*.

"I've been to so many churches of different denominations where they are crying out about not having young people in their churches," Kalbfleisch says.

She tells the story of one pastor who finally asked one mother directly why she only brought her children to church for baptisms and Christmas.

"The mom said, 'We see this church as our church. We just can't get here on a Sunday morning.'
"So churches are really looking for something new to reach families," Kalbfleisch adds. "Families with young children have changed over the years, and now a Sunday service no longer works for a lot of them. For many it's the one day a week they really get to hang out with their children, and they don't want to spend a few hours in a service while their children are off somewhere else in a Sunday school."
Kalbfleisch describes Messy Church as a "template" for creating an all ages, family-friendly service. The typical Messy Church is held on a weekday evening, and includes crafts and a meal. A key element of the evenings is that the entire family spends the night together, and the events are flexible to accommodate the families' busy schedules.

An estimated 1,000 congregations are running Messy Churches worldwide, including 30 in Ontario. It is one type of a "fresh expression" of church. The Fresh Expressions movement sprung out of Anglican churches in the UK. It now helps churches of different denominations around the world find new ways of "doing church" for those who don't attend traditional services.

Kalbfleisch and Rowe visit churches of different denominations to talk about how they might use Messy Church to reach young families. They held a *Messy Feisty workshop* in Thornhill on February 18, at Christ the King – Dietrich Bonhoeffer Lutheran Church. They are also planning an event at Emmanuel College in June.

Rowe is associate pastor of St George's Anglican Church in Georgetown. Rowe found Messy Church so successful in her own congregation that it branched out into a pub-based adult Bible study.



Nancy Rowe (left) and Sue Kalbfleisch (right) founded Messy Church to reach out to young families

Kalbfleisch says, "We find those most attracted are the 'un-churched' and the 'de-churched'—people who had some connection with church in their past but for whatever reason it didn't stick."

Fresh Expressions Canada is made up of a team of committed volunteers, who seek to encourage the development of fresh expressions of church in Canada, alongside more traditional expressions.

"There are Messy Churches springing up in every province," she adds. "All of Canada is getting messy."

For more information about Messy Church, please call Sue Kalbfleisch at 905-648-0302 or email sue.kalbfleisch@freshexpressions.ca.

INSTITUTE OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



Where The Reformation Lives ...

The Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT): an ancient practice done a totally new way! Choosing to do the academic course work online is much more than convenient; it actually gets the Church back to an earlier practice of keeping the candidate rooted in a faith community.

From the time of the apostles the Church has always had a need to train the next generation of pastors and teachers. For the last two centuries we relied on denominational seminaries to do that for us. ILT began as an answer to the concern, "Our seminaries are failing to educate confessional Lutheran pastors."

ILT is not a correspondence course; it is on-line, real-time education where instruction takes place just like it does in a traditional residential context.

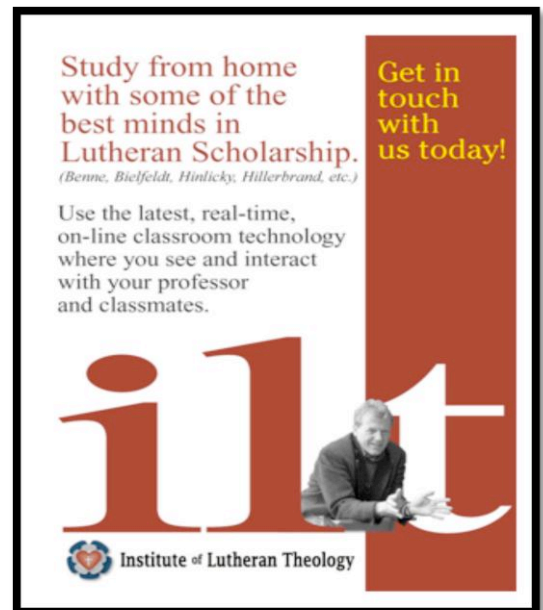
What ILT Offers Lutherans

Excerpts from ILT's Promotional DVD

What is different about the Institute of Lutheran Theology?

ILT uses new methods for bringing the message of Christ to people. Because ILT is not a traditional brick and mortar institution, it can focus its resources entirely on using the best professors to deliver quality religious and theological instruction to the most interested and able students. It can do this more economically than conventional seminaries, and it can do it while allowing students to remain at home with their families and work a job while they study. This is especially attractive to non-traditional students. They have a huge amount of life experience and wisdom, and often make wonderful pastors.

Yet in the past, many were unable to afford the time and money necessary to go to a seminary. All of this changes with ILT! We can connect students and teachers in ways never before imagined. ILT's technology can greatly benefit pastors and congregations. While there are people in congregations seeking educational programming, pastors are often overworked and have neither the time nor



background to offer it. ILT, however, can provide quality educational opportunities to interested congregational members within the context of their own congregations. Congregations can rally around their students while the students remain within the congregation. Moreover, the pastor can participate in a number of ways, e.g., discussion leader, mentor, lecturer, etc. An important difference between ILT and traditional seminaries is that ILT courses can be taken online in real time or, if a class is missed, it can be viewed later since every class is recorded and archived. Courses can be taken from the comfort of one's home or within one's congregation.



ILT seeks to provide intellectually rigorous education—perhaps more so than occurs at many seminaries across the United States. Because we believe that the contemporary intellectual and cultural horizon demands the finest theologically-minded preachers and teachers, our curriculum is more rigorous than most. Moreover, because our professors can live anywhere in the world and yet teach our classes, our students have access to the best theological minds. ILT attracts the best professors and connects them to the brightest and most interested students. Geographical location no longer limits educational development.

ILT is committed to building an association of congregations that support the mission of ILT; congregations that are tied into the purpose, function, and structure of the seminary itself. These congregations, called DTCs (Designated Teaching Centers),

actually become the physical campus of ILT. Programming uploaded from one DTC is downloadable in real time to all others.

The financial support of our generous donors allows for the growth of our programs, development of our faculty, expansion much more interested in long-term historical trends of Christian belief and practice. We are interested in such issues as: What problems bequeathed by the Enlightenment have proved intractable for Lutheran theology as it was practiced in the last century and is practiced today? What are those cultural and intellectual motifs within the contemporary horizon that link to confessional Lutheran teaching and proclamation? How are the truths of theology related to those of the sciences, be they physical or social?

Our newly-minted Masters of Theology program already offers quality courses and is producing quality student work. Last semester, Dr. Jonathan Sorum's class on Bonhoeffer gave even our best students challenging fare. We believe the market for this program is especially great. Consider the hundreds of theologically-interested Lutheran pastors serving in major Lutheran traditions all over the world. Now they can study with well-known Lutheran professors, receive a legitimate graduate degree, access our library for research, write publishable articles and monographs, and never have to leave their own parishes.

The Institute of Lutheran Theology seeks to connect the most knowledgeable and faithful Lutheran thinkers with the most interested and able of Lutheran students. The goal of this connection is to create Lutheran preachers and teachers that know Christ, Scripture, theology, and enough of the historical and cultural situation to be able to preach *for our time*. We want to give preachers and teachers the tools to evangelize into our context, into a world dominated by technology and the devaluation of the human spirit. Your support makes all of this possible!

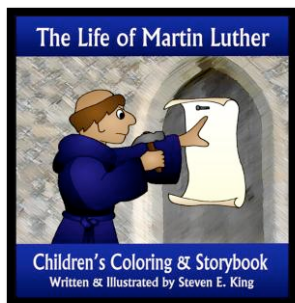
For more of the latest at the Institute of Lutheran Theology (course offering, news, and more), please visit www.ilt.org

SOLA PUBLISHING



Sola Publishing is an educational ministry serving the needs of congregations that belong to CALC, LCMC, NALC, Lutheran Core and other orthodox Christians looking for teaching resources that are trustworthy and useful, and at a reasonable price. **Sola's** materials are grounded in the authority of Scripture, with a distinctively confessional Lutheran focus, centering in the gospel message of Jesus Christ. **Sola's** resources, curriculum and materials are designed to be practical and functional, being written by people who serve in local congregations.

SOLA PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT



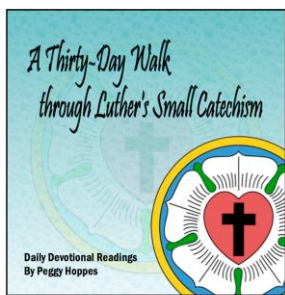
The Life of Martin Luther

Children's Coloring & Storybook

Written & Illustrated by Steven E. King

This easy-to-read coloring and storybook presents children with an introduction to the life of one of the most influential Christians in history, Martin Luther. From his childhood, to his days as a monk, to his becoming a teacher and pastor in Wittenberg -- the stories in this book trace Luther's life of faith through many struggles and challenges, showing us what it means to be faithful to God's Word and bear witness to our faith in Jesus Christ.

8x10 softcover; 31 pages



A Thirty-Day Walk through Luther's Small Catechism

Daily Devotional Readings by Peggy Hoppes

This 30-day devotional book follows the sections of Martin Luther's Small Catechism, and is designed for daily reflection on the Scriptures and the faith that we believe. Guiding the reader through a journey of Law to Gospel, the devotions are meant to show readers not only their need for grace, but where that grace is found in Jesus Christ. The book is not only meant as a basic daily devotional and prayer resource, it also serves as a brief overview of the themes of the Catechism.

Author Peggy Hoppes has been doing devotional writing for years, both online and in print. Her "A Word for Today" devotionals can be found online on Facebook™ as well as on her own site at: www.awordfortoday.org.

(soft cover book 5.5x5.5; 76 pages)

Sola is also very excited to have completed the last edits of their new Women's and Men's study on the Book of Ecclesiastes, entitled: *'Through This Vain World.'* For more information about this Bible Study or all other materials and resources of **Sola Publishing**, please visit www.solapublishing.org

A NEW COMMITMENT TO MAKING THE WORD CENTRAL TO YOUR LIFE

A letter from Rev. Rev. Kent Groethe, Executive Editor, Connections Magazine, appearing in Sola Publishing's May 2nd Ministry Moments newsletter. Connections, published by Sola, is a magazine for evangelical Lutheran Christians filled with meaty articles as well as lighter spiritual fare. Articles and features are contributed by evangelical Lutherans from congregations across America.

Dear Friends,

"And beginning with Moses [the first five books of the Old Testament] and all the prophets [the last seventeen books of the Old Testament] Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Acts 24:27

The Word of God is what reveals the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus used it to make Himself known to Cleopas and his friend on the afternoon of the resurrection. After Jesus expounded on Old Testament texts, the two men declared,

Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked to us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?

In his explanation of the third commandment in his Large Catechism, Luther states,

You must be concerned not only about hearing the Word, but also about learning it and retaining it. Do not think that it is up to your discretion or that it is an unimportant matter.

One problem is that the vast majority of Christians do use their own discretion in regard to the Bible and have decided it is an unimportant matter. This is proven by how little it is read or by studying the lives of most believers.

Another problem is that the church will grow cold and die without a deep commitment to God's Word. That is the great issue before us, the great challenge. Can we succeed in increasing the use, study and love for the Scriptures among a large segment of our people? If we fail here, we will ultimately become a human-centered religion like many other main-line denominations. If we succeed, Jesus will remain central to our task. Our hearts will burn with newer and deeper faith in Jesus and a ever-deepening commitment to the things that He cares about.

I challenge individuals and congregations to continue to *"put your money and your time where your mouth is."* We claim that the Bible is, along with the sacraments, the instrument through which Jesus creates, awakens and stirs faith in Jesus Christ.

As individuals, I challenge you to make a new commitment to making the Word central to your life. Join a Bible study, read the Scriptures on your own or with your spouse and/or children.

As congregations, I challenge you to spend your money and time in ways that focus on encouraging members to get into the Word and understand it. This exhortation is for me and for the congregation I serve as well. We have to succeed here, and with God's Spirit we can.

We need to open the Bible with greater frequency. Let's not leave it to our own discretion, because our laziness and busy lives often win out. Instead, let's be faithful to God and renew a love affair with His amazing Word.

Rejoice in Christ!
Pastor Kent Groethe
*Christ the King Lutheran Church
Dodge City, Kansas*



Mark It On Your Calendar:



CALC NATIONAL CONVENTION 2012
November 2-4
Faith Lutheran / Good Shepherd Lutheran
North York, ON



THE LUTHERAN CONNECTOR

The Official Publication of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC) www.calc.ca

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