

The Lutheran Connector *Special Advent Edition*

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

November 2013



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

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President's Advent Message - Jesus is Coming!

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's hard to believe that a new church year will begin on December 1st, with the first Sunday in the season of Advent. Once again we will hear the Baptist's cry: "**A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'**" (Luke 3:4) I have always experienced the message of Advent as an eschatological (end times) message as we confess that Jesus came and will come again to judge the living and the dead and fulfill the promise he made to us and establish his eternal Kingdom. However, this year I was inspired by the Baptist's message in a different way. John called the people in front of him to get ready for Lord that very day. He proclaimed that Jesus was coming to them then and there, this was the absolute truth and certain to occur. Like the Baptist, we can declare that Jesus is coming to us in this life, right now and this is the absolute truth and certain to occur.

In Matthew 18:20, Jesus boldly declared: "**For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.**" When we begin our worship services with the declaration: "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" it is more than a mere liturgical rubric. We call those words the "invocation." By these words we declare to one another that we have gathered here to worship our Triune God, and in reliance on His promise, we call upon Jesus to be present with us as we worship. The presence of the risen Lord in among us makes Christian worship services unique in all the universe. Jesus comes to us whenever we gather together in His name, this the absolute truth and certain to occur.

Jesus' Kingdom comes every time the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached in its purity. As Lutherans we trust, confess and believe that we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, or come to Him; unless the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, sanctifies us and keep us in the true faith. (Luther's explanation to the Third Article to the Creed.) The Holy Spirit is active in our world, and Jesus comes to us, every time the Gospel is proclaimed in its purity. This too is absolutely true and certain to occur.

Jesus' Kingdom comes into this world and this time whenever the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are administered and transforms those who are touched by the Sacraments.

Our Baptismal liturgy declares that when John baptized the repentant sinners in the Jordan River it was a sign that God had forgiven their sin. When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River his human nature received the Holy Spirit. It also signified Jesus' baptism into his own death and resurrection. When Jesus died and was resurrected he sanctified the water of baptism. Jesus thus made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In Romans 6:3-10, Paul reminds us that when we were baptized, we were united with Jesus Christ. We were joined to his death, we die with him, so that our sins are forgiven. Paul also declares that if we are joined to Jesus' death, we are also joined to his resurrection. When we die, we will be resurrected. Those who are baptized have put on Christ: "for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3:27). The Apostle Paul further declares: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" Jesus comes to us in baptism and makes us a new creation; this too is absolutely true and certain to occur

In Holy Communion we believe, trust and confess that Jesus comes to us in and under the bread and wine. When the words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," are said during the consecration of the elements we are assured forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us through these words. Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. This also is absolutely true and certain to occur.

Jesus warns that there can be impediments to His coming to us. In the parable of the sower He lists three. The first is **hardness of heart**. Throughout the Gospels Jesus is confronted by the Priests, Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. They considered themselves experts in the Law given through Moses and the Prophets. They believed that they could receive God's salvation based on their relationship to Abraham and obedience to the Law. They developed an oral tradition and their own commentaries on the Law and the Prophets by which they came to judge a man's obedience of the law. They could not countenance Jesus' preaching and teaching. They constantly challenged Jesus publically with the express aim of tripping Him up. They judged his teaching as heresy and blasphemy using their

own human standards. Their hearts, souls and minds were hardened against Jesus. They refused to open themselves up to the Gospel seed Jesus sowed all around them and directly on them.

The Gospel retains the confrontations between Jesus and the religious elite as a powerful warning for Christians of every age. Be careful Jesus warns. You could become like the Jewish religious elite. You could become religious experts and believe you have all the answers. You could become legalistic and believe that salvation can come through your own efforts. You could begin to judge my teachings on the basis of your human wisdom and understanding. You could come to believe that you have the right and privilege of supplementing, footnoting and reinterpreting God's Word using human knowledge and wisdom. You could harden yourselves to the point that the Gospel seed bounces right off of you.

The second impediment is *shallowness*. It is easy enough for the Twelve and the first disciples to hear, accept and even to proclaim the Jesus' teachings when Jesus was with them. Jesus proclaimed God's grace and mercy and performed miracles. When Jesus began to teach that his disciples were to eat his flesh and drink his blood many deserted him (John 6:51-66). Their minds were like shallow soil; the Gospel had taken root, however, Jesus' own teaching was like the heat of the sun and their disappointment with Jesus' teaching like a rock beneath the soil. Their faith failed. The disciples that stuck with Jesus received their own unique challenge. Jesus told them in no uncertain terms that He was going to be arrested, falsely accused, falsely convicted, sentenced to death, crucified, buried and then resurrected. The disciples promised to stick with him through it all and even defend him. Jesus warned them that they would desert him. When Jewish authorities and then the Roman authorities, arrested Jesus and began their evil course of action, the disciples' faith began to wither, their roots hit their rocks and stones, their fear of their own suffering and death, and they ran.

The third impediment is the *lure of this world*. It seems we worry when we have too little. We feel compelled put all of our efforts into accumulation of the resources we believe we need. We can also worry when we have too much. We feel compelled to put all of our efforts into preserving what we have and making it grow. Commerce, career development and even leisure pursuits can overtake our lives. It is easy for a person to go from "working so I can live" to "living so I can work." We can break our backs working to accumulate things (assets) and toys for our amusement and recreation. In so doing we create our own "**Thingdom**." We can believe that if we have a big enough "**Thingdom**", we can be safe from all perils.

Jesus message to us is: "Beware of your '**Thingdom**.' It's good to have things, but don't rely on them too much. Your **Thingdom** will not protect you against sin, death and the Devil. For that you need my Kingdom. You need good deep soil upon which the Gospel seed may be sown, take root, grow and bear fruit." The soil in the Parable of the Sower is a person's mind and innermost personality or core. Good soil is a repentant mind. It is a mind that admits to Jesus: "What have I become Jesus?" I have become arrogant and feel privileged. I believe I can pick and choose what I believe from among your teachings Jesus. I can blot out the ones I don't like. I believe that my personal piety and sense of what is right and appropriate in the life of faith is a standard by which I judge others and supplements your grace and mercy in some way. I am far too concerned about creating a nice, orderly, well run church rather than becoming a community which worships a risen Lord, who stands among us, who recreates us, forgives our sins. I forget we have a Savior who says to us: "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24). Our burning desire should be to fill our sanctuaries with people who hear the Gospel of Jesus and cross over from death to life.

The good news is that we have a Savior who keeps coming to us. December 1st let's confess our unworthiness and ask him to come to us, forgive us, love us, change our priorities and permit us to walk humbly with him and with his help invite a throng of others to walk with him.

In Christ's service,

Pastor Edward Skutshek, President

Thank you!

On behalf of all of our all our membership, CALC's National Council would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank two departing members of our National Council, Peggy Krause, Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB, and Tim Hartness, Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC. We want to thank God for them. We want to thank them for their selfless service to our Association. Peggy served as our Secretary for four years. She kept copious notes and produced excellent minutes for us. As an executive member of the Board of Elders and an officer, she made invaluable contributions to the discussions and deliberations of both the Board of Elders and the National Council. Tim Hartness served as a member of the Board of Trustees for four years. Tim always called the Board of Trustees and the National Council to account with his probing questions. Over the past four years, God blessed our National Council with a sense real sense of unity, collegiality and genuine love and care for one another, yet, felt able to speak the truth in love. They will be sorely missed.



CALC's National Council (2012-2013) **Back Row:** (Left to right) Tim Bauer, Elder, St. Peter's Lutheran, Cochrane, AB; Pastor Peter Vanker, Elder, Individual Associate Member & Pastor Emeritus, Markham, ON; Tim Hartness, Trustee, Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC; Fred Schickedanz, Vice President, St. Peter's Lutheran, Cochrane, AB; Art Kroeker, Trustee, Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB; Sherland Chhangeur, Elder, Toronto, ON. **Front Row:** (Left to right) Ron Voss, Trustee, St. Peter's Lutheran, Cochrane, AB; Peggy Krause, Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB; Pastor Ed Skutshek, President, Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC; Helen Zacharias, Treasurer, Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB.

The returning members of our National Council: Pastor Ed Skutshek, President; Fred Schickedanz, Vice President; Sherland Chhangur, Elder; Art Kroeker, Trustee and Ron Voss, Trustee, would like to take this opportunity to thank God and our membership for the opportunity to serve you for the past four years. We also want to thank God for the opportunity to continue to serve for all of you and for the trust reposed in us as you voted by acclamation to elect us for another term.

We also want to thank God for our two new members to our National Council: Vivian Georgeson, elected to the position of Secretary and Everley Lutz elected to the position of Trustee, both of Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC.

Please pray for our National Council. Ask God to let His blessing rest on us. Beseech God to give us understanding of the Gospel, sincerity of purpose, diligence in ministry and administration, and the beauty of the life in Christ, that many people will be served and God's name is glorified.

Sincerely,

Your National Council.

Highlights of Convention 2013

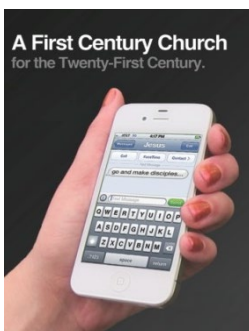


Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal, Stony Plain, Alberta, hosted CALC's 2013 Annual Convention from Friday November 1st through to Sunday November 3rd. CALC's 22nd Annual General Convention set new records. A total of 125 registered for the convention (57 voting delegates, representing 25 of our 28 congregations, and 68 visitors).

Thursday evening October 31st Immanuel invited the children of Stony Plain to their church for a Halloween party. Immanuel's gym was transformed into a Halloween carnival. Skill testing games were set up around the gym. Children received candy by participating in these games. Children and their escorts dined on hotdogs, chips and worms & dirt (a parfait made of chocolate pudding, cookie crumbs and gummie worms). A movie theater was also set up for the children that showed wholesome Halloween movies. About 80 participated in the event. The gym took two days to set up. However, as soon as the last child left, an army of volunteers took down the games and decorations and set the gym up for the convention. The same volunteers set up tables to seat 120 (for Lunch and Coffee time) and 18 tables for our 18 exhibitors (a record for a CALC convention).



Music was a highlight of this convention. Each session of our convention on Friday and Saturday was opened with praise and music. The music during opening worship on Friday night and closing worship on Sunday Morning was amazing. Special thanks must be given to Dr. Randall McLeod, Immanuel's Praise and Worship Band (Miriam & Naomi Querengesser, Erin Lampen, Doug Hafso, Caroline Fisher & Sarah Taylor), accompanist Jennifer Neufeld, and Good 4 the Soul (Carol Bond, Julie Villadsen, Norma Vanderkirkhove and Jennifer Neufeld).



Our convention's theme was a **1st Century Church for the 21st Century**. This will be our theme for subsequent conventions. In order to be a 1st Century Church for the 21st Century, we first have to understand what the 1st Century or early Church was to their time.

Friday November 1st

The Rise of Christianity: The unpacking of the nature of the 1st Century Church began with our first presenter, our President, Pastor Edward Skutshek. His presentation revealed that it is estimated that the Christian Church grew from about 3,500 at Pentecost to about 35,000,000 or half the estimated population of the Roman Empire by 350 AD. The first 350 years of the Christian Church was marked by waves of persecution. Christian leaders were jailed and some were executed by the Empire. Some Christians had their property confiscated and others were sent to the mines to work as slaves. The Church grew despite this persecution. In the time between campaigns of persecution, the church was able to grow publically. Large houses were converted to meeting halls. Christianity grew in times of religious freedom and times of persecution because Christians loved their enemies and the poor and needy around them. They stayed behind and nursed the sick during plagues when Roman physicians and all healthy people fled the cities. They welcomed the poor and the stranger in town into their congregations. They viewed their congregation as an extended family. They rescued and raised infants (mostly girls) abandoned by their



parents. These girls were raised Christian. They married pagan husbands who converted to Christianity. They helped and cared for widows and orphans. They did not only hear and preach the words of the Gospel they lived it out. The 1st Century church calls us to follow in their footsteps.

Break-outs & Exhibitors: In two hour-long breakout sessions (11:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30-2:30 PM) each participant was able to attend four half-hour presentations by various Christian organizations who are reaching into the community for Christ at home and abroad. Participants interested in world missions and relief heard a presentation by a representative of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). Those interested in Christian Education and Pastoral Training heard presentations by representatives from Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute (CLBI) and the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). Participants interested in reaching out to and mentoring single mothers heard a presentation by MOMS (Making Our Moms Successful) Canada (Meta Weir a member of our host congregation Immanuel Lutheran was a founding member of this Canadian Chapter of MOMS Canada). Representatives from “Mosaic Center” gave a presentation of how their drop-in center in NW Edmonton helps the homeless people in their community (Member congregation Emmaus Lutheran of Edmonton and two non-Lutheran congregations founded Mosaic). Trustee Ron Voss gave a synopsis of his course that helps Biblically-faithful Christians defend Creation from attacks by secular theories of creation. Our President gave a talk entitled CALC 101, during which he described the basics of our Association. Other exhibitors included LAMP Canada, Listening to God Ministries, Lutheran Renewal Canada, and an Author’s table, where Pastor Emeritus Rev. Sheilah Fletch was selling her novel, *Forgiven*, with proceeds going to support pastoral training in CALC. Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton set up a booth at the convention, manned by their Interim President, Rev. Dr. Norman Threinen.



Round-Table Discussions: From 2:30 to 4:00 PM, Fred Schickedanz, Vice President, facilitated a round-table discussion geared for and directed toward congregational leaders and pastors. Vice-President Fred Schickedanz challenged all present to answer this question: “How would you describe and define a successful congregation?” A lively discussion followed. Most participants agreed that large numbers of congregants was not necessarily a sign of the success of a congregation. However, we all agreed that congregations had to grow to be effective and continue on into the future. Some spoke of their attempts to bring people into their congregations. They tried to introduce contemporary worship which seemed to rile those already in the pews. Still others saw a successful congregation as one that acts, does things in the name of Christ in their community. Others saw any congregation that faithfully preaches the Gospel in its purity and rightly administers the Sacraments is a successful congregation. The discussion will continue on that question.



Friday Worship: Pastor Jim Bredeson, senior pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, our convention hosts, led worship and preached at our Friday night service. The Reformation was the theme. Pastor Bredeson’s sermon was based on Psalm 46. Pastor Jim declared that our congregations are in need of spiritual renewal and strengthening of personal faith, within our Lutheran heritage. Pastor Jim encouraged all of us to pray to God for renewal in our congregations. Following worship we gathered for a time of refreshment and fellowship.



Saturday November 2nd

Opening Devotions: Pastor Ted Hill of Calvary Lutheran, Wetaskiwin and Asker Lutheran, Ponoka, Alberta, led opening devotions. His devotion was based on Matthew 14:22-33. Pastor Ted declared that like Peter, Jesus calls us out of our comfort zone as we go out into the world in his name, like Peter he often calls us to walk on water. In the beginning, again like Peter, we step out on the water and begin ministering for Jesus, however, we soon begin to doubt in ourselves and others, and, like Peter,

we begin to sink. However, we must believe that Jesus will never allow us to sink below the waves and drown. When we reach up to him, he grabs us and walks us to safety.

Our Convention's Keynote Speaker: Greg Musselman, Vice-President of Outreach, for Voice of the Martyrs-Canada was our keynote speaker. Greg is also an ordained minister. Through his moving presentation, Greg declared that Christians in many nations are persecuted and even killed for their Christian faith. He informed us that 11 Christians are martyred (killed) for their faith every hour of every day or about 100,000 martyrs a year. He showed us video clips that set out chapter and verse the dangers faced by Christians in many nations. We could not record some of his presentation for security reasons. If certain information he presented got onto the internet it may put certain brothers and sisters in Christ in peril. He also shared that the suffering and death of the martyrs has not been in vain. Persecutors of the church in oppressive countries have come to Christ and believe in Him as a result of the witness of the martyrs. Voice of the Martyrs not only documents the suffering of the martyrs, with other groups they advocate for the martyrs with the oppressing nations and offer aide, solace, resources and help to the relatives of the martyrs. He encouraged CALC churches to preach the pure Gospel and not water it down. He noted that the Gospel is most often watered down to avoid offense. He exhorted us to risk being offensive.



Business Meeting:

During the business session:

- (1) We welcomed and acknowledged several distinguished guests. Pastor Mark Vander Tuig of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), joined us for the convention. Several of our congregations are dually-rostered with LCMC and CALC. A report on their convention is included in this edition of *The Connector*. A contingent from the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) was introduced: Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt, President; Rad Fich, Director of Development; Pastor Tim Swenson, Admissions and Student Advisor. It was announced that ILT had formed a standalone Canadian entity ILT-Canada. Pastor Ed Skutshek (our President), Fred Schickedanz (our Vice-President) and Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt are ILT Canada's first Board of Directors. ILT Canada will partner with ILT to advance theological education in North America. ILT Canada is seeking charitable status and if granted will allow Canadians to make tax deductible donations.
- (2) **Congregations:** We admitted the following Congregations as full members of CALC: Emmaus Lutheran Church, Edmonton, AB; Salem Lutheran Church, Kingman, AB; Trondhjem Lutheran Church, Round Hill, AB; Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wetaskiwin, AB; St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Sullivan, ON; Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Mission, BC; and Asker Lutheran Church, Ponoka, AB. Vancouver Chinese Lutheran Church of Burnaby, BC, was admitted as an Associate member. Trinity Lutheran Church, Leader, SK changes from Associate to Full Member Congregation.
- (3) **Pastors:** We admitted the following pastors to CALC's Roster of Pastors: **Parish Pastors:** Rev. Dr. Eddie Kwok; Rev. Richard Hung; Rev. Garfield Vikse; Pastor Ted Hill; Rev. Alan Boerner; Rev. John-Mark Bredeson; Rev. Robert Deobald; and Rev. Douglas Kranz. **Pastor Emeritus:** Rev. Glen Carlson.
- (4) **Individuals:** We Admitted the following Individual Associate Members: Carol Vanker; Arthur Schickedanz; Lloyd Weiler and Darrell Weiler.
- (5) **President:** President Skutshek addressed the convention. He noted that for so much of the history of CALC we have been identified by what we are against. This was absolutely necessary as CALC was formed as a lifeboat for ELCIC congregations who could not continue on the ELCIC's path. However, the time has come for us to put the past behind us and to move forward. We must articulate what we are for. We are for genuine and heartfelt

repentance. We will not water down the Gospel and preach it in a way which impedes true repentance. We are for marriage as God ordained it. We are for healthy marriages, families and congregations. He promised to move forward in rendering to Caesar what is Caesar, that is, registering CALC as a denomination in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario for marriage purposes. In the interim, we are licensing our pastors in these provinces through the Christian Ministers Association (CMA) and St. Andrews, Kamloops. He identified a need on CALC's part to unite our youth in a common mission cause. He noted that we have two predominantly Guyanese congregations in CALC with ties to that South American nation. Guyana has an indigenous Lutheran Church. It is an English-speaking country. He planted a vision for the youth of CALC congregations to travel to Guyana the summer of 2015 and work with the Lutheran Churches there to host Vacation Bible School for the children in the neighborhoods surrounding the churches. He noted that the Board of Elders have been studying the Shepherd's Pathway in an effort to streamline the process. We have two young men are on the Shepherd's Pathway. John Graham, of St. Peter's in Cochrane, Alberta is more than half way through his studies for a Master of Divinity degree from the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). Ron Laferriere of Peace Lutheran in Wainwright, Alberta has begun the Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC) Program with ILT. Our seminarians are out ahead of us and we must catch up to them with them. John Graham will soon be looking for internship site and a congregation once his studies are completed. Ron Laferriere will soon be looking for a congregation.

- (6) **Elders:** The Board of Elders introduced amendments to our constitution. The amendments would provide for staggered four-year terms for our National Council. About a third of the National Council would be elected each year. The constitutional amendments passed unanimously. The amendments must be ratified by our congregations. Ballots to be sent out to congregations as soon as is possible.
- (7) **Trustees:** The Trustees reported on their activities throughout the year, including the preparation of the 2014 CALC budget.
- (8) **Financials/Budget:** Delegates approved the financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2012. Our financials disclosed a surplus (excess of income over expenses) of \$6,874.00 for 2012. It should be noted that Revenue Canada does not recommend or require full audit of a charity's books (about a \$5,000.00 cost) if the charity's revenues are under \$250,000.00. Fiscal responsibility dictates that a charity's books be reviewed. Consistent with Revenue Canada's guidelines, our books were reviewed by a retired chartered accountant. Delegates also approved a budget for 2014 in the amount of \$70,810.00. Our budget is intended to fund: the costs of travel for our President as he undertakes the business of CALC; the costs our National Council as they meet three times each year in Calgary; some costs for our annual Pastor's Retreat and the Canadian Rockies Theological Conference; an amount paid to Grace Lutheran Church, West Kelowna, BC, as a contribution for the time taken by their Pastor Ed Skutshek (our President) as he tends to the business of CALC; and other standard costs of operation of a non-profit society.
- (9) **Elections:** The terms of seven members of our National Council had expired in 2013. The following were nominated for the vacant positions and elected by acclamation. Those elected would normally serve for four year terms. However, if the above described constitutional amendments are approved some of those elected this year will serve shortened terms to permit staggered terms in the future. The newly elected officers, elders and trustees are:

Position	Name	Year term expires*
President	Rev. Edward Skutshek, Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC	2017
Vice President	Fred Schickedanz, St. Peter's Lutheran, Cochrane, AB	2015
Secretary	Vivian Georgeson, Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC	2017
Elder	Sherland Chhangeur, Faith Lutheran, Toronto, ON	2014
Trustee	Ron Voss, St. Peter's Lutheran, Cochrane, AB	2015 or 2016 #
Trustee	Art Kroeker, Christ Lutheran, Morden, MB	2015 or 2016 #
Trustee	Everley Lutz, Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC	2017

*Assumes Constitutional Amendments are ratified by our congregations. Their successors will be elected to staggered 4-year terms.

Pursuant to our Constitutional Amendments, our three Trustees are elected to staggered terms: 2-year term, a 3-year term and a 4 -year term. The two incumbent trustees will determine among themselves who will take the 2-year and 3-year terms.

(10) A motion floor was made from the floor and passed which directed CALC's National Council to develop a ten-year strategic plan for our Association. National Council is to propose the method by which the plan will be developed and present the same to the National Convention in 2014.

Banquet: A day of devotions, learning and business was capped off with a sumptuous banquet at the Best Western Hotel in Stony Plain. The banquet afforded all present the opportunity to reflect on the business of the convention, make new friends, catch up with old friends and enjoy entertainment. With guitar in hand, Sarah Taylor performed several original Christian songs she had written. Afterwards, Sarah and her father, Dr. Randall McLeod, gave a special presentation. The presentation celebrated pieces of Stony Plain's mural collection in the words of original songs and original cowboy poetry written by Dr. McCloud. It was an amazing performance.

Sunday November 3rd

Closing Worship: The weekend was capped off with a closing worship service. Pastor Jim Bredeson led worship and presided at Holy Communion. Our President preached. The processional at the beginning of the service was



breath-taking. A stream of flag bearers processed up the center isle of the sanctuary. The flags of many nations flew. They reminded all present of the Great Commission, that we are to go out into the world in Jesus name. Four blasts from a shofar (a ram's-horn trumpet blown by the ancient Hebrews) brought the service to a start.

Drawing on a fable penned by Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, our President encouraged all present to believe that as Christians we are often like ducks in a row, normally waddling and paddling through life. However, God gave us wings, and with God's help, He can take our duck wings and make us soar like eagles. We soar like eagles when, by the grace of God, we offer our left cheek when we have been struck on the right cheek by a sharp word or angry fist; we pray for and help our enemies; we preach the Gospel knowing we will be offensive and we will be hated and even persecuted; and/or we give to the poor. A particularly moving part of the service saw the relatives of those from Immanuel congregation who had gone to be with the Lord in 2013, light a candle in honor of their departed loved one. Following the service we enjoyed an amazing buffet lunch.

The people of Immanuel Lutheran must be commended for all of their efforts in hosting CALC's 2013 General Convention. The lunches and refreshments during breaks were delicious and plentiful. Emmaus Lutheran of Edmonton also helped with a coffee break. A job well done! Special thanks must be given to our convention registrar Pat McLeod and her husband Dr. Randall for all their efforts. Thanks also to Pastor Jim for planning worship, preaching and facilitating. Heartfelt thanks for your warm western hospitality.

Videos of all convention sessions which took place in Immanuel Lutheran's main sanctuary from Friday morning November 1st to Sunday, November 3rd may be viewed on your computer by following this link: <http://vimeo.com/user21663546/videos>. Special thanks to Al Hamilton of Grace Lutheran, West Kelowna, BC for his efforts in videoing the presentations, editing them and posting them on the Vimeo website.

Next Year's Convention. CALC's National Council was overwhelmed by this year's attendance. We had more visitors than delegates. The overwhelming majority of visitors came from CALC's congregations in Alberta. CALC's mandate is to gather our congregations together for business, worship and Christian Education. National Council is tasked with the duty of maximizing the number of delegates and visitors that attend any of our gatherings. For this reason, National Council requested the delegates' indulgence in order to make a more deliberate choice in the venue for our Annual General Convention for 2014. A suggestion was made that the 2014 convention be held a week earlier, inasmuch as, the snow storm of Sunday, November 3rd reinforced our Canadian conventional wisdom that states that our weather patterns consistently change the first week in November.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Staggered Terms for National Council.

CALC's Model Congregational Constitution and most of our congregational constitutions elect a congregational council of not less than six or more than fifteen members for terms of three years. We stagger the terms of council members for the sake of the congregation. Staggered terms of office allow (a) the congregational council to maintain an experienced core over time; and (b) new council members to come on board every year. Staggered terms also ease the burden of nominating committees. Potentially replacing an entire council every three years is a daunting task. Unlike its model constitution and bylaws, CALC's constitution does not provide for staggered terms for the members of our National Council.

Our Constitution and Bylaws provide that the members of the National Council are elected to four year terms. If we follow our Constitution to the letter and every member on the National Council serves their entire term, we could have a whole new National Council every four years. Continuity on the National Council is achieved if key members of the National Council run for a second four year term. Our constitution provides that a person cannot hold an office on the National Council for more than two consecutive terms. However, if we have a resignation during a four-year term, our National Council, elects a successor to fill the vacant position on the National Council until the next General Convention when a successor is elected by the General Convention to a full four-year term (which begins from the year of election at General Convention). Thus, resignations during a term cause a staggering of terms. Resignations in the past have caused three of the terms on National Council to be out of sync with the rest of the National Council.

On November 2, 2013, our delegates voted unanimously to fill the seven expired terms on the National Council by acclamation. Our current constitutional provisions each of these seven terms would expire in 2017. The same delegates unanimously approved amendments to our constitution which will authorize the election of members to National Council for staggered terms. They voted to amend sections 2.2 and 2.5 of Article 10 of our constitution to accomplish this goal. The amended Section 2.2 allows for election of our Association's officers, elders and trustees in staggered four year terms, with about one third of the terms expiring each year. The amended Section 2.2 must be ratified by our congregations. In order for staggered terms to occur, there must be a transitional term or shorter term for some members of our National Council. If the amendment are ratified by our congregations, for this convention only, some members of our National Council were elected to shorter terms: the President and Secretary were elected to four-year terms; the Vice-President to a two-year term; a member of the Board of Elders for a one-year term; and three members of the Board of Trustees who will serve for staggered terms (a two-year, three- and four-year term). In staggering these terms we wanted to ensure that the President and Vice-President were not elected for a four year term on the same year. Staggering the term of the President and Vice-President ensures that every time a new President is elected, the sitting Vice-President will have had at least two years of experience on National Council and can thus help acclimate the new President. Delegates also amended Section 2.5 of Article 10 so that if a National Council member resigns, is removed, or dies before the end of his/her term, the National Council will elect a substitute who will serve until the next Annual General Convention, at which time the delegates to the Convention will elect a successor to fill the unexpired term of the National Council Member who caused the vacancy. The transitional terms are set forth below.

Transitional Terms

Position	Term	
<i>President</i>	<i>Elected to a 4-year term in 2013</i>	<i>Elected to a four- year term in 2017</i>

Vice President	Elected to a 2-year in 2013	Elected to a four-year term in 2015
Secretary	Elected to a 4 year term in 2013	Elected to a four-year term in 2017
Treasurer	Serving a four year term which ends in 2015	Elected to a four year term in 2015
Board of Elders #1	Serving a four year term which ends in 2016	Elected to a four year term in 2016
Board of Elders #2	Serving a four year term which ends in 2016	Elected to a four year term in 2016
Board of Elders #3	Elected to a 1-year in 2013	Elected to a four-year in 2014
Board of Trustees #1	Elected to a 2-year in 2013	Elected to a four-year term in 2015
Board of Trustees #2	Elected to a 3-year in 2013	Elected to a four-year term in 2016
Board of Trustees #3	Elected to a 4-year in 2013	Elected to a four-year term in 2017

Our current National Council and the dates upon which their terms expire are set forth below:

Name/Position	Year Elected /Reelected	Term ends
Pastor Edward Skutshek, President/Elder	2013	2017
Fred Schickedanz, Vice President/Trustee	2013	2015
Vivien Georgeson, Secretary/Elder	2013	2017
Sherland Chhangur, Elder #1	2013	2014
Everley Lutz, Trustee #1	2013	2017
Art Kroeker, Trustee #2	2013	2015 or 2016*
Ron Voss, Trustee #3	2013	2015 or 2016 *
Helen Zacharias, Treasurer/Trustee	2011	2015 (2 nd Term)
Tim Bauer, Elder #1	2012	2016 (2 nd Term)
Pastor Peeter Vanker, Elder #2	2012	2016

* The two incumbent trustees will determine among themselves who will take the transitional 2-year and 3-year terms.

Congregational Ratification. These proposed amendments were required to be approved by a majority (51%) of the registered delegates to our 2013 General Convention. The same were unanimously approved by the delegates. We elected seven new members to our National Council. However, for the staggered terms to become effective, the constitutional amendments approved by our delegates must be ratified by our congregations. Three quarters of the ballots cast by congregations would have to approve the amendments for them to take effect. In the event that the proposed amendments are not ratified by the congregations, all seven will be elected for four-year terms ending 2017.

Existing Section 2.2 of Article 10:

2.2 Each member shall be elected by majority vote of the registered delegates at the General Convention for a term of four years and may only hold the same office for two consecutive terms, holding office until a successor is elected and assumes office. The member takes office upon election.

Proposed Amendments to Section 2.2

The registered delegates shall elect, by a majority vote, a National Council for terms of four years each, with approximately a third of the terms expiring annually. In staggering the terms of office, the President and Vice President shall not be elected to four-year terms at the same annual General Convention. Members of National Council may only hold the same office for two consecutive terms, holding office until a successor is elected and assumes office. The member takes office upon election.

Transitional Provisions - 2013 General Convention: *The registered delegates shall elect: the President and the Secretary to four-year terms; the Vice President to a two-year term; a member of the Board of Elders to a one-year term; one member of the Board of Trustees to a two-year term; one member of the Board of Trustees to a three-year term; and one member of the Board of Trustees to a four-year term. The four-year terms of the previously elected and serving Treasurer (2011) and the two previously elected and serving members of the Board of Elders (2012) shall continue and their successors shall be elected in 2015 and 2016, respectively. In determining the length*



of the term of office of the three members of the Board of Trustees elected, the following principles shall apply: any incumbent Trustee elected will take the shortest term(s). Newly-elected members of the Board of Trustees will take the longer terms.

Existing Section 2.5 of Article 10:

2.5 If the President dies, resigns, or is unable to serve, the Vice President shall serve until the next General Convention. If any other member dies, resigns, or is unable to serve, a temporary

replacement shall be elected by the National Council to serve until the next General Convention.

Proposed Amendments to Section 2.5 of Article 10:

2.5 If the President dies, resigns, or is unable to serve, the Vice President shall serve until the next General Convention. If any other member dies, resigns, or is unable to serve, a temporary replacement shall be elected by the National Council to serve until the next General Convention. At the next General Convention the registered delegates shall elect a successor for the unexpired term of the National Council Member who died, resigned or was removed.

Report on LCMC's 2013 Annual Gathering

October 6-9, 2013 - Dearborn, Michigan: Adoba Hotel – Great Lakes Convention Center.

Tim Hartness and Pastor Ed Skutshek attended LCMC's 13th Annual Gathering as delegates for Grace Lutheran Church and as a Trustee and President, respectively, of CALC. Please accept this article as our joint report on the LCMC convention.

The convention was held at the Adoba Hotel, pictured to the right. Dearborn is a suburb of Detroit City. Ford Motor Company's international headquarters are located in the City of Dearborn, just a short drive from the Adoba Hotel.



The gathering took place in the Adoba's - Great Lakes Convention Center. This year 809 registered for the convention. Registrants included, delegates, visitors, LCMC staff, board and executive, and vendors. 275 Congregations were represented by voting delegates. The accommodations were first class. All our common meals were served in the hotel's Grand Ballroom. Meals were plated and were served to each table by an army of servers. They were amazingly efficient and the meals were very good.

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The total number of LCMC congregations, world wide, is currently 812 **made up of: 706** US Congregations distributed over 41 states and two territories; the remaining **106** congregations are located in 12 other countries. These countries include: Canada, Mexico, Belarus, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nicaragua, Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia, Australia, Myanmar, Tanzania, and Haiti. About 57% of LCMC congregations have attendance of less than 100 per week; another 20% have attendance of less than 200 per week; and 23% have weekly attendance of over 200.

There were about 50 vendors in attendance at the convention. Display tables were hosted by seminaries, Bible schools, mission organizations, Christian publishers and Bible translators to name a few.

Very little convention time is spent on corporate business. Worship, devotions, Christian Education and fellowship were a priority. The convention began on Sunday night with registration, supper, then opening worship, followed by fellowship. The preacher at the opening worship service began unpacking the theme of the convention with a

sermon on the Parable of the Talents. The opening worship service was a contemporary worship service. Over 800 were communed. Several praise bands, serving LCMC congregations in the upper Michigan Peninsula, provided musical accompaniment for the opening service and the time of singing and Bible Study at 8:00 AM on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The closing service on Wednesday was a Traditional service, with Holy Communion.

Convention Theme: “The Grace of Giving.” The presentations were all meant to unpack the following Bible verses:

*“And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—**see that you also excel in this grace of giving.**” (2 Corinthians 8:1-7).*

The theme of the gathering was stewardship, that is, how Christians spend their three “T”s, namely their time, talents and treasures. Every speaker seemed almost to apologize for having to speak about giving or stewardship. It seems that we all labor under the old admonition and proverb: “giving and commitment” to the church, like religion and politics, should never be discussed in polite company.”

The Apostle Paul ignored that universal proverb. He had no trouble speaking to the Church in the ancient city Corinth about their giving. He had no trouble using good old fashioned guilt in his communications with that congregation. In the daily morning Bible studies, which focused on 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, we learned that when Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthian Church, he was collecting money for the church in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem church was going through a lot of turmoil and was severely afflicted by poverty. Jews in Jerusalem that converted to Christianity were kicked out of their family of origin. They were cut off from the synagogue. They were considered as dead by their families. They were considered to be like gentiles, that is, they were considered unclean. They could not eat with other Jews. They could not hold certain positions in Jewish society. It was difficult for them to get good work. They needed financial help. Paul was absolutely determined to collect an offering for the church in Jerusalem.



Corinth was a prosperous city and many members of the Corinthian church were wealthy. Paul knew they had it in them to give. Up to this time they had given sparingly. Paul wanted to spur them on in their giving. To accomplish this goal, Paul held up of the Church in Macedonia. The people in this church were poor and were undergoing severe persecution. When the Macedonians heard what was going in Jerusalem, on their own, without Paul asking, they gave out of their poverty. They gave more than they could afford. They begged Paul for the privilege of helping the church in Jerusalem. Paul went on to tell the Corinthians that God had blessed them. Through Paul, and his partners in mission, God had given the Corinthian church an abundance of faith, the ability to share their faith with others, sincerity and earnestness in the delivery of the message of salvation, and love for one another. Paul wanted them to excel in one more thing.....the grace of giving. He wanted them to give freely for the sake of the Lord.

He wanted the Corinthians to understand that the giving of the Macedonian church found its origin in this: the members of the Macedonian church *“gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”* (2 Corinthians 8:5). Our two keynote speakers Pastor Kyle Idleman and Mr. Chuck Bentley described what Paul meant when he said the “Macedonian churches gave themselves to the Lord and then to us.” The meaning of *giving yourself to the Lord* is found in Luke 9:23: Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their

cross daily and follow me. **Key words:** Jesus says you must **deny self** and **pick up and carry the cross** and **must come after me**. Our culture tells us to put ourselves first. Jesus says to deny self is to put others first. We must become cross bearers. It means sacrifice, surrender and submission. Jesus must be primary in our preaching and our living. Jesus cannot be an add on. To “come after Jesus ..” is a “passionate following” a “chasing after” a “passionate pursuit.” The pursuit of discipleship is an intimate and passionate relationship with Jesus. When we get close to Jesus we come to understand that everything belongs to Jesus and we are merely stewards of what God entrusts us with. God call us to work hard, to save hard and to give hard. God calls us to be generous givers, like the Macedonian churches. The speakers described those things that keep us from passionately following Jesus and being generous givers: fear of commitment, procrastination, the priorities of our lives, and bondage to things. Only Jesus can break the chains that keep us from following him. First we have to admit that we are chained and then ask Jesus to free us from these chains.

Pastor Mark Vander Tuig, LCMC’s Service Coordinator gave his report. In 2012 a vision was cast for the planting of 1,000 new congregations in the next ten years. A new position “New Church Development Coordinator” filled by Pastor Dan Clites. His installation at the convention is shown in the picture to the left. As New Church Development Coordinator, Pastor Clites will: (1) Work with existing churches in an effort to plant new congregations (2) Connect congregations together so they can learn from one another and help one another grow. (3) Look for materials to train, educate and equip leaders for new ministries. Pastor Mark Vander Tuig made 85 trips in 2012-13. Many of these trips included Church leadership weekends. They began Saturday morning and were over Saturday afternoons. He was encouraged to grow these into presentations for whole congregations. The new format of his visits will be: Friday evening he will meet with congregational leaders and discuss church growth; Saturday he will lead a seminar on church growth for the congregation and he will preach on Sunday. The delegates passed a budget for 2014 of \$1, 148,500.00.



Three Breakout Sessions were included. Breakout Session 1 was held on Monday from 4:30-5:30 PM. Breakout Sessions 2 and 3 were held Tuesday from 2:30-3:30 and 4:00-5:00 PM. On Monday I attended a Breakout Session on Family Ministry. It was led by Pastor Marcus Carlson. He is working on a PHD in youth and family ministry. He looked at recent cultural shifts. Young people are opting to get married and having children later in life (their mid-thirties). Young people today have few fences or boundaries in their lives. They

experiment with sex, alcohol, and drugs with impunity. The saving grace is that parents and “invested adults” (adults who invest time and effort into a youths life) can have a profound influence on youth. The problem is parents and other adults don’t believe they have any influence on teens. He suggested that congregations must have specific ministries to children, youth and families; however, he contended that healthy churches also provide for intergenerational worship and service opportunities. Tim attended the session on LCMC Lutheran Men. The session provided practical advice on starting a congregational chapter of Lutheran Men. LCMC Lutheran Men has a mission and a vision, to provide funds for mission congregations in the LCMC. They initiated a program whereby each member of a Chapter of Lutheran Men donates a dollar each monthly meeting. The dollars collected each year are transmitted to a national fund. The proceeds of this fund are used to help LCMC Mission Congregations with capital projects.

On Tuesday from 2:30-3:30 PM Tim and I attended the Breakout Session entitled “*Reaching the Next Generation*” led by Pastors T.J. Anderson and Mark Dahl. The information presented was very similar to the information given in the Family Ministry session. The speakers emphasized that young people want to belong to group where they feel safe and are accepted. They crave authentic relationships with people who care for them. The church must be such a place for our youth. The youth crave authentic relationships with adults. `

From 4:00-5:00 PM we attended the Breakout Session on Training Leaders for the Church led by the Rev. Dr. Paul Cross. He noted that the New Testament identifies several types of leaders:

1. **Diaconal leaders:** Servant, visits the sick and serves people at the tables. Stephen, Acts Chapter 6 was an example.
2. **Episcopal leaders:** This leader teaches and oversees the life of the congregation.
3. **Elders:** The wise older persons who has much experience to share in the administration of the life of the congregation.
4. **Apostolic leaders or pastors.** These leaders grew the church. They reproduced their faith in others. The church needs more Apostolic leaders. We train them in seminaries, however, the speaker maintained that it is critical that newly trained seminarians spend more time in the parish with experienced pastors who are able to mentor them before they go out on their own.

On Tuesday evening we took in the optional dinner at The Henry Ford Museum. In its 450,000 square foot exhibition hall, The Henry Ford Museum showcases objects from Henry Ford's amazing personal collection of artifacts documenting the American experience. Henry Ford began his collection in 1909. It houses the Kitty Hawk, the primitive airplane built by the Wright Brothers. You can also see the "Spirit of St. Louis" the plane Lindberg flew from New York to Paris non-stop. We saw the limousine that President John F. Kennedy rode in the day he was assassinated and President Regan's limousine. We sat in the bus Rosa Parks rode that changed the US. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a 42-year-old African American woman who worked as a seamstress, boarded this



Montgomery, Alabama city bus to go home from work. On that day in this bus, Rosa Parks initiated a new era in the American quest for freedom and equality. When she refused to leave her seat in a "whites only" section of the bus, she was arrested and convicted of violating the laws of segregation, known as "Jim Crow laws." Mrs. Parks appealed her conviction and thus formally challenged the legality of segregation. There are also hundreds of cars (of all makes and ages), steam locomotives, farm implements, furniture, and all manner of appliances to look at.

About 400 of us had dinner at The Henry Ford. Tim and I had dinner under a large silver airliner that was suspended from the ceiling. The meal was fabulous. 400 Lutherans sang table grace in an area of The Henry Ford with a 40 foot ceiling. Our voices echoed and reverberated. We sounded like a choir of angles. During the meal we stood again and sang the Doxology. At the end of dinner we stood and sang "Beautiful Savior." It was an amazing experience.

We learned that Dearborn is an affluent suburb of Detroit. The wealth of the area was clearly visible in the mall that was across the road from the Adoba. The city of Detroit is much different. It is full of empty and decaying buildings. The city has declared bankruptcy. In a word, it is a deeply depressed city. We prayed for the city. Dearborn has become the home for many immigrants that have come to the US. In Dearborn you will meet people from India, Pakistan, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Palestine. These immigrants are predominantly Muslim. We noted that at least a third of the women we observed in the upscale Mall wore the hijab (scarf that hides the hair, but face is exposed) or the burca (covers the face and shoulders, the women see through a slit for their eyes).

The convention was well attended and well done. LCMC budgets about \$250,000.00 for its annual gathering. With this kind of a budget they can bring in the best speakers and hold the event in a first-class location. They will hold the 2014 convention in Davenport, Iowa. It was good to be in Detroit, hear great preaching and teaching and enjoy fellowship; however, it is great to be back home.

In Christ.

Pastor Ed Skutshek, President

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The Lutheran Connector is CALC's official publication and we would welcome the addition of more people who would like to contribute to developing and improving our publication.