

The Lutheran Connector

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

Special Easter Edition

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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 Message

“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

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

The picture on the cover of this issue of the Connector was painted by William Bouguereau (1825-1905). It is entitled “The Three Women at the Holy Sepulcher.” This beautiful painting preserves for the ages an image of a critical moment in human history.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” ⁸Then they remembered his words. Luke 24:1-9

The painting is striking. It proclaims the Gospel lesson so boldly and eloquently. From the beginning of the world, through that very day, the tomb was a dark place. It was the place that death and the devil made their last stand. Together they gloated over each and every occupant of the tomb. Every time a loved one was placed in a tomb, they would remember and rejoice over what had happened in the Garden of Eden. It was there that Satan tricked Eve and Adam. First, he led them to doubt God's word. Then he moved them to covet and desire divine knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil. Doubt and desire drove them to disobedience and they ate, they dined on the forbidden fruit. They were changed in an instant. God had to punish them, death had to come into the world. All human beings had to return to the earth from which they came. They had to fade to black. The stone that stood in front of the tomb was a reminder of the barriers we face in life. Sin, like the stone, separates us from God and one

another. The wages of sin are death, the final and most permanent separation from God and one another.

Jesus promised to change all of that. Jesus declared: *“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”* (John 11:25-26). Jesus promised to remove the sin barrier between us and God. By his innocent suffering and death on the cross and his glorious resurrection, Jesus destroyed the stone that seals the tomb.

The angels illuminated the tomb with their heavenly light. Their light declared that, by his resurrection, Jesus brought his light into the darkness of the tomb. The tomb was no longer the place of victory for death and the Devil, but, a gateway to eternal life in heaven.

God used the angels to give Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James, a new word to believe, trust and to proclaim. Jesus was no longer among the dead, he was alive, just as he had promised. They went straight to the Disciples. At first they refused to believe these words. Jesus came to them and they believed.

From that first Easter Sunday, to this very day, Jesus has given the church a sacred trust and privilege. On this side of Jesus' second coming, we still lay our loved ones in a tomb and it is still a dark place. However, God can use us in the same way he used the angels. Through us the light of the Gospel can shine into the darkness of that tomb. We can proclaim that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. Through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit plants seeds of faith in us that germinate, grow and bear fruit. We are able to say, we believe that God created us, Jesus saved us, the Holy Spirit sanctifies us and we will live in heaven with them forever. We can say that those who die believing are not dead they are alive and with God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. We can bring the light of Christ into the darkness of the tomb.

I pray that God will bless the season of Easter for each and every one of you and will inspire us to preach the Gospel even more boldly.

In Christ's service *Pastor Ed Skutshelk*

Congregations Ratify Constitutional Amendments

At our 2013 Annual General Convention, National Council introduced amendments to CALC's constitution which would have laid the foundation for the election of members to National Council for staggered terms. The delegates overwhelmingly approved amendments to sections 2.2 and 2.5 of Article 10 of our constitution in order to accomplish this goal. Amended Section 2.2 permits the election of our Association's officers, elders and trustees for staggered four year terms, with about one third of the terms expiring each year.

In order for these staggered terms to take effect, there must be transitional or shorter terms for some members of our National Council. Thus, at CALC's 2013 Annual General Convention some members of our National Council agreed to be elected to shorter terms. Our delegates elected our President and Secretary to four year terms, the Vice President to a two year term, a member of the Board of Elders for a one year term. The three members of the Board of Trustees agreed to 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 each on the same year. Staggering the term for President or 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 help acclimate the new president.

We amended Section 2.5 to provide 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 following were nominated for election to the National Council and agreed to let their names stand: **President:** Pastor Ed Skutshek; **Vice President:** Fred Schickedanz; **Secretary:** Vivien Georgeson; **Elder:** Sherland Chhangur; and **Trustees:** Ron Voss, Art Kroeker and

Everley Lutz. They were elected by acclamation. The current members of CALC's National Council and the expiration date of their terms is set forth herein below.

| National Council Member | Term Expires |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Edward Skutshek, President | 2017 |
| Manfred Schickedanz, Vice President | 2015 |
| Helen Zacharias, Treasurer | 2015 |
| Vivien Georgeson, Secretary | 2017 |
| Sherland Chhangur, Elder | 2014 |
| Peeter Vanker, Elder | 2016 |
| Tim Bauer, Elder | 2016 |
| Ron Voss, Trustee | 2016 |
| Art Kroeker, Trustee | 2015 |
| Everley Lutz, Trustee | 2017 |

In order for the amendments approved by our 2013 convention delegates to take effect, they had to be approved by our Member congregations.

Mid-November of 2013, the subject amendments were described in detail in a Special Advent Edition of *The Lutheran Connector*. At about the same time, each Member congregation received a ballot to be used by the congregation to vote on the proposed amendments. Congregations were free to vote on the amendments at their annual general meeting or a special congregational meeting called for that purpose. The ballots were to be received by CALC's secretary by April 1st of 2014. For a constitutional amendment to pass 75% of the ballots cast must be cast in favor of the amendment. Ballots were received from 18 congregations, with 100% of the ballots cast in favor of the amendments. The text of the amended constitutional provisions are provided below.

Article 10 Section 2.2:

The registered delegates shall elect, by a majority vote, a National Council for terms of four years each, with approximately 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.

Article 10 Section 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.

MOMS Canada Update

You may or may not have attended the CALC convention in November at Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal. It was a great opportunity for us to showcase our charity, MOMS Canada and the work we have been doing over the past five years.

Our mission is to assist single parents families in our community attain spiritual, educational, personal growth, and economic stability through Christian mentoring and coordination of services that promote the well-being of children. That sounds almost like an overwhelming task. In the natural it is!! That leads me to the verse on which our ministry was founded Isaiah 40:31 *but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* As I have assisted clients and watched many of them grow stronger, it has been a blessing in my life. The experience of raising children alone is not an easy road - I have seen the hand of God scoop them up and carry them through some really tough situations. It has been both challenging and rewarding to be a part of God's plan in helping in some small way to see them succeed. For detailed information on our programs and services please contact our office at 780-960-1554 or email at: momscanada@hotlinkwireless.com

Our client testimonials have really summed up the impact of our organization and I would like to share one of them that tells the story well of what our services have meant to one particular mom.

“Almost two years ago I finally built up the courage to leave my abusive husband in hopes of providing a healthier life for my two very young boys. Once he left, however it was as though all my courage was used up and yet I

had this long hard road ahead. I wasn't sure where to start. I was petrified. I still had the abuser verbally harassing me and basically controlling me, especially financially, because I still had to depend on him for finances. Then a friend of mine asked me to join her at this MOMS group. She told me how great it was, how friendly the people were, how good it was for the kids to meet other kids in the same situation. It took a few months for me to build up the courage to finally go, which meant I was disobeying my ex's commands to not tell a soul we weren't together or he'd take away the money, but something just made me go. Now looking back it was another great decision.

MOMS Canada has given me financial help for food or birthday presents for my kids when I couldn't afford anything. They sent us to camp which my kids had never experienced and together we tried things that were outside our box, including trusting a hook and rope to hold me as I glided through the air! They fixed problems with my car that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford that has allowed me to continue to get my kids to school and me to work. But out of everything the group has given me the most important thing!! friendship and a truly safe place to talk, ask questions and hope for a brighter future! I hope one day to give back to this group that has held my hand and kept me walking down this very difficult road”.

In 2014 our board of trustees and I hope to see our organization grow even larger and become a greater force for change in our community so that we can impact more and more single parents and so fulfill our mission. It is not just a great idea but a command to help these moms to succeed. In order to do this we need the help of our local churches coming alongside both in financial support and in volunteer support.

If you are reading this message today and you feel God is calling you to help us financially please go on our website at www.momscanada.ca and make a donation by cheque or through Canada helps.

And may God richly bless you.

In Christ,

Meda Weir;

Executive Director, MOMS Canada

New CALC Congregations

It is with great joy and excitement that we announce the addition of **two new member congregations** to our CALC family.

Immanuel Lutheran Church of Parkside, Saskatchewan, voted to join CALC on Sunday March 9th, 2014. They voted to leave the ELCIC just prior to voting to join CALC.

The congregation is served by Pastor R. Christopher Dean. He is their fulltime pastor.

The village of Parkside has a population of about 130. It is located about 58 kilometers west of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and 14 kilometers southwest of Shellbrook, Saskatchewan.

Immanuel Lutheran is one of two churches in Parkside, Saskatchewan. The other church is Parkside Pentecostal Church (PAOC). As one of two pastors in Parkside, Pastor Dean is very much a pastor for the Parkside Community.

Bethel Lutheran Church, Lea Park, near Marwayne, Alberta, voted to join CALC Sunday March 30, 2014. They too recently voted to leave the ELCIC prior to joining CALC.

The village of Marwayne is located 44 kilometers (27 mi) north-west of the city of Lloydminster, AB/SK and 21 kilometers west of the Saskatchewan border. The village is located about 250 kilometers east of Edmonton, AB. The population of the village is over 600.

Prior to their transition to CALC, the congregation was served by an interim pastor rostered with the ELCIC. During this period of interim ministry, lay members of the congregation stepped forward and began to preach and lead worship on the Sundays the interim pastor was not scheduled to lead worship. These lay members have included Kevin Nelson, a welder by trade, Ed Park, a rancher, and Stanley Fox, a retired teacher.

Kevin Nelson and Ed Park have enrolled in the Pastoral Ministry Certificate program of the Institute of Lutheran Theology. Pastors Ron & Elaine Hobden of CALC's Sharon, Irma/Peace, Wainwright Parish have volunteered to provide mentorship to the emerging ministry team as they receive training, and to administer Holy

Communion for the congregation once a month. Bethel Marwayne is leading the way in the formation of pastoral ministry for small rural congregations.

Please keep our brothers and sisters in Christ in Parkside and Marwayne in your prayers. Pray that God will continue to bless their ministries and the light of Christ will shine ever brighter through them.

M-Div Candidate Ready to Intern

John Graham is enrolled in the Master Divinity (M-Div) program with the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). He has completed about two thirds of the academic courses necessary for graduation with an M-Div. Studying online with ILT has permitted John and his family to remain in their native Calgary, and for John to contribute to the family economy through his painting business. He is currently CALC's only seminary student on track to receive a Master of Divinity Degree.



John is married to Amanda. She is self-employed as a consultant for charities. They have two children Adaline, age 6, and William, age 3. They are members of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Cochrane, Alberta (CALC). John has served on St. Peter's Church Council and on its committees.

John has been leading worship, preaching and teaching regularly at St. Peter's during their call process.

John applied for a summer preaching position at Christ the King Lutheran Church (CKLC) in Sauble Beach, Ontario. CKLC is an independent Lutheran congregation. John will begin serving


CKLC on June 1st through the end of August of this year. John is looking forward to this most wonderful opportunity to share the Gospel. John noted that this will be the first time he will have to prepare sermons for eleven Sundays in a row. With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, John will serve the people of CKLC and their guests with distinction. He will be mentored by CALC pastors in surrounding communities. John is keen on interning in a CALC congregation for 9 to 12 months following the completion of his time at CKLC. Interested congregations should contact our President directly.

Sauble Beach is a resort community and unincorporated area in the town of South Bruce Peninsula, in southwestern Ontario. It is on the eastern shore of Lake Huron. About 2,000 live in Sauble Beach year round. During the peak summer season the population can soar. At over 11 kilometers in length, Sauble Beach is said to be the second longest freshwater beach in the world after Wasaga Beach. Summer recreational activities include swimming, lawn bowling, windsurfing, fishing, tennis, beach volleyball, birding and an annual sandcastle contest. If you are in Sauble Beach this summer, please stop by and see John and his family. The address for the CKLC is: 3 Rankin Bridge, Sauble Beach, ON NoH 2To. The church telephone number is (519) 422-1760.

Pray that God blesses the Graham family's travel to Sauble Beach, the time they spend there and their trip back home at the end of the summer.

Church Staffing Vacancies

ONTARIO:



St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Sullivan, ON
Seeking
Pastor

Contact: Steven
Lembke, Council Chair
(519) 363-0152
stpeterssullivan@gmail.com

St. Peter's is currently served by Pastor David Wunderlich as interim pastor.



All Saints Lutheran Church
Ottawa, ON

Is seeking a full-time Pastor & part-time Youth Worker

For more information call us at (613) 828-9284 or email us at:
secretary@allsaintslutheran.ca

All Saint's is currently served by Pastor Doug Kranz as interim pastor.

ALBERTA:



St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Cochrane, AB
Seeking
Pastor

For more information contact Tim Bauer, Call Committee Chair, at (403) 851-0554 or email at: tbauer@atha.com.

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church
Vancouver, BC
Seeking
Bi-lingual Pastor
(German-English)
Contact: Rev. Ed Skutshek
(250) 801-3860
President@calc.ca

Commentary - The Sterling Silver Affair

and its potential impact on the Freedom of Religion.

The American Television Networks have incessantly covered what I have dubbed the *Sterling Silver Affair*. Donald Sterling is an 80 year old billionaire who owns the Los Angeles Clippers, a professional basketball team which is part of the rich and powerful National Basketball Association (NBA). About 70% of the players on NBA teams are African Americans. Adam Silver is the Commissioner, or chief executive officer, of the NBA.

American “celebrity news sites” TMZ and Deadspin posted segments of a conversation between Donald Sterling and his girlfriend V Stiviano, on April 9th of this year. On the tape Sterling is alleged to have scolded Stiviano for posing for photographs with African American people, which included basketball legend Magic Johnson. In addition Sterling was to have ordered her to not bring black people to Clippers games as her guests. Sterling was alleged to have said: “It bothers me a lot that you want to broadcast that you're associating with black people.”

The leaked recording went viral on social media. The public outcry was fast and furious. Sterling was immediately tried in the court of public opinion. Even President Obama weighed in on this debate. The verdict: Sterling was branded a racist and a bigot and deemed unworthy to own franchise in the NBA. Corporate sponsors dropped the Clippers like a hot potato. The NBA launched an investigation or inquiry as quickly as they could. Commissioner Silver recently announced the results of the NBA inquiry at a news conference in New York. He reported that the inquiry had established that Sterling had expressed the remarks heard on the leaked recording. He further reported that the statements made on the subject recording were “contrary to the principles of inclusion and respect that form the foundation of our diverse, multicultural and multi-ethnic league.”

Silver announced that Sterling would be fined \$2.5 million (US), the maximum allowed under the NBA's unpublished constitution. He also announced that a lifetime ban from the game had been imposed on Sterling. The NBA's ban

bars Sterling from contact with the NBA or the Clippers organization. This ban means that Sterling may not attend any Clippers games or practices as a spectator. He similarly cannot attend any official “Clipper's functions” on behalf of the team. He is legally barred from participating in any business, staff or player decisions relating to the team he owns.

Silver also promised to do everything in his power to force Sterling to sell the Clippers. The forced sale would require approval of 75% of the NBA owners. The commissioner “fully expected” to receive the support necessary to force Sterling to sell the Clippers from fellow NBA governors.

The *Sterling Silver Affair* sends chills up my spine and makes the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. Christians in North America must stand up and take notice and be prepared for the same treatment.

We should be concerned for two reasons:

First, a lifetime ban was imposed on Sterling by Silver and his investigative team without the benefit of a hearing at which Sterling could present and offer testimony and witnesses. This violates natural principals of justice. It is simply unfair to impose a highly punitive judgment on a man without a fair hearing. Natural justice requires that the accused be given an opportunity to face his accusers and hear the evidence that the tribunal will be base their judgment upon.

Second, Sterling is being deprived of property rights because of his private thoughts and beliefs disclosed in a private conversation. Ownership of private property is, in this case, tied to a requirement, namely, that his private thoughts, beliefs and conversations of a property owner are in line with the thoughts of a societal majority. I cannot defend Sterling's alleged beliefs. No orthodox Christian Church can support his views. However, these principals can easily be applied to orthodox Christian Churches.

Here is our problem in a nutshell. Many in the Christian Church in North America actively discriminate against protected classes of people. Our culture believes that marriage can be between two people. Our culture believes that you cannot discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation for jobs. We believe that Scripture limits marriage to one man and one woman. We

in CALC believe that Scripture limits the pastoral ministry to celibate heterosexual men and women and married men and women.

Public opinion is changing in North America. A growing number of people in our culture see orthodox Christian beliefs on marriage and ordination as draconian and on par with racial discrimination.

We will therefore eventually be tried in the court of public opinion for our views on marriage and ordination. We will be found guilty of discrimination against a protected class. What will the majority take away from people who hold such draconian views? Will the verdict of the court of public opinion move, cajole or compel our government to act like the NBA? Will our government take away the right to issue official tax deductible donation receipts from all Christian Charities that they discriminate in who they will marry and ordain? Will government impose income tax on the donations received by churches and property taxes on the buildings of congregations who do not tow the societal line on marriage and ordination? Is it possible that government could actively work to deprive orthodox Christian Churches of their property altogether and/or deprive them of the right to assemble because they are viewed as using hate language and discriminatory practices when dealing with a protected class of citizens?

If our stance on marriage and ordination is undergirded by bigotry and fear of GLBT people, we may indeed deserve the criticism leveled by the court of public opinion and any governmental action which follows. Our stand on marriage must be rooted in our Lutheran law/Gospel dialectic. We must preach, teach and proclaim that God established marriage as between one man and one woman for our good and to ensure the continuance of our species. God's most passionate desire is for married couples to radiate His love, grace and mercy in their married life. God uses the law to convict us of our sin and uses the Gospel of Jesus Christ save sinners that are driven to despair by the law. We must believe, trust and confess that Jesus Christ can change and transform people, even when it seems humanly impossible. *"Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."* (Mark 10:27) When we preach, proclaim and teach our stand on

marriage and ordination we must do so with humility and grace and as repentant sinners. We must first have examined the log in our own eye before looking at the speck in another's eye.

We must be ready for the challenges that lie ahead. We must pray to God for the words to express our Scriptural stand on marriage and ordination in a clear, passionate and direct way. We will begin this discussion in CALC at the Pastors Retreat (June 2-5) and will continue the discussion at our convention (October 17-19). In this way if we are challenged by our culture and we must suffer, we can draw strength and take solace in St. Peter's words:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:12-19)

Yours in Christ

Pastor Ed Skutshek, President

National Council News

January 18, 2014, National council met at the Airport Delta Hotel in Calgary, Alberta. The following represent highlights of the business transacted.

Ten Year Strategic Plan.

On November 2, 2013, the delegates to CALC's 2013 Annual General Convention passed the following motions:

Resolved: That the CALC National Council (NC) develop a ten year strategic plan.

Amendment: Resolved: That the actual process be determined by the National Council and report back at the next convention.

At our January 18th meeting the NC began the process of outlining the steps that we would take with respect to our Ten Year Strategic Plan ("**Strategic Plan**").

The role for the National Council in the process of formulating our Strategic Plan is to provide our congregations with foundational information and options for a path forward. NC is in the process of producing a document which:

- Clearly identifies, defines and articulates CALC's **purpose, mission** and **organizational structure**. These steps may seem rather rudimentary, a stating of the obvious. However, the first duty of good leadership is always to state the obvious.
- An organization's purpose and mission define and shape its activities in the present and shape the organization's vision for the future. The way any organization fulfills its mission and purpose is driven by its organizational structure. Thus CALC's purpose, mission and structure must be carefully defined and described.
- Articulates and assesses CALC's human, educational, worship, devotional and financial resources.
- Defines and articulates a vision for the future in the following areas.
 - CALC's mandate to gather our congregations together for worship, Christian education, prayer, praise and encouragement.

- Our Shepherd's Pathway to Ministry. The establishment of awards, scholarships and bursaries for the training of pastors.
- Our annual Pastors' Retreat.
- Options for pension, medical, and disability plans in order to provide assistance for our pastors, eligible laity, and their families.
- The dissemination of information to our congregations.
- Ways CALC can assist our congregations in the call process.
- Maximizing congregational and clergy participation at CALC events through travel aid or subsidy.
- Ways pastors can remain rostered between calls to CALC congregations.
- Ways congregations in located geographic clusters can relate with one another for worship, support, education and encouragement with the help and support of CALC.

Our constitution states that it is the delegates of our general convention that adopt a program of activity for CALC, and take the steps necessary to provide for its accomplishment. Our constitution demands that any program adopted by the General Convention shall clearly reflect the Confession of Faith and Statement of Purpose of CALC. (See Article 9, Section 3.2).

Our goal is to provide our delegates to the 2014 convention with information and options for employee benefits, pastoral education and mentoring, and the call process. The working document for the Strategic Plan will be spelled out in detail and discussed at the convention.

During the year that follows the 2014 convention we will seek input from our congregations, with a view toward adopting a Strategic Plan at the 2015 annual general convention.

We also want to encourage our congregations to adopt their own strategic plans at the congregational level. To this end we hope to provide a presentation at the 2014 annual general convention which will help congregations enter into their own strategic planning process.

The shape our Strategic Plan takes must be decided in a reasoned process involving input

from many sources. It is the National Council's mandate to lead in this regard by providing a solid foundation from which this debate and discussion flows.

Shepherd's Pathway:

The Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) has established the School of Faith and Life (SFL). One of the programs offered by SFL is a two year Pastoral Ministry Certificate, one of the two tracks to pastoral ministry of CALC's Shepherd's Pathway. ILT has asked that a representative from CALC sit on the advisory committee for the SFL. The National Council appointed our President Pastor Ed Skutshek to sit on the SFL advisory committee as CALC's representative.

Other Business:

LCBI 1,000 From 1,000 Campaign: The Board of Regents and the Administration of the Lutheran Canadian Bible Institute, a boarding high school asked National Council permission to contact CALC congregations and their alumni in CALC congregations to become a part of this program. While National Council was not in a position to endorse the program, we informed the school that they were free to contact CALC congregations. Our congregations must ultimately make the decision of whether to support any Christian School or other organization.

Pastoral Training Fund: A motion was made, seconded and carried to transfer \$4,000.00 of CALC's cash surplus to our Pastoral Training Fund in response to funding requests from our students studying for the pastoral ministry.

Mission Trip to Guyana: It was resolved that: In light of Pastor Ed's challenge to the congregations at CALC 2013 AGM to launch a mission trip to Guyana, that Pastor Ed and Sherland Chhangur are authorized to begin exploration of contact with the Lutheran church in Guyana for the purpose of discussing theological ministering opportunities, service opportunities, mission opportunities. They are to present a budget at the next meeting for approval.

Convention 2014

CALC's 2014 Annual General Convention will be held from Friday October 17 to Sunday October 19, 2014, at Grace Lutheran Church, West

Kelowna, BC. More details will be available in the next edition of *The Lutheran Connector*.

Seeing Noah



Seeing begins as light reflected off objects found in our visual field. The light enters the human eye through the cornea, passes through the iris and then hits the rods and cones of the retina. The retina converts the light into electrical impulses. These

electric impulses travel along the optic nerve to the visual center of the brain where an image is produced and we "see" the objects that are in front of us. However, seeing is more than just experiencing the images produced in our brain's visual center.

We see with our whole mind. As images pass before us, we constantly analyze them. We look for the familiar. We scan our environment for risks so that we can avoid them. Reading is never a passive process. Words produce thoughts and pictures in our "mind's eye". The visual arts are a perfect example of this process in action. Paintings, pictures, sculptures and movies all represent an artist's vision produced by words of a book or screen play or other subjects and objects in the artist's visual field.

Recently, I saw the movie Noah, directed by Darren Aronofsky and starring Russell Crowe. In a review of the movie, columnist Annalee Newitz both warned and enticed her audience with these words: "Get ready to see the Bible through new eyes." She was right. Aronofsky saw things in the text I had never seen. I always saw Noah and his sons build the ark over decades with the sweat of their brow. Aronofsky saw some helpers that were a complete surprise to me. I always saw eight adult human passengers on the ark's manifest: Noah and his wife, their three adult sons and their sons' adult wives. Aronofsky's portrayal of how two of the wives came on the scene was mindboggling. I never saw the human stowaway who broke into the ark, or the amazing

battle between Noah and this stowaway, in the Biblical text. Aronofsky's portrayal of the account of the flood and its aftermath is very different.

During a lull in the noise and the action of the movie, a voice in the theater cried out: "I suggest that everyone go home and read the Bible for the real story." I agreed with him! (Read Genesis Chapters 1-9)

Aronofsky did affirm that "long ago, by God's word, the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water." (2 Peter 3:5). He also acknowledged that Noah's flood was a global flood, not a local flood or tsunami. He affirmed that humankind's vision was completely changed by the fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. He affirmed that when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they saw one another, God's word and God, in a different way. They had to hide from God and cover one another up. They passed on their defective vision to their descendants. Cain came to see his brother Abel as a rival for God's love and approval. Cain saw the murder of his brother Abel as the only way to gain God's undivided love and approval. Cain has been killing Abel ever since.

I saw the whole movie revolve around themes central to Aronofsky's vision. Noah was utterly convinced that God had judged humanity and all other living things and would destroy them by a catastrophic flood. He was equally convinced that he had been commissioned by God to save a remnant of all the animals for the purpose of starting all over again in the post-flood world. Noah was, however, unclear as to God's mission for him and his family after the flood. Noah wondered if humankind was fit to live in the new world. In Aronofsky's movie, God was silent on this issue. He left Noah and his family to debate the issues and take action.

Despite his best intentions to obscure God's will, Aronofsky spoke volumes about God's intent for humanity. Aronofsky stated clearly that humanity was made in God's image. He clearly affirmed that God had issued a decree that Adam and Eve could not transgress. They could not eat the forbidden fruit, on pain of instant death from even touching this fruit.

Despite God's warning, they ate the fruit. God could have punished them then and there, and

wiped out all humanity by killing Adam and Eve. However, God did not wipe out humanity. He gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth before they returned to the dust from whence they came. Adam and Eve had Cain and Abel. When Cain killed Abel, by rights, God could have wiped Cain off the face of the earth, yet God let him live and be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Aronofsky's screenplay declared that, despite God's grace and mercy, almost every human being in the world eventually turned his/her back on God. The director chronicled their evil and abusive lives. God's grace and patience could finally not endure the evil that Noah's contemporaries practiced and judged them for it and executed His judgment. While God grieved the loss of man's innocence and resulting sinfulness, God did not give up on us. God chose to save Noah and his family.

Aronofsky's portrayal of the end of life on earth used the latest and greatest technology. It was hard to watch. Noah and his family and all other passengers survived and, in time, left the ark. The animals resumed life with great gusto. However, Noah and his family moved slowly and even grudgingly into the future. God was once again silent. Noah and his family are left to figure things out. The End.

However, we all know that the Biblical text does not end here. We all know that God did not keep silent. God spoke to Abraham, one of Noah's descendants. God promised to bless Abraham with a nation and a homeland and a descendant that would one day bless the entire world.

It is during Lent and Easter that we see God's promise for a descendant of Abraham fulfilled, His great love for us, and His desire to save us. The Bible reveals that Jesus, God's one and only Son, became incarnate in human flesh. Jesus was at one and the same time both Son of God and human being. Jesus does what is impossible for us. He lives a perfect human life. In addition, He reveals His divinity through preaching, teaching and the miracles He performed. Jesus openly admitted that He was the Son of God. His reward for living the perfect life and declaring his divinity? Conviction of the crime of blasphemy (pretending to be God), beating, mocking and death by crucifixion. Out of the ugliness of this sin, violence and death, God

made something beautiful: Jesus' resurrection from the dead to eternal life.

By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus became God's new ark of salvation.

'Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." (John 11:25-27).

It is by faith in Jesus, that He is the Son of God who died for our sins and was resurrected to new life, that we can enter Jesus' ark of salvation today and journey with Him to eternity.

How does one obtain this faith? Curiously, Aronofsky's movie shed some light on this subject.

In his creation sequence, Aronofsky revealed that God created the universe and the planet earth by speaking words into a swirling chaos filled with water. God's word changed water into the heavens and the earth. When God's word is used with the water of Baptism, we are joined to Jesus' death, our sins are forgiven and we are joined to His resurrection. The waters convey the Holy Spirit to the baptized person. The Holy Spirit uses the words of the Holy Bible to create something within us: faith and trust in God. Faith changes our eyes: we get new eyes. With new eyes, Scripture and the Bible come alive and we see Jesus within its verses. The creative and redeeming word of God goes out every Sunday at Grace Lutheran Church at 9:00 and 10:30 AM. Hope to see you.

In Christ's service

Pastor Ed Skutshek

This article was published April 3rd in the Capital News of Kelowna, BC. These monthly ads are published as a part of Grace Lutheran's intentional outreach with the Gospel to Kelowna and West Kelowna, BC. Articles like this one have been published monthly since December 2008. They are read widely and have brought people to Grace Lutheran.

Is your congregation celebrating an anniversary or other milestone? Let us know so we can let your brothers and sisters in Christ in CALC know through our Lutheran Connector. Would you like to submit an item for publication? Please e-mail your news items to our Editor at the following address: secretary@calc.ca.

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