

The Lutheran Connector

An official publication of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations



Advent/Christmas

*O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

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THE LUTHERAN CONNECTOR:

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WHAT'S INSIDE

REMEMBERING CALC'S FIRST PRESIDENT.

Pastor Vernon Allen Roste, passed from this life to the next on December 7th. A Memorial service was held Sunday December 11th at 5:00 PM at Hope Community Covenant Church in Strathmore, Alberta. Our lead article pays tribute to our Association's founding president.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVENTION 2016.

All Saints Lutheran Church of Ottawa, ON, hosted the largest CALC convention in our history. This edition of the Connector includes an article which lifts up the highlights of our convention.

PASTORS' STUDY RETREAT 2016.

St. Paul University of Ottawa, ON, was the site of CALC's largest Pastors' Study Retreat. This issue includes an article on our pastors' retreat.

CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES.

Celebrations marking a 60th, 40th and 25th congregational anniversary were held during 2016. Articles recounting the highlights of these celebrations are found in this issue.

SPOTLIGHT ON DIACONAL MINISTRY.

One of the mandates of CALC's 10-Year Strategic Plan was to officially recognize the office of the Diaconal Minister in CALC's congregations. Constitutional amendments and guidelines for training, rostering and disciplining Deacons were presented for subsequent approval at our convention. This issue includes an article on one of longest serving deacons.

HIGHLIGHTS OF LCMC 2016.

Several of our congregations are also rostered with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) which is headquartered in the USA. Highlights of their convention are also included in this edition.

In the Next Issue – February 2017.

It's the Law: The next issue will contain articles on: a favorable legal decision by BC's Court of Appeal on Trinity Western University's uphill battle to open a law school; a recent decision by a court in Alberta which paved the way to a lawsuit by a member of a congregation against a congregation for economic damages allegedly the result of church discipline.

Calling a Pastor Trained in Another Denomination: A growing number of our congregations are calling pastors trained by other denominations. Integrating these new pastors into a Lutheran congregation is both a challenge and an opportunity. This article looks at this work in progress.

Theology Does Matter: The next issue will include a review of a paper which concludes that theology predicts the growth of churches.



A TRIBUTE TO PASTOR VERNON ALLEN ROSTE

Pastor Vernon Allen Roste passed from this life to the next on Wednesday December 7th, in Strathmore, Alberta. A memorial service was held Sunday December 11th at 5:00 PM at Hope Community Covenant Church in Strathmore, Alberta. Pastor Vernon was remembered as a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, uncle, parish pastor, charter member of our Association and our first President. It was my privilege as CALC's incumbent president to offer greetings at Pastor Vernon's memorial service. The following is a tribute to our Association's founding president.

Vernon Allen ("Vern") was born on October 6, 1928 on the family homestead near Preeceville, Saskatchewan. He was the tenth child born to Martin and Anna Roste. The country church he attended is still used by the members of St. John Lutheran Church in Preeceville. Vern began his education in 1934 in a country church near the family farm. He completed ten grades in eight years. He went to Outlook, Saskatchewan for his high school education. He graduated from what is now known as Lutheran Canadian Bible Institute (LCBI). Vern loved all sports and participated in many. He grew up playing horseshoes with his brothers. He developed a real passion for the game. He went on to become provincial horseshoe champion for Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba.

God gave Vern an entrepreneurial spirit. He worked at many jobs in diverse fields, including farming, logging and construction. Following graduation from high school, he moved to the greater Vancouver area. In 1947 he went to work for his uncle Art and learned the building trade. He quickly rose to a leadership position in the firm. He took and passed the electrical contractors exam. In 1949 he established an electrical contracting business that bore his name. The business grew and prospered.

Vern attended First Lutheran Church of Vancouver. First Lutheran was served by Pastor Arnold Hagen, a dear friend he met at LCBI. 1951 was a pivotal year for Vern. He surrendered his life to Jesus that year. The next year, Jesus introduced Vern to the love of his life Sonja Berg. Vern and Sonja married in 1955. From 1956 to 1968 their family grew by five: daughters Lynn, Debbie, Valerie and Cindy and son Terry.

During the early 1950's Vern began supply preaching in Lutheran churches in the Vancouver area. Dr. M. Dale, a denomination leader, became aware of Vern's gifts. He came out to Vancouver to urge Vern to study for the ministry. At first Vern resisted, as he had established a thriving business and had become accustomed to the business lifestyle. Some time later Vern experienced God's call to the ministry. In 1957 Vern, Sonja and their firstborn daughter Lynn, moved from Vancouver to Saskatoon where he began studies at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS). In 1958 he was licensed to pastor Hanley-Sunny Valley, a two-point parish, while he studied at LTS. He was ordained in 1962 while continuing to serve the two-point parish. This call was expanded to include congregations at Hanley and Hawarden.

In 1965 he took a call to a four-point parish in and around Frontier, Saskatchewan. The rigors of life pastoring a four-point parish took a toll on Pastor Vern's health. In 1968 he took a call to a two-point parish in British Columbia: Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Mission and Matsqui Lutheran Church in Matsqui. Mt. Calvary congregation grew under Pastor Vern's loving shepherding. By 1970 he pastored Mt. Calvary alone.

In 1979 Pastor Vern took a call to Central Lutheran Church in Edmonton, Alberta which included a mandate to establish a church plant for Canadian Missions Board in Edmonton. Pastor Vern was the first pastor and mission developer of Emmaus Lutheran church in Edmonton. From 1979 to 1983 Pastor Vern served both Central Lutheran and Emmaus Lutheran congregations. However, Emmaus grew quickly and from 1983 to 1989 he pastored Emmaus Lutheran alone.

In 1989 he took a call to St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Kamloops, British Columbia. He served there until 1996. A massive heart attack in 1995 and the surgeries that followed caused his resignation and retirement in 1996.

Pastor Vern and Sonja retired to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Pastor Vern began attending the local Lutheran church, and was soon invited to participate in a part-time ministry there. By 1999, his health had improved to the point that he felt he could take a call to Christ Lutheran in Morden, Manitoba. He served there until 2000.

Once again Vern retired and the couple moved to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and then Strathmore, Alberta. While in Strathmore, Vern and Sonja established V & S Cleaning, a janitorial company. They worked together as the principals of V & S Cleaning right through 2015. Pastor Vern and Sonja attended Hope Community Covenant Church of Strathmore. The people of Hope church were the beneficiaries of his pastoral gifts through 2015.

Left to cherish his memory are his loving wife Sonja, daughters Lynn (Larry Casey), Debbie (Dave Hesje), Valerie (Brian Tysdal), and Cindy (Allen Bolinger) and son Terry (Colleen); grandchildren: Jennifer, Janna, Melissa (Ben Howes), Kimberley, James, Michelle (Jay Nelson), Daniel (Katie), Tim, Adam (Karrina), Jenna (Derek Rohde), Seth (Alia), Stephanie, Vanessa, Nathan & Cassie and great-grandchildren: Deklin, Connor, Keehli, Ari, Emma, Dahlia, Zion, Story, Winter, Violet and one yet to arrive in January. Vern is pre-deceased by his parents, all nine of his siblings as well as a grandson, Michael Tysdal.

God used Pastor Vern in a most profound way while he served at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, in Kamloops, during the 1990's. St. Andrew's Lutheran Church was then a member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Vern was a pastor on the ELCIC's roster of pastors. A crisis of faith had arisen in the ELCIC. For decades the authority of Scripture was tested in some Lutheran seminaries. By the 1990's liberal theologies and teachings put forward by a few liberal pastors and church leaders were poised to be adopted as the official teachings of the church. The erosion of the authority of Scripture paved the way for new teachings put forward by the church's leadership that were at odds with the ELCIC's teachings which defended the sanctity of life, biblical marriage and biblical standards for ordination. A crisis of faith can overwhelm and even paralyze many. Pastor Vern and others saw this crisis of faith as an

opportunity for likeminded people to come together. Pastor Vern and others worked together to organize meetings of likeminded people.



The first such meeting was held on 7 October, 1991 in Calgary. Fifty laypersons and pastors, representing 15-20 ELCIC congregations in western Canada, gathered together. Organizers included: Pastor Ken Wilsdon, Pastor Verne Roste, Pastor Norm Miller, Pastor Terry Sauder, Olive Kieler, Philip Brose (lawyer), and several other laypersons. Their

discussions, deliberations and prayers led to a desire to establish a church body which emphasised a commitment to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inerrant Word of God, the administration of the Means of Grace in accordance with the Lutheran confessions, the autonomy of local churches, conservative social ethics, a commitment to the church's evangelistic mandate, and an openness to the sovereign working of the Holy Spirit. Their vision included a federal charter for the new church body.

A constituting convention was held October 30-31, 1992. It was attended by over 100 delegates. The delegates established an unincorporated national church body, calling itself the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC). The unincorporated association was composed of congregations and individuals committed to the principals described above. Officers elected at the constituting convention were Rev. Vern Roste, President; Rev. Terry Sauder, Vice-President; Olive Kieler, Secretary; and Bill Anhorn, Treasurer (See picture on page 4). Pastor Vern served as the president of CALC from the beginning of the

life of the church body. He guided the organization and development of CALC for the two years before the constituting convention and the two years that followed.

Pastor Vern pursued CALC's incorporation with great passion and commitment. Together with Edmonton lawyer Phil Brose, he traveled to Ottawa. They met with members of parliament and lobbied for the establishment of a new Lutheran Church body. The organization of a national church body requires Parliament to pass an act establishing the church body. The Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations Act began with a petition submitted Garth Wagner, Harold Stedel, Olive Kieler, Rev. Vernon Roste and George Cooper. The petition is sponsored by a member or members of Parliament. The CALC Act was sponsored by H A "Bud" Olsen, MP Art Hangar and MP Deborah Grey. In June 1994, CALC was granted its federal incorporation. Ms. Deborah Grey who brought Bill S-5, an act to incorporate the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations, forward for second reading concluded her speech in the House of Commons as follows: "This association seeks a return to Lutheran roots with its emphasis on Scripture, missions and Lutheran theology."



With federal incorporation and charitable status, CALC was poised to move into the future. However, when the constituting convention for the federally chartered CALC met, only two congregations joined: St. Andrew's Lutheran Church of Kamloops, British Columbia and Valhalla Evangelical Lutheran Church of Valhalla Center, Alberta. The lack of support from those who had walked so closely together for the preceding years must have been very disappointing for Pastor Vern. He could only be comforted by these words from Holy Scripture: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:58.

The Lord blessed Pastor Vern's efforts. CALC experienced significant growth from 2007 to 2015, when membership peaked at 33 congregations. Pastor Vern was able to see churches he had served join CALC: Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in Mission, BC; St. Andrews Lutheran in Kamloops, BC; Emmaus Lutheran, Edmonton, AB; and Christ Lutheran in Morden, MB. He was delighted when his home congregation, St. John North Prairie of Preeceville, SK, joined CALC in 2012 and attended the installation of the first CALC pastor.

It was fitting that CALC's 2016 convention was held at All Saints Lutheran Church in Ottawa, Ontario. Some 23 years before Pastor Vern had walked the corridors of our Parliament in the quest for CALC's federal incorporation. We thank God for Pastor Vern's tenacity and faithfulness and for blessing his efforts with success. The journey out of the ELCIC and the formation of CALC was not an easy one for Pastor Vern. It took a toll on his health. Friends, relations and colleagues did not always understand or support his efforts or vision. We thank God for giving Pastor Vern his beloved Sonja. She stood faithfully beside him in sickness and in health and during those difficult days.

God used Pastor Vern to lay a foundation that He continues to build upon as CALC moves into the future. Pastor Vern's legacy to our Association is not to lose heart when the going gets tough. Difficult times should spur us to give our selves fully to the Lord and labor for the Lord. Any labor for the Lord will be blessed and we will yet praise him.

In Christ,

Pastor Edward Skutshek, President, CALC.

To send condolences, please visit Vern's obituary at www.wheatlandfuneralhome.ca. Donations can be made to Hope Community Covenant Church (245 Brent Blvd, Strathmore, AB. T1P 1W4) or Breakforth Ministries (#128 – 150 Chippewa Rd., Sherwood Park, Ab. T8A 6A2)

CONGREGATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

Three of CALC's congregations celebrated anniversaries this spring and summer, Trinity, Leader, SK; Mt. Calvary, Mission, BC; and Vancouver Chinese, Burnaby, BC. Faith is a journey we take with God and one another. An anniversary provides an opportunity for a congregation to stop and look in the rear-view mirror and remember and celebrate what God has accomplished among them. It provides an opportunity to thank God for calling, gathering and enlightening those who worship and serve in a congregation in the present and all God is accomplishing among them. An anniversary allows a congregation to look to the future and remember that, while they may not know the future, they know the future is in God's hands, and they will yet praise God for all He will accomplish among them in the future.

40TH ANNIVERSARY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH LEADER, SASKATCHEWAN



On Sunday April 24, Trinity Lutheran Church of Leader celebrated its 40th Anniversary as a congregation although the roots of the present congregation stretch much further to the early 1900's. Trinity is the result of an historical merger in 1976 between Peace Lutheran (ELCC) and St. John's Lutheran (LC-MS).

The day started with Breakfast in the church basement which provided an opportunity to eat and visit with current and former members of Trinity. Breakfast was followed by a Celebration Worship Service with a full church worshipping our risen Lord. Pastor Gene Mau (2000-2004) brought the Message and Pastor Jim Krause (1986-94) read the Gospel and gave the Benediction. The Worship Service featured lots of special music featuring a choir medley, a solo, and the children singing Jesus Loves Me. As well, two beautiful new banners were created by a group of women at Trinity for this event.

After Worship, the celebration continued at the Community Hall with a catered lunch. A program followed which included congregational singing, special music, sharing of Trinity's history, and greetings from former pastors.

As a special Anniversary Outreach Project, funds were raised in support of Palliative Care in Leader. This project was selected because the congregation recognizes the unique role of the church in affirming the sanctity of life to its God given natural end and wanted to make a positive contribution which reflects this Scriptural truth.

This was a great day to honour our rich heritage of sharing the love of Jesus in our region and an opportunity to look forward to the ministry to which the Holy Spirit is leading us in the future.

60TH ANNIVERSARY

MT. CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSION, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The weekend of July 30-31, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church celebrated 60 years of mission in Mission, BC. The weekend began with an open house. Displays and memorabilia retold the story of 60 years of ministry in words and pictures.

Saturday evening 140 enjoyed a celebratory banquet held in the church's lower level. Pastor Karl Keller, keynote speaker, spoke of his connections with Mt. Calvary. While he pastored in another Lutheran denomination, he was asked to supply preach frequently, and his children were involved with Mt. Calvary's youth group. He commended Mt. Calvary for reaching out to his family and urged them to continue to keep on reaching out and inviting.

Pastor Harold Rust also spoke of Mt. Calvary's gift of reaching out during worship on Sunday morning. As a seminarian studying in Washington state, Mt. Calvary stepped up and provided an internship site and even provided more. He praised them for their generous support and urged them to continue in this tradition.

Mr. Cal Lutz provided special music during the celebratory worship service. He described his years at Mt. Calvary during the 1970s. He described how congregational giving to missions (over and above congregational budget) grew exponentially over the years. Cal was inspired by his experiences at Mt. Calvary to establish an organization involved in Christian Mission.

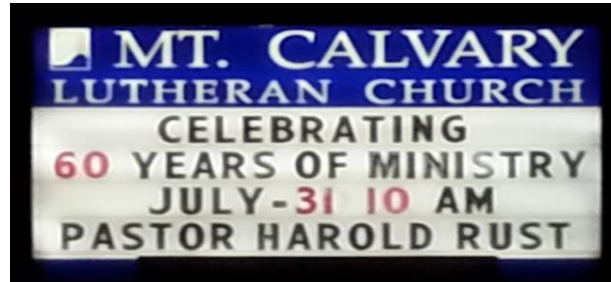
Mt. Calvary is a mission oriented congregation. Some past and current missions include:

Bread Day: The food was donated by local stores, Mt. Calvary volunteers picked up the food and distributed the same to those in need each week. This mission drew up to 100 people in a single day. This mission continued up to 2004.

MOPS (Mother of Preschoolers): 1986-2005. This ministry provided daycare for young mothers.

Seniors: Mt. Calvary hosts a seniors group each month for fun, fellowship and devotions.

Mexico Mission: Every summer beginning 1985



MT. CALVARY'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY
CONTINUED

to present, the congregation has sent a team, made up of people of all ages, to Vicente Guerrero, Mexico. The teams have served the children and ministry of the Foundation for His Ministry Orphanage which is located in Vicente Guerrero. They have undertaken the 2,500 KM journey by station wagon, van, mini-bus, school bus, touring bus and plane.

Daycare: True to their missional heart, Mt. Calvary has provided space for the Fine Art of Play Childcare Center. The congregation interacts with the families of the childcare center by hosting an annual hotdog dinner.

Congregational Firsts:

First Baptism. April 20th 1958: Barry, Linda & Allan Bremner.

First Confirmation Class. December 14, 1958: Evelyn Purvis, Linda Wergeland, Clifton Ulmer.

25TH ANNIVERSARY
VANCOUVER CHINESE LUTHERAN
CHURCH
BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

The weekend of May 28-29, Vancouver Chinese Lutheran Church (VCLC) celebrated their 25th Anniversary.

The celebration began Saturday evening with the celebratory banquet at the New Starlet Seafood Restaurant in Burnaby BC. The meal consisted of a multicourse banquet featuring traditional Chinese cuisine.

Following the banquet, was followed by a hymn sing and special musical presentations. Three videos were screened. The videos chronicled the history of VCLC through interviews with charter members and new members of VCLC.

Charter members recounted VCLC's humble beginnings in 1992. God inspired a group of Christians who had immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong to meet together. They were not satisfied with the status quo and the lack of contextual social action in their own churches. God planted a collective vision in their hearts to form a congregation. The charter members called Reverend Sek Wai Lo as VCLC's founding pastor.

First Wedding. Larry Kieler & Olive Krikau – August 30th, 1958.

First Ordination. Dennis Aicken May 22, 1983.

Mt Calvary's CALC Connection:

Pastor Verne Roste, the founding pastor of CALC, served Mt. Calvary from 1968-1978. He was unable to attend the celebration. He sent a video taped greeting. He recalled with fondness his years at Mt. Calvary. He noted that if asked, his children would say that many of their happiest childhood memories occurred during the family's years at Mt. Calvary.

Olive Kieler. Mt. Calvary's first bride, nee Olive Krikau, went on to become the first Secretary of CALC. She served on CALC's National Council with distinction in its very formative years. She has served Mt. Calvary with the same zeal and commitment.

Our prayer for Mt. Calvary congregation is that God continues to bless their vital ministry in Mission and continue to inspire their mission abroad.



At first they rented space. They gathered for worship at First Lutheran Church in Vancouver. In 1995 they ventured out, renting space Champlain Height Recreation Centre in Vancouver. In 1997 they began meeting at Faith Lutheran Church in Burnaby BC.

Their congregation grew and they entered into a

VANCOUVER CHINESE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY
CONTINUED

joint ownership and ministry agreement with Faith Lutheran congregation. Pastor Richard Hung and Eddy Kwok were called as their pastors. VCLC constructed a 2,800 square foot addition on the property.

New members and charter members described what it meant to them be members of VCLC.

VCLC was described as a place where they were accepted as a member of an extended family. One young man shared with his struggle with acceptance in school and home. He found acceptance at VCLC.

New and charter members described VCLC as a place where their faith in God the Father, God the

Son and God the Holy Spirit grew under the leadership and mentorship of their pastors and leaders.

They also spoke glowingly of their outreach to the community around them. This outreach has taken the form of Adult ESL Conversational (Intermediate), Chinese (Mandarin) and a Sunday School for children with autism.

We pray that God will continue to bless VCLC and their outreach to the Greater Vancouver community, their mission to bring salvation to the Chinese and to proclaim the kingdom of God and His righteousness worldwide. We pray that the Holy Spirit bless and guide the congregation as they strive towards building a Christ-like, caring and mission minded community.

A TRIBUTE TO SISTER AMY GOPAUL, DEACONESS

By her daughter Rosana O'Niell Sunday August 7, 2016, Faith Lutheran Church, North York, ON



My mother or Amy Sangster later know as Amy Gopaul was born a little over 80 years ago in #62 Village, a tiny little coastal farming community in Guyana. She is the 5TH child of George and Somaria Sangster and grew up with seven other siblings.

From early childhood she attended Sunday school and loved to sit beside her father as he told her stories from the Bible. She was fascinated and in awe of this man called Jesus. This man that can heal the sick, cure the lame and give sight to the blind. And with wide eyed astonishment and innocence would ask of her father. Is this really for real dad? Is this Jesus for real? Did he really raise the dead? But as the years went by and Sunday School turned into church service the questions became less and a tree of trust and faith, of belief and love for this Jesus grew in her heart.

She was married at 18 and separated 10 years later. With 4 children to take care of (the oldest being 9 and youngest being 3) and not knowing where the next meal is coming from. (My mother really had her work cut out for her). She turned to planting and cutting of rice to feed her family. Tired from the rice field she still has to cook and clean and take care of us when she gets home in the evening. It was no easy task. And amidst all the pain and suffering and heartaches and hurdles that life threw at her it was her faith and trust in Jesus that gave her the strength and courage to carry on. It was that deep rooted faith in God that gave a hopeless, despondent grade 5 drop out the courage to go back to school in order to provide better for her and children. What love, what faith, what trust, what determination.

My mother or Teach or Aunty Amy as the villagers would address her is a woman of strong, unwavering faith. She dedicated her time to serving her God, letting no one and nothing come between her and her love for Jesus. She loved to take the little children to Sunday school every Sunday (be it Christian or non-

Christian). Hand in hand they would walk down the road, and sometimes would even break into singing Sunday school choruses as they go. (Must be quite a sight for passersby). She was the Superintendent of Sunday School, taught the junior class, confirmation classes, conducted bible study classes, summer vacation class, supervised the Luther league group. At Christmas time she, coached the children for months and staged superb plays of the Nativity attracting huge crowds from the neighbourhood . And often times you could hear soft sobbing from the audience. Oh, how I remember those days with so much fondness. I often look back at those days and wonder how can someone command so much respect and trust and still be so humble and rooted. But that is what Christ does to us.

What made my mother decide to take seminary classes to become a Deaconess? Could it be that in the absence of a Pastor our Church needed a leader to take the service and administer communion every Sunday or could it be that the villagers requested her to perform their religious functions (be it weddings, prayer meetings, funerals)? I do not know. But, I am sure if I were to ask her, she would tell me she did not decide but she just follows where the Lord leads her. In 1993 she was commissioned as a Deaconess thus allowing her to serve her Lord and community in many more ways.

After migrating to Canada in 1994 she continued worshipping and serving her God at Faith Lutheran Church where she also taught Sunday School, confirmation classes and conducted Bible studies. But she felt that was not enough. She missed the interaction with people, the need to reach out and spread the good news of the Gospel is so compelling that she started to volunteer at Kipling Acres tea programme (a long term care and retirement home) for several years and provided communion to the sick and shut-in. And many times she would take the worship service at Kipling Acres when the priest could not make it.

Thank you for your many years of service and your dedication to God. God Bless and Keep you always.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CALC'S 2016 CONVENTION

Host Congregations: Our convention was held at All Saints Lutheran Church, located in Ottawa, ON. The convention began Friday October 21st and concluded Sunday October 23rd. While All Saints provided the venue, two other local CALC congregations were involved in the convention. Members of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church of Cornwall, ON, and Resurrection Lutheran Church of Pembroke , ON, contributed mightily to the convention. They provided delicious lunches, morning and afternoon snacks and refreshments on both Friday and Saturday. Resurrection Lutheran led opening devotions for the Saturday business session. St. Matthews planned Friday night worship and musical accompaniment Friday night and Saturday morning.



The people of All Saints made sure that convention delegates and visitors who flew into Ottawa International Airport were met, welcomed and then transported to the Best Western Hotel. They provided shuttle busses that transported delegates and visitors between the church and the Best Western. They made sure out of town delegates and visitors were transported to the airport. They planned a most excellent banquet on Saturday night. The meal was delicious. It was followed by singing and skill-testing games.

Attendance/Special Guests: CALC's secretary, Vivien Georgeson, reported that there were 117 registered members of CALC (the largest attendance in our history), 50 Voting Delegates, 31 non-Voting Delegates, 8 members of National Council and 38 Visitors registered for the 2016 CALC General Convention; with representatives from 28 congregations from 5 provinces – 4 congregations from BC, 14 congregations from Alberta, 2 congregations from Saskatchewan, 1 congregation from Manitoba and 7 congregations from Ontario.

Also in attendance were our Keynote Speakers, Pastor Olaf Latzel from Bremen, Germany and Rev. Douglas Morton, Brookings, SD, representing the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). We had special speakers for

our breakout sessions including: Pastor Samuel Chim, who resides in a nearby community, who the Service Coordinator representing Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) Cambodia; Pastor Tom Lovan of Sioux City, Iowa, representing Lutheran Asian Ministries; Pastor William Moberly of Albuquerque, New Mexico, representing Awakening Lives to World Missions and China Service Ventures. Also present were: Tom Brook of Winnipeg, MB representing Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR); Dennis Bielfeldt President of ILT; Eric Swensson of ILT; and Mark Vander Tuig of Iowa representing LCMC.

Video Recordings: Our 2016 Convention, from gavel to gavel was videotaped. The videos can be accessed from our website. Go to CALC's Homepage. Click on the box which is labeled "Videos for 2016 Convention – Click Here!" A menu of all videoed sessions will be displayed. Just click on the session you want to watch and enjoy! You can access this menu page at the following address: <https://vimeo.com/album/4219754>. These videos are a valuable asset for our membership. All are encouraged to watch these videos.

Convention Theme: As our nation's capital city, Ottawa hosts the embassies of many foreign nations, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Each foreign nation with an embassy in Ottawa appoints an ambassador. The ambassador's primary responsibilities are to promote good relations between his/her nation and the host nation; communicate his/her nation's foreign policy to the host nation; and work to smooth relations between countries in especially in sensitive areas of their relationship. With all these embassies surrounding our convention, it is most appropriate that our convention's theme be based on 2 Corinthians 5:20: "*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*"

The Apostle Paul calls us to see that every Christian who proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity, is an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Each congregation which preaches the Gospel in its purity is therefore an embassy of the Kingdom of God. Our keynote speakers spoke on an aspect of what it means to be Christ's ambassadors and our congregations as Christ's embassies.

Friday Learning Event. Pastor Doug Morton's sessions concentrated on communications within the congregation, or within the embassy. It is imperative that lines of communication are open and information freely flows between the staff of the embassy (members of the congregation) at all levels. When communication breaks down in the congregation, the message of reconciliation that the congregation is to preach is weakened.



Pastor Morton called us to see that communication is more than just words we use. We communicate using our entire bodies. Our communication, what we say, and what we hear, is influenced by our personality types. He introduced us to personality traits we have that influence how we lead and how we perceive the leadership of others. He introduced us to "Askers" and "Tellers." He challenged us to explore whether we were more task oriented or relationship oriented. He gave us very solid teaching in the area of reconciliation.

Friday Night Opening Worship: Special music was provided by the Sparrows Children's Choir of Timothy's Classical Christian Academy, which rents space from All Saints Lutheran Church. The children sang three anthems, in Latin: *Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring* by J. S. Bach, *Laudanum Te* by Antonio Vivaldi and *Laudate Dominum* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Our keynote speaker Pastor Olaf Latzel preached at our opening worship service. He began unpacking the meaning of our theme of Ambassadors for Christ. He began to speak of the challenges orthodox Christians face in Europe. He emphasized our solemn duty to "implore" people to be reconciled to Christ. He reminded us to implore is to "beg someone earnestly or desperately to do something. He admitted that it is a difficult calling to beg people to humble themselves and turn to God when so many are disinterested in or even violently hostile towards the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, God calls us to implore those around us to be reconciled.

Saturday Keynote Speaker: Like the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians, Pastor Olaf Latzel of Bremen revealed serious challenges facing the church which hinder the Gospel's call to repent and be reconciled with God. In his first session, he identified five key challenges facing the Lutheran church in Germany. (1) The false teaching of the Bible. (2) Pastors are not true believers. (3) The church has separated itself from Mission and Evangelism. (4) The church accepts and proclaims horrible unethical practices and behavior. (5) The church accepts gods other than the God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These challenges make it almost impossible for the church to call the culture to repentance.



In his second session he spoke of five key challenges facing individual Christians. (1) Biblical illiteracy among Christians. (2) Christians do not pray enough. (3) Individual Christians do not call people to repent and believe in Christ Jesus. (4) Christians are not on fire for Jesus. (5) Christians are too afraid to speak the Gospel. He also revealed Scriptural antidotes for the malaise caused by the challenges which face us.

Convention Business:

Additions/Changes in Membership: Membership status of Faith Lutheran, Calgary, AB, changed from Associate to full member. Seven were added as Individual Associate Members: Pastor Carl Eric Back, Edmonton, AB, Pastor Hans Peter Hincke, Long Sault, ON, Ron and Diane Voss, Cochrane, AB, Pastor Jane Mitchell, Medicine Hat, AB, Pastor John Subhakar and Nirmala Kumaria Tatapudi, Secunderabad Andhra Pradesh, India.

Changes in CALC's Roster of Pastors: Additions: Pastor Hein Bertram, Pastor Kevin Nelson, Pastor Ed Parke, Pastor Karl Faltin (Interim) and Pastor Glenn Hobden. Deletions: Pastor Goddy Hodanu, Pastor Peter Hincke, Pastor Doug Kranz and Pastor Alan Boerner. Pastor Rick Bergh was rostered as a Pastor in Extended Ministry; and that Pastor Alan Boerner and Pastor Jane Mitchell were rostered as Pastor Emeriti.

Students in Shepherd's Pathway: Pastor John Graham (has PMC is working on his Master of Divinity), Ronald Laferrier, Colin Adams, Kevin Nelson, Ed Parke, John Gooch, Lynn Rech; Randall McLeod and Sherland Chhangur.

Elections/Nominations: There were three vacancies on our National Council which were filled at our 2016 Annual General Convention: Two positions on our Board of Elders for a term of four years each and one position on our Board of Trustees. The following were nominated and elected by acclamation:

	<p>Name: Reverend Peeter Vanker Congregation: Goodwood Uxbridge Lutheran Church (GULC), Goodwood, Ontario. Status: Member of GULC, Individual Associate Member of CALC; Pastor Emeritus CALC Nominated for the Position of: Member of the Board of Elders Term: Four year term ending 2020</p>
	<p>Name: Sherland Chhangur Congregation: Faith Lutheran Church, North York, Ontario. Status: Member of Faith Lutheran Church Nominated for the Position of: Member of the Board of Elders Term: Four year term ending 2020</p>
	<p>Name: Timothy Bauer Congregation: St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Cochrane, Alberta. Status: Member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church Nominated for the Position of: Member of the Board of Trustees Term: Four year term ending 2020</p>

Nominating Committee: A motion was passed by the delegates to form a nominating committee for the 2017 convention. The Nominating Committee will consist of six people appointed by the National Council.

Three members of the National Council will be appointed to the Nominating Committee and the National Council will appoint three members of our Association to said committee.

CALC Budget 2017: The delegates approved financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2015, with revenues of \$76,654.00 and expenses of \$83,271 with a net loss of \$6,617.00 (which loss was funded by operating surpluses from previous years). The delegates approved the following budget for 2017.

Projected Income	
1. Congregational Benevolence	84,600.00
2. Benevolence from Individuals	575.00
3. Convention Registrations	9,000.00
4. GST Rebate	800.00
Total Projected Income	94,975.00
Projected Expenses	
Administrative Assistant ⁽¹⁾	3,600.00
Annual Convention	9,000.00
Bank Charges	100.00
News Letters and Brochures	500.00
Conference ⁽²⁾	1,000.00
Institute of Lutheran Theology Canada Society	3,000.00
Marriage Registration	1,500.00
Membership in Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC)	225.00
National Council Meetings ⁽³⁾	11,500.00
Office and Postage	250.00
Outreach Executive Director ⁽⁴⁾	45,000.00
Pastor's Retreat	5,000.00
Shepherd's Pathway Educational Material (40 Day Discernment) ⁽⁵⁾	2,000.00
Telephone and Fax	100.00
Travel- Pastoral & Executive	11,000.00
Website Maintenance	1,200.00
	94,975.00

(1) CALC Secretary 200 hours per annum at \$18.00 per hour.

(2) Registrations for conferences like Canadian Rockies Theological Conference.

(3) Cost of travel and meeting room for National Council meeting twice a year.

(4) Compensation to Grace Lutheran as reimbursement for Pastor Ed Skutshek's time spent on CALC business.

(5) Pastor Rick Bergh has agreed to prepare our 40 Day Discernment program, an eighty page document, two pages per day: one page that includes the devotional and a second page that will include action steps coming out of that day's devotional. The cost of this will be \$4000.00 plus GST. The cost will be funded from a designated account and the amount budgeted.

Trustees' Report: The Board of Trustees met in person two times in the past year (January 30, 2016 and September 19, 2016), as part of the National Council meetings held in Calgary. Issues dealt with at the meetings included the following:

- Reimbursement of CALC National Convention expenses for National Council members. Because it is important for all National Council members to attend, travel and hotel accommodations will be reimbursed to all National Council members, who so request.
- Pension/Benefits/Life Insurance. The Board of Trustees has reached the conclusion that it is the obligation of each congregation to provide these benefits. The Canadian Council of Christian Charities has a plan with \$60,000 basic life insurance, as well as extended medical and dental insurance.

- Congregational communication. Proposed periodical newsletters to the chairpersons of each church council was discussed. The newsletter then needs to be passed on to the congregation.
- Directors' liability insurance. The need for directors' liability insurance is becoming more necessary for the National Council, as well as individual congregations due to the risk of litigation in our society.
- CALC Policy Manual. The need for a Policy Manual has become evident, due to such issues as paid medical leave for pastors, severance pay for pastors on leave, recommended formula for financing pastoral education, etc. The Board of Trustees is to compile a Policy Manual. To date, policies exist rather willy-nilly in the private archived website information. Caution is required in development of policies because of congregational autonomy.

Diaconal Ministers: One of the mandates of CALC's 10-Year Strategic Plan was to officially recognize the office of the Diaconal Minister in CALC's congregations. Constitutional amendments and guidelines for training, rostering and disciplining Deacons were presented to the delegates of our 2016 Convention.

Three congregations in our Association have seen the value of diaconal ministry and have called and consecrated diaconal ministers. These Diaconal Ministers are currently preaching, providing pastoral care, administrative support, administer Holy Communion, providing Christian education, visiting the sick and providing marriage counseling and enrichment.

Official recognition of the Diaconal Ministry requires CALC's constitution to be changed to include a definition of the office of the Deacon and must make provision for the establishment of a roster of diaconal ministers, and provide guidelines for the education, training, call and discipline of Diaconal Ministers. Delegates received a package which included:

- Proposed Constitutional Amendments which create the office of the Diaconal Ministers.
- A manual containing Biblical teaching regarding the office of the Deacon; guidelines for the education, training, call, consecration and discipline of Diaconal Ministers. The manual included a sample Application for Entry into the Diaconal Ministry, a sample Call Letter and sample forms and procedures to be used in the Discipline of Diaconal Ministers.

Congregations are encouraged to read these documents and offer feedback. Delegates to our 2017 national convention will be asked to approve these constitutional guidelines. They will be accessible on our website in the new year.

Youth Event Committee Formed: The President's Report sparked a question about the role of CALC in promoting events for youth. Youth events could take the form of an annual youth gathering in a camp setting; a youth mission trip; and/or the participation of youth in our national convention in some way. An ad hoc committee was formed to examine the various possibilities. Those who volunteered for the committee included: Pastor Alvin Sorenson (Golden Valley, Viking, AB), Garth Teskey (All Saints, Ottawa, ON); Ron Voss (Individual Member); Pastor Ted Hill (Calvary/Asker, Wetaskiwin, AB) Billy Chiew (Basel Hakka, Vancouver, BC) and Bernard Cheng (Vancouver Chinese, Burnaby, BC).

Congregational Resolution: The following resolution put forward by Faith Lutheran Church of North York, Ontario, was approved without objection:

Resolved: If nominated and said nomination is duly accepted, Pastor Edward Skutshek be permitted to let his name stand for election to the office of president of CALC for a four year term at our Association's 2017 convention, our constitutional term limitations notwithstanding. If approved this resolution to be presented to our congregations for ratification.

Next Year's Convention: Our Annual General Convention for 2017 will be held from Friday October 20th through Sunday October 22nd at Grace Lutheran Church, 1162 Hudson Road, West Kelowna, BC. With the announcement of the host congregation for CALC's 2017 Annual General Convention, the business session was adjourned.

Celebratory Banquet: About 100 gathered for a celebratory banquet at the Best Western Hotel which accommodated out of town delegates and visitors. The meal and venue were excellent. We feasted, we sang, we played games and visited with one another.

Sunday Worship: CALC's 2016 Annual General Convention closed with worship. Our President, Pastor Ed Skutshek, preached. Pastor Ed installed Pastor Glenn Hobden as the fulltime pastor of our host congregation - All Saints Lutheran Church. Pastor Glenn presided at Holy Communion.

The church council and convention committee of All Saints Lutheran Church must be commended for all their efforts in organizing and leading the convention. The meals were delicious, the venue was comfortable and well appointed. We look forward to next year's convention.

CALC'S 2016 PASTORS' RETREAT

Thirty-four pastors attended this year's Pastors' Retreat. This the largest pastors' retreat in CALC's history. Five spouses also attended.

The Venue: St. Paul University is a small Roman Catholic University and Conference center located in downtown Ottawa. It is located between the Rideau River and the historic Rideau Canal. It is located 2.8 kilometers (37 minute walk) from Parliament Hill. And 4.6 kilometers (58 minute walk) from the Canadian War Museum.



Topic: *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel.* During 2017 we will celebrate the Quincentenary or 500th Anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation. In preparation for this auspicious event our pastors will go back to one of the foundations of our Reformation, the Law-Gospel dialectic. The relationship between Law and Gospel—God's Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ—is a major topic in Lutheran theology. The distinction between the doctrines of Law, which demands obedience to God's ethical will, and Gospel, which promises the forgiveness of sins in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ, is critical. It is used as a fundamental principle of biblical interpretation and a guiding principle in preaching and pastoral care. We used CFW Walther's "*The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*" (1929). The full text can be accessed online at: <http://lutherantheology.com/uploads/works/walther/LG/>



Presenter: Reverend Timothy Rynearson, was our presenter. Pastor Rynearson is on the faculty of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) of Brookings, South Dakota, specifically, permanent faculty – Graduate Program - Biblical Theology. He has served as the Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church of Brookings, South Dakota, since 1996. He also serves as the Principal of Peace Lutheran's Early Childhood Center. He also teaches ethics at South Dakota State University. He earned a BA at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI (1981), a Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary (1985) and an S.T.M. from Concordia Seminary (1995).

LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION FOR CHRIST (LCMC) ANNUAL GATHERING 2016



October 2-5, LCMC held an annual gathering at the Embassy Suites in Aurora, Colorado (just outside of Denver). Five of CALC's congregations are also rostered with LCMC. There are 933 LCMC congregations worldwide, with 744 of them in the US and 189 congregations found in 17 countries (including 9 in Canada). The credentials committee reported that 806 had registered for the gathering (462 voting delegates, 6 LCMC staff, 197 members of LCMC, 36 seminarians, and 111 visitors, vendors and exhibitors). LCMC has six fulltime employees, comprised of three pastors and three lay people.

The delegates passed a budget for 2017 of \$1,314,000.00 USD. It was reported that about half of its member congregations make donations to LCMC. The average congregational donation was about \$1,700.00 and the largest single donation was \$35,000.00. They approved a financial statement for the year ending December 31, 2015 with revenues of over \$1,200,000.00 and expenses just under revenues. The delegates ratified an action taken by LCMC's board of trustees. The board voted to remove the name of a congregation for LCMC's roster. This congregation no longer baptized infants and young children, which is not in accord with LCMC's statement of faith.

About 300 delegates and visitors spent Tuesday evening engaged in a service project for the benefit of Lutheran World Relief. We packed 8,000 personal hygiene kits. Each kit consisted of a bath towel, two bars of soap, a tooth brush, a comb and a small nail clipper. These will be distributed to the victims of natural disasters. A hurricane was ravaging Haiti as we packed these items. Some of these kits could end up in Haiti.

The convention's theme was "Back to the Future - First Century Principals for the 21st Century." We often hear the statement "The more things change, the more they stay the same." Our world is changing at the speed of light, yet, certain things stay the same. People are still sinners and sinful people still need Jesus. Jesus is: "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Each speaker declared that Christians are people with a mission from God. Our mission is to **confidently go out** into this **constantly changing world, to all sorts of people**, with a **timeless message**.

We can go out with confidence: Pastor Ebassa Berhanu preached during our opening worship service. He preached on Philippians 2:6-11. By these verses the Apostle Paul reminded the members at the ancient church at Philippi that Jesus' name had great power. Paul's ministry was always in Jesus name. Jesus used him to accomplish great things in his name. He declared that one day everyone in heaven, on the earth and under the earth would bow at the calling of Jesus name. He assures the church today, that Jesus' name still has that power. Paul would be the first to point out that the great resistance that Jesus' name produces in the world is evidence of its power. He assures us that, while we may suffer because we call on Jesus' name, he will overcome all resistance to his name. Pastor Berhanu called us to continue to boldly proclaim Jesus' name.

Our Message: We began each morning with a Bible Study and singing. Pastor Janice Rew-Werling was our Bible Study leader. She walked us through parts of the Book of Acts.

The Book of Acts tells us that the Apostles boldly preached in Jesus' name. At first they preached primarily to Jewish people and converts to Judaism. These people understood the books of the Old Testament. As a consequence, the Apostles could reason with these people and demonstrate how the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled many of the Old Testament promises relating to the coming Messiah. The Old Testament scriptures promised that the Messiah would suffer and die for our sins and rise from the

dead. The Messiah would judge all people and establish an eternal kingdom. Jesus had died and risen and promised to establish an eternal kingdom. Faith in Jesus was the gateway to eternal life.

When they preached in Jesus' name, many repented and came to faith. As Jesus' name was proclaimed, the church grew. The same proclamation of the Gospel inspired religious authorities to persecute the Apostles, and other members of the church. The Deacon Stephen was stoned to death for proclaiming his faith in Jesus.

The Apostle Paul began to preach to gentile people who did not know the Old Testament. When Paul spoke in Athens he opened the hearts of the Athenian people to Jesus by pointing them to an empty pedestal which bore the inscription "unknown god." Paul declared that this "unknown god" was very close to them. Even their poets acknowledged they are his offspring. Paul then declared this unknown God is revealed through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Sent to all kinds of people: Our first Keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Ed Stetzer declared that all Christians have been commissioned and sent by God to go to all kinds of people and preach the Gospel to them, baptize them in the Triune name and make disciples of them. He cited John 20:21-23 and Matthew 28:18-20, as the key commissioning and sending verses.



When the Gospel is preached, it calls for repentance on the part of those who hear it. The repentant heart is open to the message that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. If we have faith in Jesus our sins are forgiven and we can live a new life. The Gospel is to be proclaimed by all Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit. Parents are thus called and commissioned to preach the Gospel to their children. Parents are commissioned and deployed to call their children to repent and to believe. The church is called to equip parents to preach the Gospel to their children in word and deed. God calls every member of the church to be engaged in mission, to share the faith with those who we come in contact with in our daily lives.

Rev. Stetzer emphasized that in the great commission of Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus called Christians to go to the *ethnos*, to all different kinds of people. It follows that when the Gospel of Jesus was preached to all kinds of people, the way God is worshiped would be different in each community. Yet, there are aspects of worship which transcend time and the different kinds of people. Worship will always include the preaching and proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, baptism, Holy Communion, repentance and forgiveness.

Rev Stetzer gave two powerful examples of missionaries and congregations going out to many different kinds of people. He told of the mission work of a group of recent seminary graduates he had taught. They intentionally planted a congregation in the middle of a suburb of Louisville, Kentucky, which was home to a very eccentric community of artists and musicians. The pure Gospel message was communicated to them in a way which resonated with their artistic spirits. Worship drew on their talents as musicians and artists. However, repentance, contrition, forgiveness and the Sacraments were central to their worship.

He spoke of an aging congregation that actively prayed about and took specific steps aimed at reaching out to younger families in their area. They introduced more contemporary music into their worship and made their building more child friendly. They opened their hearts and doors to younger people. God drew new people in. Maintenance went up as attendance went up. This congregation did not look back, they looked and moved forward. God blessed them.

The past, present and future.



Our second keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Mike Granquist, a historian and seminary professor. He challenged those assembled to honestly look at how we understand and use the past, the present and the future to shape our proclamation of the Gospel.

Looking back. There is a tendency on our part to want to look to the past. We can look back to a golden age in the life of the church. The golden age in the life of the Lutheran church in North America would be the 1950s and the 1960s. We grew into the 4th largest denomination in North America during those two decades. Fragmented Lutheran

Churches merged into large churches with head offices, pensions, programs and highly trained theologian/pastors. It all changed in the 1970s. Contemporary liberal theology had taken over the seminaries. The emerging liberal leadership began a systematic campaign aimed at taking over the positions of power and influence. The attainment of power and influence paved the way to the enactment of their liberal theology. The Lutheran church has been in decline ever since.

There is a tendency to romanticize the 1950s and 1960s. We look back at that time and want to go back to those days. We wait for that program or revival that will bring back the golden age.

The problem is that we cannot go back to the 1950s and the 1960s. People are different today. The world is a different place. We have become citizens in a growing global village. North America is becoming more secular each day. If our eyes are constantly in the rear-view mirror waiting for a revival of the past, we miss opportunities for our mission in the world that is in front of us today.

Looking forward. Some Christians want to look forward. They want to see into the future. They wait for the Lord's second coming and eternity. They want to take current events and line them up with the images found in the Book of Revelation. They see the Lord's coming as imminent. They want others to join them in this speculative waiting. The problem is that for the last 2,000 years there have been so-called prophets in every generation that were sure that the Lord would return in their generation. They were wrong.

When we fixate on the future, on the end times specifically, we will be tempted to make predictions of the best before date stamped on our world. We will be tempted to advertise the date of the Lord's return and we will surely err. Speculation on a date for Jesus' return will take our eyes off of the needs of the people before us and our mission in the world today

Despair in the present. There are some who have their eyes fixed firmly on this world and this time. Yet, they look at our world with great despair. They see our world as a hopelessly fallen place and its people as reprobates. They look at a fractured and splintered church. They struggle for doctrinal and personal purity. They fixate on God's promise to destroy this evil world. The destruction of this world is sure, the end is imminent and there is little we can do about it. These folks want to separate from the evil world and evil people. How can a church that wants to separate from the evil world possibly have the passion to reach out to others?

Our Lutheran tradition calls us not to get fixated in the past; rather we are to learn from it. The church has always been fragmented. Read the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. Paul accused the Corinthian church of harboring all kinds of splits. During the church's first 400 years, many great theological battles waged. We are the beneficiaries of these theological struggles. The church has never been as unified as it is these days.

Luther called the church to live and minister without thinking about the end. Luther called the members of the church to remember that we are at one and the same time saints and sinners. We are called to proclaim the Gospel to evil sinners so they can be drawn, by the work of the Holy Spirit, out of this world and into the Kingdom of God.

In worship and evangelism we must remember that what makes us Lutheran is not our liturgy or hymnody. Our unity comes from our theology. We find our unity in our common understanding of the authority of scripture, how it is interpreted and how we have agreed to proclaim the Gospel. We speak with one voice when it comes to the meaning and the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Lutherans believe that the Gospel, when rightly preached, will cause its hearers to repent and beg God's forgiveness. We believe that Jesus gave us the Office of the Keys to assure repentant sinners of the forgiveness of their sins. We are called to be loyal to one another and hold one another accountable.

The leaders of LCMC must be commended for the convention and the local committee for their efforts in organizing and leading the convention. The speakers were excellent, the meals were delicious, the venue was comfortable and well appointed, the worship and Bible study inspired us. We look forward to next year's convention.

CALC'S PRESIDENT TO SPEAK AT CONFERENCE IN BREMEN, GERMANY



Pastor Olaf Latzel, Keynote Speaker at our 2016 Annual General Convention has extended an invitation to Pastor Edward Skutshek, our President, to speak at a conference which will be hosted at his church on Pentecost weekend 2017. The conference begins on Saturday June the 3rd and ends late in the afternoon on Sunday June 4th.

The main theme of the conference is "*The Afflicted Church.*" Pastor Ed has been asked to prepare two lectures (each one hour). The first lecture will take place on Saturday afternoon. He will be asked to recount CALC's history and the need for separation from our previous denomination. The second lecture will take place on Sunday afternoon. In his second lecture, Pastor Ed has been asked to share the challenges CALC will face in the next years in Canada. He was also asked to give a ten minute Biblical greeting on Sunday morning during worship.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & THANK-YOU



We give God thanks and praise for the blessings He has showered upon us despite our unworthiness, and for all He has accomplished through us in 2016. We thank God for each and every member of our Association. We are so grateful for your generous support. We look forward to the year before us.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

Your National Council: Pastor Ed Skutshek, Helen Zacharias, Vivien Georgeson, Brenda Evjen, Pastor Peeter Vanker, Sherland Chhangur, Randall McLeod, Tim Bauer, Everley Lutz and Dennis McQuire.

7 STRATEGIES THAT REALLY WORK TO HELP YOU MEET YOUR LOVED ONE AT CHRISTMAS (EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE DIED)

Is Christmas difficult this year because you will be missing a loved one? Are you wondering how to manage without them? Do you feel that Christmas will be too hard to handle without their presence? The following strategies will help you to bring that person whom you are missing a little closer.

- 1 Bring them closer through their words**

It's a different relationship now that your loved one is not physically present in your life – but it's still a relationship. You would like to hear their voice one more time – and you can. Recall special words or phrases that this person spoke to you when you were with them. What words do you think this person would say to you now that would bring joy to your life? Keep those words close to your heart when you miss them this Christmas and speak them out loud to yourself when sadness hits you.
- 2 Tell them what you really miss – then tell someone else**

Only you know how precious this person was to you when they were alive. But, does anyone else know how much you miss this person at Christmas and how important this person still is in your life? Write down what you miss about this person and share it with a trusted friend. Invite a friend to hear what is in your heart. In a season in which so many appear to be happy, it's okay to visit sadness for a time. You miss because you love and always will.
- 3 Honour a Christmas tradition or ritual that was important to them**

Remember your deceased loved one by honouring a special Christmas tradition or ritual that was important to them. You could even establish a new one that is helpful to you. Did they play Santa Claus? Did they like a special food? Did they love to decorate the house a specific way? What do you remember about this person as you think back about Christmas? How might you bring them closer to you by taking part in what was important to them? You will feel their presence in a special way when you engage in one of their important ritual or traditions.
- 4 When a “grief burst” happens, honour the moment and tell their story**

When you are surprised by a moment at Christmas that brings you closer to your loved one and you feel overwhelmed with emotion, don't push it away, move into it. A smell, a song, a picture, a missing spot at the table – each of these could potentially stir up emotions from past memories. When they do, tell the story that surrounds that memory. Say, “This reminds me of... I remember when... I miss them because...” When you are drawn closer to this person because of a memory, it just says one thing – you miss and you love. What could be more beautiful than that?
- 5 Plan ahead with your family**

Planning forward is important. Being intentional is smart and healthy. Let your family know that this year you would like to remember and honour the person who is no longer with you in a special way. Let them know you are looking for suggestions. Be intentional. “Do you have any ideas how we might remember Dad/Mom etc. this year at Christmas?” You will be surprised how often people want to remember but are not sure how to broach the topic with the family.
- 6 Do one specific thing at Christmas to remember**

People deal with grief and mourning so differently. Think about one unique thing you could do this Christmas to remember that special person in the midst of your Christmas celebrations. It could be as simple as lighting a candle, sharing a story or toasting them in remembrance. Small gestures of honour can add a lot of joy into your home and are a healthy part of mourning.
- 7 Put up a boundary that that empowers you**

When someone tells you that you need to “move on”, “forget” or even “celebrate” Christmas because it's “better for your family”, put a boundary around that statement. Remind them politely that honouring your loved one is the best way for your family to celebrate Christmas together. Unhelpful words can throw you into a tailspin and cause you to doubt yourself. By protecting your heart and speaking up, you will be empowered. It will enable you to do the best thing possible – that is, bringing your loved one closer to you this Christmas.

Rick Bergh is a best-selling author, thanatologist, and narrative therapist. He uses these practical principles in his own family to remember his late wife Pam, who died at 47 years of age. You can read more of his writings on grief and mourning at www.rickbergh.com