

The Lutheran Connector

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



Inside this Edition

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This edition of the Connector is packed with information.

The “training, consecration and ordination of Pastors” is a mark of the church.” The lead stories in this edition announce the installation of two pastors and a pastor-in-training and the renewal of a pastor’s ordination vows.

CALC’s 10-Year Strategic Plan called our congregations in close proximity to one another to meet as clusters. Highlights of four cluster meetings are described in four articles. We hope these stories will convict our congregations of the efficacy of cluster meetings inspire our congregations to organize and host them.

CALC’s congregations have voted to affirm the resolution passed by the delegates to CALC’s 2016 Convention which would allow me, if nominated and the nomination is accepted, to run for a third term as President. An article describes the results of the voting. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the trust you have reposed in me.

Preliminary information is provided for CALC’s annual Pastors’ Retreat: October 18th and 19th; and CALC’s Annual General Convention: October 20th to 22nd.

In the segment entitled: “It’s the Law – Commentary on Recent Court Cases” we will look a recent decision in favor of Trinity Western’s Law School and the appeal of this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada.

National Council has appointed a Nominating Committee for our 2017 Convention. An article introduces the committee and describes their mandate. This edition announces the publication of a devotional series which is the first step in the process of discerning a call to the pastoral ministry and the publication of a commemorative pocket-sized Small Catechism.

We hope you find this edition of the Connector informative and inspiring. May God continue to richly bless you all.

In Christ, Pastor Ed Skutshek, President.

Inside this Edition

Inside this Edition	1
CALC’s Shepherds	2
A Shepherd’s Pathway to Installation at Mt. Calvary...	2
Installation at Immanuel Lutheran -Stony Plain, AB...	4
Renewal of Ordination Vows – Vancouver, BC.....	5
Installation at St. Matthew’s Cornwall, ON.....	6
Congregations Approve Convention Resolution	6
Cluster Meetings	7
Ottawa Valley.....	7
Highway 14 Cluster in AB.....	7
Word at Work Workshop in Medicine Hat, AB	9
ON Faith & Good Shepherd.....	9
CALC Ontario Cluster.....	9
CALC 2017 Pastor’s Retreat	10
CALC 2017 National Convention	11
It’s the Law – Trinity Western vs BC Law Society	12
Congregational Vacancies	14
CALC’s Nominating Committee	15
40 Days of Discernment	16
Commemorative Luther’s Small Catechism	16
Interpreting and Understanding Biblical Authority ...	17
Free Old Testament Course Offered by ILT!	19

The Lutheran Connector is a newsletter published by:
Canadian Association Lutheran Congregations (CALC)
 1162 Hudson Rd. West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3 250.769.5685
 Website: www.calc.ca Email: info@calc.ca

President: Pastor Ed Skutshek - president@calc.ca
 250.801.3860

Vice President: Helen Zacharias – vice-president@calc.ca

Secretary: Vivien Georgeson - secretary@calc.ca

Treasurer: Brenda Evjen – treasurer@calc.ca

Treasurer’s Address: 4808 51 Ave., Stony Plain, AB, T7Z1C4

CALC's Shepherds

A Shepherd's Pathway to Installation at Mt. Calvary Lutheran of Mission BC

By Corrine Roste. Pictures by Deborah Hansen



In December of 2015 our church's pastor reached the age of 65 and in January of 2016 moved into the role of interim pastor. At the congregation's annual meeting that same month a call committee was formed. With pastoral ministry essentially continuing unchanged, the call committee was able to work without time pressure to pray together for God's leading, to evaluate the congregation's status and needs, and determine the strengths that would be best suited in the congregation's next pastor. Following this, names of potential candidates were gathered and contacts made. Most names considered at first were of those who were already well known to the committee. A few months into the process the first call was made, but declined. Later a second candidate was brought in for an interview weekend, subsequently called, but again the call was declined.

Now the call committee needed to regroup and earnestly search for God's leading in view of events thus far, re-evaluating the congregation's needs. The search for suitable candidates needed to be broadened. Suggestions from friends of the congregation were collected, and some resumes were provided by president of CALC, Pastor Ed Skutshek. Surprisingly, among these resumes was one from Pastor Leslie Kern from South Africa. Would we really consider a pastor from so far away? It seemed unlikely; surely we would exhaust all North American possibilities first. However, I had heard about the congregation in Preeceville, Saskatchewan calling a South African pastor from my relatives there, so I called on my cousin for the story. Their story had some similarities to ours where a long serving pastor had come to retirement age, but it also included the challenges facing a fairly remote small town prairie congregation in attracting any pastoral candidates whatsoever. For them it made sense to approach someone wanting to immigrate to Canada. We discussed at length the process

they went through to interview, bring over for a personal meeting, and the eventual call. While there were some wrinkles with their situation that complicated things, all obstacles were overcome, and Pastor Ed was available to make the connections with their new pastor and CALC. My cousin was excited with end result and that their church was growing already.

Our committee wasn't quite ready for so much adventure yet though. Our call committee continued contacting possible candidates, mostly Canadian and a few American. Some didn't respond. Some responded negatively. Some expressed interest, but then declined when we approached them for an interview. We explored some creative ideas such as a dynamic-styled interim candidate, or an intern. Needless to say, we had some moments of discouragement, and we again had to give our church over to God and trust where He was leading us.

We realized that we needed to explore every possibility, including contacting Pastor Leslie Kern in South Africa. We knew from his resume and first emails that he and his family were planning and already in the process of preparing to move to Canada as the situation in South Africa was becoming increasingly unsettled. We conducted our first interview by Skype in the latter part of July 2016. Knowing that he was not from a Lutheran tradition, we prepared a set of primarily theological interview questions and emailed them to Pastor Kern to prepare for our interview. He shared that he was challenged by the depth of our questions and pleased that we were concerned about such things. We both learned that we were like minded about the things that mattered the most. We were pleased with Pastor Kern's command of the English language even though he seldom had opportunity to use it. We also met his wife Rita during the Skype interview. We felt positive and awestruck by their huge step of faith to leave the only country they had ever known, but following this we weren't ready to move forward for a variety of reasons. The church was busy celebrating its 60th anniversary, some went away on a Mexico mission trip, vacations, and the committee was still making other Canadian contacts and posting ads at theological schools.

By October 2016 our presiding pastor has announced his pending departure, and all candidate leads seemed exhausted except Leslie Kern. The call committee took this leading and booked another Skype interview in early November. By now we knew that the Kern family had received Canadian resident status and in fact booked flights to Vancouver in December! This second interview was less formal. We talked about programs and how they might be conducted, and how various situations would be handled. Both Leslie and Rita Kern were present, and later we met the children as well. We communicated to the

Kern family that we didn't know what Mt. Calvary's situation would be concerning them yet, but at least we would be there for them when they arrived in Vancouver to meet them in person and we wanted to welcome them to Canada and help them find a new home.

Our committee knew we had a future with the Kerns, but struggled with what that would look like. We didn't have peace about recommending the congregation issue a full call, as we couldn't fairly make that decision without giving them a chance to adjust to a new country, language, cold weather, church body, etc. The committee met (again by Skype) with Pastor Ed and discussed our situation. Here everything became quite clear as Pastor Ed shared with us the wisdom and logistics of a term appointment enacted by the church council. It seemed to provide room for both the Kern family and the church family to make the necessary growth and adjustments that would be needed in the coming months, while still providing pastoral care. It would give the church family the opportunity to reach out and be a family to the Kerns who were leaving all their family and friends behind. Then when the time is right a more permanent decision can be made.

One more Skype meeting between Pastor Ed, the call committee, and the church council, and we were ready to offer a one year term appointment to Pastor Leslie Kern, which was quite quickly accepted. In the meantime my own communications had really ramped up with Rita, thanks to Facebook. Together we searched the web for possible accommodations and daily discussed all manner of things concerning life in Canada for their family. Furnished rentals (Kerns would arrive with only their suitcases) are scarce and expensive around here and the challenge seemed daunting until the Vetter family in our congregation came forward with the offer of a suite in their home which was under renovation. What an answer to my prayers! The renovation was quickly completed. They and others in the congregation donated furnishings and household items, and enough pantry items to get our new family started.

On December 28, 2016 we met a beautiful, though travel weary Kern family at YVR, and recognized each other immediately as our eyes met. It felt like we already knew them.

Things went as smoothly as they possibly could on one of the busiest airport days of the year. We brought them to Mission and the children fell right into their new beds. I am so thankful to all the Mt. Calvary family for creating this welcome and new home! In the days that followed many have helped to show the Kern family around, take them shopping and to government offices, give them some authentic Canadian experiences, and a car was gifted so they now have their independence. The children

have started school, and Pastor Leslie has started working. Rita hopes to find work as well.

What is left to say? With God the impossible becomes possible. He saw things knitting together between two places on opposite sides of the globe long ago. It took every other door closing before we looked through the open one and took the opportunity given to us. How lovely it is to follow God's leading and be blessed by Him. This experience has drawn our congregation together with a focus on our purpose and future. There is an air of excitement and anticipation. People linger together after Sunday service over coffee, seeming that they don't want to leave, sharing and caring for each other. We have long been a missions focused congregation, and now we have our own missionaries ministering to us in Mission, BC.

Pastor Kern was installed as Interim Pastor on Sunday April 2, 2017 at 4:30 PM. Guest pastors included Pastor Alan Boerner, former pastor of Mt. Calvary, Pastor Norm Miller, Pastor Dennis Bjorgan, Pastor Robin Ross, and Pastor Brent Borthwick.



Back (L to R): Pastor Leslie Kern, Rita and Leslie Jr. **Foreground** (L to R): Nico and Paul.



Installation: L to R: Lani Vetter, Pastor Ed Skutshek, Todd Guse, Pastor Leslie Kern and Chris Staeheli.

Installation: Immanuel Lutheran, Stony Plain, AB



Sunday January 28th Pastor John Gooch was installed as Pastor-in-Training of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal (ILCR).

Pastor John grew up in BC's beautiful Okanagan Valley. Kelowna, BC is his hometown. He is married to Vanessa and they have three children: sons Zechariah and Jude and daughter Genesis. Vanessa is from Edmonton. Two of their three children were born there.

Pastor John was not raised or trained in the Lutheran Church. His wife Vanessa was raised in the Lutheran Church. His family spent the five years prior to coming to ILCR in ministry in Alberta and Ontario. He was ordained in the Community Christian Fellowship Church of Canada (CCFCC) May of 2013. From 2011 to 2015 he served in the Salvation Army, at an Alliance Church and at an Anglican Church. He held the title, Associate (youth) Pastor twice, and then Pastor of Intergenerational, Youth and Outreach Ministries.

Pastor John serves ILCR under a specific pathway to pastoral ministry offered by CALC's Shepherd's Pathway (SP) program. CALC offers two pathways to ordained ministry. The traditional pathway is to complete a Master of Divinity Degree, a post bachelors degree consisting of three years fulltime study at a seminary, and a yearlong internship in a parish. The second pathway is the Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC) offered by the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). The PMC consists of 12 courses which are offered on-line.

Candidates for the PMC program can study and serve in a congregation at the same time. The candidate first typically takes and passes three essential courses: a course on Luther's Catechisms and Theology, one on Biblical Interpretation and a course on Preaching and Proclamation. The candidate is then installed as a Pastor-in-Training (PIT). As a PIT, the candidate is licensed to

preach, teach, baptize, commune, confirm, marry and conduct funerals. The PIT is actively supervised and evaluated by a Supervising Pastor and mentored and evaluated by a Lay Committee (made up of congregational members).

Pastor John has been serving at ILCR since July of 2016. The fall of 2016 he completed three of the twelve courses required by the PMC. Upon completing the three courses he was installed as the Pastor-in-Training. Pastor Bent Damkar is currently his Supervising Pastor.



Pastor John and wife Vanessa and children Jude, Zechariah and Genesis.

Pastor John will be serving the parish and taking courses at the same time, one during 2017 and two courses a year thereafter until he has completed all 12 courses required by the PMC program.

Pastor John wrote "*Understanding This Jesus Thing*"; a book directed to those new in the Christian Faith. The book was published and released by Freedom Press under his writing name "JG Smoothy." It is currently available on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Understanding-This-Jesus-Thing-Smoothy/dp/1927684161>. He is also a Christian Political Columnist on Barbwire.com under the name JG Smoothy.

We look forward to Pastor John's continued growth as a capable shepherd as he takes classes and serves the people of Immanuel Lutheran. Pray that God would continue to bless the Gooch family and the people of Immanuel as they grow in grace, faith and their relationships with Father, Son and Holy Spirit and one another.

Renewal of Ordination Vows: Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church, Vancouver, BC.



Sunday March 19th Pastor Manfred Schmidt renewed his Vows of Ordination at Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church (MLELC). Our President, Pastor Ed Skutshek preached and officiated during the service. The hymns and music incorporated into the liturgy were amazing. Special music included: an aria "*Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel!*" -- *Elijah*, Op. 70 No. 14 (Felix Mendelssohn) sung by Brian Reschke.



MLELC's German Choir (pictured above), sang two anthems "*Mach Mich Reiner*" and "*Erforsche Mich Jesu.*" A quartet sang "*Standing on the Promises.*"



Pastor Manfred was born in Liebenwalde, Germany. He grew up in a Christian home. His father came from a Lutheran background and his mother from an evangelical background. He was exposed to both. He was trained in Germany as an engineer.

Pastor Manfred may have worked as an engineer, however, he always had a heart for the Lord. He took classes at Bible School in Germany. He participated in mission trips to Haiti, Kenya and Israel.

He immigrated to Canada and began working as an engineer for Finning Tractor in 1985. He soon began studying theology at Regent College (a seminary in Vancouver, BC) and earned a diploma in Christian Studies in 1991. He was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in April 18, 1993. He continued to study theology at Regent College and earned a Master of Divinity degree in May of 1996. He served in several congregations in the greater Vancouver area from 1993 to present, most notably, he served as a lay pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Cloverdale, BC from 2004 to 2014. He accepted a call from MLELC in February of 2015.

Over the past several years Pastor Manfred has been taking courses from Lutheran Seminaries in order to enrich his understanding of the history and theology of the Lutheran Church. He took courses on Church History and preaching from Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton. (Concordia is a seminary of the Lutheran Church Canada LC-C). While serving at Martin Luther he took two courses from the Institute of Lutheran Theology. He took the course on Martin Luther's catechisms and theology and a course on Lutheran worship. In response to the successful completion of his coursework, Pastor Schmidt was moved to renew his vows of ordination.

Pastor Manfred is fluent in German and English. He leads services in English, German and combined services, where hymns, liturgy and readings are sung and spoken in English and German. MLELC is blessed with a German Choir that provides special music regularly. Pastor Manfred is gifted in the area of music and singing. He sings in MLELC's German choir, is a capable soloist and a capable musician. May God continue to bless Pastor Manfred and the people of MLELC.



Installation: St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Cornwall, ON

A weekend to remember! April 29-30, 2017

It began late Saturday afternoon with a moving healing service led by Pastor Ed Skutshek, followed by a pot-luck supper and Bunco. Sunday April 30, 2017, was a special day in the life of Matthew's Lutheran Church of Cornwall, Ontario. Reverend Dr. Zakaria David Mandara, was installed as the congregation's fulltime pastor by our President. St Matthew's pulpit has been vacant since November of 2014. Pastor Mandara served in the capacity of supply pastor and Interim Pastor from the time of the vacancy through January of 2017. During this period he also served as an interim pastor at Almonte United Church for a year.

Pastor Mandara faithfully served St. Matthew's for two years prior to accepting the call. He regularly commuted from Ottawa to Cornwall during this period of time. He preached on Sundays and spent time in the parish during the week. He led Bible studies. Pastoral visitation was an important part of his ministry at St Matthew's.



L to R: Pastor Ed Skutshek CALC President, Pastor Zakaria Mandara and Mr. David Neiman, Chairperson.

Pastor Mandara did not labor alone for those two plus years. Pastor Fred Rennie of Cornwall regularly preached at St. Matthew's. Pastor Rennie served in the Presbyterian Church in Canada prior to his retirement from active ministry. Pastor Rennie's service and commitment were recognized during Pastor Mandara's installation. The congregation expressed their appreciation for Pastor Rennie's willingness to step into the pulpit wherever he was needed and the sage advice he gave the congregation during the transition in ministry.

Pastor Mandara looks forward to the continuation of his ministry at St. Matthew's. He is committed to "Making Christ the center of our lives, guiding the youth, visiting the sick, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ that will move our hearts closer to him and praying for any spiritual matters people might have in their lives."

Pastor Mandara earned a Bachelor of Divinity at Tumaini University, Makumira College in Tanzania. He was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in 1998 and worked as a parish pastor in the Lutheran Church in

Tanzania from 1998-2001. He earned his a Masters of Theology from the same seminary in 2003. He came to Canada in 2003. He studied at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon. He then moved to St Paul University, Ottawa where he studied conflict resolution.

Pastor Mandara's pastoral charges in Canada have included Redeemer Lutheran Church, Biggar, SK, where he served from 2005-2007. He subsequently served All Saints Lutheran Church in Ottawa from 2007 to 2013.

He was born December 7, 1966 in Old Moshi-Kilimanjaro, on the slope of Mount Kilimanjaro in northern Tanzania. Pastor Mandara is married to Emma. They have three sons, Nixon, Nelson and Nathan.



St. Matthew's Lutheran, Cornwall, Ontario.

Congregations Vote to Ratify a Resolution Approved at CALC's 2016 Annual General Convention



Delegates to the 2016 CALC convention unanimously approved the following resolution.

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.*

Permitting an incumbent two term President to run for a third term has the same effect as a constitutional amendment. Article 17 of CALC's constitution states that our congregations must vote to approve any constitutional amendment. A congregation must vote at a legally called annual general or special meeting of the congregation. The resolution submitted by CALC has to be approved by a simple majority of those present and

eligible to vote at a congregation’s annual or special meeting. The resolution submitted by CALC has to be approved by 75% of the congregational ballots cast and timely received by our Secretary. (Section 3.6 of Article 17 of our Constitution).

This resolution was presented to our congregations for ratification. A ballot together with covering materials dated January 11, 2017 was sent out January 12 by email to our 31 congregations which are eligible to vote. The ballot and the covering material specified that ballots had to be returned to CALC’s Secretary by April 2, 2017 to be counted.

Ballots were received from 24 of our 31 congregations eligible to vote by the April 2 due date. The ballots were cast as follows:

Ballots opposed to Faith’s Resolution	3	12.5%
Ballots in favor of Faith’s Resolution	21	87.5%
Total	24	100%

The ballots received met the 75% threshold for the approval of a constitutional amendment. Therefore, our incumbent president may run for a third term if nominated and the nomination is accepted.

Cluster Meetings

Ottawa Valley - Pembroke



Saturday February 18th participants from All Saints Lutheran Church in Ottawa, St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church in Cornwall and our host congregation Resurrection Lutheran Church in Pembroke met for a cluster meeting.

During our morning session, our President reviewed the constitutional amendments and guidelines re: the call, training, roster, and discipline of the office of the Diaconal Ministry presented at our 2016 National Convention followed by a Q & A session. During the afternoon session those present looked at the nuts and bolts of establishing a congregational strategic plan. Thanks to the people of Resurrection Lutheran for hosting the event.

AB Highway 14 Cluster Meeting

ILT Word at Work Workshop

“Martin Luther - Life and Theology”

Reverend Jamie Stickler

Saturday April 8, Golden Valley Lutheran Church of Viking Alberta hosted a cluster meeting for CALC’s congregations along and around AB Highway 14. It began at 9:30 AM and concluded about 4:00 PM. Participants came from Golden Valley Lutheran Church; Sharon Lutheran, Irma; Bardo Lutheran, Tofield; Bethel Lutheran Marwayne, and included guests from Faith Lutheran LC-C located in Vermillion.

The cluster featured a day long “Word at Work Workshop” presented by Reverend Jamie Stickler of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). ILT offers these day long workshops for congregations. The topic of this workshop was Martin Luther – Life and Theology.

Rev. Stickler serves as ILT’s Dean of Students and Director of Institutional Advancement. He is also on ILT’s faculty. He teaches courses in ILT’s Certificate Programs.

Rev. Stickler shared his journey of faith with participants. He described how God called him from a corporate position to: pursuing a bachelors degree (Grandview University 2008), seminary training (M-Div from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2011), parish ministry, and ILT as a teacher and administrator.



Rev. Stickler’s Word at Work presentation included a biographical sketch of Martin Luther’s life. He focused on events in Luther’s life that would later work to shape his ministry and theology. He spoke on Luther’s theology, including, the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel; justification; active vs passive righteousness; original sin; the theology of the cross vs the theology of glory; confession and absolution; Baptism; and Holy

Communion. Rev. Stickler is a powerful and passionate speaker. He is an excellent communicator. The content of his presentation was informative and thought provoking.

ILT offers Word at Work Workshops in addition to the Workshop devoted to Martin Luther. Other Workshops offered are:

- World Religions and Cults.
- Jesus Christ Prophecy Fulfilled.
- Defending the Faith.
- The Book of Revelation.

There is no charge to the host congregation for the workshop. ILT simply asks the host congregation to supply coffee and rolls and a luncheon. ILT does charge \$25 per person at the door to the attendees simply to help cover some of our expenses. Couple and group discounts are offered as well.



Live Interactive Learning. Rev. Dr. Dennis Beilfeldt, President of ILT, is shown here teaching a class of seminarians. He sees each the five students in his class live and on line. Their images are live streamed and can be seen on the column on the left side of the screen above. His lecture notes are also on the screen. The students see the professor, his notes and one another on their computer screens.

He described ILT's academic or university level degrees which include: the Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.); the Master of Divinity (M.Div.); the Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.); and the Doctor of Ministry (D.M.).

He also described two certificate programs.

Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC). This twelve (12) course program is designed to prepare leaders with no prior theological training to successfully provide pastoral leadership for a congregation. CALC has several students in the PMC program.

The Faith and Life Certificate This six (6) course program is designed to provide instruction in basic Christian theological understandings and practice. It can be used as ministry preparation for short term missionaries or anyone who wants to be better equipped in the basic teachings of the Bible and Christian theology.

Free Course Offered: Rev. Stickler made an offer to all those present. ILT is offering **BT 111: Old Testament Theology and History** tuition free. This course introduces the Old Testament, giving careful consideration to matters of interpretation and examining theologically the Torah, the Writings, and the Prophets. Old Testament stories are seen against the backdrop of God's law and gospel. Tuition for the course is normally \$680.00 USD. See flyer on back page of this edition of the Lutheran Connector.

ILT on the Road to Accreditation: He announced that ILT had received candidate status with the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), 5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Ste. 130, Orlando, FL. Candidate status is a pre-accreditation status granted to those institutions that meet the ABHE Conditions of Eligibility and that possess such qualities as may provide a basis for achieving accreditation status within five years. In order to move from candidacy to accreditation, ILT is required by ABHE to have a financial reserve of \$300,000. It is their goal to have these funds on reserve by the end of our fiscal year June 30, 2017. He made an appeal for help in this fundraising campaign.

The Institute of Lutheran Theology

910 4th St Brookings, SD • www.ilt.org • 605-692-9337



Rev. Stickler also described ILT's structure, its head office, staff and onsite library. He noted that ILT's online learning model is unique. Using ADOBE Connect software, a virtual classroom is created via the internet. The class instructor and all students are connected by the cameras and microphones on each of their computers. Each participant can see all the others in the class on their computer screen and hear them. This technology allows live interactive classes, which include lectures, class discussions and student presentations. This learning model allows students from all over Canada, the US and beyond to learn together. The virtual classroom allows students to study theology without quitting jobs and uprooting families. It also allows students to serve in a congregation and study at the same time.



**INSTITUTE OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY (ILT)
WORD AT WORK WORKSHOP**



**MARTIN LUTHER
HIS LIFE & THEOLOGY**

Presented by
Reverend Jamie Stickler

**October 21, 2017
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

Cost: \$25.00 per person (discounts for couples/groups)

Host: Victory Lutheran Church



2793 Southview Dr SE, Medicine Hat AB T1B 2H1

RSVP at: 403-527-5617 or office@victorylutheran.ca

ON Faith Lutheran – Good Shepherd

LCMC Cambodia Pastor Samuel Chim

Faith Lutheran Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, both of North York, Ontario, hosted presentations by Pastor Samuel Chim.



About 40 persons attended the gathering at Good Shepherd, and about 40 attended the event at Faith. The two events were organized by Pastor Peeter Vanker. Pastor Chim's inspiring presentations described his own family's journey from Buddhism

to Christianity, and their ministry in Cambodia. He spoke of his own mission activities.

Pastor Chim is the Service Coordinator for LCMC Cambodia. He has led missions in Cambodia for 20 years, establishing 50 house Churches, 9 Congregations, and 5 major regional projects. Some of Pastor Chim's work includes establishing a floating school for 500 impoverished children, digging wells throughout the country to ensure clean water, and training pastors for mission work. LCMC Cambodia is partnering with *Awakening Lives to World Missions* (ALWM) to create mission experiences for groups and congregations in the west and to raise awareness and support for the needs of

Cambodian Christians and the Christian communities there.

Pastor Chim is a graduate of Luther Seminary, St. Paul Minnesota. He presented a breakout session at CALC's 2016 Convention in Ottawa.

CALC Ontario Cluster Gathering

Lake Scugog Retreat



Participants from 5 of the 7 CALC congregations in Ontario, gathered Friday May 5th and Saturday May 6th for a retreat and cluster meeting. Participating congregations: Faith Lutheran and Good Shepherd Lutheran, of Toronto; St. Peter's Lutheran of Sullivan; Goodwood Lutheran of Uxbridge; and St. Matthew's Lutheran of Cornwall.

About a dozen gathered late Friday afternoon at a cottage on the shores of Lake Scugog (near the village of Little Britain, located north east of Oshawa, ON). Participants settled in and then enjoyed an evening which included a hymn-sing (accompanied by Sherland Chhangur on guitar and William Patrick on Keyboards), a lovely supper and lively conversations around current events, faith, life and evangelism.



Saturday morning we were joined by about 12 additional participants for the cluster meeting. Pastor Peeter Vanker chaired the cluster meeting. Participants discussed the precipitous decline in participation by Canadian Lutheran denominations in World Missions. Congregational representatives present described their support of various international missions organizations, including Advent

Messengers of India, LCMC Cambodia and Canadian Food Grains. Congregational representatives from Faith Lutheran Church noted a strong congregational connection to Lutheran Churches in Guyana and the potential for cooperation between CALC congregations and Lutheran congregations in Guyana. The cluster appointed a committee to further study and reflect on World Missions for the purpose of offering guidance and advice to members of the cluster in their quest to support the Great Commission beyond our shores.

Pastor Paige Isaac, of Faith Lutheran Church, gave a very informative presentation on Islam, Muslims and the various strategies on evangelism and growth practiced by Muslims. He spoke of the potential for drastic change in our Canadian society if Islam continues the current vigorous rate of growth. He implored all present to look at the negative impact Muslims have had in England and Europe and to see these events as a foretaste of what may

happen in Canada. He called all Christians to earnestly reach out to Canadian Muslims with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Participants also discussed pastoral training and formation, including the work of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) and Institute of Lutheran Theology Canada Society (ILTCS). Participants also shared events they intend to observe the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

Heartfelt thanks to Sherland & Shanta Chhangur for hosting this event at their cottage. Thank you both for the time spent preparing the cottage for our arrival, for supper on Friday evening and breakfast and Lunch on Saturday. The Chhangurs' efforts made the weekend so special for all participants. We look forward to the next cluster.

Sherland Chhangur is an Elder and member of CALC's National Council.

CALC 2017 Pastors' Retreat

When: Wednesday October 18th and Thursday October 19th

Where: Greenbay Bible Camp: West Kelowna, BC

Cost: \$200.00 per Pastor and \$200.00 per spouse

Participants driving to the 2017 CALC Convention and Pastors' Retreat are asked to bring their own bedding. Bedding will be provided for those flying into the retreat. The registration fee includes accommodations for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday night; breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for Wednesday and Thursday. This fee assumes double occupancy and additional charge of \$150.00 is required for a room occupied by one person.



This year's presenter is Pastor Scott Suskovic. In addition to serving as a member of a ministry team at Christ Lutheran Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, he is a published author and conference speaker. Topics to be covered.

- **Learned Behavior vs Spiritual Gift?** (Who are you modeling?)
- **Sermon Series vs. Lectionary**
- **Preparing Your Advent Sermons** (Looking at the Advent Text and preparing a four part series)
- **Crafting the Sermon: Driving the Point Home** (Words, Objects, Screens, Music, Devotions, Bulletin.
- **Traditional and Contemporary Worship.**
- **Help! I Don't Wear Untucked Plaid Shirts, I Don't Have a Tattoo, I Don't Have Facial Hair and I'm Over 50.** (Is There Any Hope For My Mainstream Denomination in a Post Modern World?)

Pastor Scott has served as senior pastor of Christ Lutheran since 1998. His primary role is preaching, teaching, visioning, and overseeing the staff. Scott grew up in Minnesota where he earned his Master's degree at Luther Seminary. He completed his Doctorate at Boston University. Outside of Christ Lutheran, Scott has served as Chair for the Senior Pastors' Conference of the ELCA and currently is on the board for The Smiles Foundation doing work in Romania and Augsburg/Fortress Publishing House. Pastor Scott is married to Gretchen and they have two adult children, Hannah and Nathan. He enjoys golf, sailing and travel.

CALC 2017 Annual General Convention

Grace Lutheran Church – West Kelowna, BC

October 20th to 22nd

Friday October 20th Morning Learning Event
Keynote Speaker Reverend John H.G. Rasmussen



Luther's Small Catechism

*Luther's Great Gift
To the Church*

Rev. Rasmussen is a permanent faculty member of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). He currently teaches Homiletics in ILT's Graduate program as well as Systematics, Confessions, Catechetics, and Homiletics in ILT's Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC) program.

Rev. Rasmussen has served 39 years in the pastoral ministry, both in congregational ministry and as a chaplain in the United States Army during which he served two twelve-month combat deployments.

He served as Chair of the Doctrine and Church Relations Committee of the Augsburg Lutheran Churches (ALC) from 2001-2006. He is currently rostered with the ALC and with the Lutheran Church in North America (NALC).

Rev. Rasmussen earned his B.A. from Luther College in 1973, his M.Div. from Luther Theological Seminary in 1978, and his M.Th. from Luther Theological Seminary in 2007.

October 21st Afternoon Convention Address
Keynote Speaker Reverend Seth Flick



The Five Solas of the Reformation

*Sola Fide
Sola Scriptura
Sola Christus
Sola Gratia
Soli Deo Gloria*

Rev. Flick is a member of the faculty of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). He has taught Biblical Interpretation in ILT's Pastoral Ministry Certificate (PMC) program.

He currently serves as the Pastor of Discipleship for Divine Redeemer Church and School located in Heartland Wisconsin.

From July 2010 to July 2015 he served as Pastor of Outreach & Mission for Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in Riverside California.

His passions include being Christ's servant as a husband and father, preaching, playing guitar, watching movies, and relationships building.

Rev. Flick is married to Melinda. They have four sons.

Rev. Flick earned his B.A. in Pastoral Ministry/Theology · Mequon, Wisconsin in 2003, his M.Div. from Concordia Seminary of St. Louis, Missouri, in 2011.

Friday October 20th
 8:30-9:30 – Registration
 9:30-10:30 – Session 1 - Rev. Rasmussen
 10:30-11:00 – Break
 11:00-12:30 - Session 2 - Rev. Rasmussen
 12:30-1:30 – Lunch
 1:30-2:30 – Breakout Session #1
 2:30-2:45 – Break
 2:45-3:45 - Breakout Session #2

 7:00 PM Opening Worship and Graduation Ceremony for Pastor John Graham M-Div, granted by ILT.

Saturday October 21st
 8:00-9:00 – Registration
 9:00-10:30 – Opening/Business Session 1
 10:30-11:00 – Break
 11:00-12:00 – Business Session 2
 12:00-1:00 – Lunch
 1:00-1:30 – Introductions
 1:30-2:30 – Keynote #1 Rev. Flick
 2:30-3:00 - Break
 3:00-4:30 – Keynote #2 Rev. Flick
 4:30 Unfinished convention business.
 6:00-8:00 Banquet & Entertainment

Sunday October 22nd
 9:00 AM – Closing Worship – Contemporary Service

 10:30 AM – Closing Worship - Traditional Service.

 Refreshments- Farewell & Godspeed

Important Convention Business:

- **Elections - National Council:** These positions are to be filled by the vote of the delegates:
 - President
 - Secretary
 - One position of Board of Trustees.
- **Office of the Diaconal Ministry:** Vote on constitutional and administrative provisions for the creation of the office.

Information on Hotels and ground transportation to follow in Summer Edition of the Connector.

"It's the Law" – Trinity Western University vs BC Law Society

By Pastor Edward Skutshek, President



CALC has had an ongoing interest in and a relationship with Trinity Western University (TWU) of Langley, BC. As you may recall, Robert "Bob" Kuhn, JD, TWU's President, gave the Keynote address for CALC's 2014 National Convention. TWU has taken steps to

establish a private Christian Law School. President Kuhn's keynote address described TWU's path to the accreditation of its law school and the roadblocks they encountered. Their saga continues.

TWU requires its students, faculty members and employees to sign a covenant which includes a promise to: "abstain from sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman." This covenant does not recognize the legitimacy of same gender marriage and bars sexually active lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals from applying for admission to TWU.

Students applying for admission to TWU's law school will have to sign the covenant to keep sexual activity within the bounds of heterosexual marriage. TWU's law school must be approved by the BC Law Society in order for its graduates to articulate, write the bar exam and practice law in BC. TWU's law school will have to be accredited by every other provincial law society in Canada.

At first the BC's Law Society approved TWU's law school. However, certain rank and file members of the Law Society demanded the approval to be rescinded. They argued that lawyers in BC are required to take an oath to "uphold the rights and freedoms of all persons according to the laws of Canada and BC." They argued that the covenant to honor marriage as between one man and one woman promotes discrimination against a protected class of citizens, namely spouses in same gender marriages. They further argued that students who embrace and uphold such discriminatory beliefs and attitudes would not promote and improve the standard of practice of lawyers in the Province of BC.

The rank and file members of the BC Law Society forced the question to a referendum of members. A majority of members of the BC Law Society voted in favor of rescinding approval of TWU's law school. The BC Law Society formally withdrew approval.

TWU sought a judicial review of the BC Law Society's actions by a chambers judge. The chambers judge set aside the BC Law Society's actions. The BC Law Society

appealed this decision to the BC Court of Appeal, the highest court in BC. The Court of Appeal dismissed the Law Society's appeal. It is important for Christians to understand how the judges of the BC appellate court came to their decision. The BC Court of Appeal's decision in the TWU case may be summarized as follows.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* ("Charter") guarantees certain rights and freedoms. The Charter grants Canadians the freedom of conscience, religion and association. The same Charter also guarantees that every individual is equal before and under Canadian laws and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

The rights and freedoms guaranteed by our Charter are not absolute. Those in authority can pass laws which place reasonable limits on those rights and freedoms as are allowed by law and can be justified in a free and democratic society. In enacting, interpreting and applying laws and statutes, those in authority in Canada are required to balance the Charter rights of Canadians as they come into conflict in any given situation.

The appellate court was required to put the rights of TWU and its students to freely associate and to practice their faith on one side of the scales of justice and the rights of LGBTQ people to be free from discrimination based on their sexual orientation on the other side of the scales. The BC Court of Appeal was called to assess the weight of the harm done to LGBTQ students by permitting TWU's restrictive covenant to stand and the harm done to TWU's students by striking down TWU's restrictive covenant. If the harm done to Christians by striking the restrictive covenant down was greater than the harm done LGBTQ people by keeping it in place, the scales tip in favor of TWU and the restriction would be declared constitutional and lawful.

The court agreed that TWU's covenant harmed LGBTQ students applying for admission as they were permanently banned from applying for admission. However, in assessing the weight of the harm to both sides, the court reasoned as follows. TWU's law school would create about 65 new seats or positions for law students each year. Existing law schools across Canada currently provide 2,500 seats or positions for law students each year. The court reasoned that when you compare the 2,500 free and unfettered law school seats available to all students to the 65 restricted law school seats, the overall impact on the civil rights of LGBTQ students is small. The court even

argued that TWU's 65 seats will take selected students (evangelical Christians) out of the pool for the existing 2,500 seats, resulting in more options for all students.

TWU's law program remains accredited by the BC Law Society. The Law Society vowed to launch an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). The SCC will hear the BC Law Society's appeal and an appeal by TWU of a decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal declaring the marriage covenant unconstitutional. The hearing of both appeals will likely occur late this year or early in 2018.

There is no guarantee that the SCC will balance the rights of TWU and its students to practice their faith and the rights of LGBTQ to be free from discrimination in the same way the BC Court of Appeal balanced those rights. The SCC may well tip the balance in favor of LGBTQ students. Canada's highest court could argue that TWU's restrictive covenant cannot be justified on the following grounds: it is at odds with Canada's national interests; it is at odds with our desire to be a free, open, inclusive and tolerant nation; it is at odds with standards all other Canadian law schools must follow; and it can be harmful to LGBTQ people.

The SCC could argue that our Canadian government has openly opposed systematic discrimination by foreign governments against their citizens based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability. The BC Law Society functions as an arm of the provincial government. Accreditation of TWU's Law School represents endorsement by an arm of a provincial government of an act of discrimination which the government of Canada opposes most vigorously internationally. TWU would freely practice in Canada what our government harshly condemns in other nations. The SCC could conclude that Canada's integrity internationally, outweighs, the right of TWU and its students to practice their faith and freely associate and declare TWU's covenant unconstitutional on that basis.

The SCC could argue that TWU is applying for a public benefit, namely, government accreditation of their law school. This government accreditation allows TWU's law school to operate in the field of public education. The school will be training students for a profession which is sworn to protect the rights and freedoms of all Canadians. If TWU receives a public benefit and seeks to serve a public interest, they should have to adhere to the same rules as all the other law schools in Canada who have applied for and received the same benefit. All other law schools are expressly prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. TWU must be held to the same standard as all other law schools. The SCC could

order TWU to remove the offending covenant or lose their accreditation by the BC Law Society.

Social scientists retained by the BC Law Society testified that while LGBTQ persons have legally protected rights, they still often experience a lack of family support, are vulnerable to harassment, violence, negative social attitudes, and diminished opportunities for employment and careers. The BC Law Society introduced other expert testimony which concluded that enforcement of a policy of exclusion like TWU's restrictive covenant reproduces the conditions that have in the past led to an overabundance of anxiety disorders, depression and suicide and among LGBTQ people. The BC Law Society engaged the Dr. Ellen Faulkner, a Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the College of New Caledonia for an expert opinion. She is an expert in the field of discrimination and the harm caused by it to LGBTQ people. She was asked to consider the potential adverse effects on LGBTQ students if they were to sign the TWU covenant. She testified that "this would push gay and lesbian people 'back into the closet' because of limited law school spaces and that they might be forced to 'live a lie' in order to obtain a degree." She likened signing the Covenant to self-censorship by LGBTQ people. They would be forced to hide relationships legally sanctioned in Canada. Signing the covenant could require LGBTQ people to isolate themselves. She contended that TWU's covenant "re-pathologizes" homosexual identity and may be considered homophobic. This expert testimony may provide the basis for concluding that TWU's covenant could be seen as affirming all of our culture's anti-LGBTQ attitudes and therefore not justified in our modern Canadian society.

As Christians we are called to intercede for TWU and pray for God's intervention in this case. We are called to pray for TWU's legal team, that God would give them the wisdom, discernment and words required to prevail in this case. We are also called to pray for the legal teams opposing TWU, that God would soften their hearts and that they would turn to Him. We are called to pray for the Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada that God would soften their hearts and He give them the wisdom and discernment necessary to render a decision that reflects God's supremacy and the rule of law.

TWU's legal bills will be significant. If you are moved to support TWU financially, cheques should be made out to "Trinity Western University" with "legal defense" in the memo section and sent to: Trinity Western University Development Office 7600 Glover Rd., Langley BC V2Y 1Y1. For online donations go to: www1.twu.ca/giving/donate.

Congregational Vacancies



**WANTED:
Full-time
Pastor**

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 20076

32420 7th Avenue

Mission, BC - V2V 7P8

Address inquiries and/or direct resumes to

President of CALC: Pr. Ed Skutshek

Email: president@calc.ca OR phone: (250) 801-3860



**Seeking a
Fulltime Pastor**

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

815 Renfrew Street, Kamloops, BC, V2B 3X3 (250) 376-8323

Address inquiries and/or direct resumes, applications and other documents to:

Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)

c/o: Pastor Edward Skutshek, President

Email: president@calc.ca Telephone: (250) 801-3860

Mail: 1162 Hudson Road, West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3

CC: You may also cc Dennis Kujat with documentation at: standrewslutheran@telus.net

CALC's Nominating Committee

The delegates to CALC's 2016 National Convention made a motion for the appointment of a Nominating Committee for the 2017 Annual General Convention. The Nominating Committee was to be appointed by our National Council. Three of the committee's members were to be appointed from our National Council and three members from CALC's membership. The following were appointed by our National Council at our January 28th meeting:

Appointees from CALC's National Council:

- **Pastor Peeter Vanker**, Elder, Goodwood Lutheran Church, Uxbridge, ON.
- **Sherland Chhangur**, Elder, Faith Lutheran, North York, ON.
- **Tim Bauer**, Trustee, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Cochrane, AB.

Appointees from CALC's Membership:

- **Bernard Cheng**, Vancouver Chinese Lutheran Church, Burnaby, BC.
- **Pastor Harry Huff**, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Sullivan, ON.
- **Pastor Manfred Schmidt**, Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church, Vancouver, BC.

The terms of the following members of the National Council expire at our Annual General Convention October 20-22, 2017. It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to recognize and seek qualified nominees for these positions.

- **Pastor Ed Skutshek**, President
- **Vivien Georgeson**, Secretary
- **Everley Lutz**, Trustee

Bylaw 5 of CALC's Bylaws provides:

1. At least four months prior to the General Convention, Member Congregations shall be notified of vacancies to be filled.
2. Each Member Congregation shall be encouraged to present to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee names and qualifications of consenting candidates for election.

Information on the vacant positions to be filled:

The President

The President has the following authority and responsibility:

- Serve as the spiritual leader of our Association.
- Represent CALC in relations with other church bodies and secular authorities.
- Uphold CALC's Constitution and Bylaws.

- Provide for the effective administration of our Association.
- Chair CALC's National Convention, meetings of the National Council and the Board of Elders.
- Intervene in conflict situations in congregations.

The Secretary

The Secretary shall have the following authority and responsibility:

- To give notice of meetings of the Association and BOE.
- To keep minutes of all meetings of CALC, National Council and Board of Elders.
- Have custody of all records (excluding the Treasurer's records).
- Have custody of the common seal of the Association.

The Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees (BOT) has the following authority and responsibility:

- Purchase or otherwise acquire title to real estate.
- Borrow money (must be approved by congregations).
- Invest and manage investment funds of our Association. Prepare a budget and monitor spending.
- Review the financial condition, policies, practices, and operations of all components of this Association.
- Appoint auditors, prepare job descriptions and recommend remuneration for officers and other employees.

National Council normally meets twice a year (January & September) face to face at a meeting room in the Delta Hotel at the Calgary International Airport in Calgary, Alberta. The Board of Elders and the Board of Trustees meet separately during the National Council meeting. The meeting typically is held on a Saturday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. CALC reimburses participants for the cost of travel to and from these meetings. CALC's executive (President, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President) are required to attend our National Convention. Other National Council members may attend. Costs of travel to and from the convention and accommodations are reimbursed by CALC.

Nominating Procedures:

1. Obtain a nomination form and biographical statement. To request these forms send an email to our Secretary: secretary@calc.ca or mail the request to CALC- Attn: Secretary, 1162 Hudson Road, West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3.
2. Fill out and sign the nominating form and biographical statement as directed and mail the same to our secretary at the address provided above. The Secretary will forward all forms in confidence to the Nominating Committee.

Ready For Use in the Parish

40 DAYS OF DISCERNMENT



Wrestling with God's Call to Become a Shepherd

By Rick Bergh, M. Div.

CALC's mission includes partnering with our member congregations in identifying, training, mentoring and disciplining pastors for our congregations. To this end we have established the "Shepherd's Pathway to Ministry."

Our existing pastors and our congregations are called to "seek out and encourage qualified persons to prepare for the ministry of the Gospel and strive to extend the Kingdom of God in the community, at home and abroad."

Our delegates to CALC's 2016 Convention authorized National Council to commission Pastor Rick Bergh, M. Div., to prepare a workbook which will help a candidate discern whether God is calling him or her into the pastoral ministry.

The candidate examines, through a series of 40 devotional readings, the important qualities of a shepherd by first looking at what it means to have the 'heart of a pastor'. Each candidate will identify through God's Word, God's people, family, and friends what the "heart attributes" of a servant leader are and more precisely, how this will guide his/her role as a shepherd.

A PDF file of this program has been sent to all pastors in CALC. To request a PDF of the 40 Days of Discernment program, send an email to our President: president@calc.ca or mail the request to CALC- Attn: President, 1162 Hudson Road, West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3.

Martin Luther's Small Catechism



This Catechism is printed in celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, 1517-2017, by the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)

CALC's Board of Elders has commissioned the printing of 2,000 pocket sized (5.25 x 3.75 inches) Small Catechisms. The cover page is depicted above. The cover contains the following inscription: "This Catechism is printed in celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, 1517-2017, by the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)." They are available at the cost of \$2.00 per catechism. Congregations have already pre-purchased 950 copies.

To purchase copies of the commemorative Small Catechism send an email, specifying the number to be purchased, to our President: president@calc.ca or mail the request to CALC- Attn: President, 1162 Hudson Road, West Kelowna, BC, V1Z 1J3.

CALC PRESIDENT'S TRAVEL ITINERARY

June 3-4 Pastor Olaf Latzel, Keynote Speaker at CALC's 2016 Annual General Convention has extended an invitation to Pastor Ed, to speak at a conference which will be hosted at his church in Bremen Germany on Pentecost weekend 2017. Pastor Ed has been asked to prepare two lectures (each one hour). He was also asked to give a ten minute Biblical greeting on Sunday morning during worship.

LCMC Convention – Minneapolis, Minnesota, Pastor Ed will attend October 8-11.

CALC Convention – Pastor Ed will chair October 20-22.

Interpreting and Understanding Biblical Authority

By Sherland Chhangur

The authority of scripture, the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ, is inseparable from the historical reality of the events recorded in it, where scripture interprets scripture and addresses us with full divine authority of the Bible as the inspired and infallible word of God.

In Matthew 8:5-13, the story of a Roman centurion who came to Jesus, his servant was paralyzed, he doesn't ask Jesus to heal his servant directly but he just says "Lord, my young servant lies in bed and in terrible pain". Jesus responded, "I will come and heal him". I love the fact that Jesus is always willing to come. But the officer said "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come to my home", he wasn't saying that his servant was not worthy of his presence, in fact he said I am not worthy, this is humbling coming from a Roman centurion to a Jew. This indicates that he had already come to faith in Christ, and that he had already placed himself under the authority of Jesus' command. This man knew authority when he heard it. The Roman centurion says "just say the word from where you are and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superiors and I have authority over my soldiers, I only need to say go and they go, and come and they come, I say to my slaves do this and they do it". You see this man knew about authority, the Gospel is about coming under the authority of God by believing in Christ. We neglect that thought sometimes. But what it is saying to us is to come under God's authority and allow him to rule our lives. Paul says in Romans 12:3, "I give each of you this warning, don't think that you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourself, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given you". The Roman officer wasn't trying to impress Jesus, he was genuinely concern for his servant, Philippians 3:2-4 "Don't be selfish, don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves, don't look out for your interest, but take an interest in others too". The centurion showed incredible faith in Jesus' authority. Jesus was amazed at his faith which was not found in all of Israel. So when my belief and his authority collide does this mean that I can believe for others to be healed even if they don't have the faith. It seems to say to me; does it to you? But more importantly is who I have faith in JESUS WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO HEAL.

We tend to question or defy authority because we believe that it is our inalienable constitutional right. We resist the concept of authority, we don't like to submit to anyone. When it comes to the church, most do not view it as a

place where you submit to the leadership for the purpose of growth and accountability. But rather, as a store where you shop as a consumer. If you don't like what you hear or see, you go somewhere else. Pastors who are proclaiming the word of God according to the Bible teachings may offend or upset the customers about their consumer view of the church. The idea of spiritual authority or proclaiming "thus says the Lord" seems odd and out of place. On the other hand the idea of spiritual authority scares us because of wacko cult leaders like Jim Jones who killed over 900 followers in Guyana who blindly followed him. What about authoritarian Pastors who claim they are the Lord's anointed and that they are beyond reproach even if they engage in sinful or unbiblical practices? They label anyone who speaks out as divisive or contentious. But they misunderstand true Biblical authority.

I would like to explore and list for your perusal ten statements about authority and in particular biblical authority based on various biblical passages such as Titus 2:15 NRSV "Declare these things, exhort and reprove with all authority". In other words our charge is for us to teach these things and encourage the believers to do them. We have the authority to correct them when necessary and "let no one disregard you" because by disregarding the preacher, they are disregarding the word. In reality they are not in submission to God, they are in fact dodging the serious implications of God's word by attacking God's messenger. Some Biblical passages exemplify this authority: "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17;NRSV). "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21; NIV).

My purpose is to help you understand this important concept so that you will submit all of your life to God who is the ultimate authority and reap the blessings that come from a life of submission to him.

1. Authority begins with God for there is no authority except from God (Romans 13:1) Jesus was asked by whose authorization he taught (Matthew 21:23). He was granted authority from God the father (John 10:18).

2. All authority on earth is delegated authority from God to obey He who is sovereign - having supreme authority, control and power over everyone and all things. This means that no person, no matter what office he holds is above rebuke if he strays from the ultimate authority from

God's word. Daniel confronted Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar about their sins. John the Baptist confronted Herod about his sins of taking his brother's wife. Pastors and elders need to be obedient to God's word and to conduct themselves properly and to be examples to the flock, in order to be in a position to exercise Biblical authority in the local church. Those under delegated authority are accountable to God.

3. All authority is crafted for our blessing and protection, so, when authority is abused it hurts those under authority. In such cases God ultimately will judge the abuser. But when it is exercised properly authority blesses and protects those under it. Authority is never to be used for the advantage of the one in authority.

4. God entrusts authority in a plurality of people in the local church level. A plurality of elders over a single church is God's way of protecting the church against the abuses of authority. This can only be done through Biblically based discussions to determine how the Lord in their midst wishes to run His church and to uphold God's standards of holiness and sound doctrines, to teach, reprove and/or reproach.

5. Authority refers to power, ability or capability to complete an action. Jesus was given the authority to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6-8) and to drive out spirits (Mark 6:7) and to heal and raise the dead. On the other hand Satan has authority to function within the parameters established by God (Acts 26:18).

6. Authority does not suggest or confer superiority over others. Christ is the head of every man and man is the head of woman and God is the head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3). The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal as persons in their eternal deity, but to carry out the divine plan of redemption, the Son submitted to the Father and the Spirit submitted to the Son but the Son and the Spirit are equally God along with the Father (the Triune God)

7. Authority is about being responsible and accountable. The key concept of delegated authority is not that I am the boss, but, rather, I am responsible and accountable to the ultimate authority which should bring fear and trembling into the hearts of everyone in authority. We have to give an account to God who entrusts positions of authority to us. If you use authority to work to accomplish the Lord's will and at the same time blessing and protecting those under your charge, you will be rewarded (Luke 12 and 20). If a church refuses to follow God's word, each member will answer to God, as would the elders and the pastor. Also if a man allows his family to drift away from the Lord then he is responsible along with the rebelling parties. One of the main problems in Christian

homes today is that in many households husbands are spiritually passive while the wife excels in Biblical knowledge and spiritual maturity.

8. Authority is about one's character and not so much about rank or status. When Paul tells Titus, "let no man disregard you," he did not mean that Titus was to assert his authority by letting people know that they couldn't push him around. Paul called Titus be such an example of godliness and good deeds that people would not be able to disregard his message because they knew that his life backed it up (Titus 2:7-8). It was the same with Timothy: "Let no one look down on your youthfulness." (1 Timothy 4:12) How was Timothy to do that? Was he to let people know that he had authority because Paul had put him in charge? No, but rather in speech, conduct, faith and purity, he was to show himself as an example to those who believe. Thus character is the primary thing in authority, because a Godly authority commands respect and a man with respect has authority.

9. Authority is signified in the established spheres of authority in the world: the various levels of Government, leaders, rulers, Kings (Queens). Each has their sphere of influence; but Christ has been placed above all realms of authority (Ephesians 1:21).

10. Authority is exemplified in the local church through teaching, connecting and correcting with God's word. Sometimes the elders must take correction to the level of church discipline, where the church must submit to the discipline by breaking fellowship with the sinning member (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Luther calls us the priesthood of believers and together with pastors and elders and as people of God we must teach the word of God with all authority. When the Bible clearly commands something, the preacher must not dodge the command or teach it as a helpful hint for happy living. It is the work of the living God and it must be preached as His commandment, not as an opinion or option that you may want to consider. Both the preacher and the congregation are under the same authority of the word. We all must obey God's word.

May we all take to heart the teaching of God's word about biblical authority. He is the supreme authority and we need to make sure that our hearts are humbly in submission to him.

Sherland Chhangur is a member of CALC's National Council. He is a member of the Board of Elders. He is currently enrolled in the Pastoral Ministry Certificate program offered by the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT). He is a realtor and mortgage broker. He is married to Shanta and they live in Woodbridge, ON.

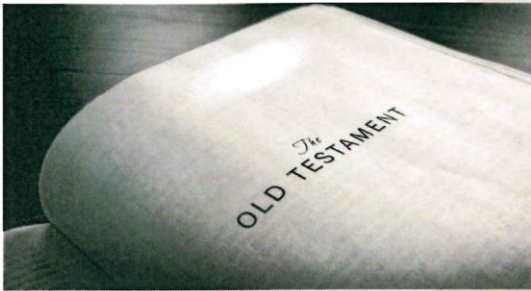


Institute of
Lutheran
Theology

!!! FREE !!! ONLINE BIBLE COURSE

THE INSTITUTE OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

is a Christian faith community, seminary and graduate school that rigorously equips faithful pastors, teachers and lay people to effectively proclaim the gospel and serve Christ's church throughout the world.



BT111 OT THEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Our gift to you, with a donation of \$25 or more. Simply complete the form, detach and send it to:

ILT
% BT111
910 Fourth Street
Brookings, SD 57006

For more information please contact Pastor Jamie Strickler by phone at 605.651.0689 or via email at jstrickler@ilt.org

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

CONGREGATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

GIFT AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$10 _____ \$15 _____ \$25 _____ OTHER _____

CHECK ENCLOSED _____ CREDIT CARD _____

*CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____

*CARD VERIFICATION (CVV) _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

RECURRING DONATION (yes or no) _____

DAY OF RECURRENCE (day of the month) _____

910 4th Street | Brookings, SD 57006 | 605.692.937 | www.ilt.org

