



Living our Faith

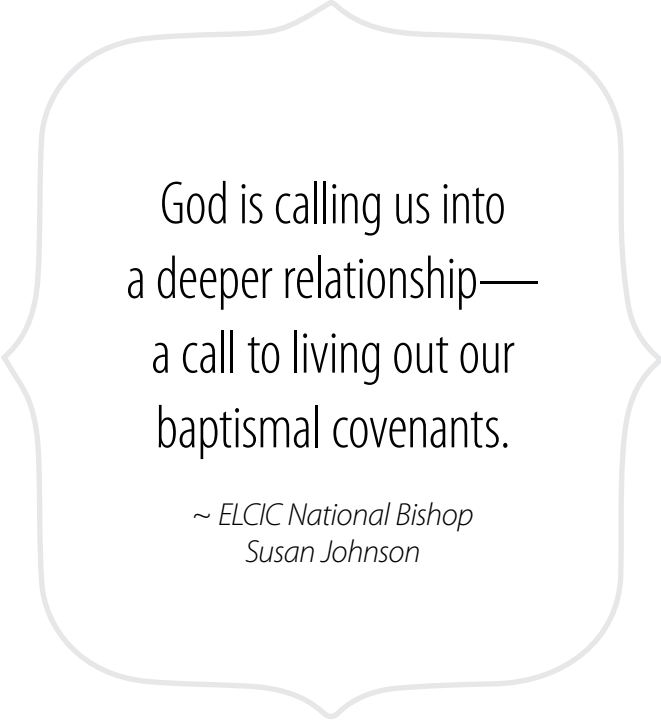
In Mission for Others

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ELCIC

*In Mission
for Others*



God is calling us into
a deeper relationship—
a call to living out our
baptismal covenants.

*~ ELCIC National Bishop
Susan Johnson*

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Photos by Carter Brooks, Peter Scoular, David Solheim,

Photos from the 2019 ELCIC National Convention.

On the cover, from top left: A sweat lodge at the Sandy-Salteaux Spiritual Centre near Beausejour, MB; *photo by Monica Bortoluzzi*. Neighbourhood park clean-up by members at St. Peter's Ottawa; *photo by Rev. Elina Salonen*. Ninety-year-old Shirley Holcomb from St. David Anglican-Lutheran church in Orillia, ON, organized a donation cross in the community garden for mittens, toques, scarves and socks; *photo by Ainsley Munro*. Seven-year-old Lillian gets high fives after her baptism at Trinity, New Hamburg, ON; *photo by Dave Mello*.



National Bishop Susan C. Johnson

Message from the National Bishop

Dear members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

I am delighted to share with you the 2019 Annual Report. I know it is almost unreal to look back on a year that took place before the COVID-19 pandemic.

St. Paul wrote: *For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.* (Romans 12: 4–5)

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada we work together as one body, with each of the expressions of the church—congregation or synodically recognized ministry, synod, and national—fulfilling a different function. We work together to fulfill our vision of being a church *In Mission for Others*. At the same time we function with and within other parts of the body of Christ, for example partners like the Lutheran World Federation, KAIROS, our full communion partner the Anglican Church of Canada, and as part of the universal church.

I love our church, and I'm proud of the ministry we do throughout the church. I know that the impact of our ministry together is greater than the sum of our separate parts.

I hope that this report will provide insight on the work of our church and a vision for how we can respond together to the call to be a church *In Mission for Others*.

ELCIC National Bishop Susan C. Johnson



Photos courtesy of National Bishop Susan Johnson.



ELCIC Mission Statement

The mission of this church, as an expression of the universal Church and as an instrument of the Holy Spirit, is to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to people in Canada and around the world through the proclamation of the Word, the administration of the sacraments and through service in Christ's name.

Our Vision Priorities

In September 2017, the ELCIC's National Church Council began the work of developing a new *Strategic Plan* for the National Church. This five-year plan helps us to focus our work at the National Office.

COURAGEOUS INNOVATION



We are called to not be afraid.
(Luke 12:32)

- Addressing systemic change
- Innovative interaction with the community
- Encourage experimentation
- Accompaniment
- Acknowledge our anxiety
- Flexibility in sharing and deploying financial resources
- Ongoing evaluation of mission priorities
- Ongoing evaluation of barriers to innovation

RECONCILED RELATIONSHIPS



We are given the ministry to reconciliation.
(2 Corinthians 5:18)

- Vision of an inclusive church
- Indigenous justice and reconciliation
- Ecumenical and interfaith partnerships
- Challengers of racism and privilege
- Work with diverse allies
- Healthy relationship with the earth
- Striving for peace
- Work to end poverty in Canada

ONE BODY WORKING TOGETHER



We are one body in Christ.
(Romans 12:5)

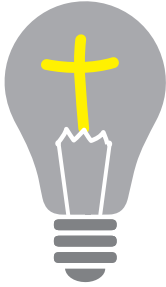
- Shared vision across all expressions of the church
- Mutual credibility, trust and transparency
- Sharing of necessary resources
- National and international partnerships
- Connectedness to local ministries
- Support CLWR's mission
- Mutual support between synods and National Church
- Focused priorities
- Good communication

EMPOWERED DISCIPLES



We are to equip the saints for the work of ministry.
(Ephesians 4:12)

- Faithful gospel witnesses
- Baptismal vocation
- Leadership development for a changing world
- Engaged and empowered youth and young adults
- Worship that nurtures disciples



How to “right-size” your church

It takes courage, vision and trust.

Stemming from its root verse “We are called to not be afraid” (Luke 12:32), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)’s vision priority of “Courageous Innovation” has been demonstrated by various ELCIC members and con-

gregations, first lifting up the priority in the ELCIC’s *National Office 2017–2022 Strategic Plan*. One such occurrence dates back a number of months—years even—to two congregations situated in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

“I see signs of Courageous Innovation all across our church,” said National Bishop Susan Johnson during her *Report of the National Bishop* at the 2019 ELCIC National Convention in Regina, SK. “Much like in Medicine Hat, where Unity Lutheran and the Evangelical Free Church swapped church buildings. It makes perfect sense to ‘right size’ your church building, to the size of your congregation. But I know how deeply attached people become to church buildings. It took courage, vision and trust to go ahead with these plans.”

The two Medicine Hat-based churches teamed up in an effort to cater to the needs of their re-



Photo by Mike Steiner

The old building...

Portable food pantry a hit

In autumn of 2018, a simple wooden cross was erected outside St. Paul's, Leamington, ON. This warming cross had many hooks on it so warm things could be attached; scarves, hats, gloves and especially work socks were very popular. Neighbours were invited to add items as well. At least twice a week open hooks were filled with new or gently used items.

In the spring of 2019, two newspaper cabinets with self-closing doors were converted into a food pantry and were soon standing by the cross. They were stocked with food items to help meet the needs of an increasing number of homeless or anyone in need.

The pantry was initially stocked solely by the congregation. When a banner was put in front of the cross inviting others to share, within 48 hours four large containers were crammed full with food and canned goods. When asked for advice for other congregations looking for ways to help, Pastor Sylvia Swiatoschik says to just step out and try new things. "The congregation was a bit apprehensive at first, but now see how many people are helped and also, how many of our neighbours want to help, and our projects provide and invite them into participating.

COURAGEOUS
INNOVATION



Photo by Marilyn Miller.

St. Paul's food pantry and warming cross.

spective congregations. The smaller community of Unity Lutheran left its building of 23 years to relocate down the road into the former site of the Evangelical Free Church, in a move that Rev. Jeff Decelle says happened very quickly.

"We had met with the other congregation only in November, and the move actually happened the following January," Rev. Decelle says. "We had been on a discernment process for quite a while in determining what to do with a building that we couldn't really afford anymore. Interestingly, roughly two years before this, we had actually

first met the Evangelical Free Church, who at that point said that they were interested in looking for a bigger space and possibly trading buildings. Although at that point we weren't really interested in pursuing the conversation, a year-and-a-half later we decided to call them up and see if they were still interested. It all fell into place quite quickly after that."

Having been worshipping in a rather new church building since 1996, some members of Unity Lutheran were a touch reluctant to pack up and move, however, the overall process went

without a hitch, according to Rev. Decelle.

"You have to remember that our old church building was really only like 20 years old at the time of the move," Rev. Decelle says. "So many of the people who were responsible for the building project and the design are still members of our congregation. I think it was very courageous for them to put all of this effort into building the old church building with all of their dreams invested into it, and then down the road to see the future of their congregation no longer tied to that particular building. I think that because this idea came at the end of a rather lengthy budgeting process, people were really on board when the time came."

Rev. Decelle, who has served Unity Lutheran since 2014, was the only pastor involved in the relocation process, as the Evangelical Free Church was

without a leader at the time of the move. Remembering back to many congregational discernment sessions, he knows that things could have gone much differently if the church members had not been on board with the project the way they were.

"Despite not having a pastor at the time of this process, those at the Evangelical Free Church were very pleasant to deal with," Rev. Decelle reflects. "Obviously, we had a lawyer involved for the legal aspect of the move, but we were also quite active with their lay leaders and they were really great to work with. There have actually even been talks about maybe getting together for a supper with their congregation after we had kind of settled in."

Now, situated roughly 10–15 city blocks away from the church building officially known as the



Photo by Mike Steiner.

...and the new building.

Evangelical Free Church of Medicine Hat, Unity Lutheran continues to thrive within the same neighbourhood with which it planted its roots many years ago.

“In some ways it could have been a tragic story,” Rev. Decelle says. “In a sense, all of these former dreams were unfulfilled and we were forced to downsize into a smaller space. But in many ways,

it was just kind of ‘right sizing’. And in many other ways it has allowed us the possibility of future ministry to open up for people in ways that were just completely invested in the building before. When people feel as though they are making the decision, or in this case, when God is leading them in a certain direction, it is a much easier situation than being forced into something.” 📺



COURAGEOUS
INNOVATION

A vision of ministry

Television is more than a communication medium. It’s about hope and heart and story. “And wow, does our church have a great story to tell,” says the St. Peter’s leadership team.

For more than half a century, thanks to a great cloud of witnesses and supporters, St. Peter’s, Kitchener, Ont., has been doing just that.

The St. Peter’s community is buoyed by the connection they are making with viewers from coast to coast to coast. Almost every day, St. Peter’s receives emails, calls and letters from people across the country who have been transformed by a message of hope and who share the impact of the television ministry in their lives:

It takes a dedicated team to put together a polished, professional broadcast. Regardless of the demographics, the television audience is diverse, powerful and engaged.

The ministry is invested in through viewer donations, the St. Peter’s community, Lutheran



PHOTO BY ANDREW HEUBNER.

Camerman Brody comes in for a close up.

congregations who have augmented their own ministries with the broadcast, the Eastern Synod, select businesses and bequests.

“To honour these investments, and because people matter, St. Peter’s is committed to continually learning, evaluating and keeping the television ministry creatively fluid in order to offer an exceptional broadcast and make effective connections with viewers,” says Rev. Mark Ehlebracht, pastor of St. Peter’s.

“This now sought-after broadcast has led to wonderful partnerships between St. Peter’s and local secondary schools, organizations and non-profits that do invaluable work and St. Peter’s gives thanks for being able to give back to the amazing communities that it serves.”



KAIROS Church Leaders Delegation to Palestine and Israel

Partnerships enable the ELCIC to be active in many areas of justice issues.

In November of 2019, ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson—alongside ACC’s Rev. Rosalyn Kantlant’am Elm—co-chaired the delegation including settlers, newcomers and Indigenous persons for an 11-day KAIROS Church Leaders Delegation to Palestine and Israel. Traveling throughout the regions of Bethlehem, Gaza, Jericho, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Ramallah, Tel Aviv and Tiberias, delegates explored the landscape, spoke with religious and political leaders, visited various community project zones and met with local women’s groups, all while aiming to help build and strengthen the ecumenical relationship with partners overseas.

Traveling alongside Bishop Johnson, Rev. Kantlant’am Elm and KAIROS Executive Director Jennifer Henry were delegates from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Primate’s World Relief

and Development Fund, the Religious Society of Friends, the Canadian Religious Conference and the United Church of Canada. Hosted by KAIROS, delegates returned home to Canada committing to advocacy and education in sharing what they had seen and learned in the form of a report of recommendations to the Canadian government.

“The focus of the trip was on gender justice and building communities for peace with KAIROS,” Bishop Johnson says. “I’ve been in that region many times, almost always to visit our partner church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. That has given me some familiarity with their ministries and with many other issues that are centered around the ongoing tension between Israel and Palestine, but to go with KAIROS while focusing on this specific mission for the trip was very different for me.”



Participants of the KAIROS Church Leaders Delegation to Palestine and Israel.

Having now seen the multiple forms of female oppression in Palestine, the high occurrences of Israeli-led, solitary confinement of child detainees, as well as the tragic devastation of Gaza first-handedly, Bishop Johnson and fellow delegates are committed to sharing the stories of the many microaggressions of those living in Palestine under Israeli control.

"I really saw different aspects of the country and the kind of work that our church is doing through KAIROS and its partners," Bishop Johnson says. "It really helped me hone in on the specific challenges that are faced by so many; it made me look at the situation with new eyes, which was very painful, but also very hopeful. We saw the resilience and the faithfulness of all these women, whether Christian or Muslim, and we met with

Jewish organizations working for peace. It was so enlightening seeing people committed to peace with justice while continuing to live in hope, despite the tension and conflict that has gone on for over 50 years."

Having been in partnership with KAIROS since its formation in July of 2001, the ELCIC continues to find ways to work together on themes of justice and peace, Indigenous rights, gender justice, peacebuilding and human rights. The long-standing relationship with KAIROS is one in which



Full delegation at Wi'am with director, Zoughbi Zoughbi.



Archbishop Attallah Hanna, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem; The Rev. Rosalyn Kantlant'an Elm, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Huron, priest for the Parish of Six Nations; ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson; Jennifer Henry, Executive Director, KAIROS.

Bishop Johnson continues to see exceptional growth.

"Whether that is focused on poverty in Africa or in relation to corporate responsibility in Canada, KAIROS is working around several broad themes with which we associate," says Bishop Johnson. "The work that they do, and that we do together

with other church partners helps us gain expertise and work more intensely in areas that we wouldn't be able to do on our own. We are always able to accomplish more when we work with our partners, and KAIROS is one of our highly-valued partners."

Since returning, Bishop Johnson has turned her attention to advocacy work in raising the awareness of the Canadian government in relation to the treatment of youth detainees, while also advocating for the need to break the blockade in Gaza and help those living in intolerable poverty. As highlighted in the *2019 Delegation Report* (https://www.kairoscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KAIROS_PalestineAndIsrael_Delegation_Final_Report.pdf) a host of recommendations have been made by delegates in hopes that Canadian leadership will help with the implementation of new policy, assist financially with the various socio-economic challenges and continue to raise awareness of the issues faced in Palestine and Israel daily. 📄



RECONCILED
RELATIONSHIPS

Stolen sisters remembered

Violence and murder are a significant reality for many Indigenous women and children in B.C. and across Canada. Church of the Cross and Grace in Victoria, have been attending the Stolen Sisters March and have done a memorial at each church in February for the last three years. Each memorial looks different, as



Photo by Barb Smart.

Stolen Sisters memorial at Grace, Victoria.

circumstances and resources dictate. On Sunday, Feb. 17, 2019, the two congregations honoured the memory of 21 B.C. First Nations women who were murdered or missing. As worship began at Church of the Cross, a red dress hung from the processional cross. Twenty-one women silently made their way from the congregation to stand in front of the communion table, each carrying a sheet of paper with the name of one of those 21 women. Their names and ages were read one by one.

At Grace, there was a memorial procession at the end of worship with a woman's red dress covered in a traditional wrap carried on the processional cross. A red carnation was given to each woman of the congregation.

In both congregations, prayers were offered for loved ones and asking for help to walk together.

Looking back, moving forward

Why do Indigenous Peoples occupy only one-half of one per cent of the land in Canada? Why is systemic racism against Indigenous people so prevalent? Why are Indigenous people often refused service in restaurants, hotels and elsewhere?

These are just some of the disturbing questions pondered by the 60 people who attended the reconciliation event from Jan. 25–26, 2019, at Hope, Nanaimo. “Looking Back, Moving Forward: A Journey Toward Reconciliation” grew out of Men’s Breakfast Group discussions after retired lawyer Dan Mulligan researched treaty law on Vancouver Island. The men reeled at the injustices.

Tim Stime, a group member, suggested hosting a reconciliation event as a way of following through on Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action. Tim and Vivien Stime co-convened the event, as experienced animateurs with My People, part of the Indigenous Pathways family of ministries. Building on the experiential learning of the

Friday Blanket Exercise, the Saturday session gave Indigenous leaders a platform to share their humanity, their struggles, fears and dreams with the non-Indigenous community that surrounds and dominates them.

It gave settler-colonizers a chance to understand our common history from a different perspective than what we learned in school and through other western institutions. And it was a chance to begin to better understand an Indigenous world view and understand the Creator and creation.

Five experienced presenters led the event—Ray Aldred, Harvey Eagle, Jillian Harris, Marie Va’a and Barney Williams.

Hope is a community of the people of God seeking to answer Jesus’ call to reconciliation and wholeness in what can be an unloving, alienated and broken world. It is situated on the traditional lands of the Snuneymuxw First Nation right on Departure Bay, a place considered sacred by Coast Salish peoples.



Presenter Harvey Eagle (pictured centre with tablet) leads one of the break-out sessions.



Called to Journey Together

A vision of an inclusive church, reconciliation and interfaith relationships.

The theme of the 2019 National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada *Called to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation* lifted up the priorities of reconciled relationships.

This speaks to a vision of an inclusive church, Indigenous justice and reconciliation, and ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

At the opening service, as participants focused their attention on the baptismal font that stood at the entrance to the convention's worship and meeting space, it was most appropriate that In-

digenuous Elder Betty McKenna formally welcomed those gathered on Treaty 4 land, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Lakota and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis people, as they met in Regina, at the University of Regina, July 11–13, 2019.

In his sermon for opening worship, Rev. Dr. Martin Junge, general secretary of The Lutheran World Federation, reminded delegates that as they faced the task before them, "It is not because of who we are, and it is not because of what we do, but it is because of who God is and what God does in Christ."

Delegates approved adoption of *The Call to Faithfully Journey with those who are Dying: An ELCIC Resolution* which calls for gathering resources that will support congregations and faith communities in offering spiritual care.



**CALLED TO JOURNEY TOGETHER:
The Ministry of Reconciliation**



Photo by Peter Scouler.

Indigenous Elder Betty McKenna formally welcomed those gathered on Treaty 4 land.

National Church Council (NCC) established the task force as a result of the 2015 ELCIC National Convention motion asking for a review of the ELCIC's current policy on assisted death. The task force encouraged conversations across the church regarding the needs of people in times of death and dying, reviewing the current resolution and making recommendations.

Approval of *Reimagining Our Church—Public Ministry in the ELCIC* begins a process to live into a new and fresh vision of the ELCIC. It encourages all members to consider how best we can participate in God's mission and together imagine and build a church which is missional, diaconal and prophetic.

An immediate outcome of this motion's ap-

proval is that the ELCIC now recognizes that ordination is the rite which marks and celebrates acceptance of a first call into public ministry of a bishop, pastor or deacon. All may now be addressed as Reverend.



Photo by Trina Gallip Bank.

Viewers from six countries and 75 cities went online to watch the livestream for the 2019 Convention and it received over 650 unique pageviews.



ONE BODY
WORKING TOGETHER

Cameroon Encounter 2019

On a recent companion synod visit to Cameroon, participants met with women pastors from The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EELC), which has been ordaining women for only about seven years. They heard about women in various parts of Cameroon and the obstacles they faced. It is still expected that women be primary care-givers in families. This means that, even as they work in the church, they also work full-time in the home with little help. They also met with past and present directors of Femmes Pour Christ, an organization much like our church's former Evangelical Lutheran Women, doing good work through grassroots organizing in congregations and supporting ministries of the wider church. Through our relationship as companion synods, we accompany women in ministry and want to be supportive of their work and understanding of their struggles.



Photo courtesy of Tyler Gingrich.

Visiting with some of the women pastors of the EELC in Ngaoundere.

To show commitment to stewardship of creation, the ELCIC will encourage participation in the *ELCIC Stewardship of Creation: Greening Faith Communities* program. There is growing concern about the ecological impact of the production, consumption and disposal of many plastic products, particularly single-use plastics. Delegates passed a resolution that encourages reduced use of single-use plastic products.

The convention affirmed that a relationship of Full Communion exists among the ELCIC, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This affirmation will have full effect upon the completely of a similar action in each of our three partner churches.


"Muslim leaders and scholars have invited Christians into a process of Muslim-Christian dialogue and engagement, which is based on love of God, and love of neighbour," said Pat Lovell, a member of NCC, as the ELCIC joined other national and international Christian churches and leaders as signatories to *A Common Word between Us and You*.

This action builds on actions from the 2015 National Convention when the ELCIC adopted *Welcoming the Stranger*, and honours the ELCIC's witness to the Muslim community in our 2017 *Statement to Muslims*.

The ELCIC recognized that meeting diverse peoples and forming a truly inclusive community is a journey of discovery that will include moments of discomfort and anxiety. Delegates affirmed the ELCIC's 2011 commitment to uphold the dignity of all people. Their actions mandated the ELCIC to encourage individual members to find ways to build relationships with, and affirm respect for, diverse communities.

Speakers at National Convention explored the themes of reconciliation and journeying together through three separate presentations to convention. Their presentations are all available on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEaqcptLthDIAGCg-SFnEw5PcwasUHRpE>).

“God has blessed us, set us free, and calls us to serve those who are marginalized, to restore creation, to be reconciled with the first peoples of this land, and to understand that multi-religious neigh-

bours are actually children of God as much as we are,” said Bishop Eaton at the closing service. “And that blessing them is a way that we bless God. This is a marvelous and liberating promise. 



Delegates gather for a business session at the 2019 National Convention.

Photo by Peter Scoullar.

Visiting Myanmar

In early 2019, members from the Alberta and the Territories Synod visited The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Myanmar program. Pre- and post-colonial history, ethnic diversity (including religious differences), and evolving quasi-democratic institutions overlap to account for the complex picture that is contemporary Myanmar. The forced flight of 700,000 Rohingya in 2017 from northern Rakhine State to the no man’s land between Myanmar and Bangladesh recently catapulted Myanmar onto the world stage.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) funding to date has provided livelihood training (beauty salon kits, dressmaking training and startup supports, food making training and cooking sets, vegetable farming and inputs, crab farming training, fishing training and materials).

LWF Myanmar truly appreciates the support offered by CLWR and Global Affairs Canada, both in financial contributions and in the training provided by CLWR’s program department.

This graduate of dressmaking and tailoring training—sponsored by LWF and CLWR—has set up her own shop in her house.



ONE BODY
WORKING
TOGETHER



Photos by Margaret Sadler.



Living our Faith—Year of Prayer

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada IS a church that really knows how to pray.

Beginning in the fall months of 2019, National Bishop Susan Johnson invited all members of the ELCIC to partake in a four-year spiritual journey called ***Living our Faith—Pray, Read, Worship, Love***. Together, as one body in Christ, the church has worked its way through the first of the four years, with 2019–20 holding a collective focus on prayer.

“As the ELCIC, our hope is to learn about prayer, grow in our experience of prayer and deepen our regular prayer practice,” said Rev. Johnson during the Report of the National Bishop at the 2019 ELCIC National Convention in Regina in July.

“I hope that this will encourage all of us to feel more comfortable talking about prayer, but more importantly praying with each other. I would love for us to be known as the church that really knows how to pray.”

Bishop Johnson’s message was well received and many members of the ELCIC—both lay and clergy alike—focused on the various aspects of their respective daily prayer practices. Through weekly social media postings and ELCIC News mail-outs, simple, yet elaborate reflections from various members of the community provided new ways to think about prayer.

In the current age of vast technological advances, electronic/digital prayer has become very relatable. Smartphone push notifications featuring Bible verses of the day, online Bible studies and live-streamed worship services are now a significant part of 21st century prayer practice.

Sherry Coman, Devotional Creator/Curator of Lutherans Connect and soon-to-be Deacon for Spirituality and Internet Outreach in the Eastern

Living our FAITH

PRAY READ WORSHIP LOVE

Synod, composed an in-depth *Living our Faith* reflection which was featured online on October 16, 2019. She spoke of the importance of embracing the online prayer community, while providing many options to those looking for a daily prayer connection. To her, the *Living our Faith* initiative came at the perfect time.

"I actually helped collaborate on the introductory portion of *Living our Faith* with Bishop Susan in early January of 2019," Coman says. "We introduced the four words to the church and hinted at the possibility of more in-depth work down the road.

It was quite a profound experience for me, as I was reconnected to a call to ministry while doing work on that project. I am now nearly done in my formation to become a deacon, and will be ordained at some point soon—pending all things pandemic-related. The *Living our Faith* project served a pivotal role in my call."

Coman says that the decision to begin the four-year endeavour with a focus on prayer was



Sherry Coman



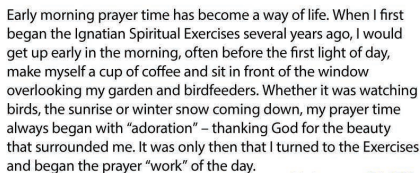
EMPOWERED DISCIPLES



Photo by Diacon Gretchen Peterson.

Diaconal ministry conference

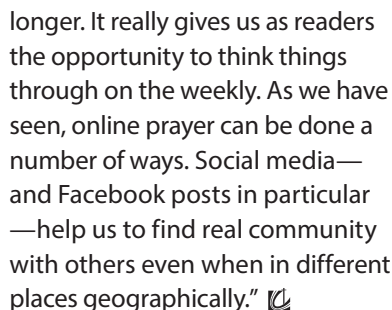
Nine deacons from the ELCIC attended the DIAKONIA of the Americas and the Caribbean Conference held in Vancouver in August. The conference theme *Respecting Covenant—Risking the Journey of Reconciliation* came to life through excellent plenary presentations on reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and learning about climate justice and global migration. There were also workshops, sightseeing, Bible studies and creative and diverse worship experiences.



Living our **FAITH**
PRAY READ WORSHIP LOVE

For me there is no one way to pray. I pray frequently but there is no set time or way that I pray. Mostly I try to find the opportunities that arise for prayer—doing the dishes, going for a walk, reading the newspaper. Sometimes the opportunity comes about during a quiet time, and sometimes it finds its way through the loud intrusion of what is happening in the world.

Living our **FAITH**
PRAY READ WORSHIP LOVE





The 2018 Camp fYrefly leadership team.

EMPOWERED DISCIPLES



A labour of love

Camp fYrefly is a leadership camp for gender and sexually diverse youth and allies. It strives to build resilience and confidence in young people exploring their own gender and sexual identity and/or advocating for the rights and inclusion of the diverse community in the wider world.

Like any camp, a week at fYrefly involves fun, friendships and learning, with a little bit of sleep thrown in for good measure. Unique to fYrefly is what the learning portion entails.

Workshops include crafts, drama and musical opportunities, as well as healthy relationships, a career fair and ways to deal with stress and anxiety. Building leadership skills is emphasized so that campers develop the confidence to advocate for themselves and others in their daily lives.

The most important skill is resiliency. fYrefly unapologetically acknowledges the challenges that gender and sexually diverse young people face in our society, and aims to prepare them to not only survive, but thrive in their home communities.

Part of building resilience is providing a safe environment in which people can encounter those who might in other situations seem unsafe to them.

Specifically, visibly-present members of law enforcement and the clergy support the campers and leaders.

For the most part the leadership team at Camp fYrefly are members of the gender and sexually diverse community. They give of themselves to make a place where their young siblings can grow strong and proud. This event is a labour of love.

Camp fYrefly Saskatchewan is a gospel place. It is an environment in which young people who feel freaky and strange and like they don't quite fit in can be not only normal, but in the majority for one short week of the year. It is a place where people are told that they are loved and valuable, exactly as they are, that they are seen to be very good.

This is the message that Jesus proclaimed with his entire life, death and resurrection, always walking towards the margins to let those who felt on the outside in the world know that they had a place in the kingdom of God.

Camp fYrefly is a place where God's beloved children know themselves to be loved and safe and can walk for a few days on holy ground.

400 years of Lutheran Worship in Canada

Commemorating the Jens Munk Expedition

On Christmas Day, 1619, Rev. Rasmus Jensen led worship on the shores of Hudson Bay. He is remembered as the first Lutheran minister to serve in North America and for likely leading the first formal Christian worship services in Western Canada.

Nine years after Henry Hudson's failed Arctic expedition, King Christian IV of Denmark-Norway commissioned an expedition to establish a new trade route to the Orient and a Danish colony in North America.

After leaving the Copenhagen harbour on May 9, 1619, the crew made landfall in an area later known as Churchill, Manitoba, on September

7, 1619. Trapped by the early winter ice in the Hudson Bay, the expedition endured a winter of darkness, hunger and hopelessness. Among the crew was Rev. Jensen, a Lutheran pastor from the Church of Denmark.

In preparation for Christmas Day, 1619, the ship's captain, Jens Munk, wrote in his journal that the Lutheran chaplain conducted "preaching and the Lord's Supper."

By January 10, 1620, Jensen took ill. "On the 23rd of January... the priest sat up and gave the people a sermon, which would be the last he delivered in this world..."

In 1991, Manitoba Heritage Council installed a commemorative plaque at the Prince of Wales Fort National Historic Site in Churchill.


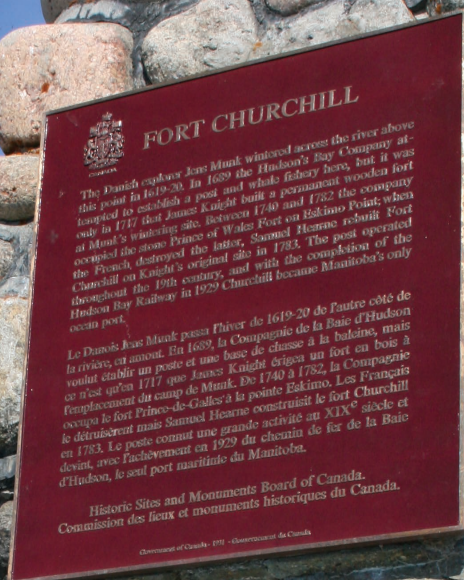
The plaque reads: "In 1619, eight kilometers upriver from this site, the first Lutheran services on North American soil were conducted by the Rev. Rasmus Jensen. He was a member of the ill-fated Danish expedition which discovered this port and wintered here. Only the ship's captain, Jens Munk, and two crewmen survived the harsh weather, returning to Denmark the following year. Pastor Jensen led a Christmas mass, buried the dead, and ministered to the grieving, forlorn company of seamen. He died February 20, 1620, the first Protestant clergyman to be buried in Canadian soil." 



Photo courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The west bank of the Churchill River near its mouth, about four miles downstream from Munk's wintering place.

The plaque at the Prince of Wales Fort National Historic Site in Churchill, Manitoba.



Your offering

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) functions through three major expressions: **NATIONALLY** as the ELCIC, **REGIONALLY** as synods, and **LOCALLY** as congregations. Each expression of the church has unique ministries as well as ministries which are shared with the other expressions.

In 2019, ELCIC members gave over

\$70 million

to support the call to be *In Mission for Others*.

When you give to the ELCIC, you help support ALL the expressions of the church!



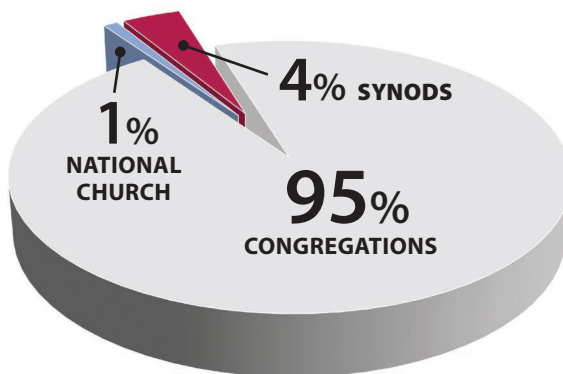
CONGREGATIONS

\$65,984,559 was used by congregations to fund local ministries. Your weekly offering supports the work of your congregation and its ministry.



SYNODS

\$3,258,319 was shared to support the ministry done through ELCIC synods. This includes supporting congregations and leaders within your synod.

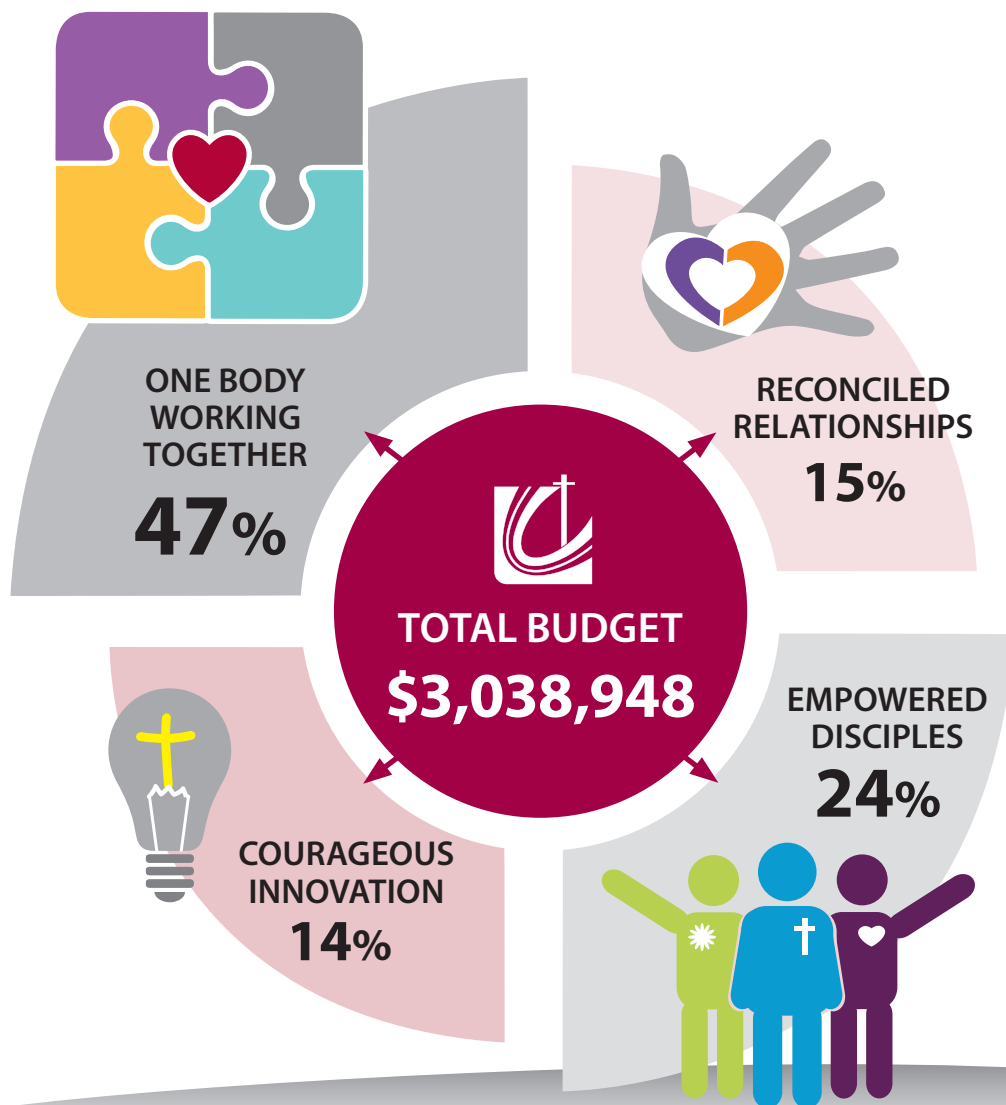


NATIONAL CHURCH

\$802,487 was sent through the synods to the National Church to support the wider mission of the ELCIC.

A Focus on the Strategic Plan

The 2019 ELCIC National Church budget supports ministries carried out through the four areas of focus set out in the National Office Strategic Plan.



#myELCIC



Share your selfies, photos and social media posts using the **#myELCIC** hashtag. Whether you're on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, make sure you click on the hashtag and see what others are doing across the church!



Jun Gao @gaojun73 Camp Lutherlyn 2019—can't be better than this.



David Malina @davejmalina Don Nevile rehearsing on a weekday.



Adam Snook @eastcoastpastor
A mid-service selfie with my dear friend.



Sheila Hamilton @shamilton190 St. David's, Orillia, ON, supporting a campaign to raise funds to build the Lighthouse Community Services Hub.



@HolyCrossBurl
Bishop Michael Pryse blessed runners and offered oranges and bananas at the Chilly Half in Burlington, ON.



Martin Luther UC @LutherWaterloo More about-to-be-grads from our MA program.



Larry Kochendorfer @abtbishoplarry A wonderful Advent 1 with Advent Lutheran, Calgary as they marked their 40th Anniversary.



Michael Harmon @harmon2ekim My installation at Armena Lutheran Parish.



Paul Gehrs @PAULGEHRS Sep 27, 2019 #ClimateStrike #Winnipeg #myELCIC



Larry Kochendorfer @abtbishoplarry National Convention 2019 delegates gathering.



@HolyCrossBurl
Our bishop has encouraged us to explore different forms of ministry...

National Office

There are six full time, seven part time and one casual staff working for the National Office for a staffing compliment of 9 equivalent full-time positions.



Your National Office staff: (1) Rev. Susan C. Johnson, *National Bishop*. (2) Carter Brooks, *Communications Specialist*. (3) Norman Coull, *Proofreader, Canada Lutheran*. (4) Catherine Crivici, *Graphic Designer*. (5) Trina Gallop Blank, *Assistant to the Bishop for Communications and Resource Generation*. (6) Rev. Paul Gehrs, *Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Leadership*. (7) Kyle Giesbrecht, *Director, Finance and Administration*. (8) Gwen Hewitt, *Office Assistant and Canada Lutheran Circulation*. (9) Rev. Lyle McKenzie, *Assistant to the Bishop, Worship*. (10) Desiree Mendoza, *Meetings and Communications Co-ordinator*. (11) Rick Natividad, *Information Technology Co-ordinator*. (12) Deacon Gretchen Peterson, *Assistant to the Bishop, Youth*. (13) Lucy Randa, *Accountant*. (14) Rev. Kenn Ward, *Editor, Canada Lutheran*.

Contributors

We thank all those who assisted with this annual report.

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Many thanks to all who shared their images with us.

I love our church, and I'm
proud of the ministry we
do throughout the church.

I know that the impact
of our ministry together
is greater than the sum
of our separate parts.

~ *ELCIC National Bishop*
Susan Johnson



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