

## SECTION C – THE BISHOP’S OFFICE

The Bishop, as chief executive officer, has responsibility for the ministry and mission of this synod through the authority assigned to him/her in the Constitution (Article XIII); the Bylaws (Part IX) and the Synod Council governance policies. This section informs the Convention of these actions and outcomes.

### Bishop’s Report

I am pleased to welcome you to the Sixteenth Biennial Convention of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories: ***Liberated by God’s Grace***. “**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast**” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

***Liberated by God’s Grace***. Those words are at the heart of our faith. It is classic language; grounded in a declaration of God’s essence. God is a God of grace, and God’s grace liberates. This is the theme selected by the Lutheran World Federation for the years 2015-2017 and the Commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.

Synod Conventions offer delegates, guests and visitors a larger view of what it is to be church together. Along with the business sessions that necessarily require our attention we will share in worship; we will explore the Scriptures together; we will grow in our wisdom and understanding of the *missio dei* (mission of God); we will explore our convention theme through the three keynote addresses and table conversation: **The Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen – Salvation Not For Sale; National Bishop Susan Johnson – Human Beings Not for Sale** (via recording from the MNO Synod Convention); **and National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald – Creation Not For Sale**; and there will be many opportunities to meet and engage in conversation with sisters and brothers in Christ from across the Synod.

We will welcome to our Convention **The Rev. Canon Travis Enright** and his mother, **Donna Enright**, who will together welcome us to Treaty 6 land; National Church Council Vice-Chair **Sheila Hamilton** and National Church staff **Trina Gallop Blank**, Director of Communications and Stewardship; **Lisa Thiessen**, Executive Director, ELCIC Group Services Inc.; **The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude**, *En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador*; **The Rev. Dr. Michael Nel**, Acting President, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon; **Marcus Busch**, President, Board of Directors and **Tom Brook**, Director, Community Relations Team from Canadian Lutheran World Relief; and, **Wayne Hove**, President of Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute, Outlook, SK.

We will also welcome the newest congregation of our Synod...from Saskatchewan. **St. Paul’s, Burstall**, requested of the SASK Synod a transfer to our Synod since it is geographically closer to the Lutheran congregations in Medicine Hat than to congregations in the SASK Synod. The transfer was approved by respective Synod Councils and by the National Church Council. I believe that there will not be a delegate present from the congregation, however, we will acknowledge that they are a “new” congregation of our Synod.

Our Convention begins with a **Hymn Festival** created around the Convention theme and sub-themes by **Dr. Joy Berg, Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken and The Rev. Ann Salmon**. It is my intent in commissioning the Hymn Festival that it be available for use throughout our Synod over the next year and particularly in 2017 as we Commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation. See further in this report for more Reformation Commemoration information.

In addition to the Hymn Festival each delegate/congregation will receive a **DVD** and brief **study guide** which includes interviews with Synod leaders regarding each of our **Synod’s Four Mission Priorities**. You will see on our Convention Agenda that these will be viewed throughout the Convention and that time is provided for table conversation related to each. I encourage you to share this resource as you are able in your own context.

Throughout our Convention, delegates will be assigned seating so that the conversations begun in the sixteen “Participating in Hope” geographical gatherings in 2015 and 2016 might continue.

I invite you throughout our Convention: as you worship, listen, pray, discern, share stories to write your thoughts to the following statements on sticky notes and post them to the large print paper in the assembly hall: ***I am hearing God say to us...***, and, ***I sense that one of the places the Spirit is inviting our Synod to join with God in God’s work is...*** During the Closing Eucharist these notes will be gathered and presented during the Installation of Synod Council members to Synod Council for their review and reflection; as well, they will shape the crafting of the Prayers of the People for the worship.

Thank you to our **Convention Manager, Wendy Christensen-Grosfield**, members of the **Local Arrangements Committee** and of each team, **Synod Staff**, our **Convention Chaplain, The Rev. Daranne Harris**, and all who are serving during our Convention.

As we gather it is my prayer that together we would be open to the Spirit's work among us... shaping... transforming... reworking... and that we would know the reality of the words of Paul to the church in Rome (15:13): ***"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."***

#### **Synod Staff – With Gratitude**

It is a privilege to work with and among gifted and committed staff. Thank you to each for your ministry with and among us.

**The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow** was called to serve as **Assistant to the Bishop for Mission** and began August 1, 2013. Julianne's primary focus, and passion, is missional formation. She continues to facilitate and model for us all a culture of discernment, experimentation, discovery, wondering and reflecting. Serving from the southern area of our Synod has been a wonderful addition to Synod leadership.

**Darla Wildfang, Executive Assistant**, is the voice you hear when you contact the Synod Office. Her administrative abilities and a passion for discovering and experimenting has led to significant contributions in use of technology, for example, jot forms for registration purposes and the creation of our weekly *Wednesday's Word* e-list correspondence. The hours of the Executive Assistant were increased to full-time as of September 1, 2015.

**Sharon Villetard, Assistant to the Bishop for Programming**, concluded her service on August 14, 2014 after thirty years of ministry. Sharon served diligently, and her long experience and many gifts are missed by our Office and by the entire Synod.

**Trudy Davis**, following twenty plus years of service, retired from her position as **Synod Bookkeeper** March 31, 2016. Trudy served with great commitment and with great humor often bringing levity to our Synod Office. **Sheryl Burry** has been contracted to serve as Synod Bookkeeper and began on April 1, 2016. Already Sheryl has learned much about this new position and about our Synod and I believe that she is an ideal addition to our Synod Staff.

**Colleen McGinnis**, who faithfully served as the editor of our Synod's *Celebrations* and *Canada Lutheran* insert for several years, concluded her ministry with among us all in 2015 in order to focus on other passions including her

artwork. I am pleased that **Wendy Christensen-Grosfield** agreed to serve as editor and she has served very well in this role.

**The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude** serves as program staff through our Synod's *En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador* sharing gifts of hospitality, community and grace.

**The Rev. Gary Nickel** continues to serve as **Synod Necrologist and Archivist** enabling him to share his gifts of attention to detail, and conscientiousness. Gary is available as a resource to your congregation regarding any matters related to archival materials and documents.

**Bishop Don Sjoberg (ret.)** continues to assist the Synod Office as **Consultant Related to Church Property and Dissolution of Congregations**. Ministry as Consultant includes that of accompaniment and guidance to those congregations who are anticipating closure and matters related to their church properties. Don shares many years of experience, wisdom and grace with and among us all, and all as a gift to our Synod. Over the past biennium Bishop Sjoberg has worked with three communities of faith who have closed as a congregation: **Augustana, Edmonton (2015); Trinity, Warburg (2016); and Bethania, Sedgwick (2016)**. Together, with you, I am thankful for the faithful witness of these communities of faith over many years.

The Synod Office continues to be challenged by request, questions, documentation and management surrounding the ownership and care of cemeteries, particularly where congregations are closed. **Carl Sorenson** has agreed to serve as a **Cemetery Consultant – Historical** for our Synod. He will be reviewing historical files, updating contact information, and collecting the materials into a database so that they are more easily accessible. I appreciate Carl's willingness to free give of his time and energy. His particular passion for history, exploration, and people are a valuable asset in this position.

In 2015 I named **Ecumenical Officers** in Edmonton and in Calgary to continue and to expand the Synod of Alberta and the Territories ecumenical relationships and partnerships. For some time now I have desired to appoint Ecumenical Officers as I am committed to joint ecumenical efforts and action, including the observance of Reformation 500; to relationship building, and to a raising up and encouraging of those among us gifted and passionate in the area of ecumenical ministry. It is my hope that in appointing the Ecumenical Officers there will be a greater promotion of Christian unity across our vast Synod as the Officers participate cooperatively and collaboratively with, but not

limited to, the Edmonton and District Council of Churches and the Calgary Council of Churches. **The Ecumenical Officer – South** is **The Rev. Daranne Harris** who serves as the VP & Chief Mission Officer for the Bethany Care Society, Calgary. She is passionate about creating community and equipping people to live out their faith in ways that shape their everyday. **The Ecumenical Officer – North** is **Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken**. As a practicing spiritual director since 2006, she loves the opportunity to help people listen for, express, and discover the sacredness in their own stories shared in prayerful conversation. In 2014, she was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister, called by the Synod to the specialized ministry of spiritual direction.

### Synod Leadership – With Gratitude

Synod Council is moving to a regular practice of meeting in a retreat-like setting which provides for additional agenda time as well as relationship-building. We have appreciated the space and setting at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake and Mulhurst Lutheran Bible Camp, Pigeon Lake most recently.

Thanks to **The Rev. David Holmes** who completed his term as Anglican representative to our Synod Council. **The Rev. Canon Erin Phillips** was appointed in 2015 to serve in this capacity following conversation with Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson, and at the same time, **The Rev. Dr. Christine Nojonen** was appointed Lutheran representative on the Anglican Diocese of Calgary Diocesan Council.

It has become a common practice for **Conference Deans** and **National Church Council members** from our Synod to participate at meetings of Synod Council as advisory members. Agenda time is given for a verbal report by NCC members and they provide a written report as well.

Following each meeting of our Synod Council **Highlights** have been prepared and distributed through the weekly *Wednesday's Word*. These are also available on our Synod website.

Our **National Bishop, Susan Johnson**, regularly meets with our Synod Council and did so again in the spring of 2015 and 2016. This provides an on-going connection and opportunity for conversation with the national expression of our church.

Following the sharing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Report I committed to a time of education and learning once each year, for the next three years, for our Synod Council. At the March 2016 Meeting/Retreat The Rev. Ann Salmon and Carl Rausch, co-chairs of our Synod's Abiding in Right Relations Ministry Team led

council members, senior staff and advisory members through the KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

I am thankful for the gifts of time, commitment and prayer shared by each councilor and advisory member.

### Missional Formation

We are on a journey as a synod. It is life-long. That is why we have been insistent that our missional renewal process is not some "program" nor something you complete in a few months. This is about discerning God's activity among us and within our neighbourhoods and communities. This is about living out our faith for the love of the world. This is about acting and living our way into new habits and practices.

God calls. God goes before us. I am reminded of the resurrection stories of holy visitors at the empty tomb saying to the disciples: "He has been raised; he is not here... But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you" (Mk 16:6-7). Christ is going ahead of you to Galilee — a place that was home for the disciples; a place where it all began. So, too, does the risen Christ calls us back to our homes, our neighbourhoods, our communities. The Risen Christ invites us to join what God is already up to ahead of us.

As you will read further in this report (Spirit-Led Leadership), a significant number of rostered leaders and congregational members are now participating in this missional renewal process. Immersed in the Word, learning how to listen, discerning what God is up to, engaging in the neighbourhood, shifting built-in defaults and habits — these are some of the basic things we are delving into.

We are learning a lot during this process. Based on an action-learning model, congregations are engaging in experiments, trying this and that, reflecting on what they have learned from their experiments and what they have learned about God. They continually ask the questions "What is God up to in our neighbourhood and community?" and "What is God calling us to?" We typically are very good at thinking in terms of "meeting needs" or of wanting to invite people to come and join us at our church and sit in our pews (and contribute to the finances). But the missional process raises different types of questions and invites different ways of thinking about God's activity in the world.

### Synod Ministry Teams

Included within the Synod Convention materials are the reports of each Synod Ministry Team. I commend their reports and their ministry with and among us all to you. In addition to these reports I will highlight in what follows our

Synod's ministry via our Synod Mission Priorities without, I hope, repeating too much from the Ministry Team reports.

### **Synod Mission Priorities: Spirit-Led Leadership**

**Forming Missional Shaped Ministries.** Our Synod is intentionally working to explore, develop, and support skills and capacities to move into God's planned future following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Congregations and ministries are invited to join in God's work in our local contexts. Throughout the Synod, congregational leaders, both lay and rostered, have participated in the **first iteration** of the Missional Network's process, under the direction of The Rev. Dr. Alan Roxburgh and his team The Missional Network (TMN). On the journey of listening, attending, discerning and experimenting, these leaders gained new skills and began to cultivate a learning community culture within their congregations.

Facilitated by the Assistant to the Bishop for Mission a cohort of rostered leaders continues to meet regularly in Edmonton and in Calgary and Lay Guiding Teams also continue to meet. These meetings are a time to discern and share what participants are learning as they continue to experiment new ways of building relationships in their neighbourhoods.

A **second iteration** began in the fall of 2015 in the Southern Conference. Eight pastors and six congregations are participating. This iteration is facilitated by Julianne who shadowed TMN staff during the first iteration. The rostered leaders meet monthly and the Guiding Teams (lay) will gather in Brooks five times in 2015-2017.

Conversation has begun regarding a **third iteration** with facilitation provided by those lay and rostered leaders who have been through the process and who are continuing to listen, attend, discern, experiment and reflect. An introductory gathering met April 30, 2016 at Scandia Lutheran, Armena. Please contact Julianne for further information.

**Annual Study Conference.** We welcomed to the 2015 Study Conference, February 2-5, 2015, "The Gospel in Four Directions: The Horizon of Christian Faith in North America (with an Indigenous perspective)," our plenary speaker, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, **The Right Rev. Mark Macdonald**; guest Bishop, our **National Bishop Susan Johnson**; and our Thursday morning speakers, **The Rev. Dr. Laura Holck and The Rev. Dr. Phil Holck** (Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary), who explored the possibilities of "Telling the Text by Heart" and preaching from a "virtual" manuscript. Afternoon options included: "Sharing Stories of God at Work through the Missional

Network Journey" with Assistant to the Bishop for Mission Julianne Barlow and cohort participants; and, conversation with myself and those rostered leaders who have served 12 years or less – where do you see God at work in your ministry context/our Synod/our National Church?

The 2016 Study Conference was "outstanding." We were richly blessed by our keynote presenter **The Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen** from OMG - Center for Theological Conversation ([www.omgcenter.com](http://www.omgcenter.com)) who spoke on the theme "Liberated by God's Grace"; Christian Chavarria, our Synod's guest from El Salvador who shared *una vida, una historia, un testimonio* (his life, story and testimony) and who painted a gift of a processional cross for our Synod; guest Bishop from the MNO, **The Rev. Elaine Sauer**, who shared of her learnings as Bishop and current events within the MNO Synod; Thursday presenter, **Dr. Sharon Smith**, Executive Director of Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries ([www.sanctuary-ministries.com](http://www.sanctuary-ministries.com)) who spoke on the theme: "The Lived Experience of Mental Health Recovery and the Gifts of a Christian Community."

**Conference of Deans.** Twice each year the Deans meet with the Assistant to the Bishop for Mission and myself. This is a time for reflection on the Scriptures, Eucharist, prayer, conversation and planning for the fall conference gatherings.

**Internship Placements.** I am very excited that several internships have or are currently being provided within our Synod. In some cases, financial support has been provided by our Synod through our Synod Reserve Fund. This financial support significantly contributes to the capacity of the congregations in serving as internship placements. My thanks to those who have provided pastoral mentorship and to each congregation who has journeyed with our interns. **Erik Sorenson** completed his required one-year internship at St. Paul's, Olds with The Rev. John Lentz in 2015. **Lindsey Skakum** completed a two-year placement at Holy Spirit, Edmonton with The Rev. Trish Schmermund. **Jailyn Corbin** has begun a two-year placement at Peace, Leduc with The Rev. Matt Lyseng. **Sarah Mowat** has begun a two-year placement at Grace Lutheran and St. Catherine's Anglican, Edson with The Rev. Ann Salmon. **Colin Millang**, supervised by the Rev. John Lentz, continues his course work to complete an M.Div. while licensed to serve in a pastoral capacity at Redeemer, Hanna.

**Diaconal Ministers Gathering.** In 2015 and again in 2016 I invited the Diaconal Ministers from across our Synod to gather at the Synod Office for a day of worship, prayer, reflection, conversation, support and encouragement.

These have been gatherings with great energy, passion and commitment to service.

**Annual Synod Retired Rostered Leaders and Spouses Gathering.** Each year I have gathered our retired rostered leaders and spouses to a day together at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake. 2016 was our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering. I always look forward to a wonderful day of conversation, food, and worship. In 2015 I shared of our Synod Delegations journey to El Salvador and in 2016 **The Rev. Art Weiss**, Director of Camp Kuriakos, shared with us about Outdoor Ministry.

**Annual Open House.** Cathy and I love to share the gift of hospitality and began in 2014 an annual Open House for rostered leaders and their families. The weather does not always cooperate but we love to welcome you to our home.

**Planned Giving/Endowment Team.** I am determined to establish a Planned Giving/Endowment Committee and have asked Synod Treasurer Stephen Wildfang to work with a couple of other individuals to draw up Terms of Reference and a process for this team.

**Congregational Life Events.** In April 2015 our Synod's Leadership Development Ministry Team planned a Congregational Life Event (previously called the Church Council Workshop) at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer. "**Just Relationships**" was the theme with keynote presenter, **The Rev. Ryan Andersen**. Several of the workshops focused on the theme. In April 2016, together with the Synod's CARE Ministry Team, the event at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer focused on the theme, "**Walking Together: Mental Health Through our Lifetime**" with keynote presenter, **Dr. Sharon Smith**, Executive Director, Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries. Again, several workshops focused on the theme.

The Leadership Development Ministry Team also planned two continuing education opportunities: **The Rev. Lee Woolery** offered, "*The Messiness of Missional Church*", October 2014 at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Calgary. **The Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen** (Professor – Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon) offered, "*The Priesthood of All Believers*" January 2015 at Peace, Leduc.

**Synod Mission Priorities: Hope-Filled Discipleship Conference Conventions.** We continue to gather in the fall of each in three locations with opportunity for separate Conference work. In 2014 we gathered under the theme: ***Fed and Nourished, Filled and Refreshed***, based on a portion of the hymn text, *Baptized and Set Free*. Together we explored, considered, discussed and provided feedback to the "Study Guide on Word and Sacrament Ministry."

Thank you to **The Rev. Marc Jerry** who facilitated our learning and sharing at two of the events, and to **Wayne Street** who provided the same leadership at the Southern and South West gatherings. Much thanks to those congregations who hosted our gatherings: Lakeland Lutheran, Cold Lake; Bethel and Messiah Lutheran, Camrose; and Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Lethbridge.

In 2015 we gathered under the theme: ***Living Well with the Land: touch the earth lightly (ELW 739)***. Presenters at the Northern Conference were: **The Revs. Kathy Calkins** and **Ann Salmon**. **The Rev. Dr. Cam Harder**, Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon presented at the West and East Central and Southern and South West Conferences. Much thanks to those congregations who hosted our gatherings: Church of our Saviour, Edmonton; St. Peter's, Millet; and Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary.

**El Salvadoran guest, Christian Chavarria.** "*In Canada you are born, you live, you die. In El Salvador you are born, you survive, you die.*" These were the words I heard spoken often by our El Salvadoran guest, Christian Chavarria, as he shared throughout our Synod (January 13-February 1, 2016) at congregations, cluster gatherings, campus ministries, Young Adults retreat, Annual Study Conference, and so on. His story of violence, death, living as a refugee in Honduras and later in Sweden, undergirded by great hope in the promise of God, impacted all those who heard him. It was a gift to welcome him and to host him in our Synod. Many purchased his art, primarily painted crosses, and some (such as those at the Young Adults Retreat) sought to paint in his unique style. "*The civil war was a turning point in my life. My brother's death at 18 changed the course of my life and my mind about wanting to be actively involved in fighting in the war. As a child I wanted revenge for my family's deaths. As I grew older, I learned to know what is just and what is unjust. I learned how to face life without guns and how to respect life. Suffering taught me to be thankful to God for everything God gives us every day.*" While at the Annual Study Conference Christian painted a cross as a gift to our Synod which will be used as a processional cross. You can find more information about Christian and his personal story of horror and violence in El Salvador, 'Afflicted with Hope,' here: <http://www.embracingelsalvador.org/christian-armando-chavarria-ayala>. I am thankful for funds from the Lutheran Triune Educational and Benevolent Society of Calgary to host Christian in our Synod.

**Monthly Synod Messages for Congregations, and Lay and Rostered Leaders.** Throughout 2014, I prepared

monthly messages focusing for congregational use on several *Marks of a Missional Congregation* based significantly on Stephen P. Bouman's, *The Mission Table: Renewing Congregation & Community* (© 2013 Augsburg Fortress). In 2015 I invited reflection on portions *Philippians*, Paul's letter, *to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi (1:1b)*. During 2016, I am preparing monthly messages focusing on the theme of "Practicing Our Faith." My intent is that these writings offer a time to engage in learning, discernment and reflection together. I encourage their use, as you gather for church council, adult study, youth group, coffee group, or choir rehearsal. Each article has included a Scripture reference, thematic reflection, questions for consideration, and a prayer. The Monthly Messages are distributed through *Wednesday's Word* and are available on our Synod website.

**Easter Pastoral Letter.** In the Season of Easter, 2016, I prepared a pastoral letter which was distributed to the synod. This letter is available on the synod website. (<http://albertasynod.ca/about-us/bishops-message/bishops-letters/>)

**Compassion Justice Initiative.** Annually, our Synod office invites applications for Compassionate Justice funds. Recently funds have supported, for example: Mulhurst Camp (enabling those with limited resources to attend camp); Mom's Canada (providing emergency essentials to young, single mothers); and ICPM, Edmonton (accompaniment provided to inner city clients).

#### **Synod Mission Priorities: Innovative Tradition**

**Synod Communications.** Due to increasing costs and significant staff time, Synod mailings are no longer being produced and distributed. Instead, a weekly email beginning January 2016, *Wednesday's Word*, has been developed and continues to be re-fined. Each edition is archived on our synod website. Please see our synod website to subscribe to *Wednesday's Word*. The synod e-list will continue to be used in a reduced capacity and particularly for items of urgency such as prayer requests.

**All Ministry Team Gathering.** Members of our Synod's Ministry Teams gathered in September 2014 and 2015, and in May 2016 at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer to worship, reflect on Scripture, pray, listen, consider our Synod's mission priorities, and collaborate with other ministry teams active in our Synod. Time was set aside for each ministry team to explore their own individual agendas and then to share with the whole gathering. As well, each Ministry Team shares the following with those gathered: a story of where/how you see God at work in your ministry area; how will we, as a ministry team of our Synod, seek to fulfil the Synod's Mission Priorities of Spirit-led

leadership, Hope-filled discipleship, Innovative Tradition and Collaborative partnerships; and, relevant sharing of on-going ministry team work.

This annual gathering has been welcomed and has been instrumental in sharing and in hearing of the ministry of each of the teams. **Thank you to Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd** who graciously welcomes us to host our gathering in Red Deer, as well as many other Synod events and meetings.

**Participating in Hope - 2015 and 2016.** We are supporting congregations and ministries in becoming learning communities where listening, attending, discerning, experimenting, and reflecting are the norm for decision making and planning. Modelling this rhythm, the Synod Council's *Participating in Hope* work of listening to the stories of God at work in and through the congregations across the Synod is a first step of discerning next steps for the Synod.

Following preparation, participation and training at our September 2014 Synod Council retreat, and further preparation at our March 2015 Synod Council meeting, sixteen Conversations were facilitated across the Synod in the weeks following Easter Sunday 2015. Synod Council and Executive members, and Conference Deans, gathered geographically close church councils (as identified by the Deans) for the purpose of: listening to their stories of mission - of God at work; fostering the faith and ministry of the congregational leaders; thanking them for their past partnership in ministry; and inviting them to participate in God's hope-filled future, in partnership with the Synod and each other. The September 2015 meeting of our Synod Council meeting included time to listen to the sharing of experiences and learnings which were collated and distributed via mail to rostered leaders and congregations.

One of the significant pieces heard was a desire to repeat this listening and learning exercise again in 2016. Sixteen Conversations were facilitated early in 2016 with our Synod Council listening to and reflecting on what was heard at its March 2016 Meeting/Retreat. The learnings were gathered and distributed through *Wednesday's Word* and are available on our Synod website.

The *Participating in Hope* conversations were a very important and valuable opportunity for congregational leadership and synod leadership to listen and to learn. Thank you to all who participated. The listening and the collated materials provide significant direction and information to our Synod Council. Alan Roxburgh's, *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World: The New*

*Shape of the Church in Our Time*, recently published has also informed our Synod Council's conversation and discernment. It is also being used as a book study by several congregational church councils within our Synod.

**Transitional Ministry Training.** Our Synod hosted a transitional ministry training event in Edmonton with **The Rev. Dr. Cam Harder**, Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon, June 2015. Within our Synod there is a very small number of trained interim ministers and we have had several congregations who do not have an interim pastor. The training and participation was excellent.

**Creating Healthy Relationships.** Our Synod worked in partnership with **ELCIC Group Services** in June 2015 to facilitate a presentation and conversation with rostered leaders regarding issues of social isolation and pastoral identity. A good number of rostered leaders participated in this event held in Calgary.

**Synod Mission Priorities: Collaborative Partnerships Ecumenical Officers (North and South).** One of the fruits of naming Ecumenical Officers was the coordination of a joint Roman Catholic-Lutheran study in Lent 2016 in Edmonton. Each evening began with a presentation, followed by a fellowship break, table dialogue, and concludes with evening prayer. Archbishop Richard Smith and I each lead in evening prayer service once during the five weeks. Presentations and presenters were: "Reformation 500 – What is There to Celebrate?" with The Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen; "Contemporary Contexts" with Ecumenical Officers Dr. Julien Hammond and Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken; "Theological Consideration #1 – Sola Scriptura" with Dr. David Norman and Bishop Don Sjoberg (ret.); "Theological Consideration #2 – Sola Fide/Gratia" with Dr. David Goa and Dr. Stephen Martin; and "Catholics and Lutherans Today" with Dr. Bob McKeon and The Rev. Ingrid Doerschel.

**Commemoration of Reformation 500.** Many significant events and opportunities within our Synod to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reformation will take place in 2016 leading up to and including 2017.

With the assistance of the Ecumenical Officers conversation has begun regarding joint viewing in our Synod with Roman Catholic sisters and brothers of the **Common Prayer worship, October 31, 2016** in Lund, Sweden which will include leadership by the Lutheran World Federation and Pope Francis I. The **Hymn Festival** commissioned for our Synod Convention will be used as our Synod hosts and invites Lutherans, ecumenical and interfaith partners for worship: March 17, 2017 at Hope, Calgary, and March 18,

2017 at Hosanna, Edmonton. We are anticipating that the **Common Prayer** worship will be lead by me and Bishop Henry in Calgary, October 29, 2017 and with Archbishop Smith in Edmonton, October 30, 2017. A **lecture series** has been planned in Calgary for the fall of 2017. Bishop Henry, Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson and I will be presenting September 19 in Calgary at the first of the lecture series. Watch for further details and do consider welcoming your neighbors to a worship service in your community using our Synod Convention **Hymn Festival**.

**Synod Youth Gatherings.** In collaboration with our Lutheran Bible Camps, a Synod Youth Gathering took place May 29-31, 2015 at Mulhurst Lutheran Camp – "**Called to Be**" with keynote speaker: The Rev. Dr. Tim Wray. I was able to be present for much of the weekend and am thankful for the hard work in preparing and implementing the gathering by Tammy Kirkwood, Marg Daly, Mark Kuntz, Sarah Rudd, camp staff, and Tim Wray. A Synod youth gathering is being collaboratively planned by our Synod and camp staff for **May 5-7, 2017** at Camp Kuriakos.

**CLAY Youth Gathering and Pre-Gathering Trip.** Thanks to **Tammy Kirkwood**, St. Paul's, Ellerslie and **The Rev. Anna Thede**, Hosanna, Edmonton who have been working to coordinate an ABT Synod Pre-Gathering Trip, August 13-17, 2016 through Nova Scotia prior to the CLAY Gathering in Charlottetown. Cathy and I are looking forward to being with our Synod youth and leaders during the pre-gathering journey and at the Gathering itself.

**Joint Camp Staff Ministry Training.** Hastings Lake Bible Camp hosted joint camp staff training in June 2015. Staff from Hastings Lake, Mulhurst and Kuriakos gathered for a multitude of learning pieces, worship, and prayer, as well as Bible study with The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen (Hosanna, Edmonton). I was able to gather with the staff for most of one day and led worship and presided at the Eucharist the next day. These young adults are diversely gifted, passionate about ministry, and a gift to us all.

**Synod Delegation - *En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador.*** A six-member Synod Delegation journeyed to El Salvador March 17-30, 2015 in a partnership between our Synod and Hosanna, Edmonton. Thank you for your prayers as we journeyed. Participants in "*Daunting Challenges – Wellsprings of Hope: A Synod Journey to El Salvador - 2015*" experienced, embraced and engaged the contexts and ministries of the church in El Salvador including prison and congregational ministries; built relationships with our sisters and brothers in Christ – including the celebration of 25 years of partnership between Hosanna Lutheran, Edmonton and Redeemer

Lutheran, San Miguel; and sought an expanding global understanding of faithful discipleship through the Lutheran El Salvadoran context. The journey included many opportunities to meet our Lutheran sisters and brothers in Christ and to experience a variety of ministry contexts in El Salvador including the ministry of The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude. Following our journey, I prepared and distributed a “diary-like” report of the delegation’s journey and experience. It is available on our Synod’s website and participants shared of the journey at Hosanna, Edmonton.

***En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador.*** In the fall of 2015 The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude was invited to share in Saskatoon through the Micah Project of his work in restorative justice. Bishop Sid Haugen also gave his blessing for Brian to share (*In Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador*) throughout the SASK Synod while he was there. Previously in 2015 Brian shared in several locations throughout our Synod. Each year our Synod has prepared an annual report, including financial and budget information, and forwarded these with a cover letter to individual and congregational contributors. This information was also distributed through *Wednesday’s Word* and is available on our Synod website.

**Companion Synod – The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO).** Our Synod continues to be in companion relationship with IELCO. February 2016 a new Bishop-President was elected, Benjamin Ojeda. Many of you will remember welcoming our Colombian guests to our 2012 Synod Convention and to your congregations. One of those whom we welcomed was Zulma Ojeda, at that time a principal at one of the Lutheran schools. She is the daughter of Benjamin Ojeda. Conversation continues on a regular basis with the two ELCA Synods, national ELCA staff and our Synod regarding IELCO projects, delegation journeys, and so on. I hope that we might welcome Bishop-President Ojeda to our 2018 Synod Convention and plan for a Synod Delegation to journey to Colombia in a partnership between our Synod and Ascension, Edmonton the same year.

**Abiding in Right Relations Ministry Team (AIRR).** Following my participation with many others in the Truth and Reconciliation Alberta National Event in Edmonton on March 2014, and with our National Church’s motion relative to right relations in mind, I have been determined to move forward in building right relations, particularly through education and relationship building. You will find the Ministry Team’s report included in our Synod Convention Docket.

A highlight for me was the November 2015 gathering on Treaty 7 Land in Airdrie of 69 people for a time of listening and learning, talking and experiencing ways of abiding in right relations as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples: “Abiding in Right Relations: Laying the Foundation.” ELCA Montana Bishop Jessica Christ and I are intending that a similar event take place in Montana, October 2017, with participants and leaders again from Canada and the United States; Anglicans and Episcopalians, Lutherans, United Church and Presbyterians; Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people.

**Walking Together: In the Spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.** Co-sponsored by Lutheran Campus Ministry – Edmonton and our Synod, “*Walking Together*” brought Dr. Terry LeBlanc, founder and chair of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies, to Edmonton in March 2015 for lectures, worship and the annual Lutheran Campus Ministry banquet. A screening of the film “*Gently Whispering the Circle Back*” was also part of the event followed by discussion with Elder Charles Wood and Filmmaker Beth Wishart MacKenzie.

**Augustana Lutheran, Edmonton.** Through funding from the sale of **Augustana Lutheran**, Edmonton’s building our Synod received \$100,000 to assist in the design of a **Mental Health Awareness initiative** within our Synod (see the CARE – Congregational Action and Response for Mental Health Ministry Report), support of our National Church and of Lutheran Theological Seminary, funds to the Lutheran Campus Ministries *Drive for Five* campaign; and other recipients included charitable groups that had received support from Augustana in the past or who represent the vision that the congregation had for ongoing ministry in a particular area.

The congregation also established an *Augustana Heritage* gift which will provide in-perpetuity gifts to Lutheran Campus Ministry, to *En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador* and any subsequent international missions that follow this mission; and to a third charity which reflects the past and present vision that the congregation has for ongoing ministry.

**Ecumenical Partnerships.** Relationships continue to grow with those in similar leadership, particularly in the Anglican Church of Canada, the Roman Catholic Church, Ukrainian Catholic Church, the United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church. On a regular basis those in Edmonton and in Calgary meet for conversation, reflection and to share common concerns.



**Refugee Sponsorships.** Many ABT Synod congregations have become refugee sponsors or have explored becoming one. Some congregations have committed to sponsoring one or more families; some are still deciding. Many congregations are working collaboratively with other Lutheran congregations or church denominations. It is wonderful to hear so many stories of interest and commitment. Thank you, all, for exploring this important and life-changing ministry

### **Mission Priorities and Outcomes 2016-2018**

The Synod Council will be bringing for your review and affirmation Mission Priorities and Outcomes for the biennium 2016-2018. As we gather in Convention we will be reviewing and reflection on each Mission Priority through the prepared videos. The Priorities are the same as the previous two years, however you will notice that there are two additional outcomes, e. and f., within Collaborative Partnerships.

**Recommendation from Synod Council:** Reflecting our mission statement, our vision and the Evangelical Declaration, our mission priorities and outcomes for the biennium 2016-2018 are as follows:

#### **1. SPIRIT-LED LEADERSHIP is characterized by trust in the Holy Spirit who “calls us through the Gospel, enlightens us with gifts, sanctifies and keeps us in true faith.”**

- a. Listening and discernment is modeled throughout the Synod enabling leaders to cultivate a passion for their call and use the gifts entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit.
- b. Lay and rostered leaders are equipped and empowered to practice the disciplines of Biblical engagement, prayer and spiritual direction.
- c. Faithful, accountable and wise disciples mentor, encourage, and mutually equip the body of Christ.
- d. Innovative organizational structures, governance models, and approaches to conflict resolution will reflect the incarnational presence of Jesus.
- e. Candidates for rostered ministry who hear the call to serve God in the church, are identified, mentored and provided with support and information.

#### **2. HOPE-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP is expressed through ministries which embrace the diversity of all participants and the unity of the body of Christ working together for the glory of God.**

- a. Together in Christ we live with discernment and spiritual practices modeled and taught for faith formation.

- a. All people, with the uniqueness of their gifts, are welcomed as valued partners in ministry with clear expectations of service.
- b. Ministries are encouraged to equip, support and inspire one another.
- c. A life of stewardship that strengthens the body of Christ is practiced.

#### **3. INNOVATIVE TRADITION is embraced and uplifted as an expression of God at work in and through the Synod in Jesus’ name.**

- a. Formative worship that proclaims the Gospel, shapes the living of our baptismal vocation and prepares the way for openness to change.
- b. Creative approaches to ministry, focused on the centrality of Christ, are supported with respect and interest.
- c. Experimentation and risk is encouraged, allowing for flexibility, possible failure and exciting possibilities.

#### **4. COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS reflect the communion of saints and the interconnected nature of the Triune God as witness to the restoration, redemption and reconciliation of the world.**

- a. Seeking justice and mercy, ministries collaborate in ventures of service with other groups and agencies to express God’s grace and love.
- b. Serving with the Anglican Church of Canada whenever possible, and strengthening connections to other ecumenical partnerships, witnessing mutual respect and good stewardship.
- c. A culture of caring conversations, encouragement, hopeful opportunity and accountability is expressed and developed.
- d. Collaborative and co-operative experiments are initiated and supported throughout the Synod.
- e. We work with Synod, with the ELCIC and, through the ELCIC with International partners.
- f. We will focus on abiding in right relations with Indigenous Peoples.

### **Western Synods**

**Development of Lay Academy.** The four western Synods and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, are working together in the development of a Lay Academy. A working group has been formed to explore the rationale, values, needs and timelines. (Ron Schlegelmilch and I represent the ABT Synod). We also have begun a conversation as to the type of curriculum required and have noted that the Lay Academy also could accommodate some of the requirements outlined in the “ELCIC Policy Regarding Authorized Lay Ministry.” The working group has generated

a resource database of prospective teachers/facilitators for the Lay Academy. A “needs assessment” questionnaire was distributed to a number of congregations spring 2016 to define the curriculum even further. The establishment of the Lay Academy is in response to the leadership needs of congregations and to the interest expressed by lay people for a comprehensive program of study. I believe that the development of the Lay Academy is vitally important as the church undergoes a shift in its human resources over the coming decades. Congregations are becoming smaller, which means that fewer of them will be able to support financially a full-time pastor. As a result, more pastors likely will be serving multi-point parishes. The means that there will be a shift in the role of pastor and the way in which congregations relate to one another. As a result, there needs to be an increased emphasis on lay education and training, so that these lay leaders may work in consort with the pastor in such a system. Such a shift also provides us with another opportunity to imagine, frame and implement another way of being church.

**Lutheran Theological Seminary.** I am very pleased with the work of Acting President Michael Nel as he leads our seminary through this very important transition time. His training and expertise in Bowen Systems Theory and in working as a consultant with synods and rostered ministers enables him to bring an experienced eye to some of the challenges facing the seminary. As this is only a two-year appointment, the Board of Governors has begun the formal process of a presidential search and a full review of its governance structure.

### National Church

Because of our identity within our **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**, our Synod enjoys a missional reach far beyond the boundaries of our region. Through **our national church** we are linked **laterally** with four other synods; **nationally** with the ELCA, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Canadian Council of Churches and Kairos; and **globally** with the Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches. Our Companion Synod relationship with The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and our ministry, *En Misión Con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador*, is an expression of our **global connections**.

The 2013 ELCIC National Convention made decisions that require changes to Synod constitutions and bylaws in a coordinated way. Here is the **timeline** that will lead to triennial conventions for your information:

2016 – Synod Conventions elect delegates for 2017 National Convention.

2017 – National Convention meets in MNO Synod.

2018 – Synod Conventions elect delegates for 2019 National Convention. Synod bishop elections are for 6-year terms.

2019 – National Convention meets in Joint Assembly with Anglican Church of Canada in British Columbia. National Bishop election is for a 6-year term.

2021 – Synod Conventions – first ones in the triennial schedule.

2022 – National Convention – first one in the triennial schedule.

Our Synod was privileged to host three ELCIC national events in 2014 and 2015. Thank you to the great multitude of volunteers who prepared for these “OUTSTANDING” events: **National Diaconal Formation Event**, July 13-20, 2014, Edmonton; **National Lutheran and Anglican Worship Conference**, July 20-23, 2014, Edmonton; and the **ELCIC National Convention**, July 9-12, 2015, Edmonton. What a marvelous job of planning, hosting, welcoming and serving. Much thanks to all!

**Companion of the Worship Arts.** During the 2014 National Anglican and Lutheran Worship Conference **Dr. Joy Berg** was awarded the Companion of the Worship Arts. For the first time the Anglican Church of Canada awarded the Companion of the Worship Arts to an Anglican, **The Rev. Dr. Graham Cotter**.

**Retirement Education Sessions.** In November 2015 two retirement education sessions in Edmonton and in Calgary were offered through our **ELCIC Group Services Inc.** and were very well attended and very informative.

**Reformation 2017.** The Lutheran World Federation invites us to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation during the years 2015-2017. I encourage you to make use of the many resources found on the ELCIC and the Lutheran World Federation websites. There you will find study documents, theological reflections and, of course, the Reformation Challenge.

As a Church, we have committed ourselves to an ELCIC Reformation Challenge that involves:

1. Sponsoring 500 Refugees to Canada;
2. Planting 500,000 trees;
3. Providing 500 Scholarships for ELCJHL Schools (Jordan and the Holy Land); and,
4. Giving \$500,000 to the LWF Endowment Fund.

Additional Information is available on the ELCIC national church website, including the opportunity to register your

commitment as individuals, congregations, conferences, etc.. ([www.elcic.ca/ReformationChallenge/default.cfm](http://www.elcic.ca/ReformationChallenge/default.cfm))

The offerings received at the opening and closing worship services of our 2016 Synod Convention have been designated by our Synod Council to be divided between the LWF Endowment Fund portion of the Reformation Challenge and the ABT Synod Bishop's Discretionary Fund.

I encourage delegates to invite people from their congregations to send financial gifts with each delegate for these very important ministries.

### Other Ministry

**Bishop Self-Care and Spiritual Renewal.** As per Synod Council policy, Bishop Self-Care and Spiritual Renewal, I continue to take a one-day personal retreat each month and twice a year take a two-day personal retreat. Each retreat period also provides the opportunity to see a Spiritual Director. I am thankful for this care and support from our Synod. I continue to meet on a regular basis with a committee of two retired rostered and two lay leaders.

**Continuing Education.** I participate along with my ELCIC Bishop Colleagues at the annual Bishop's Academy with the ELCA Bishops. Informative in 2016 were four presentations and facilitated conversations around topics pertinent to the calling of Bishop. Keynote presenter was the Rev. Dr. William Willimon.

**Lutheran Theological Seminary Course.** I taught a senior-level course at LTS fall 2015: *Liturgical Practices in Praxis*. September 14-15; November 7, 9 and 10, 2015. This was life-giving for me and provided an opportunity to be with students, staff and faculty at our Seminary.

**Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission.** I welcome the opportunity to continue serving as an appointed member of the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission (JALC). The work of this commission is energizing, informative and reflects well our own mission priority of Collaborative Partnerships.

**House of Bishops and Conference of Bishops.** Yearly the Anglican and Lutheran Bishops gather for learning, encouragement, relationship building and worship. Together with Bishop Greg Mohr I am part of a small group of Bishops planning for our gatherings.

**Faith, Order and Doctrine.** At the September 2014 meeting of National Church Council I was appointed to complete the term (December 2015) of Bishop Cindy Halmarson on the National Church Council's Faith, Order and Doctrine committee. I was subsequently appointed by

National Church Council to serve beyond December 2015. Our current focus has been the direction from National Church Council regarding Orders of Ministry.

**Advisory group – Authorized Lay Ministries.** I was appointed by NCC to a three-member advisory group to develop guidelines for Authorized Lay Ministries. Appointments of one member from The Program Committee for Leadership Ministry and from The Program Committee for Worship have been made and our work has just begun.

**Delegate to LWF Assembly.** National Church Council recently appointed delegates to the Lutheran World Federation's 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly which will take place in May 2017 in Namibia, with a pre-assembly gathering in Suriname, South America in August 2016. I am honored (and excited!) to be one of the delegates journeying with National Bishop Susan Johnson, Rev. Katherine Altenburg (Eastern Synod) and Dan LeBlanc (SASK Synod).

I continue to seek to minister with the Core Values of: **affirmation, involvement and servant-leadership**. My personal mission is: **to engage, empower and equip for ministry**.

### With Gratitude

In conclusion, I wish to offer my thanks to God for so many people:

- + for my wife, **Cathy**, and our children, for their support and encouragement;
- + again, for Synod staff who have served over the past biennium and who form a wonderful synod staff team without whom I simply would not be able to function;
- + for the synod officers, Chairperson **Tim Posyluzny**, who has given of himself generously in service to the Synod and who has discerned not to seek re-election; Treasurer **Stephen Wildfang** who has gone above the call of duty in his service to the Synod; and Secretary **Marilyn Murray** who so capably serves;
- + for the members of the Synod Council for their dedication and service, especially those who are no longer eligible to serve another term, **The Rev. Paul McCormick** and **Wayne Street**, and **The Rev. Gary Aicken** who has discerned not to let his name stand for re-election; **The Rev. David Holmes** who completed his term as the Anglican Church of Canada's representative;
- + for members of the Standing Committees of Synod Council – the Examining Committee, the Committee for Theological Education and

Leadership, and the Constitutional Review Committee;

- + for all the ministry team members who work on your behalf in support of the ministries of the synod;
- + for my Bishop colleagues who provide an unparalleled support group for my ministry;
- + for the conference deans currently serving and those who completed this calling during the biennium, their families and congregations who give of their time and energy beyond their full-time ministries to serve the needs of the conferences – **The Rev. Kathy Calkins and The Rev. John Lentz, The Rev. Kristian Wold and The Rev. Dennis Aicken, The Rev. Reg Berg, The Rev. Eleanor Ness, and The Rev. Trish Schmermund and The Rev. Markus Wilhelm;**
- + for all lay and rostered leaders with whom I have enjoyed a wonderful working relationship;
- + and to all the members of our congregations and specialized ministries who work and pray and support the work of the church in so many ways.

It is a privilege to serve as your Bishop.

**I believe there is a growing renewed focus and vision in our Synod.** I believe this will also be our experience at our Convention: *Liberated by God's Grace.*

**There is a commitment, I believe, to moving forward in mission together. Discerning where God is at work. And joining God in God's mission.**

**This is a time for prayer, conversation and discernment together.**

**This is a time for shaping, for transformation guided by the Holy Spirit, and confident in the nurturing, healing, forgiving, life-giving water and Word of our baptism into Christ.**

Thank you for your partnership in mission. God's richest blessings as you gather for worship and work together at the Synod Convention.

***"The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).***

In Christ Jesus –  
Shalom,  
+ Larry Kochendorfer

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## Abiding in Right Relations (AiRR) Ministry Team

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During the past 18 months a wide and rich variety of steps have occurred as the Abiding in Right Relations (AiRR) Ministry Team sought to implement Bishop Kochendorfer's vision and mandate;

"One of my desires as Bishop of the ABT Synod is to gather like-minded, passionate people for conversation, consideration and discernment related to "moving forward" in promoting right and renewed relationships between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples and in tangible action both in our local contexts and in the larger reality. For me one important event and exchange was the final National Truth & Reconciliation Commission event which took place here in Edmonton in March 2014 ... "

Following 2 'internal' sessions that encompassed the Treaties 6, 7 and 8 areas there were 2 further significant steps forward made during the 2015 Synod Study Conference for Rostered Workers. In addition to the presence and some input from indigenous members' congregations in the northern Conference, there were also insights from the Anglican National Indigenous Bishop, Mark MacDonald, in his keynote speaker role during the Conference itself. A significant and focused discussion also took place on the Wednesday night of that 2015 Study Conference. As 'volunteers' during their own time, 21 people gathered with Anglican Indigenous Bishop Mark McDonald for a working dinner to discuss ways to move this important ministry forward as a priority in our Synod.

In addition to this collaborative and consultative work done before, and especially at, the Synod Study Conference in Feb. 2015 we:

- dealt briefly with Indigenous Rights issues during the April 2015 Congregational Life learning event held in Red Deer in a workshop that focused on 'natural resource extraction';
- in the Spring of 2015 encouraged the planting of 'Heart Gardens' in our Conferences right before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued their report in June. We know that at least two 'Heart Gardens' were planted as a concrete expression of solidarity with both the past (residential schools) and into the future (First Nations Child and Family Services) with a focus

- on children, their families and communities;
- met with KAIROS Executive Director Jennifer Henry in July 2015 as she prepared to address the ELCIC National Church Convention in Edmonton regarding the repudiation of “Doctrine of Discovery”. The motion was passed by the ELCIC; and,
- organized a cross border ELCIC and ELCA (Montana Synod), interdenominational (mainly Anglicans and Episcopalians), indigenous and non-indigenous learning event in Airdrie on Nov 20th and 21st. 69 people attended this “Abiding in Right Relations – Laying the Foundation” event (30 Anglicans/Episcopalians; 29 Lutherans (ELCIC and ELCA); and 10 others). Event participants and panelists were from Canada and the United States. They were Indigenous and non-Indigenous, young adults and not-so-young adults. Canadian participants were from Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 Land.
- facilitated the KAIROS “Blanket Exercise” with the Synod Council during their March 2016 Mulhurst retreat. Also present for this part of the agenda was National Bishop Susan Johnson who, like everyone else, willingly and fully participated in the exercise, and then the subsequent debrief.

### ***Moving Forward:***

Between Aug. 17th and 21st, 2015 the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) held their 8th triennial Sacred Circle. At the Sacred Circle session, National Bishop Susan Johnson invited Sacred Circle participants to enter into more formal working relationships. (Please see this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJdxR0bRy8o>). After an “informal start” it will bring you up to date about our ongoing working relationship with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, a major partner within the Anglican Church of Canada. We will certainly hear more about this through the National ELCIC Bishop’s Office.

Our ongoing commitment to the vision and work of ACIP and Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Anglican Indigenous Bishop, is clear. Into the future we will continue to work with our Anglican partners as we strive to build better relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

KAIROS is a major resource for our ecumenical work. Our ecumenical partnership with KAIROS has been ongoing for over 40 years, starting with Project North and its focus on

the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proposal. In 2015 we encouraged all congregation and individuals within our Synod to sign the ‘Winds of Change’ petition in support of the TRC Call to Action #62. Copies of the petition are available for signing at the Convention, and more information is available on line.

(<http://www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/windsofchange-overview>)

We have worked towards the creation of material and actions for the June 2016 Synod Convention in Camrose. The latest motion by our National Church, at the July 2015 Convention, to repudiate the ‘Doctrine of Discovery’ will assist us in our work. The March 2016 statement by the ELCIC National Church Council (NCC), as a follow-up to the TRC call to action #48, will also guide our ongoing work. This NCC action follows the ELCIC’s 2011 and 2015 National Convention motions; the June 2015 “Calls to Action” from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and, our National Bishop’s commitment to the implementation, at all levels, of the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We have begun to utilize the AiRR link on the Synod’s web-page. (<http://albertasynod.ca/ministries/right-relations/>). This link leads to other resources that address advocacy/issue, service and educational needs.

Leading up to an event, with a Montana venue, likely in October 2017, we look forward to work again with the Montana Synod [ELCA], Calgary Diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Episcopal Diocese of Montana. This work will be very cognizant of the Blackfoot Confederacy which has always been within what is now Northern Montana and Southern Alberta. The lead on this work will be taken by a group established and led by Bishop Jessica Crist of the ELCA Montana Synod.

### ***In conclusion:***

We give thanks for our growing working relationship with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples [ACIP].

We give thanks for the personal relationships that were either established or deepened at the November Airdrie event in the Treaty 7 area. We look forward to working with our indigenous, cross-border and ecumenical partners within the Blackfoot Confederacy area.

We know that ‘abiding in right relations’ means that we listen and act, and study and learn by doing; remembering our covenant relationships as reflected in Treaties and Church statements for over 30 years. Abiding in right relations means being in relationship Indigenous Peoples

while constantly working with Indigenous Peoples as they assist us to implement both the June 2015 TRC Calls to Action and the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Submitted by co-chairs, Carl Rausch and Rev. Ann Salmon on behalf of the Abiding in Right Relations Ministry Team.

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## Congregational Action and Response for Mental Health (CARE) Ministry Team

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God calls us, through the Gospel, to serve all people as we are able.

Mental wellness and health issues are a serious concern in our society and our congregations. It is estimated that one in five Canadians is living with a mental health issue. Individuals and their families, and our communities, are affected significantly. The people of the Church and our congregations have a special role to play in supporting all persons to achieve mental health.

But often we do not have the information or the skills to do that effectively. The CARE Ministry Team is a Synod initiative to promote mental wellness and health in our congregations and in our communities.

CARE is supported by a grant from the former Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church in Edmonton. Augustana's own 85-year ministry had made it aware of mental health and wellness issues in its neighbourhood. One way the congregation chose to leave a legacy was through a gift of \$100,000.00 to the Synod of Alberta and the Territories to be used for a Mental Health Awareness Initiative.

Bishop Kochendorfer established a Synod Ministry Team to guide the work. CARE has a number of goals, one of which is to assist congregations to become more informed of mental health issues in society and the church; a second is to share resources and ideas within the Synod.

CARE focuses on the following priorities:

- raising awareness of the reality of mental health issues in congregations;
- educating and training lay people and rostered leaders about mental illness, and helpful responses;
- identifying and providing resources available to congregations; and

- encouraging the development of local responses by congregations.

There are clearly organizations and agencies which are already addressing these issues. There are initiatives within church bodies related to mental health issues that can inform our work. We are blessed with many community resources; many which we might call secular. That in no way makes them resources we should avoid or ignore, as they are good resources.

CARE melds these resources with a faith perspective; that is a very intentional goal. Our Lutheran theology speaks very much to mental well-being.

The CARE Ministry Team is actively engaged in how best to bring these resources to the people and congregations of the Synod, and how best to work with congregations so that they can support and minister to people, families, and communities wherever and in whatever way mental health is an issue. The ABT Synod website has a page which focuses on CARE; it provides information and resources which congregations are encouraged to be aware of and use.

In February, 2016, the CARE Team and Synod leaders participated in a two-day workshop of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). MHFA workshops are provided by trained facilitators in many places across the Synod's territory, and have varying focuses.

CARE provides financial support to congregations through \$100.00 "scholarships" provided to every ABT Synod congregation in support of members enrolling in MHFA workshops – up to three per congregation.

The Synod Study Conference in January, 2016, with its presenter Dr. Sharon Smith of Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, was a means of raising awareness and discussing the Initiative.

The April 23 Congregational Life Event in Red Deer focused on mental health and wellness, again with Dr. Sharon Smith as main presenter, and a variety of workshops focused on mental health care.

The CARE Ministry Team met at the All Ministry Team meetings in Red Deer on May 7, to develop further ways congregations and their members can be assisted in this import ministry.

CARE aims to do more than talk about the issue – we want to make a difference.

Submitted by Carl Sorensen (Chair)

On behalf of the CARE Ministry Team: Marcus Busch, Al Johnson, Dianne Kieren, Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, Rev. Keith Loewen, Rev. Mike Lynch (Anglican Church), Rev. Richard Reimer, Rev. Kathie Schmitke, Barb Stolee, and Rev. Marty Tuer

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## Leadership Development Ministry Team

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The Leadership Development Ministry Team is responsible to plan and provide opportunities to enhance skills in leadership for laypeople and rostered personnel in the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. Accountable to the Bishop's Office, it helps to fulfill the Synod Mission Priorities for 2014-2016 of *Spirit-led Leadership*, (equipping and empowering to practice the disciplines of Biblical engagement, prayer and spiritual direction), and *Hope-filled Discipleship* (encouraging, equipping, supporting, and inspiring ministries within the Synod).

For many years the Leadership Development Committee has organized a day-long workshop in the spring intended for church councils to enhance their skills at leadership within their congregations. In 2015 the annual Church Council workshop was re-named the Congregational Life Workshop to reflect a wider scope for the intended participants. Not only for church council members, this workshop is valuable for any interested congregation member and potential leader in the community. The 2015 workshop was titled, "Justice, Love, Faith and the Renewal of the Church" with the keynote speaker Rev. Ryan Andersen. In 2016 the Leadership Development committee collaborated with the Synod's Congregational Action and Response (CARE) Ministry Team to bring Dr. Sharon Smith of Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries to speak on "Walking Together: Mental Health Through Our Lifetime".

For several years the Lay Pastoral Assistant program met a need in the Synod to offer in-depth training for those who wish to take leadership roles in the parish. Since the program was originally established, a variety of educational opportunities have become available in the Synod, including

the annual Retreat of Our Own, courses offered by the Ronning Centre in Edmonton/Camrose, lectures from the Wisdom Centre in Calgary, and new initiatives from the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon. In light of the many educational events now available, the committee decided to re-focus its efforts on advertising the existing opportunities to Synod members rather than organizing events under the umbrella of the LPA program. The last LPA seminar was held in January 2015 with the Rev. Dr. Gordon Jensen.

In a changing church context, the Leadership Development Committee is seeking new ways to fulfil its mandate to train and grow leaders, lay and rostered, in our Synod. We look forward to increasing our collaboration with other educational partners in the church.

Since 2014, long-serving members of the Leadership Development Committee have retired; many thanks go to Janet Charlton, Anne Lyseng, and Sharon Villetard. Current members are Brenda Bohmer, Madeleine Staub Odegard, Rev. Kristian Wold, and Rev. Lee Woolery.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Kristian Wold

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## Missional Formation Ministry Team

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The Missional Formation team includes members of the former Canadian Missions Committee, members of the Missional Network Synodical team, as well as people interested in the future God has for congregations and ministries across the Synod. The practices and attitudes gained in missional formation encourage and support the Synod's *Mission Priorities* of *Spirit-led Leadership*, *Hope-filled Discipleship*, *Innovative Tradition* and *Collaborative Partnerships*.

The team focusses on three areas:

- 1. Encourage experiments and opportunities which support missional formation.**  
Across the synod, congregations have been wondering how we can faithfully be following God's leading (using spiritual practices of listening to God, each other and the neighbourhood; discernment; followed by experiments and reflections). This open ended journey of discovery with no end point or goal in

mind, is one of simply wondering together what joining in God's activity in the neighbourhoods and communities around each congregation might look like.

## 2. Encourage and support mission congregations financially.

Partnership support from Synodical Canadian Missions funding for congregations and leaders was distributed to congregations (two in 2015 and two in 2016). The ELCIC Canadian Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) monies were granted for support to mission congregations, ethnic specific ministries, and congregational re-development. In both 2015 and 2016, four congregations in the Synod received financial support. These grants also provide funds for Synod training and equipping of pastors and laity for mission. Historically, the CECF funds supported the development of new mission starts, particularly the cost of pastoral leadership. This national committee is reviewing the use and criteria for this fund and has initiated an ELCIC Creative Initiatives experiment.

## 3. Grant funding for ELCIC Creative Initiatives CECF experiment.

At the February 2015 meeting of the National Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF), the following challenge was articulated: Despite our desire to use the CECF fund faithfully, creatively and effectively, we are unsure how to participate in God's mission today in our changing local contexts. Hence we do not know how to best steward the use of the CECF resources (formerly used to buy land and mortgage new buildings). This ELCIC, CECF fund provided a total of 200K for use in 2015 – 2018 in support of activities in this Synod which are experimental in spirit and genuinely seek to explore what it means to participate in God's mission in the world today.

Funding has been allocated to the following experiments: Lenten Art worship in a local mall; developing a missional cohort for ABT Synod interns; synodical leadership of second The Missional Network (TMN) iteration; and missional lay leadership development in a congregational setting. More funding is available. Other experiments include hearing stories

about budding relationships with refugees across the Synod and providing a Church council experience to explore missional attitudes and practices.

Members of the committee are: Gerda Windiate, Sheryl Dubois, Penny Johnson, Rev. Jeff Decelle, Rev. Dr. Tim Wray and Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, Chair,  
Assistant to the Bishop for Mission

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## Study Conference Planning Ministry Team

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The Study Conference Planning Committee has a single mandate: to plan and oversee the annual Study Conference for Rostered Clergy and Church workers, held for more than 20 years at the Coast Canmore Hotel & Conference Centre, Canmore, the first Monday to Thursday of February.

The 2016 conference was held January 25-28 because of a World Cup ski event held the first week in February, which meant that all hotel accommodations were filled. Our plans always include a keynote speaker on some current topic of theological and pastoral interest, and many opportunities for outdoor recreation, rest and socializing among colleagues.

The keynote speaker this year was the Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen, who operates the OMG Center for Theological Conversation in Sioux Falls, SD. Her topic for the presentations in Canmore used the LWF theme for the 500th anniversary celebrations in 2017: "Liberated by God's Grace: Creation Not for Sale, Human Beings Not for Sale, Salvation Not for Sale." For our Thursday morning presentation, usually a more hands-on topic, we heard Dr. Sharon Smith, of Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, Vancouver, speaking about "The Lived Experience of Mental Health Recovery and the Gifts of a Christian Community". Her presentation was funded by our Synod's CARE Ministry Team, formed to help congregations address mental health issues as a community.

Next year's speaker is the Rev. Dr. Dirk Lange, Associate Professor of Worship at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. One of the most interesting facts in his biography is his experience as a brother of the Taize Community in France, which no doubt was an influence in his becoming a



professor of worship. Because it will be 2017, his presentations will likely be a further exploration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation theme.

Members of the committee are the Rev. Faith Brace, Cochrane; Cathy Kochendorfer, Edmonton; the Rev. Kevin Powell, Calgary; and the Rev. Dr. Tim Wray, Airdrie.

Rev. Faith Brace, Chair

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## Synod Campus Ministry Team

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The Synod Campus Ministry Team (SCMT) provides assistance to chaplains and local campus ministry councils to provide a Lutheran and Christian witness at post-secondary institutions in five communities across Alberta and is partially funded from Synod benevolence.

Following conversation and decision-making at our Synod's September 2014 All Ministry Team Meeting, it was determined that the composition, Operational Guidelines and Terms of Reference of SCMT would be changed, edited and/or newly drafted to meet a need for participation on the SCMT by those most closely connected: chaplains and local councils. Meetings now include the chaplains, a representative (usually the chair) of each local campus council, and the Bishop.

We give thanks to those conference representatives who have served previously on SCMT: South West Rep.: Laverne Rude, Calgary; East Central Rep.: Rev. Bonnie Arends, Camrose; West Central Rep.: Diaconal Minister Virginia Burke, Clive; Northern Rep.: Rev. Aaron Schnell, Spruce Grove; Southern Rep: Les Pearson, Medicine Hat - appointed by Synod Office.

We give thanks to those who serve on Local Campus Ministries and to our Chaplains:

Rev. Richard Reimer - LCM U of A Chaplain  
Rev. Jason Anderson – NAIT Chaplain  
Rev. Margaret Propp - LCM U of C Chaplain  
Rev. Canon Erin Phillips - ECM Lethbridge  
Chaplain Lisa Waites - ECM Medicine Hat College  
Rev. Craig Wentland - Augustana Chaplaincy Chaplain  
Robyn Simpson Mohr - Augustana Assistant for Chaplaincy (retired 2015)  
Sarah Smith – Augustana, Assistant for Chaplaincy

We give thanks to God for the financial gifts given to Synod Campus Ministries from the Augustana Lutheran, Edmonton congregation upon the sale of its property and for the legacy funding to Lutheran Campus Ministry in our Synod.

We are excited to share that a grant from the Lutheran Triune Educational and Benevolent Society, Calgary enabled Lutheran Campus Ministry-Edmonton to initiate a new chaplaincy at NAIT! Rev. Jason Anderson's two-year contract began in February of 2015.

With gratitude we give thanks for a grant from the Lutheran Triune Educational and Benevolent Society, Calgary for El Salvadoran Lutheran artist, Christian Chavarria, to journey through the Synod, including presenting at the January 2016 Young Adults retreat at Camp Kuriakos.

The chaplains from each local Campus Ministry have provided the following reports:

### Augustana Chaplaincy, Camrose

Rev. Craig Wentland

Augustana Chaplaincy is marking a year of transition with the retirement of Robyn Simpson Mohr in the spring and the hiring of a new Assistant for Chaplaincy, Sarah Smith. Sarah is an alumna of Augustana, served as a student chaplain for three years and last spring completed a MDiv degree at Ambrose Seminary in Calgary. We are pleased to have a former student who has a passion for Augustana and campus ministry in this position. We are confident that we trained her up well. Last fall Augustana Chaplaincy initiated a new fundraising event called The Good Wine First. This was a seven course, farm-to-table, gourmet meal prepared by chefs who volunteered their time, served by students, and accompanied with a partial pairing of local wines. It was a well-received event that provided exposure for local producers and support for Chaplaincy. Finally, Augustana Chaplaincy has articulated a new overarching theme and vision for our ministry outlined in a witty little booklet entitled Table Manners 101. It is the communion table which provides the shape for our ministry and primary formation for the students in their vocations. The booklet will be available at the convention.

### Ecumenical Campus Ministry, Lethbridge

Rev. Canon Erin Phillips

2015 was an exciting one for ECM-Lethbridge as we celebrated 20 years of ministry at Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge! In October 2014 we began a year of celebrations with a service in Markin Hall at the

university. Over a hundred people from both campuses and the community attended and our student group providing rocking music! In October of 2015 we concluded the celebrations with a potluck for ECM volunteers and board members from the past 20 years.

Our focus on food and thought continues. We held two very successful end of term dinners at the college, handed out over 700 bags of groceries at the university and fed our student group supper every week.

Our student group, the Theology Reading Group, thrived with great turn out and lively discussion every week. This year's Cade Community lecture series also went very well with four lively weeks looking at place and identity.

This year we began two new big projects: a study of post-secondary poverty and a refugee sponsorship group. A research group of individuals from both campuses has been working all year on a major series of focus groups and surveys to take place next year on issues concerning poverty for our students. And a group made up of university people, three Anglican churches and a group from the community joined together to sponsor four Syrian families. Out of that initiative a group of students have also formed a World University Service of Canada (WUSC) club and have raised enough money to sponsor a refugee student this coming fall.

We are truly blessed to be involved in this ministry!

### **Ecumenical Campus Ministry, Medicine Hat Chaplain Lisa Waites**

The past two Academic years at Medicine Hat College were filled with new opportunities for the MHECM to deepen existing relationships with on-campus and community partners, and to establish new connections, too. As your Chaplain, I was invited to act as a facilitator for a weekly stress reduction program that the college initiated for staff, students, and faculty alike. The responses from the campus community toward MHECM are overwhelmingly positive. Thanks be to God!

Chaplaincy continues to be a ministry full of crisis counselling and pastoral care for students experiencing a wide range of typical young adult challenges, and, quite often, additional concerns of a more serious nature.

Hospitality continues to be an important theme for MHECHM. Our weekly soup and a bun free lunch was very popular with the students from October-April. Other popular

food ministries included our Christmas Hamper program (150 hampers delivered last December 2015, many to students who are also single parents) and our spring "Snack Pack" initiative, which was held for two weeks in April, during final exams. This year, more than 12,000 individually packaged snacks (granola and protein bars, nuts and dried fruit, and juice boxes) along with 500+ pounds of fresh bananas, apples, and oranges were distributed to students.

Christian programming included weekly "Campus Alpha" sessions in the fall semester, and "Life Tree Café" in the winter and spring terms. A weekly drop-in Bible Study and prayer group was also offered, along with connections to on and off-campus opportunities for Christian worship and discipleship. I was the staff advisor for a student church group called "Encounter Church."

I also invited a United Church Overseas Personnel staffer to talk about her work in South Korea; on the day of her presentation, the room overflowed with international students. Outreach events included a 5km Walk for Justice on behalf of the International Justice Mission in the fall, the Coldest Night anti-homelessness initiative in the winter term, an anti-slavery movie night and letter-writing campaign, and prayer walks around the campus on a monthly basis, weather-permitting. I have also been asked to sit on the newly formed Medicine Hat College Circle on Indigenous Peoples, a committee that seeks to decolonize the college and implement the list of Truth and Reconciliation recommendations. I hope to offer the Kairos "Blanket Exercise" on campus next year. We hope to hold several cultural events next year.

My future hopes for the ministry include further development of church partners. I dream of having representation from every Christian church and ministry as members of our society, and a diverse board of directors filled with the wisdom of our city and region. I pray for continued stable funding and for the financial viability to increase this position further during the academic year, so that all students at Medicine Hat College would have access to the MHECM, and through our ministry, to the compassion and hope that Jesus Christ freely offers to every living soul.

The beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year marked the fifth year of Chaplaincy services at Medicine Hat College. I thank God for the continued ability to share the love of God with students in this college community.

## Lutheran Campus Ministry, Calgary

### Rev. Margaret Propp

The Lutheran Campus Ministry-Calgary has implemented a new leadership programme called the Peer Partnership Programme (PPP). In partnership with the United and Presbyterian chaplaincies, Campus Ministry has partnered with two Calgary congregations (Hope Lutheran and Advent Lutheran) in this pilot programme, which we hope to expand to other congregations. Student leaders while receiving co-curricular credit from the University of Calgary and an honorarium from the congregations will participate and facilitate in theological learning, leadership, and outreach. The Women of Faith Grant from the ELCIC has made implementing this programme possible.

The University of Calgary chaplaincy continues to operate at a 40% position and hope to increase the Lutheran presence to full time. In 2015, our fundraising dinner involved a "Sushi Making Night" followed by Holden Evening Prayer; and in 2016, our fundraising dinner involved a "Taco Night" followed by Holden Evening Prayer. With many people participating, including students, each dinner was a celebration.

In September I am involved with other Christian chaplains for the medical school internment held at Queens park cemetery. This service is held to honor the bodies donated and now interned after their time with the medical school. I had the honor to participate and help host a Blackfoot sweat lodge ceremony with the United/Presbyterian chaplaincy and Elder Casey Eagle Speaker. This event was held in the fall with approximately 20 students in attendance. This unique and powerful experience was new to me, and challenged some of my misconceptions of Aboriginal spirituality.

I was approached by the University to assist in a new co-curricular course offered through the Faith and Spirituality Centre called the Kaleidoscope project. This project invites students to engage in learning, conversation and action with others who may have a different background or viewpoint in order to build a more engaged and diverse community on campus and in Calgary – a community that works together, regardless of religious tradition, spirituality, culture, identity, sexual orientation, gender, and personal or political views. This course with over 20 students spent reading week at the FJC Centre (Catholic Retreat Centre) in Calgary and used it as the home base to visit different sacred spaces of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jewish faith. We had guest speakers present, and also looked at case studies of real life events where the secular

and religious sphere intersected and required intentional conversation and action. As the chaplain, my role was to facilitate reflection and debriefing of the students' experiences.

The 2016 annual young adults retreat at Kuriakos was a fabulous weekend with approximately 60 students in attendance. Christian Chavarria from El Salvador was our guest speaker and provided a powerful and grace filled weekend with his sharing of story, artistic abilities, and presence. Calgary was able to bring 12 people in total to the retreat, which was a real highlight (with almost a third of the people not coming from a Christian background and being interested in participating!)

Lutheran campus ministry continues to be a joyous and exciting ministry, which I feel, truly blessed to be called to. I hope this ministry continues to be a priority to the wider church as we struggle to support it financially.

## Lutheran Campus Ministry, Edmonton

### Rev. Richard Reimer

Celebrating a Double Anniversary: this year's Friends of Lutheran Campus Ministry-Edmonton Annual Banquet celebrated a remarkable 60 years of ministry! The banquet also celebrated the 25th year of Rev. Richard Reimer's call through the Synod of Alberta and the Territories to serve as Lutheran Chaplain at the University of Alberta. Richard reflected on the unique contribution of campus ministry to the calling of the church and the university in his presentation, "God in the Quad" (posted online at: <http://albertasynod.ca/ministries/campus-ministry/university-of-alberta-edmonton/>).

We are excited and grateful for the momentum God has given us in our 60th year, particularly as we grow with a new part time ministry to NAIT by Chaplain Jason Anderson while continuing Richard's full time ministry at the University of Alberta.

Developing Student Leadership: this year, under the theme, "Creating Hope Shaped Community," the Lutheran Student Movement (LSM) raised over \$2,000 to support the work of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) in settling Syrian refugees locally. The LSM Executive invited an array of speakers to talk about what it means to create hope within our community, guests such as Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, Sheena Abar, the U of A's Community Social Work Team Coordinator, representatives from the EMCN, and, finally, two brothers who arrived from Syria this past year. At the annual Young Adult Retreat that LSM helped

organize, Christian Chiavarra, El Salvadoran artist, inspired participants with paradoxical hope—recounting horrifying atrocities suffered by his family and his life as a refugee, and yet testifying to the saving presence of God, leading him to paint hope for his country into crosses that have reached even the hands of the Pope! He also led us in a wonderful, creative session of painting our own crosses!

Promoting “right relations”: In 2015 Lutheran Campus Ministry joined with the Synod of Alberta and the Territories to build on the ELCIC’s commitment to right relations with indigenous peoples by hosting a transformative weekend of events under the theme, “Walking Together: In the Spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” One hundred and forty attendees of the annual Friends of Lutheran Campus Ministry Banquet at Trinity Lutheran Church were riveted by the powerful storytelling, in word, poetry and song of MikMaq/Acadian Terri LeBlanc, founder of the North American Institute for Theological Studies. And a broad cross section, including a representative of the Mennonite Central Committee, a Muslim teacher, and a member of the provincial Department of Education, took in the moving documentary of our residential school legacy, “Gently Whispering the Circle Back,” and discussion afterward facilitated by filmmaker, Beth Wishart MacKenzie and Charles Wood, Elder from the Blue Quill First Nation that commissioned the documentary (to purchase the DVD and facilitator guide, visit: [www.bluequills.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Publications-ORDER-FORM.pdf](http://www.bluequills.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Publications-ORDER-FORM.pdf))

Creating Community: Martin Luther House continues to provide a “home away from home” where seven student residents can bring together faith, life and the university. Residents reach out to the wider student community by opening their doors for Tuesday suppers hosted by the Lutheran Student Movement. New this year, on Sunday evenings residents joined the Anglican student community for “The Worship Room” at St. George’s Anglican Church located right by the campus. To find out more about Martin Luther House, or to apply for residency, visit: <http://lcm Edmonton.ca>

Collaborating Ecumenically: The Lutheran Chaplain again coordinated the annual Festival of Lessons & Carols for Advent & Christmas, featuring the U of A Mixed Chorus and the Faculty of Education Hand bell Ringers and sponsored by the Interfaith Chaplains’ Association. This benefit raised over \$4,000 for student mental health, donated to Community Social Work and Student Counseling Services on campus. Make sure to include this year’s Festival Nov. 28th in your calendar! In another expression of Christian

unity, Lutheran, Presbyterian Reformed, Catholic, Unitarian, Pentecostal, United Church, Anglican and Baptist chaplains brought “Pancake Tuesday Mental Health Break!” to the Main Quad on Shrove Tuesday serving over 400 students!

## Lutheran Campus Ministry– NAIT, Edmonton

Rev. Jason Anderson

Extending “outreach” to NAIT: Thanks to a grant from the Lutheran Triune Educational and Benevolent Society, Lutheran Campus Ministry-Edmonton has initiated a new chaplaincy at NAIT. Rev. Jason Anderson’s two-year contract began in February of 2015. Jason dreams of developing with other chaplains a group for soulful nourishment and ecumenical gatherings, and maybe even a sports ministry, but admits that he is at the start of discovery and development. Pray for Jason and this exciting ministry!

The Synod Campus Ministry Team welcomes your partnership in the gospel. Thanks for keeping our campus ministries in the driving lane by your ongoing support via Synod Benevolence, Directed Giving and especially through your support for Campus Ministry’s “Drive for Five” Sunday, held each September.

On behalf of the Synod Campus Ministry Team,  
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

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## Synod Youth Ministry Team

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The Synod of Alberta and the Territories is challenged, assisted and enriched by the youth in congregations. To support and highlight this important part of our community, a biennial synod gathering hosts the young people from all congregations; and a network of youth leaders is encouraged. Diaconal Minister Sarah Rudd served on the Youth Ministry Team and in the fall of 2014 approached Tammy Kirkwood and Mark Kuntz to join the team, who subsequently took on the leadership when Sarah resigned in the spring of 2015. We wish to thank Sarah for all her contributions over the years to this Ministry Team.

### National Youth Gathering

The Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering (CLAY) is a biennial national event for youth aged 14–19 years old, organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). Each gathering is held over four days and includes large group worship, speakers and workshops, excursions, activities,

entertainment and education. It is held in a different location across Canada every other year.

"Worth It", the 2014 CLAY (Canadian Lutheran & Anglican Youth) gathering was held August 14-17, 2014 in Kamloops, BC, at the Thompson River University and received very positive reviews from delegates all over our synod. Speaker Scott Evans asked the youth to consider how they define ourselves: is their worth determined through their thoughts, words, actions, and projected images on social media sites? The speakers, workshops and servant events sought to make space for another equation of worth: "God has said, over and over, you already are worth it. You're trying to earn something that you already have."

In 2016, the CLAY Gathering, with the theme: "Not for Sale – Salvation Not for Sale; Human Beings Not for Sale; Creation Not for Sale" will be held at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) in Charlottetown, from August 17–21, with registration and a welcome event taking place on Wednesday night and the rest of the gathering schedule kicking off Thursday morning.

Plans are well underway for a Synod sponsored 4 day and 4 nights Sightseeing Bus Tour in Nova Scotia prior to the CLAY Gathering in Charlottetown. While in Nova Scotia, ABT Synod youth will have a chance to see such sites as the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lunenburg and the famous Peggy's Cove, and will gather for meals together as well as for worship and community building. The tour also visits other sites and activities over the four days, including Tidal Bore River Rafting on the Shubenacadie River. Bishop Larry and his wife, Cathy, will be travelling with the group as well as attending the Youth Gathering. Leadership for this tour has been coordinated between Tammy Kirkwood, and Rev. Anna Thede.

### **Synod Youth Gatherings**

"Called to Be" was held May 29-31, 2015 at Mulhurst Church Camp with 51 participants, including 9 Home Team Leaders. This Gathering was based on a new model that the Synod camps brought to the team. As our numbers for the Gatherings have dwindled, our Lutheran camps can now accommodate a Synod youth gathering, unlike in previous years when registration numbers were too large. With this model, the Youth Ministry Team was trying to achieve two things: have the youth learn what a gathering with their fellow Lutheran peers is like, especially if they hadn't experienced one in the past; and, with shared staff representing each camp, offer the youth a taste of what our camps; Mulhurst, Camp Kuriakos, and Hastings Lake, have

to offer. The hope was that this would help encourage the youth to attend the camps in the summer, and it did have a positive impact. Mulhurst's Camp Director, Marg Daly reports that this was successful, especially with cultivating new future leaders.

Thank you to Rev. Dr. Tim Wray for volunteering his time to be Keynote Speaker; Rev. Dr. Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, and Lisa Rude for taking photos; and to the worship Band, consisting of Connor Dear, Cullen Halvorson and Anna Kochendorfer.

The 2017 ABT Synod Gathering is booked at Camp Kuriakos for May 5-7, 2017 and we have started looking into speakers and themes for the gathering.

### **National Church Convention**

Thank you also to Jacob Rempel and Kristen Kirkwood from St. Pauls, Eilerslie for being our ABT Synod youth delegates to the National Convention, July 2015, in Edmonton. They reported on what a great experience it was. Kristen and Jacob had fun getting to know the youth representatives from the other Synods and enjoyed the discussions with both adults and the other youth. One thing they would like to see is a bit more education with some of the adults, to take youth seriously. Both Kristen and Jacob felt it was a great experience to see how things are discussed from the National ELCIC stand point and how the administration works to make the changes; these changes are what will affect the future and their generation.

### **CLAY. Ed (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth in Edmonton and surrounding area)**

In 2012, an Edmonton and area group was formed after the national gathering in Saskatoon. Its purpose was to help the Youth from various Lutheran and Anglican congregations stay connected between Synod and National Gatherings. We hold events about 3 times a year at different locations around the city. This has also had an impact on the Pastors & Youth Leaders as we also stay more connected with pre-meetings to plan the events. It has been a good way to share and collaborate on ideas and other missional information.

We usually try to have different types of events to appeal to all the youth, for example:

- **CLAY. Ed Scott Evans Event** – worship, games, Educational
- **CLAY. Ed Earth Hour Event** – worship, games, Educational activities, (15 youth)

- **CLAY. Ed Saints and Martyrs Bash** – band worship, games, (15 youth)
- **CLAY. Ed Lazerquest** – worship & games, (42 youth)
- **CLAY. Ed Transfiguration Event** – outdoor games, campfire worship, palm burning prep. for Ash Wed.- (20 youth)

Youth Ministry Team goals for the future;

- Setting up a Youth Leadership retreat (FOR LEADERS)
- Continue to connect with all ABT Synod Churches to gain Youth Leader contact info. for better networking and collaboration between Youth Leaders
- Use the ABT Synod Web page/Youth Tab to provide up to date youth information on events and programs
- Set up and manage youth relevant Social Media outlets; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to get information out to the youth about events that affect them in and around the ABT Synod.
- Adding 2 or 3 more people to the Team to help share and manage the information across the Synod
- plan the 2017 ABT Synod Gathering

Respectfully submitted,  
Tammy Kirkwood, Chair

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## World Mission Ministry Team

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Greetings to all of you in the name of our risen Lord.

I am writing during the Easter season and I am still mindful of how many people Jesus touched as the witness of the disciples began to spread. His appearance at Emmaus (Luke 24), on the shore of the Lake of Galilee (John 21) and to Saul (Acts 9) reveal the many ways that the church adds to the witnessing of Jesus' power. In that same vein, several things have changed since I wrote in 2014.

First, our name has changed from World Mission Committee to World Mission Ministry Team. This better reflects what we are about, doing mission work in the world.

Secondly, there were two major mission events that took place. One was just over a year ago. The Bishop lead a group to El Salvador. The trip was in March and April of

2015 and it was very important that our mission group was there. Major celebrations were held on Palm Sunday in commemoration of the death of Archbishop Oscar Romero. The Bishop has sent pictures of this trip around the Synod and I will leave it to him to reflect further on the spiritual significance of his involvement in this trip and event. There was also a celebration of Pastor Brian Rude's work there. He has been 'on leave from call' for the past three years and is with us as we gather in convention. He and the Bishop may reflect on how this ministry moves forward.

Secondly, there was the visit to the Synod by a fine El Salvadoran artist, Christian Armando Chavarria. He visited throughout the Synod during January and February of 2016 and many will have heard his story and collected some of his handiwork. It is always important to understand that not everyone is privileged to live in a country such as ours. Christian said that here, "You are born, you live and your die." In contrast, in El Salvador he said, "You are born, you survive and you die." There are missionaries serving right now who cannot even be identified by the country they are serving in; to do so would mean death for them.

These are the things that we have worked on and the people we have worked with in the last biennium. Going forward, we have another task at hand. At the end of April, there was a meeting with Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen to discuss a draft proposal as to how the National Church wants to move forward with the area of World Missions. A draft will be presented and then worked on further. As always, I give thanks for my two partners who do this work with me. My thanks to Dr. Helen Bowden and Mr. Ray Blacklock for their perspectives, wisdom and contributions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Scott Brown, chair.

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## Worship and the Arts Ministry Team

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God, our creator and protector, you illumine the world and breathe life into us.

You heal the world with your outstretched arms.

You rescue creation and inspire your church.

We thank you for this day . . .

*"Evening Prayer," Reformation 500  
Sourcebook Sampler  
Augsburg Fortress*

Our synod's Worship and the Arts Committee, which usually meets twice a year, has four members:

- Bishop Larry Kochendorfer (Synod office)
- Colleen McGinnis (Wetaskiwin) – secretary; editor of the Adoramus newsletter
- Rev. Ron Flamand (Edmonton)
- Carolyn Ethier (Lethbridge) – chair; ABT representative on the ELCIC National Program Committee for Worship

This year we have been privileged to coordinate worship planning for the 2016 Synod Convention. We are thankful for the gifts of others who have joined in this work: Robyn Simpson-Mohr, Rev. Daranne Harris, and Dr. Joy Berg. We also give thanks for Christian Chavarria from El Salvador, who, while journeying through our Synod in 2015, painted a processional cross for the Synod. Phil Berg from Grace, Bentley, is creating the pole and stand, all of which will be dedicated during the Synod Convention.

Our members are also currently exploring how we can support worship-related initiatives with the ELCIC's 2017 Reformation commemoration, "Liberated by God's Grace." We encourage everyone interested in worship to attend the 2016 National Anglican/Lutheran Worship Conference, *Formation & Reformation: Worship, Justice, and God's Mission* in Kitchener-Waterloo on July 24-27. With an emphasis on justice and mission, the National Worship Conference brings together presenters and participants from across Canada to explore the worship life of the church. Keynote addresses will be given by The Rev. Dr. Bruce Jenneker (Cape Town, South Africa) and The Rev. Dr. Stephen Larson (New Hamburg, Ontario). The conference offers a great opportunity to extend the wonderful connections made at the 2014 Edmonton event, *Weaving Strands: Liturgy for Living*. Look to the National Worship Conference website for details: <http://www.nationalworshipconference.org/>

Our primary focus in the past has been to create and promote resources and education around worship.

Issues of the Adoramus newsletter are available on our synod web page ([www.albertasynod.ca](http://www.albertasynod.ca)), along with a growing collection of seasonal worship resources, hymn festivals, workshop opportunities.

The weekly diary of prayers and intercessions for congregations and ministries of the Church is also on the

synod website. Congregations are invited to include these public intercessions in their weekly worship.

A processional cross and torches, previously commissioned by the committee, are used at synodical events and are also available from the synod office for congregational use.

You are always welcome to share through our synod website the ideas and worship resources being created in your own communities.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Ethier  
on behalf of the committee