
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.

Bishop’s Report

2018 Synod Convention – Report of the Bishop Prepared April 19, 2018

Welcome to Convention. Welcome to the Seventeenth Biennial Convention of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories: *“Faith, Hope Love...the greatest of these is love”* (I Corinthians 13:13).

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 gather in worship, we will explore the Scriptures together, we will explore our convention theme through three keynote addresses and table conversations, and there will be many opportunities to meet and engage in conversation with others from across our Synod.

I am thankful for the work of Convention Manager, Wendy Christensen-Grosfield, the worship planning team and our Convention Chaplain, The Rev. Jeff Decelle (Unity, Medicine Hat), and I am looking forward to introducing you to The Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen (<http://omgcenter.com/about/>) and to hear and learn from her engaging keynote addresses. Plans are underway to video, with Anna’s gracious permission, her three keynote presentations which will be made available following Convention.

We will welcome and hear from our National Bishop Susan Johnson; also four guests from The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO); The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude, *En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador*, Lutheran Theological Seminary President, The Rev. Dr. Bill Harrison; LCBI; and CLWR Executive Director, Karin Achtelstetter.

In addition to our celebratory Opening Eucharist, other highlights include a Thursday evening *Jazz Vespers including Healing Rite and Remembrance of Those Who Have Died*, Friday and Saturday morning Eucharist with *Dwelling in the Word* facilitated by our Convention Chaplain and Keynote speaker, and a Saturday afternoon *Sending* service which will include the Installation of Council members and Seminary Representative and Blessing of the Synod Bishop.

We will gather Friday evening for a celebratory banquet honouring those with ordination anniversaries, as well as the Synod of Alberta and the Territories

first recipient of the “Synod of Alberta and the Territories *Stephen D. Wildfang Leadership Award.*”

Video presentations highlighting our four mission priorities through story will be shared throughout the Convention and each delegate/congregation will receive a DVD of the same and discussion guide for use in their own context. Elections will include the election of Synod Bishop, Council Secretary, Council members, Lutheran Theological Seminary Board of Governors member, and delegates to the 2019 ELCIC National Convention in Regina. Delegates, guests and visitors will have ample time to view the Display Tables of many Synod Ministry Teams (including a refreshment break featuring gelato prepared and served by the Synod Campus Ministry Team), National Church and CLWR, just to name a few, as well as plenty of opportunities for food and fellowship.

New this year: Registrants to the Convention are invited to register for Friday and Saturday “Lunch and Learn” events. Up to 25 registrants will meet in identified rooms for lunch and further conversation with: National Bishop Susan Johnson on ELCIC Global Mission, President Bill Harrison from Lutheran Theological Seminary, The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude, our guests from Colombia, CLWR, and Jeff Pym with ELFEC (Evangelical Lutheran Foundation of Eastern Canada). All other registrants will have their lunch in the cafeteria.

Also new for this Convention was an invitation for submissions of artwork to be displayed in the assembly hall, reflecting the theme of the convention. Thanks to each contributor. I am looking forward to walking through the art gallery.

Throughout the Convention as you worship, listen, pray, discern and share stories I invite you to write your thoughts to the following two statements on sticky notes and to post them to the large print paper in the convention 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...”* These will be gathered and reviewed for action at the September 2018 retreat of Synod Council.

As we gather from across our Synod it is my prayer that together we will be open to the Spirit’s work among us...shaping...transforming...reworking...guiding...and that we will 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.”*

The Synod of Alberta and the Territories. We are a very different Synod than when I was elected Synod Bishop in October 2012 and ordained in January 2013. Yes, we continue to be challenged with several realities not unique to our Synod nor to our denomination: a growing reality that there are too few candidates for congregational ministry, congregations struggling to provide financially for full or part-time ministries, shrinking worship participation, shrinking budgets, a need for faith formation and discipleship. I know that you share these realities, and others, with me. However, decline in participation or financial support does not mean God's purpose/mission for the church has changed.

My experience these past years is that the people and ministries across our Synod are rising to the challenge, seeking to join God in God's mission, which involves much intentional listening and shared discernment and experimentation and risk-taking. Across our Synod we have intentionally focused on missional formation, not as a program, but as a way of living.

As you know I was privileged to serve as one of four ELCIC delegates to the 12th Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Windhoek, Namibia. Together with delegates, staff, visitors, and ecumenical guests we numbered over 800 from 98 countries of the world representing 45-member churches and 74 million Lutherans.

While at the Assembly, we learned of the Namibian government's introduction of a development plan called the Harambee Prosperity Plan. The Kiswahili word Harambee means, "pull together in the same direction" and the development plan, therefore, is a "call for unity" encouraging Namibians to work towards a common purpose.

This understanding of Harambee...of pulling together in the same direction...gave me a new language and a renewed perspective on what we are seeing in our Synod...a pulling together in the same direction as we participate in God's mission. "A coming together" which is, interestingly, the meaning of the word, "synod".

This excites me; this "coming together" ...this "pulling together in the same direction" ...reaching out beyond the church walls, and asking where is God at work? And, how we might join God in God's mission?

So where are we headed? With change as a constant for the church and for society, what might our Synod look like in the future?

What if we took seriously the equipping and empowering of all – youth, child, adult – lay and rostered? Where gifts are identified and nurtured? And where leadership opportunities

on Synod Council or in Area Leadership Teams are created and offered to youth and young adults?

Imagine creating cohorts of learning – of intentional faith formation, discipleship building, service, discernment, and partnership with one's neighbor, including preparation for rostered leadership.

What would it look like for more youth and adults to participate in a pilgrimage of learning with our partner synod in Colombia, or El Salvador, or with first nations communities?

Imagine in our Synod an openness to collaborative ministries – with a neighboring Lutheran or Anglican congregation – where resources and gifts are shared for the common good. Where a team of lay and rostered leaders are trained and equipped to serve with and among several communities.

Imagine our Synod with every college and university campus from Whitehorse to Lac La Biche to Red Deer served by a Lutheran or ecumenical chaplain.

With the world at our doorstep, literally, what is the role of the church, where today's immigrants and refugees are seeking community, education and a home? Imagine creating specialized ministries with and among this growing ethnic diversity, and the grace-filled welcome to existing faith communities.

What if we lived our call as stewards of creation by resourcing our buildings both in greening the building and in offering space for community gatherings, forums, events – public space safe for dialogue, debate, and inquiry?

Together, we are the Church – sign, symbol and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. Synod: "Coming together." Harambee: "pulling together in the same direction."

Together, we live in vibrant witness to God's work in the world, offering our hands and feet in the service of God's mission.

Synod Staff – With Gratitude. It is a privilege to work with and among gifted and committed staff. A mere, "thank you," hardly expresses my deep gratitude, but, "thank you."

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.

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 for various events and workshops, and the preparation of our weekly e-newsletter *Wednesday's Word*.

Sheryl Burry, Synod Bookkeeper, began her service to the Synod on April 1, 2016 and her time at the Synod Office was increased in 2017 to provide some additional administrative support. She is now often the voice you hear when you contact the Synod Office. Sheryl has stepped into her position and its increased responsibilities with enthusiasm.

As you know there has been significant grief just within the Synod Staff. I thank you for your continued prayers. Sheryl has experienced the death of her father-in-law. Julianne's father died last year, and she is currently on a gradual return to work from a medical leave which began in February 2018. With Darla Wildfang and her family, we continue to grieve the death of Stephen. Darla currently continues a Compassionate Care Leave.

I am thankful for your patience and understanding as staff capacity has been greatly reduced these past months and will continue to be reduced for several months. Thank you to Anna Kochendorfer for providing part-time administrative support March and April, and to Cathy Kochendorfer who will be providing part-time administrative support in the month of May. Colleen McGinnis has, since Darla's leave, updated and published our Synod's e-newsletter *Wednesday's Word*. And as much as possible I have sought to reduce time away from the Synod in order to be present and available to all.

Wendy Christensen-Grosfield, in addition to serving as Convention Manager, serves as our Synod's *Canada Lutheran* editor. I appreciate Wendy's wonderful gift of connecting with people and ministries across our Synod and of word crafting.

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. I am pleased that Brian will be with us for the 2018 Synod Convention and available following the Convention through to July 1 for speaking engagements throughout the Synod. If you or your congregation would like to arrange for Pastor Brian to be with you, please contact the Synod Office via email at: darla@albertasynod.ca.

I am thankful for the ministry that Bishop Don Sjoberg (ret.) continues to provide *gratis* with regard to congregational dissolution and properties. He assists the Synod Office and congregations as Consultant Related to Church Property and Dissolution of Congregations.

The Synod office continues to be challenged by requests, questions, documentation and management surrounding the ownership and care of cemeteries, particularly where congregations are defunct. Carl Sorensen has served as a consultant to the Synod office regarding cemeteries updating synod materials, gathering the materials into files and identifying where follow-up is needed. I appreciate his willingness to freely give of his time and energy and he has now completed this task (56 files with notes).

The Rev. Gary Nickel continues to serve as Synod Necrologist and Archivist and I appreciate 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.

While at the 2018 Annual Study Conference I met with our Synod's Ecumenical Officers: The Rev. Daranne Harris (south) and Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken (north). They have completed their three-years terms and I am pleased to share that each has agreed to serve a 2nd three-year position. Together we reviewed and added to our Synod's Ecumenical Officer Terms of Reference. We also began a listing of all appointees which I have made to various ministries/networks. These are current as of March 2018; my apologies if I have missed someone. For your information these are:
Ecumenical Officer North - Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken, LARC Dialog (Lutheran Anglican Roman Catholic Dialog) Edmonton - Marcus Busch, Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken and The Rev. Barbara Groote, Ronning Centre – Augustana Campuse, UofA, Camrose - The Rev. Markus Wilhelm, EDCC (Edmonton and District Council of Churches) Edmonton - The Rev. Ingrid Doerschel, Greater Edmonton Alliance - The Rev. Phil Penrod, Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative - The Rev. Kathie Schmitke, Edmonton "Our Common Ground" Committee - Dr. Andrea Wilhelm, Ecumenical Officer South - The Rev. Daranne Harris, Metro Alliance for the Common Good Calgary - The Rev. Dr. Phil Holck, Calgary Interfaith Council - The Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein, and Anglican Diocese of Calgary, Diocesan Council - The Rev. Dr. Christine Nojonen.

Synod Council.

Synod Council retreats. Synod Council continues to meet twice per year in a retreat-like setting, gathering Thursday evening for worship and community building, and then meeting Friday through mid-afternoon on Saturday. We have appreciated the facilities at Mulhurst Lutheran Camp, Pigeon Lake and Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake and the cooking of Cathy Kochendorfer for our retreats.

Synod Officers meetings. Between the Synod Council retreats the Synod Officers meet on a regular basis. We have

regularly met at the Synod Office in Edmonton occasionally skipping Synod Officers and Synod Staff in to the meeting.

Welcome to New Councillors and Officers. Following the 2016 Synod Convention we welcomed new councillors to Synod Council: Shae Belanger (East Central), The Rev. Dr. Deborah Ann Taylor (East Central), The Rev. John Lentz (West Central), Wendy Kalkan (Southern) and The Ven. Alan Perry (Anglican Diocese of Edmonton). We also welcomed a new Chair, Wayne Street, and together we facilitated an orientation for new councillors in September 2016.

In September 2017 we welcomed two new councillors: The Rev. Heidi Wachowiak (North) who was appointed to replace The Rev. Dr. Ann Salmon who had taken a position at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon; and, The Rev. Janice Whitelock (Southern) who was appointed to replace The Rev. Reg Berg who had taken a call to Prince of Faith, Calgary.

In March 2018 Synod Council appointed Paul Ellison, Synod Treasurer, to complete the term of Stephen Wildfang. I look forward to working with Paul in his role as Treasurer and to welcoming him and introducing him to you at Synod Convention.

Guests to the Synod Council retreats. It has been our regular practice to invite the Deans and the National Church Council Synod representatives to Synod Council meetings and to provide agenda time for a brief report from the National Church Council. The National Church Council Reps (through to the 2017 ELCIC National Convention) were Judy Wry (Holy Spirit, Edmonton); The Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry (Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer); and Les Pearson (Unity, Medicine Hat). Beginning with the adjustment of National Church Council members at the 2017 ELCIC National Convention, we now have two Synod Reps on National Church Council: The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen, (Hosanna, Edmonton) and Les Pearson (Unity, Medicine Hat).

At the September 2016 retreat we welcomed The Rev. Dr. Alan Roxburgh of *The Missional Network*. In March 2017 and 2018 we welcomed National Bishop Susan Johnson who at the March 2017 retreat, in addition to reporting from National Church Council, facilitated a learning event around The Lutheran World Federation's, *Gender Justice Policy*.

At the March Synod Council retreats, beginning in 2016 following the work of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's work, learning around Abiding in Right Relations has been shared. At the March 2017 retreat we welcomed Fiona Brownlee, Rural Indigenous Communities Liaison for the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton who shared of her ministry,

and in March 2018 Councillors and guests viewed and discussed the video *Reserve 107*, the story of how the Young Chippewyan First Nations Band initiated a gathering with the Lutheran and Mennonite settlers who had unknowingly settled on their reserve land. The video is available through the Synod office.

At the September 2017 retreat we welcomed Jeff Pym, an ELCIC member and director of ELFEC (Evangelical Lutheran Foundation of Eastern Canada), a Lutheran Foundation with a three-fold mission: to help congregations manage and grow investments, to help individuals leave gifts to the church, and to grant money to Lutheran charities and other church-related projects. You can find more about ELFEC here: <https://elfec.ca/about-us>. Jeff will be with us for the 2018 Synod Convention.

MISSION PRIORITIES

1. Spirit-Led Leadership:

Forming Missional Shaped Ministries. Our Synod continues its intentional work of exploring, developing and supporting skills and capacities for moving into God's planned future following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Congregations and ministries are invited to join in God's work in their local contexts. On this journey of listening, discerning, experimenting, reflecting and learning, rostered and lay leaders are gaining new skills and beginning to cultivate a learning community culture within their congregations and ministries.

A brief summary: Throughout the Synod, congregational leaders, both lay and rostered, participated in the first iteration of *The Missional Network's* (TMN) process, under the direction of The Rev. Dr. Alan Roxburgh and his team. A second iteration began in the fall of 2015 in the Southern Area gathering regularly in Brooks. Eight pastors and six congregations participated. This iteration was facilitated by The Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, who shadowed TMN staff during the first iteration. Conversation began regarding a third iteration with a gathering of lay and rostered leaders at Scandia Lutheran, Armena. As a result, a third iteration began in the fall of 2016 in the Camrose-Wetaskiwin area.

Across the Synod awareness of missional formation practices continues to grow. There are thirteen congregations and twenty-four rostered leaders actively participating in the Missional Network action learning process. As well, current Creative Initiative experiments involve seven ministries and ten additional leaders. Other congregations are seeing God's work in their local contexts and are actively seeking to join God in God's work (a total of twenty ministries and thirty-four leaders).

We are supporting congregations and ministries in becoming learning communities where listening, discerning, experimenting, reflecting and learning are the norm for decision making and planning.

Modelling this rhythm, the Synod Council's 2015 and 2016 "Participating in Hope" events in sixteen area gatherings across the Synod focused on listening to the stories of God at work in and through the congregations as a first step of discerning next steps for the Synod. This was followed by Council's intentional listening at the 2016 Synod Convention, reflection together as a Synod Council on a presentation by The Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, *A Listening and Discerning Process – ABT Synod Council*, discernment together with The Rev. Dr. Alan Roxburgh at the September 2016 Synod Council Retreat, and further sharing and feedback from the fall 2016 area gatherings

As a Synod Council we continue to imagine and to grow into our Synod's mission priorities: Spirit-Led Leadership, Hope-Filled Discipleship, Innovative Tradition and Collaborative Partnerships. We are seeking to build relationships, to listen and to seek common areas for working together, and to discern our role and structure.

We continue to hear across our Synod the following four summary opportunities first articulated at the September 2016 Synod Council retreat, that:

- You are desiring connection and relationship to experience God's love among us all.
- You are eager to risk and test new ways but are concerned about how to do this and want to ensure we keep our essentials.
- You want practical help in discerning what God is up to because you sense God is at work and present in so many ways.
- This sense of God's acting presence is creating renewed desire to be communities of God's hope-filled people.

Area Leadership Teams (ALTs). In September of 2017, following nearly two years of listening, exploring, and discernment, Area Leadership Teams were appointed by Synod Council to a three-year term with input from the then conference councils in five geographical areas. Each Area Leadership Team is composed of five members: two rostered leaders (one of whom would be appointed Dean), two lay members and one youth. A treasurer may or may not be a member of the Area Leadership Team.

These leaders are gifted listeners, encouragers, natural leaders, and organizers. They are prayerful, flexible, thoughtful, collaborative and have a sense of humour. Twice a year, these teams will gather together with Greg Lingelbach

(First, Calgary), and The Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow to explore, develop and support skills and capacities to move into God's planned future in their Area, following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Over the next three years, these newly formed Area Leadership Teams (ALTs) will begin to cultivate a learning community culture and continue building relationships, to listen and to seek common situations for working together in their local Area.

The goals of Area Leadership Teams (ALTs) are to: develop a discerning, learning community within the area who seek to follow where God leads; strive to be an expression and catalyst of this synod's mission priorities in the area; encourage and equip congregations and ministries within the area to collaborate and implement the mission priorities of this synod; annually arrange, together with synod staff, for continuing education opportunities for rostered and lay leaders to support and encourage learning and collaborative area ministries; encourage networking and mutual support among rostered and lay leaders; provide pastoral support to area rostered ministers as required; maintain contact with the bishop of this synod; serve as the bishop's representative, as requested, at installations, assisting with the call process, and conducting exit interviews; and, provide recommendations to the bishop of this synod and synod council regarding the appointment of area leadership team members.

LWF Missional Consultation. In November 2016 The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, was one of two ELCIC delegates to the LWF Missional Consultation in Geneva. Her presentation on the North American context included learnings and wonderings:

- We are noticing that we (the church) are unclear about our distinct Lutheran identity and we wonder how to live into being "Lutheran" in our local contexts.
- We are noticing how, despite our best intentions, we are mired in a colonialist mindset and we wonder how to shift into an attitude of accompaniment.
- We have noticed our missiology of "doing for" keeps us in "control and power" and stymies authentic mission engagement. We wonder how to shift into doing "with" and being transformed by our neighbours.

2017 Annual Study Conference. Our keynote presenter at the 2017 annual study conference was The Rev. Dr. Dirk Lange, Associate Dean of Graduate Theological Education, Fredrik A. Schiotz Chair of Mission and Professor of Worship at Luther Seminary, St. Paul MN: *Entering the Next 500 Years! The Reformation Today and Tomorrow*. From Winnipeg, Dr. Lange's ministerial experience has covered a wide spectrum of activities, but all under one umbrella: liturgy in the lives of people. He has written extensively on topics in ecumenism and liturgical theology, including *Trauma Recalled*. Dirk Lange was Project Officer for the global Joint Commemoration of the

Reformation prepared by the Lutheran World Federation and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Rome). He is also a member of the International Joint Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission.

Our 2017 guest Bishop was The Rev. Dr. Sid Haugen from the SASK Synod, and the final morning included our recent practice of having those rostered leaders who have completed advanced degrees share their thesis in an ABT Synod TED (Theology Education Discipleship) Talk format. In 2017 we heard from The Rev. Dr. Kayko Driedger Hesslein, The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen and The Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry. Chaplains were The Rev. Kathy Calkins and The Rev. Jeff Decelle.

2018 Annual Study Conference. Our keynote presenter at the 2018 annual study conference was The Rev. Dr. Allen Jorgenson, Professor of Systematic Theology and Assistant Dean, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary: *Exploring our Neighbor's Faith*. Allen is originally from Ponoka, AB. The theme of the conference intentionally grew out of the evolving multi-faith contexts for ministry acknowledged in "Encountering People of Other Faiths: Interfaith Guidelines" (ELCIC: 2017). Our Conference guest was The Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President of Lutheran Theological Seminary, which provided opportunity for the new President to share formally and informally with those gathered.

The 2018 TED Talk presenters were The Rev. Dr. Tim Wray, Part-time Parish Pastor and Farmer; and The Rev. Mick Macintyre, Chaplain with the Canadian Forces. Chaplains were The Rev. Lindsey Jorgensen-Skakum and The Rev. Kirk Tastad.

Conference participants very much appreciated this year's ELCICGSJ Lunch and Learn sessions with Lisa Thiessen and John Wolff, and the opportunity for free consultations with a registered dietician and/or a chair massage.

The Executive Officers approved funds from the Synod's Reserve Fund to significantly reduce the cost of the 2018 annual study conference for retired rostered leaders and their spouses. Evaluations indicate that this was appreciated by those who were retired and present. In 2017, only one retired rostered leader participated in the entire study conference. In comparison, ten retired rostered leaders and one spouse participated in the entire study conference in 2018.

Internship Placements. We give thanks for congregations and rostered leaders who have provided excellent internship supervision opportunities for

- Erik Sorenson, supervised by The Rev. John Lentz, St. Paul, Olds,
- Lindsey Jorgensen-Skakum, supervised by The Rev. Trish Schmermund, Holy Spirit, Edmonton,

- Colin Millang, supervised by The Rev. John Lentz, St. Paul, Olds completing an M.Div. while licensed to serve in a pastoral capacity at Redeemer, Hanna,
- Jailyn Corbin, supervised by The Rev. Matt Lyseng, Peace, Leduc,
- Sarah Mowat, supervised by The Rev. Dr. Ann Salmon, Grace Lutheran and St. Catherine's Anglican, Edson,
- Mike Harmon, supervised by The Rev. Charlotte Strecker-Baseler, Armena Parish,
- Kate Zaiser, supervised by The Rev. Dr. Phil Holck, Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary,
- Seth Perry, a BC Synod candidate for ordained ministry, supervised by The Rev. Markus Wilhelm, Glory, Sherwood Park.

In addition, The Rev. Dr. Tim Wray and the congregation of Lutheran Church of the Master, Airdrie continue to provide pastoral support to Denis Sindano and his family, whose internship concluded prior to completion.

Synod Council approved partial funding of the internships in Olds, Leduc, Edson, Armena Parish and Airdrie from the Synod Reserve Fund.

Ordination Celebrations. Celebrative Services of Ordination were held for

- Erik Sorenson, August 6, 2016 at Mt. Olivet, Sherwood Park who began a First Call at St. Peter's, Millet,
- Lindsey Jorgensen-Skakum, August 7, 2016 at Holy Spirit, Edmonton (Ordination and Installation) who began a First Call at Holy Spirit, Edmonton,
- Colin Millang, July 15, 2017 at Messiah, Camrose who began a First Call at Redeemer, Hanna,
- Diaconal Minister Bev Swanson, August 26, 2017 at Messiah, Camrose (Ordination and Installation) who began a First Call at Messiah, Camrose,
- Jailyn Corbin, September 2, 2017 at Lord of Glory, Lac La Biche (Ordination and Installation) who began a First Call at Lord of Glory, Lac La Biche,
- Sarah Mowat, October 26, 2017 at Trinity, Whitehorse who began a First Call at Redeemer (shared ministry), Biggar, SASK.

Together with the whole Church we welcome Erik, Lindsey, Colin, Bev, Jailyn and Sarah to the Office of Word and Sacrament.

First Call Program. The First Call Program is one of the highlights of the year for the four western bishops. All newly rostered ministers (ordained or diaconal) are required to participate for the first three years of their first call. In addition to working with a mentor on a regular basis as well as attending to some reading requirements, the primary event is a four-day gathering each October. The venue rotates from

synod to synod each year, except that the BC Synod has been asked to host every third year in order that the participants and the other bishops might be able to enjoy an October in Victoria!! The learning sessions and case studies are deep and enriching, and the conversations throughout the week are life-giving.

Conference of Deans. Meetings occur three times per year prior to the Synod Council retreats and preceding the Annual Study Conference. The Deans, together with the Assistant to the Bishop for Mission and I, review plans for fall gatherings, engage in continuing conversation related to the transition to Area Leadership Teams within existing geographical conference areas, reviewed matters while I was on Sabbatical, share concerns related to rostered leaders and/or congregations, and much more.

Thank you to those who have served as Deans, to their families and congregations: The Rev. Eleanor Ness, The Rev. Reg Berg, The Rev. Kristian Wold; and those currently serving: The Rev. Trish Schmermund, The Rev. Jeff Decelle, The Rev. Kevin Powell, The Rev. Kathy Calkins and The Rev. Julianna Wehrfritz-Hanson.

Diaconal Ministers Gathering. An annual gathering of Diaconal Ministers from across our Synod takes place in the spring of each year, hosted at the Synod Office. Our time together includes worship, prayer, reflection, and education. In 2017 our time together included a presentation by Dr. Julien Hammond, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Officer, Roman Catholic Diocese of Edmonton, *Reformation 500 from a Roman Catholic Perspective*. A 2018 gathering did not take place due to reduced staffing capacity.

Synod Campus Ministry. The Synod Campus Ministry Team continues to provide resources via Canada Post and the Synod's website annually for the *Drive for Five* fundraising event. The event has been renamed (since we are now on more than five campuses in Alberta) the SMART (Synod Missional Academic Response Team) Sunday. Thank you for your support for Campus Ministry through this annual initiative. After many years of review and consideration the Synod's Campus Ministry Team's Terms of Reference/Manual were presented to and approved by Synod Council in September 2016.

Candidacy Committee. The Synod's Candidacy Committee (formerly CTEL) meets three times each year. At the fall retreat, in addition to worship, to Developmental Interviews for candidates for ministry, and candidates one on one conversation with me, our learning component in 2016 focused on the ELCIC' Faith, Order and Doctrine's Study, "To Love Our Neighbors as Ourselves: A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC," which was facilitated by The Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry.

In 2017 our learning component focused on the ELCIC Study Guide on Medical Assistance in Dying facilitated by Diaconal Minister Karen Wedman and The Rev. Dale Olson from the Good Samaritan Society.

We continue to give thanks for significant Financial Aid provided to our Synod's candidates for ministry from the Synod's Support our Students Fund and The Stephen P. Kristenson Endowment.

In September 2016 \$17,000 was granted; in February 2017 \$7400 was granted; in September 2017 \$10,000 was granted; and in February 2018 \$8000 was granted.

In addition, funds from the Synod's Support our Students Fund have been made available for counseling services for ministry candidates.

Western Synods - Development of Lay Academy. The four western Synods and the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, are working together toward the development of a Lay Academy. Ron Schlegelmich (Holy Spirit, Edmonton) continues to represent our Synod. In the fall of 2017 the four western Synod Bishops participated in the Lay Academy by reflecting together on the lectionary texts for Advent 2017. I enjoyed this opportunity very much, as well as the November 18, 2017 live conversation around the texts for Advent 1 and 2, together with Bishop Elaine Sauer.

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 financially support a full-time pastor. As a result, more and more rostered leaders will likely be serving multi-point parishes. The means that there will be a shift in the role of rostered leaders 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 rostered leader. Such a shift also provides us with another opportunity to imagine, frame, and implement another way of being church. Some funds received by our Synod through the National Creative Mission Initiatives have been designated for two years for the Lay Academy.

Annual Synod Retired Rostered Leaders and Spouses Gathering. An Annual gathering for retired rostered leaders and spouses, widows, and widowers, takes place at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake. I have an opportunity to share with those gathered highlights and events within our Synod, and to respond to questions and concerns. Our time together has usually included a time of learning and reflection. In 2017, The Rev. Dr. Kayko Dreidger Hesslein shared on the theme of *Reformation 500*. By the time of the 2018 Synod Convention the Synod will have hosted six gatherings with this year's event

held at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer. This is a wonderful day of conversation, food prepared by Cathy Kochendorfer, and worship.

Annual Open House. Cathy and I are pleased to welcome rostered leaders and their families to our home for an annual open house. The gathering is always rich in conversation, laughter and community building. And we love having guests in our home...so do our two dogs.

The Synod of Alberta and the Territories Stephen D. Wildfang Leadership Award. In recognition of the 500th Commemoration of the Reformation, and paralleling a similar national award within the ELCIC, Synod Council approved an Award recognizing an individual within the Synod committed to advancing the mission, mission priorities, and ministries of our Synod. Synod Officers are tasked with reviewing all nominations, creating a shortlist to bring to the spring meeting of Synod Council prior to a Synod Convention and to bring a recommendation to the Synod Council. Several submissions were received, and Synod Council approved the Executive Officers' recommendation of the first recipient. At the March 2018 meeting of Synod Council, a motion to rename the Award was also unanimously approved. At this year's Synod Convention banquet, Allyn Langager, a lay leader at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Lethbridge, will be honoured as the first recipient of The Synod of Alberta and the Territories *Stephen D. Wildfang Leadership Award*.

2. Hope-Filled Discipleship:

Synod Youth Gathering – Freely Given. In collaboration with our Lutheran Bible Camps a Synod Youth Gathering was held May 5-7, 2017 at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake with forty-seven youth participating (sixty-four participated which included home team leaders, staff and planning team). The gathering theme reflected the 500th Commemoration of the Reformation. The keynote presentations by The Rev. Richard Reimer, drama and Sunday preacher Jacob Rempel, workshops, and the ministry of the gathering band affirmed the theme. Thank you to those who planned the Gathering, particularly the Synod's Youth Ministry Team chair, Tammy Kirkwood, and planning team: The Rev. Erik Sorenson, Krystle Plant, Wayne Hoff, Kyra VanVeen and from Camp Kuriakos: Kendra Freeland and Paul Kopjar. A 2019 Synod Youth Gathering is being planned to be held, May 3-5, 2019 at Hastings Lake Bible Camp.

CLAY 2016 – Not for Sale. An ABT Synod pre-gathering bus trip involved worship, site-seeing, community building and a whole lot of fun! Cathy and I were privileged to participate in the bus trip and then to participate at the CLAY gathering in Charlottetown, PEI. We are looking forward to

the ABT Synod pre-gathering bus trip to CLAY 2018 "Threads" in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Camp Ministry. The Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, participated in the 2016 joint annual training for staff from Hastings Lake Bible Camp, Mulhurst Lutheran Camp and Camp Kuriakos. I continue to be amazed and thankful to God for the ministry of our Lutheran camps and appreciate the opportunity to rent their facilities for various Synod gatherings and meetings.

In September 2017, I invited the Camp Directors and Board Chairs to meet with me to review a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the valuable partnership between the Camps and the Synod. Each camp: Hastings Lake Bible Camp, Mulhurst Lutheran Camp and Camp Kuriakos was invited to discuss at a Board level the Memorandum of Understanding and to consider signing the document. Thus far, one Camp has signed the Memorandum.

Monthly Synod Messages for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders. Each month I seek to prepare a brief article distributed through the ABT Synod's weekly e-newsletter, *Wednesday's Word* and available on the Synod's webpage. My intent is that these writings be shared through congregational newsletters and/or posted on a bulletin board or by other communication means within a congregation. Often, they may be appropriate for use as people gather for church council, adult study, youth group, coffee group, or choir rehearsal.

2016 Area Gatherings. In the fall of 2016 we gathered again in three area gatherings under the theme: *One Bread, One Body (EvLW #496): There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* Galatians 3:28.

Thank you to the rostered and lay leaders of the following congregations for hosting us: Trinity Lutheran, Westlock; Messiah Lutheran, Camrose; and Nazareth Lutheran, Standard. In addition to the Bishop's time...a game of *Synodical Jeopardy*...we welcomed three guest presenters: Dr. Julien Hammond, Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Officer, Roman Catholic Diocese of Edmonton, sharing about *Reformation 500: A Roman Catholic Perspective*; Wayne Street, Synod Council Chair, member of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Lethbridge, sharing about *Area Leadership Teams*; (at two of the Area gatherings) The Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry, Chair of Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee of the National Church Council and Pastor of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer, shared *To Love Our Neighbours as Ourselves; A Study of Orders of Ministry in the ELCIC*. Each presentation was informative and very well received.

2017 Area Gatherings. In the fall of 2017 we gathered in three area gatherings under the theme: *Celebrate the Promise, Celebrate the Hope* based on the text of a hymn introduced at the 12th Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation.

Thank you to the rostered and lay leaders of the following congregations for hosting us: Ascension, Edmonton; Peace, Innisfail and All Saints, Calgary. In addition to the Bishop's time a National Church Convention Delegates report was shared together with time for Q&A, information and conversation related to Areas and Area Leadership Teams, and a report from the 12th Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

2017 Congregational Life Workshop. The Leadership Development Ministry Team diligently prepared for the March 25, 2017 Congregational Life Workshop at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer: *WORSHIP: WHEN RUINS REJOICE "Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem."* - Isaiah 52:9.

The keynote presenter was Paul Vasile, Executive Director of "Music That Makes Community". Workshops included:

- Proclamation with Power - The Rev. Dr. Laura Holck,
- Words for Worship – The Rev. Daranne Harris,
- This is the Night! - Robyn Simpson-Mohr and The Rev. Kristian Wold,
- Letter of Call Documents - Lisa Thiessen, Executive Director, ELCIC Group Services (for Treasurers and Congregational Chairpersons),
- plus, a worship resources display table.

2018 Congregational Life Workshop. The ABT Synod CARE (Congregational Action and Response for Mental Health) Ministry Team diligently prepared for the April 14, 2018 Congregational Life Worship at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer: *"No One Is Immune: Taking Action for Mental Health in Congregations."*

The keynote presenter was The Rev. John Dowds, Lead Chaplain/Senior Mental Health Consultant – City of Edmonton.

Workshops included:

- The Power of Hope to Deal with Mental Health Issues – Dr. Cheryl Nekolaichuk and Dr. Bill Chimich,
- Handling Anxiety Across the Life Cycle – Gail Mukaida,
- Understanding Mental Health for Older Persons – Diaconal Minister Sarah Rudd,
- Incorporating Mental Health Activities in the Regular Service – The Rev. Marty Tuer,
- Ministering to the Needs of Youth at our Synod Camps – Marg Daly,
- Preparing the Church Secretary/Administrator to Handle Mental Health Issues – Kathie Goetz Thompson,
- plus a resources display table.

3. Innovative Tradition:

Synod Communications. A weekly ABT Synod e-newsletter *Wednesday's Word*, began in January 2016, and continues to be refined. Currently there are over 350 subscribers. Each edition is archived on the Synod website. Please see the synod website to subscribe to *Wednesday's Word*.

All Ministry Team Gathering. An Annual All Ministry Team gathering took place May 6, 2017 at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer. Together, we shared in worship, reflected on Scripture, prayed, listened, dialogued, and collaborated with other ministry teams active in our Synod, as well as worked as individual ministry teams. A 2018 All Ministry Team gathering was cancelled due to illness and winter conditions in the southern parts of our Synod.

National Convention Delegates Pre-Convention Gathering. Synod Delegates to the ELCIC National Convention gathered June 10, 2017 at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer for a time of convention agenda review, orientation for first time delegates, and conversation. Twenty-three of the twenty-seven delegates were able to participate. Prior to the gathering Judy Wry and I prepared a survey which was distributed to each delegate. The results became the agenda items for the gathering. National Church Synod representatives: Judy Wry, Les Pearson, The Rev. Dr. Marc Jerry and I facilitated the gathering. Delegates expressed enthusiastic appreciation for this time together. Delegates also met twice during the National Convention with me. Three delegates: The Rev. Barbara Groote, Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken, and Wayne Street were tasked with preparing a report of the Convention with input from other delegates. This was shared at each of the fall 2017 area gatherings and then made available through the Synod office for use in congregations.

"Ponder Anew – Dinner with Bishop Larry" – Planned Giving Events. Five planned giving events, *Ponder Anew*, took place in the spring of 2017. PR materials were made available through *Wednesday's Word* and the Synod website. Partial funding for these events was provided through a grant from the Lutheran Triune Foundation and through the Synod's Reserve Fund. Synod staff worked with Joe Stolee and Pamela Giles (Faithful Servant Consulting) to prepare for the events. I was very pleased with each event. Costs were well within the proposed budget; offerings of \$7,021 were received. We had hoped for 300 participants and 390 people actually participated!

Joe and Pamela included the following in their lengthy report to me: *Brooks, May 28 – 65 participants; Red Deer, June 9 – 35 participants; Edmonton, June 10 – 110 participants; Calgary, June 24 – 70 participants; and, Camrose, June 25 – 110*

participants. The mood at all the events was very upbeat, and we received much positive feedback during the events and after. Many people marvelled that they had been unaware of aspects of the Synod work, of the number of candidates registered with the CTEL, and of the work that had been made possible as a result of generous gifts that had been made in the past ten years through donor bequests and through the closure of the Augustana and St. John congregations. Many others commented that they had not really thought about making a gift to the church in their will or even made a will, and now they were thinking about it.

Work is being done to create a Planned Giving/Endowment Ministry Team within our Synod. Terms of Reference are being developed as well as consideration as to who might serve on the Ministry Team.

4. Collaborative Partnerships:

40th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women. As a result of initial conversation between Bishop Sauer and myself, a gathering was planned, May 29-31, 2017 in Calgary for women in rostered leadership to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women. Forty-four participated in the event representing every Synod of the ELCIC as well as ecumenical representation. The Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis, Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary shared "SHE: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry." Much thanks to the Synod staff: The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, Darla Wildfang and Sheryl Burry for their incredible work of planning and providing support during the event.

Trinity Lutheran, Whitehorse. In conversation with the church council arrangements were made for four rostered leaders to fly to Whitehorse (one rostered leader for several days each month) beginning September 2016 providing worship and Eucharistic ministry, visitation, Bible Study, confirmation class, youth ministry, and so on. Thank you to the following Pastors and Congregations for their partnership in this ministry experiment: The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow (Synod Staff), The Rev. Ingrid Doerschel (Trinity, Edmonton), The Rev. Barbara Groote (Ascension, Edmonton) and The Rev. Phil Holck (Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary). In the spring of 2017 this shared ministry model was reviewed by the church council and rostered leaders and a second year began using the same model with The Rev. Les Skonnard (Lethbridge and serving with the Good Samaritan Society) replacing The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow. This experiment has been a wonderful experience for Trinity Lutheran and for the rostered leaders involved. While in Whitehorse in 2017 I had several congregants say to me, "we are so excited! We now have four pastors and most congregations only have one."

Reformation 500. Synod Commemorations of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation included a gathering together with Roman Catholics on October 31, 2016 to view together (via livestream) in at least Edmonton and Calgary, the "Common Prayer" worship from Lund, Sweden led by Lutheran World Federation leadership and Pope Francis.

Our Synod hosted two Hymnfests (prepared for the 2016 Synod Convention) in 2017: March 17 at Hope Lutheran, Calgary and March 17 at Hosanna Lutheran, Edmonton. Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Anglicans participated in all these events.

"Common Prayer" worship was led by Roman Catholic Bishop William McGratton and me in Calgary, October 29, 2017 at Hope Lutheran; Roman Catholic Archbishop Richard Smith and me in Edmonton, October 30, 2017 at All Saints Anglican Cathedral; and Roman Catholic Bishop Hector Vila and me in Whitehorse, Yukon, November 16, 2017 at Sacred Heart Cathedral. In each "Common Prayer" service the Anglican Bishop also participated: Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson, Bishop Jane Alexander and Bishop Larry Robertson. A tri-lateral covenant was signed at the Edmonton "Common Prayer" service committing to on-going dialogue and learning. This LARC (Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic) group met for the first time in January 2018 and I anticipate further opportunities for shared learning, service and worship. I am thankful for our Synod's Ecumenical Officers, Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken and The Rev. Daranne Harris, who have been working with their Roman Catholic counterparts to organize, plan and facilitate. Significant support and planning for the event in Whitehorse was provided by The Rev. Barbara Groote.

Several academic institutions in Calgary jointly focused on a series of presentations and conversation in the fall of 2017 reflecting Reformation 500. Together, Roman Catholic Bishop William McGratton, Archbishop Greg Kerr-Wilson and I, participated in a presentation at St. Mary's University, Calgary. It was a fascinating evening as we each presented on the theme from our denominational perspective, commented on each other's presentation and responded to questions.

Together with Dr. Julien Hammond, Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Edmonton, and Diaconal Minister Dr. Faith Nostbakken, I shared in presenting around the theme of *Reformation* at the Ronning Centre: UofA – Augustana Campus fall 2016. I was also pleased to share, November 18, 2017 at Our Saviours, Hay Lakes, in "Lift It Up: A Reformation Celebration Through Music."

Many congregations and Roman Catholic parishes gathered together during the season of Lent 2017 to study the joint resource, *Together in Christ – Lutheran and Catholics*

Commemorating the Reformation, and many other congregational and ecumenical events were held across our Synod.

En Misión Con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador.

Thank you for your on-going prayerful support and directed gifts, as congregations and individuals, for our Synod's mission, *En Misión con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador*, with The Rev. Dr. Brian Rude serving as program staff. Directed gifts may be sent to the Synod, clearly marked for "In Mission with El Salvador." In March 2017 and 2018 letters of thanks, a report from Pastor Brian and a financial update were prepared and distributed. These materials were also made available through the Synod's weekly e-newsletter, *Wednesday's Word*, and the Synod website.

Companion Synod – The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO).

Conversation continues with the two ELCA Synods, national ELCA staff, and our Synod regarding updates from IELCO. In consultation with our Synod's Global Missions Ministry Team chair, The Rev. Scott Brown, I invited The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen (Hosanna, Edmonton), the ABT Synod representative on the National Church Council's Global Mission Task Force, to represent me at the International Consultation for Companion Synods and Companion Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean on November 9- 13, 2016 in Lima, Peru. In addition to ELCA Global Mission staff and companion church leaders, participants at this consultation were representatives of those ELCA and ELCIC synods that are in a relationship with a church or synod in Latin America and the Caribbean.

IELCO Delegation to our Synod. I am looking forward to welcoming our Colombian guests and ELCA staff to our Synod Convention. Our Synod is working in partnership with Bethel, Camrose to bring our guests to the Synod. Thank you to the Lutheran Triune Foundation for partial financial support and to the planning team for coordinating this visit with me: Mark Rintoul, Donna Heine, The Rev. Barbara Groote, and Alan and Val Fielding.

Our guests will be: Bishop Atahualpa Hernández Miranda and his wife, Rev. Angélica Bernate Rojas; along with Rev. Diana Carolina Londoño Espinosa and her husband, Óscar Ricardo Niño Durán; and ELCA Global Mission Staff, Manager for Relationships, Latin America and the Caribbean, Paulina Dasse, who will be present with us for the Synod Convention.

Their journey, June 12-25, 2018, will include participation at the Synod Convention and then they will be touring and sharing throughout our Synod. Watch for an opportunity to welcome and to hear our guests!

IELCO and Companion Synod Consultation. Our Synod will host an IELCO and Companion Synod Consultation, June 18-19, 2018 in Edmonton. Participants will include members of IELCO, two ELCA Synods, ELCA staff and our Synod. I look forward to this time of shared consultation and planning together. I have asked The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen, chair of our Synod's Global Missions Ministry Team to join me for the consultation.

Synod Delegation to Colombia. Tricia Hoepfner (Ascension, Edmonton) and I will be facilitating our Synod's Delegation to Colombia July 26-August 6, 2018, a partnership between our Synod and Ascension Lutheran. The 12 participants (including one from the SASK Synod) have already met for the first of two pre-orientation sessions which include pre-journey learning, sharing, group-building, worship, and so on. Your prayers as we prepare for our journey are appreciated.

Camp Effectiveness Survey. The Executive Officers, in the fall of 2017, approved funds from the Synod Reserve Fund to assist with a Camp Effectiveness Survey. I look forward to receiving and reviewing the data gathered. My correspondence to congregational leaders: rostered, council chairs, youth leaders said in part:

Across our Synod there are many opportunities to be in collaborative partnerships. One of these is with the outdoor ministries which relate to our Synod: Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camp, Mulhurst Lutheran Church Camp, Peace Lutheran Bible Camp, and Sylvan Lake Lutheran Bible Camp (Kuriakos).

These outdoor ministries, in cooperation with our Synod, are participating in an Effective Camp Research Project, examining the impact of the Christian summer camp experience on campers, families, and church communities. This summer, youth participating in camp programs will complete surveys concerning the long-term impact of camps, beyond the so called "camp high".

The information gathered will assist our outdoor ministries in providing strong programs for Christian faith development, growth and leadership.

As outdoor ministries are strong partners with our Synod, I encourage you to participate in the initiative and complete the survey by clicking on the link, below. The information gathered will help shape the future of our camp and retreat centers, and their partnership with the Synod, its congregations and ministries.

Full Communion Partners. I continue to appreciate the shared ministry partnerships and conversations with the Anglican Dioceses and their Bishops on the same

geographical area of our Synod. This is a collaborative partnership of growing possibility and opportunity.

Abiding in Right Relations Ministry Team (AIRR). With the co-chairs of AIRR, The Rev. Dr. Ann Salmon and Carl Rausch, having recently moved to Saskatoon, the AIRR Ministry Team is in a time of re-organizing. We now have a four-member team in place, representing different geographical areas of the Synod. I was honored to participate in a time of listening and learning together with AIRR Ministry Team members and Anglican leadership at Siksika First Nations October 21, 2016. Bishop Jessica Crist (ELCA Montana Synod) and I worked toward a second cross-border, cross-denomination AIRR event in Montana – October 16-17, 2018, at Wolf Point, Montana. However, due to a low number of registrations the event was cancelled. Thank you to The Rev. Faith Brace who represented me and AIRR on the planning team.

I have appointed Dr. Andrea Wilhelm to represent me on the Edmonton-based "Our Common Ground" committee, which consists of Anglicans, Lutherans, United Church, and Roman Catholic participants. The two staffers are Rick Chapman, chaplain from Inter-City Pastoral Ministry (ICPM), and Michelle Nieviadomy, who is with the Native Healing Centre (Reformed Church) as well as ICPM. The committee began its work in 2017, and with grant funding from the Anglican Foundation, held 4 "Our Common Ground" events which explored the common ground we have as people of faith, e.g.: common ground around prayer from the different Christian and Indigenous traditions. April 2018 - February 2019, the committee's main project is a 9-week small group discussion-based curriculum for up to 20 people, which will deepen and expand the learning from the previous year.

CARE (Congregational Action and Response for Mental Health) Ministry Team. CARE is a Synod-wide initiative focusing 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 resources available for congregations; and encouraging the development of local resource for congregations. Funding *per congregation / ministry* in our Synod is available to train with Mental Health First Aid Canada. Additionally, the Southwestern Area and the Synod's CARE Ministry Team jointly sponsored a Mental Health First Aid Canada at Lutheran Church of the Cross, November 2017 with the costs of the event covered by the Synod's CARE Ministry Team. To date, approximately 80 individuals from across our Synod have participated in this training.

In collaboration with the Synod's Worship and the Arts Ministry Team a worship service was prepared for

congregational use February 2017 with a theme of mental health. This material is available on the Synod's website and is easily adaptable.

Refugee Sponsorships. A number of ABT Synod congregations and ministries 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.

Compassionate Justice Initiative – Synod Antipoverty Grants. Reports have been received at the Synod office for applications approved for each of the past two years and a year-end report was sent to our National Office.

Healthy Boundaries. A first 'Healthy Boundaries' workshop took place March 7, 2018 at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer facilitated by National Bishop Susan Johnson. All rostered leaders were invited, and I am currently in the process of identifying three individuals to be trained to continue to offer this learning event once each year.

Ft. McMurray Fire. Response to the fire in Ft. McMurray in May 2016 was generous and overwhelming by our Synod, across Canada, and indeed, around the world. Rostered Leaders in or near Edmonton provided chaplaincy support, Lutheran Campus Ministry provided care and ministry on the UofA campus, donations to CLWR were incredible, congregations in or near Ft. McMurray provided accommodations, meals, personal items, and so on. Conversation via teleconference continued following the devastation for nearly two years on a regular basis with CLWR representatives, the LC-C and myself, with updates provided, planning, and fund distribution being much of our conversation. An application for funds was mutually created and made available through the LC-C and our Synod offices.

The week following the devastation our Synod hosted an evening service of Prayer and Lament at Trinity, Edmonton. Several from the Christ the King, Ft. McMurray congregation attended as well as many from Lutheran congregations in and around Edmonton.

On May 28, 2016 Cathy and I gathered with The Rev. Susan and Cliff Horton and current and former Christ the King, Ft. McMurray congregants for worship on an acreage south of Athabasca, which included a baptism and Eucharist. Some months previously, Pastor Susan had announced her retirement, so all were experiencing several layers of grief as we gathered together. Susan and Cliff have now settled in Stony Plain.

Conversation via teleconference also regularly took place between denominational judicatory leadership including the Anglican Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian, LC-C and myself. We shared updated information, planning and how we might work together to provide support and care now and, in the months, to come.

Together with representatives of CLWR and LC-C, The Rev. Susan Horton and I visited Ft. McMurray to view for ourselves the devastation and to meet with members of the Lutheran community. A second journey to Ft. McMurray with representatives of CLWF and LC-C and myself took place August 2017 for the purpose of learning how the funds received through CLWR were being used, to meet with various representatives and to explore further support. The various ministries provided were very meaningful and deeply appreciated.

Foodgrains – CLWR, LC-C and ABT Synod. In the summer of 2017 Foodgrains, CLWR, LC-C, myself and congregational representation from Mt. Olivet, Sherwood Park and St. Johns, Ardrossan met to learn more about the work of the Foodgrains bank. A harvest gathering took place August 27, 2017 hosted by Glory Lutheran, Sherwood Park which I also attended.

OTHER MINISTRY

Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission. I welcome the opportunity to continue serving as an ELCIC 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. I continue to serve as National Church Council appointment on the Faith, Order and Doctrine (FOD) committee. Recent work has been focused on the Orders of Ministry study and paper. A very interesting, informative and meaningful part of the process of developing the study was a meeting of FOD together with the Diaconal Ministers and candidates providing opportunity for members of FOD to hear from and to learn from these rostered leaders and candidates.

Advisory group – Authorized Lay Ministries. Fall 2016 I was appointed by National Church Council to a four-member advisory group to develop guidelines for Authorized Lay

Ministries. Appointments included National Staff, one member each from the Program Committee for Leadership Ministry and the Program Committee for Worship, and myself. The guidelines were reviewed and approved by National Church Council in September 2017.

Delegate to LWF Assembly. I was 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) to the Lutheran World Federation's 12th Assembly which took place May 2017 in Namibia, with a pre-assembly gathering in Suriname, South America, in August 2016.

During the elections at the 12th Assembly I was elected to serve on The LWF Council as one of six members from the North American Region. I am aware of the richness, and the fullness, of my role as Synod Bishop, including the many time commitments and responsibilities. As a member of The LWF Council I will be participating in meetings of the Council once per year, serving as a member of the Mission and Development Committee, usually in May or June for one week, and alternating between Geneva and a member Church somewhere in the world. Though this responsibility certainly adds to my workload I do not anticipate it requiring significant time and I look forward to sharing the richness of this global experience and opportunity with our Synod, Church and Region.

I was asked to be the North American Region representative on a small committee tasked with reviewing the 12th Assembly and presenting a report to the Council's meeting in July 2018.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dissolutions of Incorporated Congregations and Church Property. We continue to work with our Synod lawyer toward the dissolution of incorporated congregations which have closed or are defunct. This work is necessary, and a cost to the Synod. We have also been working with our Synod lawyer to work toward the proper ownership of the land upon which one of the congregations of our Synod sits. This is work that is also necessary, and should have been done decades ago, prior to several mergers.

An **Officer's Consultation** (national and synodical) was held December 2017 in Winnipeg, MB. Present from the ABT Synod were Chair Wayne Street, Secretary Marilyn Murray and myself. In a conference call of ABT Synod Officers following the Consultation, appreciation was expressed for the opportunity to gather in this way and to meet leadership from the other synods and our national church. One outcome from the meeting was that Synod Council meeting minutes will be distributed to the national and synodical secretaries for

distribution to council members and that synod council meetings will include on their agenda a time for “what are we learning from other synods and the national”. Following learning and conversation, it was agreed to focus on three areas: financial, motion 95-11 and the role of national and synod, and communications. These three working groups are continuing to meet and to work.

ELCIC National Convention. The 2019 National Convention will take place at the University of Regina, Regina, July 11-13, 2019. The ABT Synod will have an additional rostered delegate with apportionment based on the December 31, 2016 parochial reports: 15 Lay, 2 Youth and 11 Rostered for a total of 28 delegates.

PERSONAL MINISTRY

Sabbatical – November 2016-January 2017.

Reflections on the Sabbatical Leave – Reflections about Larry.

Walter Brueggemann makes the wonderful statement that, “Sabbath is an invitation to image our life differently” (*Finally Comes the Poet: Daring Speech for Imagination*). Much of my time in journal writing, reflecting and praying centered around this imaging.

As I began the Sabbatical I realized immediately just how tired I really was. While re-reading Brueggemann’s book I came across the following words which affirmed not only my exhaustion but the life-giving gift that the Sabbatical was for me. “A startling theological claim is made for the Sabbath as God’s day of rest in Exodus 31:17: ‘...The Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’ The text uses the verb *nap hash* in the reflexive, suggesting that Yahweh was exhausted, diminished, and the Sabbath made it possible for God to receive life back.”

Henri Nouwen’s words spoke into this weariness and this gift of Sabbatical too: “While realizing that ten years ago I didn’t have the faintest idea that I would end up where I now am, I still like to keep up the illusion that I am in control of my own life. I like to decide what I most need, what I will do next, what I want to accomplish, and how others will think of me. While being so busy running my own life, I become oblivious to the gentle movements of the Spirit of God within me, pointing me in directions quite different from my own.

It requires a lot of inner solitude and silence to become aware of these divine movements. God does not shout, scream, or push. The Spirit of God is soft and gentle like a small voice or light breeze. It is the spirit of love.” (*Here and Now: Living in the Spirit*)

Imagine. The Spirit of God pointing. Growing awareness of these divine movements.

Imagining my life differently means in part that I have reconnected with my most deep friendships, I have re-engaged in exploring the gift of music, and I have intentionally carved out time for days off and holiday.

Reflections on the Sabbatical Leave – Reflections about Family.

One of the greatest joys in the Sabbatical gift has been quantity and quality time with my family. Cathy and I spent much time together...talking, walking, laughing, remembering...simply being. Time with our children, too, was a gift. They are caring, inquisitive, loving, supporting, encouraging, teasing, gifted young adults. And I am so proud of each of them! On behalf of Cathy, Paul and Kim, Matthew, Anna, and Jordan, I thank you for this Sabbatical gift.

The Sabbatical also gifted me with quantity time with my extended family: parents, twin, and two sisters. All offered me, without reservation, the gift of presence, silence, tears and laughter. And I am so thankful.

Reflections on the Sabbatical Leave – Reflections about Our Synod.

Thank-you to each of you who shared your God given gifts with us all during these past three months! I express particular thanks to The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, who served capably as Commissary; Darla Wildfang, Executive Assistant; Synod Executive – Wayne Street, Marilyn Murray and Stephen Wildfang; and the Deans: The Revs. Trish Schmermund, Eleanor Ness, Kathy Calkins, Kristian Wold and Reg Berg. Thank-you.

Conclusion.

Celebrating the gift of a Sabbatical leave means a deep, deep sense of gratitude and thanksgiving for me: to God for sustaining and upholding me during this time, for insights gained, imagination rekindled. Sabbatical time in order to receive life back. For deeper listening and deeper discerning of my calling as your Bishop.

Bishop Self-Care and Spiritual Renewal. As per Synod Council policy, Bishop Self-Care and Spiritual Renewal, I strive to take a one-day personal retreat each month and twice a year take a two-day personal retreat. In 2017 I did not follow this pattern; however, I have resumed this pattern in 2018. I have continued to see a Spiritual Director, meeting almost every month. I am thankful for this care and support from the Synod. I continue to meet on a regular basis with a committee of, currently, three retired rostered and one lay leaders.

Continuing Education. In 2016 I attended the National Worship Conference at Wilfred Laurier University, Kitchener-Waterloo: *Formation & Reformation: Worship, Justice and God's Mission*. I also participated in the *Music That Makes Community* three-day learning event in Calgary 2017.

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 Wayne Street, who has given of himself generously in service to the Synod; Treasurer Stephen Wildfang who served above the call of duty in his service to the Synod – for this was his 'duty and delight'; and Secretary Marilyn Murray who so capably serves;
- + for the members of the Synod Council for their dedication and service;
- + for members of the Standing Committees of Synod Council – the Examining Committee, the Candidacy Committee, 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 ministry;
- + for the Area 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 Areas;
- + for the Area Leadership Teams;
- + 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 Synod in so many ways.

These past years as your Bishop have been richly rewarding, regularly challenging, at times overwhelming, and personally fulfilling.

Together, we are the Church – sign, symbol and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. Synod: "Coming together." Harambee: "pulling together in the same direction."

Together, we live in vibrant witness to God's work in the world, offering our hands and feet in the service of God's mission.

As we journey forward together the following verse from Paul's letter to the church in Rome (15:13) continues to sustain me in profound and meaningful ways: *"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."*

In Christ Jesus –
Shalom,
+Larry Kochendorfer

Abiding in Right Relations (AiRR) Ministry Team

As a result of Co-chairs Rev. Ann Salmon and Carl Rausch moving to take a call in another province, this ministry team has been mainly inactive in the past six months, since the summer of 2017. New members have been appointed to the committee: Harold (Buzz) Robinson, Edmonton; and Dale Woitt, Wetaskiwin. The committee now consists of Rev. Faith Brace, Cochrane; Rev. Ron Flamand, Rolly View; and the two new members.

The Cross-Border Event with the ELCA Montana Synod, to be held at Wolf Point, Fort Peck Reservation in eastern Montana in October 2017, was cancelled because of insufficient registration, a great disappointment to the four people from Alberta who planned to attend. There is no information at present as to whether the event will be planned for another time.

Meanwhile, many cultural and educational and spiritual events related to the 94 Calls to Action take place among Alberta churches and community organizations, giving opportunity to Lutherans throughout the Synod to experience the surge of interest in reconciliation between Indigenous people and other Canadians. I have personally been part of a group from All Saints Anglican Parish in Cochrane who conduct a grief and loss circle among young adults at Stoney Nakoda First Nation in Morley, AB. It is led by an Anglican deacon who is qualified in transition ministry, and it includes a hot lunch prepared by members of the parish. Every week there is opportunity to serve the people who come, to listen to them, hear of their individual experiences and begin to understand their struggle with community breakdown, personal loss and pain. I hope that many Lutherans across the Synod will find such opportunities in their local areas.

Rev. Faith Brace

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

CARE is a Synod initiative to promote mental wellness and health in our congregations and in our communities. Mental wellness and health issues are a serious concern in our society and our congregations. The people of the Church and in our congregations have a unique role to play in supporting all persons to achieve mental health. In addition, our Lutheran theology speaks to mental well-being.

There are two fundamental goals of this ministry team:

- to assist congregations to become more informed of mental health issues in society and the church; and
- to share resources and ideas within the Synod.

Work to Date:

- Created a page on the ABT Synod website which focuses on CARE information and provides resources which congregations are encouraged to be aware of and use.
- Researched the most supportive and effective ways to make use of existing mental health resources. The Team especially found that the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program of the Mental Health Commission of Canada is a very useful, straightforward and easily accessible resource for congregations and people wanting to take part in the priorities of the ministry. MHFA is easily accessed through the internet.
- Workshops and presentations since the last Synod convention:
 - o Grace Lutheran Church, Hinton, organized and held a series of workshops with presenter resources from within the Synod.
 - o CARE encouraged and promoted local groupings of congregations and church leaders in their own organizing of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) workshops; it provided the financial resources and assistance in organizing these.
 - o The Ministry Team and Synod leaders, and members of congregations, have participated in two separate, two-day MHFA workshops organized by CARE.
 - o A MHFA workshop was held in Calgary in November 2017. It was fully subscribed, with the possibility of further workshop opportunities.
 - o The Synod's 2018 Congregational Life Event was titled 'No One is Immune: Taking Action for Mental Health in Congregations, which included workshops on mental health and wellness, with a MHFA keynote presenter.
- CARE continues to provide financial support to congregations through \$100.00 "scholarships" in support of members enrolling in MHFA workshops – up to three per congregation. MHFA's own workshops are provided by trained facilitators in many places across the Synod and have varying focuses.
- A congregational worship resource was developed in partnership with the Synod's Worship Ministry Team.
- CARE allocated funds to the Bishop in support of the Synod's clergy-assistance and support program.

Going Forward:

- Team members continue to be available to meet with local groups to provide information, encouragement and support for workshops and scholarships. Contact the Synod office for more information.
- Financial support for locally-organized MHFA workshops continues.
- CARE has agreed to support one workshop a year for each of the next two years, with the 2018 Congregational Life Event being the first of these.
- CARE is endeavoring to set up and fund a MHFA workshop in the Red Deer area.
- The individual MHFA-related "scholarship" program continues, and congregations and individuals are encouraged to take advantage of this.
- The Team is coming to realize that a mental health ministry intersects with the Synod's other ministries addressing many other issues for people and congregations – and that there are opportunities for intersectional ministry.

Submitted by Carl Sorensen, Coordinator

CARE Ministry Team:

Rev. Dyanna Couture, Standard
Dr. Dianne Kieren, Edmonton
Bishop Larry Kochendorfer
Rev. Kathie Schmitke, Edmonton
Barb Stolee, Calgary
Rev. Marty Tuer, Red Deer
Rev. Richard Reimer, Edmonton
Rev. Mike Lynch (representative from the Anglican Church),
Edmonton

Global Mission Ministry Team

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:3

You will notice several changes that have happened in the past two years with the ministry and our report. First, we have changed our name. This brings us into an easier understanding for our colleagues in this work as many use the title, "Global Mission". Recently, the Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen was appointed to the Global Mission Ministry Team.

Some ministry areas that we are working on at present are the following:

1. Colombia. We welcome Bishop Atahualpa Hernandez as the new Bishop of IELCO. Plans have been underway since January, for him and a group from Colombia to visit us at the Synod

convention in 2018. A working group has been established to prepare for the visit of our Colombian guests. As well, a new covenant between IELCO and our Synod will be signed during the Synod Convention.

2. Synod Delegation to Colombia. The next journey to Colombia is set for July 26-August 6, 2018. Bishop Larry will be facilitating this trip along with Tricia Hoepfner (Ascension Lutheran, Edmonton). The twelve participants will be meeting twice for pre-education prior to the journey. Pictures and a report of the trip will be shared with the Synod via Wednesday's Word after their return.
3. *En Misión Con El Salvador: In Mission with El Salvador.* Pr. Brian Rude continues his work and presence in El Salvador. We are pleased that he will be joining us for Synod Convention and sharing of this ministry throughout the Synod following the Convention.

Some other matters that I would bring to your attention as well:

- A. National Church Global Missions. You will all have received a brochure in your congregational mailings about the on-going nature of global missions. I commend it to you.
- B. Consultation. We continue to work to build relationships with our sister synods in the ELCA that are partnered with us in Colombia. Immediately after the Synod Convention representatives from our synod, the two synods in the ELCA, ELCA staff and the members from Colombia will meet in Edmonton to review our mission work.

I would ask the delegates to continue to pray for all refugees around the world, and especially those in two different situations. The Middle Eastern situation continues to be quite fluid at the moment. Syrian refugees are struggling to survive, adapt to new countries and find the necessities of life in refugee camps. Further, the situation with the Rohingya refugees is still not resolved.

I have now served some eight years on this committee/ministry. Since God is leading me into new areas and adventures in ministry, I have submitted my resignation from the Global Missions Ministry Team to the Bishop. It has been a pleasure to serve this dynamic and on-going ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. L. Scott Brown, chairperson

on behalf of:
Dr. Helen Bowden
The Rev. Dr. James Hendricksen
Mark Rintoul

Leadership Development Ministry Team

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 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).

The focus of the Leadership Development Committee's work in the past two years has been on organizing the annual Congregational Life Event, a one-day workshop—usually held in March or April—on a theme of contemporary relevance in the church. These events offer the opportunity for ABT Synod members to explore issues of interest in their church and spiritual lives, and a chance to showcase the incredible work that is being done in many fields by pastors and laypeople around the synod.

The theme of the 2017 Congregational Life Event was "Worship: When Ruins Rejoice." Paul Vasile, executive director of Music that Makes Community—"a non-profit organization working with ecumenical communities and leaders to empower and liberate communities' spiritual life through singing"—was the keynote speaker who offered reflections on what it means to gather for worship in the 21st century, and led the assembly in song. ABT Synod members Rev. Dr. Laura Holck, Rev. Daranne Harris, Robyn Simpson-Mohr, and Rev. Kristian Wold offered breakout sessions that built on the workshop theme. This event was generously supported financially by the SW Area Group. Members of the Synod Worship and the Arts Committee collaborated as organizers.

In 2018 responsibility for the organization of the Congregational Life Event moved to the Synod's CARE Committee, in followup to the very successful and important 2016 Event on mental health issues and the church.

Since the Leadership Development Committee was formed the landscape for continuing education has changed, and opportunities for Christian growth have proliferated. Within the Synod groups like the Retreat of Our Own, Synod Study Conference, and CARE are active in providing education and training; and at the seminary in Saskatoon the Lay

Leadership Academy is equipping church members for leadership. In light of the current context the Leadership Development Committee is currently taking a hiatus from its activities and spending some time reassessing its future role in the church.

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the Leadership Development Committee,
Rev. Kristian Wold

Missional Formation Ministry Team

The Canadian Missions committee transitioned into the Missional Formation team and is responsible for CECF Church Extension Capital Fund (CECF) interest distribution recommendations and Creative Initiative grants. Sincere thanks to all who served through this time of change.

Canadian Missions CECF interest distribution: The amount available is based on the interest earned in the CECF which has historically been used to buy land and assist congregations with building mortgages. Funding criteria for *CECF interest distribution* includes congregational redevelopment, ethnic specific ministries, supporting pastors in mission congregations and providing funds for the training and equipping rostered ministers and laity for mission. Since the 2016 Synod convention \$ 91,130 of the *CECF interest distribution* has been granted to congregations and ministries.

Creative Initiatives: The CECF Committee began wondering how they could best steward the fund since it is generally no longer feasible to buy land and build new buildings. Creative Initiatives Synodical monies from amounts over the CECF cap, began in June 2015. Congregations and ministries continue to be invited to apply for Creative Initiatives grants which must be used before June 2020.

Since the 2016 Synod convention \$106,200 has been granted to congregations and ministries.

Learnings from Creative Initiatives experiments include the following:

Across the Synod (2016-2018):

- We are eager to find new ways of "being church," and new ways of joining God in our community.
- The pace of change in attitudes, imagination, perspectives and practices is slow and requires patience.
- Modelling spiritual practices and experiential learning is important. In this approach, as we risk, there are no failures, only opportunities to learn. Developing

learning communities requires an adaptive leadership approach and skills.

- There are many benefits from gathering in a place to collaborate and discern with others. Cohorts became safe spaces for leaders who voiced hopes and anxieties.
- It is important to explore the impact of policies, organizational structures and expectations.

Across the ELCIC: (Jan 31, 2018)

- There has been an “awakening” a shift in awareness that things have changed, and we want to participate in God’s mission.
- It is important to pay attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit, and our movement in joining the Spirit. We need engage in practices to listen to what the Spirit of God is saying.
- Encounter those in the community, especially those not like us, for the sake of reciprocal relationships (meeting neighbours, not just meeting needs).
- Stories expand the capacity for imagination.
- Tensions exist between the movement and institution, building new and upholding the existing and we need to embrace the disruption and conflict.
- We have theological riches in our Lutheran tradition that can move us from fear to freedom.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Study Conference Planning Ministry Team

This past 2018 Study Conference February 5-8 in Canmore was a success! Numbers were up, as was the positive energy in among participants. The keynote speaker was Dr. Allen Jorgenson from Waterloo Seminary, who will spoke on interfaith relations.

Next year’s conference will run February 4-7, with keynote speaker Dr. Karoline Lewis from Luther Seminary, who will speak on preaching the lectionary.

Thank you to Pastor Lindsey Jorgensen-Skakum and Pastor Kirk Tastad for their worship leadership.

Thank you to Cathy Kochendorfer, Pastor Tim Wray, and Bishop Larry for helping make this event such as valuable time for rest, reflection, and study.

Submitted in Jesus’ Name,
Rev. Kevin Powell, chair
Study Conference Planning Committee

Synod Campus Ministry Team

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.

The Synod Campus Ministry Team continues to provide resources via Canada Post and the Synod’s website for the Drive for Five fundraising event. The event has been renamed (since we are now on more than five campuses in Alberta) the SMART (Synod Missional Academic Response Team) Sunday. Thank you for your support for Campus Ministry through this annual initiative.

After several years of review and consideration the Synod Campus Ministry Team Manual was presented to and approved by Synod Council in September 2016. One of the significant changes was the desire for participation by those most closely connected to the ministry: chaplains and local councils. Meetings now include the chaplains, a representative (usually the chair) of each local campus council, and the Bishop.

A retreat for young adults continues at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake each January with chaplains and students participating from several campuses, including Regina and Saskatoon. January 2017 the speaker was Lauren Wray and the theme, “Calling,” with her presentation entitled, “please wait while your call is being connected,” and in January 2018 the speakers were The Right Rev. Sidney Black, Suffragan Bishop of Treaty 7 Territory and his granddaughter, Danielle, and the theme, “Abiding in Right Relations.”

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

- The Rev. Richard Reimer - LCM U of A Chaplain
- The Rev. Jason Anderson – NAIT Chaplain
- The Rev. Margaret Propp - LCM U of C Chaplain and Mount Royal University
- The Rev. Canon Erin Phillips - ECM Lethbridge
- The Rev. Kristy Reimers-Loader - ECM Medicine Hat College
- The Rev. Craig Wentland - Augustana Chaplaincy Chaplain
- Sarah Smith – Augustana, Assistant for Chaplaincy
- The Rev. Ron Flamand – Interim Augustana Chaplaincy Chaplain – January 19-April 16, 2018

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

Ecumenical Campus Ministry, Lethbridge – The Rev. Canon Erin Phillips

ECM Lethbridge rejoices in another year of campus ministry. Our chaplain, Erin Phillips, continues to forge connections and strengthen networks at Lethbridge's two post-secondary institutions, the Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge. This year we have connected students and faculty to new ideas through the Theology Reading Group; brought established congregations, willing volunteers and students in need together through end of term suppers and Campus Care Parcel projects; provided new knowledge to all through the annual Cade lecture series; experienced new relationships and watched many "Canadian firsts" with our fourth jointly sponsored refugee family from Syria; and identified the extent of student need on the University campus through a poverty study. The purposeful work continues!

Lutheran Campus Ministry – UofC, Mount Royal University, Calgary – The Rev. Margaret Propp

With the generous gift of the Triune Foundation, LCM-Calgary expanded their 40%-time ministry to 60% by including Mount Royal University. The current model of running the Drum/Dine/Discuss outreach once a week at the UofC now operates at MRU. Currently we have anywhere from 30-50 students taking part in the Drum/Dine/Discuss every week between the two institutions. The leadership training program called the Peer Partnership Programme also had 12 students from several institutions throughout Calgary (U of C, MRU, Ambrose, SAIT, and MaKami Collage). LCM-Calgary serves a very diverse demographic. The magnitude of outreach has only been possible through a collegial collaboration with the United/Presbyterian campus ministry. We are currently looking into research and models of Campus Ministry to be more financially self-sustaining. We see the vital and life-giving work of Campus Ministry as essential to the formation of young people in their education. As numerous students have expressed "What you do here..... this has been the most significant and life-giving part of my week and time at University!" (former MRU Students Union Rep)

Medicine Hat Ecumenical Campus Ministry – The Rev. Kristy Reimers-Loader

The work of raising awareness of the chaplaincy over the past year has proven very fruitful. As I move around the College from day to day, I experience a growing recognition amongst the people I meet; more and more people are aware of who their Chaplain is, what she's doing, and how she might be helpful for situations which may arise. Hence, I've experienced an increase in the number of people requesting appointments as well as those who will stop me in the hallways and talk. This is extremely gratifying, to say the least. The work of pastoral care remains the most meaningful form of ministry I practice at the College. Without breaching the confidence of any of the people with whom I have spoken, I have dealt with a number of students, staff, and faculty in varying states of distress, grief, confusion, stress, and sadness. In all cases, I have endeavored to be fully present in the encounter, and to meet the people where they were, emotionally and spiritually. I have prayed with, and for these people, and I have prayed for many others by explicit request. Programming has included: soup lunches, daily silent meditation, Wednesday coffee hour, and weekly prayer for the community within and around the College, and for the world. The Board engaged the services of a local videographer, with a view to producing a short promotional film that would detail the work of the chaplaincy at the College. This has been completed and has been hailed as a successful project.

This ministry represents the spirit of Christ working in the world; that through a principally Christian-funded and sustained ministry, people of all faith traditions—and those holding no particular faith—may enjoy the benefit of our Creator's love expressed through the provision of a safe, inclusive space and where, prior to any other consideration, each individual's humanity is honoured, and they are granted the dignity and respect owed to all Creation.

Augustana Chaplaincy, Camrose – Sara Smith (Assistant for Chaplaincy)

This year's theme has been Feast, Pray, Serve. We adopted this theme in order to intentionally transform our activities towards the model given for the early church in the Book of Acts. A new academic calendar challenged us to change our set worship times from Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays to Tuesday and Thursdays. We took this opportunity to create a new form of worship on Wednesday nights where we join together in Holy Communion, a chili supper, and an activity

that varies from week to week. This could be in the form of a guest speaker, a demonstration of a different worship practice such as centering prayer or a fun community building time. This is often an intimate meal with 12-15 students that allows us to get to know one another on a different level compared to the dinners we continue to host on Tuesday nights that feed 90-120 people.

Recently, we supported six student chaplains who engage in peer ministry and small group activities through the campus. They regularly host knitting nights with a group of community ladies and students, worship nights on Sunday evenings as well as the larger events such as SCORE! that continue to be a staple within the campus. They provide a face to chaplaincy that extends beyond worship to activities such as compliments and encouragements posted to every door in residence just before exams and bring a personal touch of joy and compassion to campus during some of the most stressful times.

This current winter semester has provided Pastor Craig Wentland, Campus Chaplain, with an opportunity to take a short sabbatical after his 12 years of service. We have been privileged to have Rev. Ron Flamand (retired) join us as a part-time interim chaplain in Craig's absence. We recently hosted a fundraising event entitled Feast, Pray, Serve: Chaplaincy and All That Jazz. The evening was arranged similar to a jazz vespers service and Interim Chaplain Ron Flamand was the guest speaker. This was a very successful event and is on-par with previous year's fundraising dinners. As many people are aware, the University of Alberta as a whole is experiencing cutbacks over the next years. Augustana Chaplaincy is in part funded through a partnership with the University and thus we are experiencing part of this decrease in funding. While the amount is quite substantial university wide, the specific impact on Chaplaincy will not change the quality of programming that we provide to the students. We are dedicated to accompanying the Augustana community on a pilgrimage of educating the whole person – mind, body, and spirit.

Lutheran Campus Ministry-Edmonton – The Rev. Richard Reimer

In 2016, Lutheran Campus Ministry-Edmonton received notice of a generous bequest from the estate of long-time friend, Beverley Boren. With the first installment of that gift, LCM-Edmonton has established a permanent endowment with the Edmonton Community Foundation in her honour. Known as the "Bev Boren Lutheran Campus Ministry Fund," interest will be disbursed annually to reflect Bev's desire to support campus ministry personnel and programming carried

out by Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Alberta, Edmonton. God bless you, Bev! God bless your memory!

Last year, at the invitation of the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE), Atlanta, Georgia, I attended a North American Consultation on Intentional Christian Communities. This concluded with the invitation to write a grant proposal for up to \$10,000. My proposal was to grow student community that practices discerning and responding to Christ's call to ministry through retreats, book study, and spiritual direction.

The Rev. Dr. Julianne Barlow, Assistant to the Bishop for Mission, and I designed two day long-retreats bringing together the intentional Christian communities of Martin Luther House and St. Aidan's House (Anglican) at Mulhurst Lutheran Camp.

We began with the practice of "Dwelling in the Word," reflecting on where God's mission is unfolding in the world, and where we may join it. Dr. Faith Nostbakken, Diaconal Minister, joined us to introduce spiritual direction and led us in drawing our prayers through a mandala. Chef Dana Rayment cooked marvelous meals! The grant also funded the annual student winter retreat at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake. At the weekly supper and meeting facilitated by Chaplains Richard Reimer, at Martin Luther House, and Sarah Holmstrom, at St. Aidan's House, residents have been given and are reading together, *Called to Community: The Life Jesus Wants for His People*. With gratitude we acknowledge the FTE grant that has made the growth we have experienced possible!

This past year the Lutheran Student Movement's (LSM) theme has been "Serving in the Spirit", focusing on a different fruit of the Spirit each month, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22). Special highlights of this past year include LSM's annual hotdog sale through which six hundred dollars was raised for the Red Cross to assist flood victims in Asia. Other activities included participation in Lutheran Campus Ministry's Skate-A-Thon and the Prayerworks inner city meal program.

We are especially grateful to local congregations including Holy Spirit, Mount Zion, Ascension, and Hosanna, who have nourished LSM in both body and spirit by providing meals and cookies throughout the year. In the midst of the turbulent environment of academia, LSM ministers to the campus community by welcoming students from all walks of life to be part of a Christian community.

Martin Luther House provides a “home away from home” and intentional Christian community to five students. Residents reach out to the wider student community by opening their doors for Tuesday suppers hosted by the Lutheran Student Movement. On Sunday evenings residents join 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, and to apply, visit: lcm Edmonton.ca

NAIT Campus Ministry – The Rev. Jason Anderson

Things are always great at NAIT... mostly because that rhymes, but so does commiserate, and we probably all sympathize with plentiful vineyards but too few laborers. I continue serving Lutheran Campus Ministry 4hrs a week as one of many ecumenical chaplains. Together, we ensure NAIT has full time chaplaincy services. In good Lutheran prudence, I am now able to provide worship (prayer, word, sacrament) to our students. With this, in addition to everything else going on: community-building events, faith mentoring, spiritual care/counseling, and premarital counseling, students are able to find spiritual security and well-being as they journey through their education with various joys and challenges. What’s most special to me is being an extension of our church, creating a space for young people to encounter Christ incarnate: in their lives, in their communities, among their peers, where they are at emotionally and physically, in the context of their intense learning and professional formation. Thanks to NAIT and the department of Student Counseling for being champions of campus ministry, to our Synod, all its members, to Lutheran Triune Educational and Benevolent Society, for the support that makes this all happen.

The Synod Campus Ministry Team welcomes your partnership in the gospel. Thanks for your ongoing support via Synod Benevolence, Directed Giving and especially through your support for Campus Ministry’s “SMART” Sunday, held each September.

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

Synod Youth Ministry Team

The Synod of Alberta and the Territories continues to encourage youth ministry in various ways. One way we support this important ministry is through a biennial synod gathering. All

youth from across the synod are invited and, in addition to fun, fellowship and learning, it is a good time to network with other leaders.

Mark Kuntz served with me on the Youth Ministry Team from 2015-2017 and together we achieved two of the Ministry Team’s previous goals: to increase the size of the Youth Ministry Team and to create a working list of youth leaders across the Synod. In 2017 when Mark stepped down Wayne Huff, Krystle Plant, Rev. Erik Sorenson and Kyra Van Veen joined me on the team. The entire Team wishes to thank Mark for all his contributions.

Synod Youth Gathering

The Synod youth gathering, *Freely Given*, took place May 5-7, 2017 at Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake, with 47 youth participating (64 participated in total, which included home team leaders, staff, and planning team representing 10 congregations). The gathering was a joint event (as it was in 2015) between the Synod and Kuriakos, Mulhurst and Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camps.

The gathering theme reflected the 500th commemoration of the Reformation. The keynote presentations were by Rev. Richard Reimer; drama and Sunday preacher Jacob Rempel; workshop leaders; and gathering band, featuring Andrew Chell, Anna Kochendorfer, Mark Kuntz, Ethan McGhan, lead by Ingrid Parker.

All worked well together in proclaiming the reality of the theme. We were pleased that Bishop Larry was able to join us and to lead a workshop.

Thank you to those who planned the gathering: Krystle Plant, Rev. Erik Sorenson, Wayne Hoff, Kyra VanVeen and, from Camp Kuriakos, Kendra Freeland and Paul Kopjar.

National ELCIC Convention 2017

There were two youth delegates to the ELCIC National Convention last summer in Winnipeg. Chad Garson from Grace Lutheran, Edson, and Nyajuok Kulang from Lutheran Church of the Cross, Calgary attended along with 25 other delegates from the Synod.

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 five days and includes large group worship, speakers and workshops, excursions, activities and education. It is held in a different location across Canada every other year.

CLAY 2016 Youth Gathering and Pre-Gathering Trip - Rev. Anna Thede, Hosanna Lutheran Edmonton and myself from St. Paul's Lutheran, Ellerslie, Edmonton worked together to coordinate the ABT Synod Pre-Gathering Trip, August 13- 17, 2016 through Nova Scotia prior to the CLAY Gathering in Charlottetown. Much fun was had - highlights of which included a trip to Peggy's Cove, Lunenburg, Tidal Bore rafting, Cow's Ice Cream, a lobster dinner at the Shore club and much more. Approximately 60 youth and leaders attended the ABT Synod Pre-Gathering Trip. Youth and adults were very pleased that Bishop Larry and Cathy were able to join us on the Pre-Gathering trip and CLAY Gathering

2018 CLAY Gathering (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth) is being held August 15-19 in Thunder Bay, ON, with the theme of "Threads". The ABT Synod Pre-Gathering Bus Trip there and back is being planned by Krystle Plant of Hosanna Lutheran, Edmonton, along with myself for August 11-21, from Edmonton to Thunder Bay and back. The trip will be through the prairies with various stops along the way

ABT Synod Youth Gathering 2019. We are planning the next gathering to be held at Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camp May 3-5, 2019.

Synod Youth Ministry Team goals for the future;

- Connect our Youth Leaders with training opportunities, in and around the Synod
- Continue to connect with all ABT Synod Churches to keep Youth Leader in contact with each other
- Use youth relevant Social Media; Facebook, Instagram, Snapchop to get information to the youth about events that affect them in and around the ABT Synod.

Respectfully submitted,
 Tammy Kirkwood
 Chair

Worship and the Arts Ministry Team

"Many and great, O God, are your works . . . with you are found the true gifts that last." ELW 837

Our synod's Worship and the Arts Committee, which usually meets twice a year, currently has three members: Bishop Larry Kochendorfer (Synod office); Colleen McGinnis (Wetaskiwin) – secretary; editor of the *Adoramus* newsletter; Carolyn Ethier (Lethbridge) – chair and ABT representative on the ELCIC National Program Committee for Worship.

The year following our 2016 Synod Convention has been one

of collaboration with other ministry teams.

- We partnered with C.A.RE to create worship resources, including liturgy, music and sermon, for use by congregations observing **Mental Health Sunday** in 2017.
- We assisted Leadership Development in designing the March **Congregational Life Event**, which included workshops with some of the people who helped shape our last convention worship:
 - **Proclamation with Power:** Proclaiming the word of scripture with intentionality and authenticity – *Rev. Dr. Laura Holck;*
 - **Words for Worship** – *Rev. Daranne Harris;*
 - **This is the Night! [Easter vigil]** – *Robyn Simpson-Mohr and Rev. Kristian Wold;*
 - *plus, a worship resource table – Carolyn Ethier)*

We celebrate, too, the many worship events planned by others beyond our group. As part of Reformation 500 commemorations, ecumenical expressions of the **Liberated by God's Grace hymn festival** have been hosted around the synod. Lutherans and others also came together for the excellent **Music that Makes Community workshop** that took place in Calgary in the summer of 2017.

On the synod website, a new **Adoramus** newsletter was published in fall 2017, as was the current **weekly diary of prayers and intercessions** for congregations and ministries of the Church; congregations are invited to include these public intercessions in their weekly worship. Most recently, we have enjoyed coordinating worship planning for the 2018 Synod Convention.

We want to highlight four key worship-related supports from the national church:

- Through the work of the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship, a **sermon-sharing program** developed by the BC Synod has been expanded for use by congregations without a full-time minister. Information is available through the synod office.
- The Program Committee for Worship also commissioned **Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Worship for Small Assemblies**, a series of worship plans using *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* as the primary resource. The worship outlines include options for Holy Communion and Service of the Word

each week. They have been posted on <http://www.worship.ca/> by season: Advent resources (Michèle Barr, MNO), Epiphany (Kathryn Smith, Eastern Synod), Lent (Carolyn Ethier, ABT), and Easter (Lorraine Reinhardt, BC).

- To assist congregations in preparing **Sunday worship bulletins**, the ELCIC now produces our church bulletin series, available through <http://churchbulletins.ca/>. Last fall, people were invited to contribute images of doors and windows that look out and see in, evoking the mission we all share. These images have been featured as bulletin covers for the 2017-2018 liturgical year.
- The **National Anglican/Lutheran Worship Conference**, “Sing, Pray, Presence, in response to disasters,” acknowledges the experience of communities large and small to storms, fires, earthquakes, and violence. How can worship be a community resource and response? The event happens **July 16-19, 2018 in Victoria, BC**. The National Worship Conference website has details: <http://www.nationalworshipconference.org/>

You are always invited to share through our website the worship resources created in your own communities.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Ethier