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# Section E– Partner Reports

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## Report of the National Bishop

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### Liberated by God’s Grace

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

As I think back on the past two years since your last Synod Convention, the first thing that comes to mind is the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation and the lasting impact it will have on the ELCIC. The commemoration of the Reformation may be officially over but the way it has strengthened our Lutheran identity, the way it brought us together in common witness and service through the Reformation Challenge, and its core message of being *Liberated by God’s Grace* will continue to shape our life together as a church in Canada.

In September of 2017, our National Church Council began working on a new five-year strategic plan. The National Office uses this strategic plan to help shape and focus our work. We are energized by the new four areas of focus in our strategic plan: Reconciled Relationships, One Body Working Together, Courageous Innovation, and Empowered Disciples. I would invite you to look at these four areas and consider how you, your congregation and your community might be engaged in one or more of these priorities.

The following is a small glimpse at the work of the National Office reported around these four new strategic areas, and how we carry out our call to be a church *In Mission for Others*.

### Reconciled Relationships

In 2011, the ELCIC made a commitment to promote right and renewed relationships between non-indigenous and Indigenous Peoples within Canada. In July 2015, the ELCIC renewed this commitment to truth, reconciliation and equity by repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. At this year’s National Convention delegates welcomed Kaila Johnston, research coordinator for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). The NCTR opened in the summer of 2015 and was created to preserve the memory of Canada’s Residential School system and legacy. It is the permanent home for all statements, documents, and other materials gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). In her presentation to delegates, Johnston

shared that she is frequently asked what people can do be involved in reconciliation. She listed several actions of reconciliation, including: “Learn the history of Indigenous and non- indigenous peoples, understand the history and legacy of Residential schools, explore the unique intersections between treaty, constitutional Indigenous and human rights, recognize the rich contributions Indigenous peoples have had to this country, take action to address historical injustices and present-day wrongs, as well as teach others.” I encourage you to consider how you and your congregation can learn more about the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action and how you can be involved in the important work of reconciliation.

The 2017 ELCIC National Convention affirmed *A Statement to Muslims in Canada by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada* (<http://elcic.ca/ecumenical/documents/StatementtoMuslimsinCanada.pdf>) and a new resource titled *Encountering People of Other Faiths—Interfaith Guidelines* (<http://elcic.ca/ecumenical/documents/EncounteringPeopleOfOtherFaiths-InterfaithGuidelines.pdf>).

These are important documents for our church given the fact that hate crimes are rising within Canada. Following the January 2017 fatal attack at le Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec, I called on the members of our church to reach out in a genuine expression of love for our neighbour (<http://www.elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=459>). I continue to urge you to speak out against all forms of racism and violence against Muslims and to work to build relationships with your interfaith neighbours.

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation provided the opportunity to strengthen relationships with Roman Catholics in Canada and around the world. There were services of Common Prayer co-sponsored by Lutherans and Roman Catholics all across the country, from Whitehorse to Vancouver, Sault Ste. Marie to Halifax. Other events that took place as part of the commemoration of the Reformation gave us the opportunity to strengthen relationships with many of our ecumenical partners. This was evidenced at the 2017 National Convention, where partners from the Canadian Council of Churches, Presbyterian Church in Canada, United Church of Canada, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Mennonite Church Canada participated in an ecumenical panel on the convention floor and then participated in our National Service of Commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

At the 2015 National Convention we adopted an “ELCIC Resolution on Climate Justice.” This action expanded the commitments we made in 2007’s resolution on the Stewardship of Creation.

Our continued commitment to working for reconciliation with all of creation is done at the congregational level through efforts like the tree-planting component of the Reformation Challenge, and nationally and internationally through work with partners.

## One Body Working Together

To be a fully functioning church we need to have effective working relationships between congregations, synods, national church, and national and international partners. The body of Christ is bigger than any one of its component parts.

The Synodical and National Officers met at the beginning of December 2017 to look at ways we can work more closely together. At a time of challenge and opportunities, with fewer resources, we need to work together to set focused priorities that will enhance our ability to fulfill the mission to which God is calling us.

Shared vision and mutual trust is not only important within the church, but also among our church and our various partners. We are currently working towards a new *Memorandum of Understanding* with our partner Canada Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). We give thanks for the wonderful leadership Robert Granke has provided to the organization and offer our prayers on his retirement. At the same time, we welcome Rev. Karin Achtelstetter and look forward to our ongoing partnership in the ministry of CLWR.

In May of 2017, I had the privilege of participating in the global life of our church through The Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia. As we gathered from many churches and countries and spoke and sang in many languages, I was reminded again of how much we gain when we are one body working together.

I was honoured to preside at communion at our Sunday worship service, a global celebration of the reformation anniversary. To look out over the crowd of 10,000 and see Lutherans gathered from around the world, worshipping God, commemorating our shared history, joining with ecumenical partners and celebrating the steps towards reconciliation we have shared, lifting up our shared mission and ministry—it was a spiritual highlight for me!

I had a similar spiritual highlight when I presided at our national commemoration service in July. Seeing our church gathered from across the country along with her ecumenical partners

reminded me of my Windhoek experience. What a joy to feel the Spirit alive and in our midst whether carrying out ministry in our local communities or gathered together at a convention.

## Courageous Innovation

We recognize that we are in a time of change and that we are going to need to be flexible and patient with one another as we discover together how God is calling us to be the Lutheran church in Canada at this time.

The ELCIC’s Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) is in the middle of a five-year initiative where they are doing experimentation to figure out new ways of doing ministry given that the old model of congregational development has proven to be too expensive and/or no longer effective. CECF has provided a total of \$300,000 to each synod for Synod Mission initiatives. Funds will be used for activities that are experimental in spirit and genuinely seek to explore what it means to participate in God’s mission in the world today.

We are excited about walking with synods in this process. Each of the synods are allocating their funds in different and creative ways. In your synod, two examples are support for unique Drum, Dine and Discuss event through Campus Ministry at the University of Calgary, and various opportunities for coaching and mentoring lay leadership as we seek to strengthen our habits for empowered discipleship.

Being courageous innovators involves balance—on the one hand we need to remember the boundaries we live in as expressed in the constitution and bylaws of this church and on the other hand allow for the freedom of colouring outside the lines. We need to hold these together in a healthy and creative tension as we continue to discern possibilities and try out new ministries across the church.

By naming Courageous Innovation as one of our strategic priorities, National Church Council is recognizing that God may indeed be calling us to new things and new ways and we may have to try things and fail and learn from our failures as part of our faithful discipleship.

## Empowered Disciples

Now as in all times of the church there is a need to create and nurture faithful participation in God’s mission in the world. In an effort to inspire a church that is prophetic, missional, and diaconal, the ELCIC’s Faith, Order and Doctrine committee has published *Public Ministry in the ELCIC: A preliminary draft* for review, reflection and response by September 30, 2018.

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## Canadian Lutheran World Relief

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At the same time, we are looking at new ways of calling and equipping Rostered leaders in our church for specific ministries.

We believe the new *Congregational Employment Agreements* and updated *Letters of Call* will enhance the quality of your vocational relationships and deepen the bonds of mutual care and accountability.

And, in this year of synod conventions, we also look forward to two national gatherings—the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering ([www.claygathering.ca](http://www.claygathering.ca)) and the National Worship Conference ([www.nationalworshipconference.org](http://www.nationalworshipconference.org)). Both of these Lutheran/Anglican events serve to strengthen faith and empower people in witness and service.

Thank you for your participation in the ELCIC Reformation Challenge. I was overwhelmed and proud by the contributions, large and small, that individuals, congregations and synods make to help us meet our goals. We may not have met all of our challenge goals but together we raised the equivalent of about four million dollars for ministry in Canada and around the world. How amazing is that!

In his 2018 New Year's message to the Lutheran World Federation, General Secretary Martin Junge declared that despite the many challenges we face, there is no better time than now to be the church. By acknowledging these challenges, it reminds us to stay focused on what has been given to us without cost, and share it with the thirsty in the world—offering a life-giving witness. "It is a good year to be the church. We have our hands filled with gifts to share," says Martin! And I agree.

Friends, it's a good year to be the church. We too have our hands filled with gifts to share. Yours in Christ,



We want to thank you. You are creating hope in the world.

Your generosity each year means that more children learn in safe and healthy environments, providing them with a strong foundation for the future. You make it possible for refugees—many of whom have had to leave everything behind—to have a new home and the basic supplies they need to care for themselves. Along with volunteers all across Canada, you create beautiful quilts that are sent overseas, providing thousands of people with warmth and comfort. Many others receive the We Care kits you packed, filled with essential supplies.

Thanks to you, Fort McMurray residents are receiving support as they adjust to life after wildfires swept through the region in 2016. More than 270 refugees began new lives in Canada in 2017 because Canadian Lutherans like you responded.

For all these reasons and many more, we say thank you. And we're not the only ones.

Around the world, people are thanking you. At the time of writing, you are creating life-changing hope in Canada, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua and Palestine and more.

Thank you!

I wish to express gratitude to Robert Granke, our Executive Director, who retired at the end of March 2018. He has held this title since 2006 and has a more than 40-year history with CLWR. We deeply appreciate his strong and wise leadership, his commitment to CLWR's mission and his vision for nurturing future humanitarians.

Robert Granke's legacy of life-changing leadership will be continued through the Intern Support Fund, which will be established in his name. You are invited to nurture future leaders of CLWR by considering a contribution to the Fund. Your gift will support interns as they prepare for a future of humanitarian service. Donations to the Fund may be made online anytime at: <http://bit.ly/clwr-isf>

CLWR's Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Rev. Dr. Karin Achtelstetter has been appointed CLWR's incoming Executive Director Designate. Previously the General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication, Rev. Dr. Achtelstetter has extensive experience working with CLWR partners including The Lutheran World Federation, ACT Alliance and the World Council of Churches. As an ordained Lutheran pastor and

through her years of executive leadership experience, she has firsthand experience working with churches, grassroots communities and project partners around the world.

Beginning April 1, 2018, she will assume the position of Executive Director. Please join us in welcoming her to CLWR.

I am pleased to share about several other staff transitions in our Community Relations department. Fikre Tsehai, formerly our Development Manager—Refugee Resettlement, has transitioned to the position of Refugee & Migration Policy Advisor. He will remain based in our western office in New Westminster, BC.

Senait Biadgilign, also working out of our western office, has begun the position of Refugee Resettlement Officer. If you are interested in refugee sponsorship and are in the British Columbia Synod or Synod of Alberta and The Territories, please contact Senait Biadgilign at 1 (888) 588-6686.

Jennifer Ardon, based out of our office in Waterloo, ON, is our new Refugee Resettlement Manager. If you are interested in refugee sponsorship, and are in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Eastern Synods, please contact Jennifer Ardon at 1 (888) 255-0150. Additionally, we are pleased to welcome Hoda Al-Obaidi to the position of Refugee Program Assistant in the eastern office.

These changes are designed to provide increasing support for the refugee sponsorships made possible by Canadian Lutherans like you each year. Along with the transitions, these staff will now focus specifically on refugee sponsorship. If you would like to arrange for someone to speak with your congregation or group, please contact me at 1 (800) 661-2597 and I would be happy to make arrangements with you.

We are so thankful for your desire to create a world where people live in justice, peace and dignity. Visit our website at [www.clwr.org](http://www.clwr.org) and join the conversation with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn to find out how you are making a difference in the lives of people around the world.

I would like to hear from you about what CLWR means to you. We would love to feature your congregation's stories. I can be reached at [carla@clwr.org](mailto:carla@clwr.org).

God bless,

*Rev. Carla Blakley*

Rev. Carla Blakley  
Community Relations Director  
On behalf of  
Robert Granke and Karin Achselstetter

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## Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute

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*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.  
But the greatest of these is love.  
—1 Cor. 13:13*

Love, illustrated by this verse from 1 Corinthians, is the first of LCBI's Seven Core Values. This value is woven through everything LCBI does. As graduates from the 1940s through to the 2010s visited with old friends and made new ones at our "Catch Up" events this winter, current students and alumni confirmed the truth of this message. Those in attendance described the incredible transformation they had experienced during their LCBI years.

Our choral program has grown significantly over the last couple years under the direction of Graham Codling. The choir hosts the largest membership in years and will soon require us to establish two choirs as in previous years. Our Leadership program continues to grow servant and team-based leaders for our churches and communities. This program helps all our students to understand that leadership is a personal skill and to work in faith.

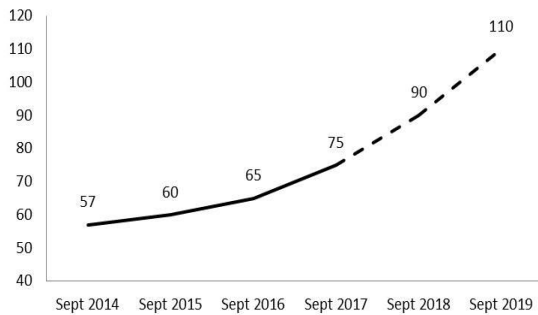
Twenty-two students from the Class of 2018 are preparing to graduate Grade 12. They are excited about postsecondary education, gap-year travel, entering the workforce, and other adventures. These students will leave LCBI knowing that the education, leadership skills, and faith they have acquired during their time here have equipped them to succeed. They are grateful for the generosity of the donors who made this education possible.

Staff planning for September, are pleased to have already received more student applications than we had at this time last year. Our Recruitment Officer is working with many families to make 2018 the year their children begin studies at LCBI. We want these new students to have a chance to feel accepted, appreciated, and confident in their abilities. We want these future Bisons to be able to be educated as whole people – as athletes, singers, actors, mentors, academics – with strong Christian values and a sense of discipleship and mission. We want these Sons and Daughters of LCBI to know they are loved children of God, children loved also by each other and by their teachers and staff.

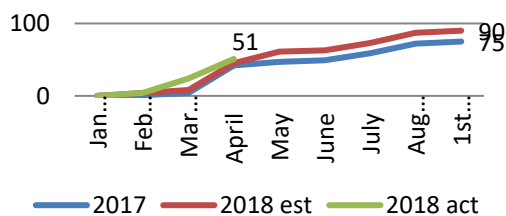
While we remain in a critical cash flow situation, our student numbers rise each year and programs grow each year. Below are two charts; one of our student registrations over the past few years and one of our anticipation for more students in the fall of 2018.



### Registrations



### Recruitment for Fall 2018



Now, as our 2017–18 academic year swings into its final weeks, we invite you to help us provide opportunities for next year’s students. Please make a generous gift and support our vital and life-changing mission. By making this donation, and by praying for our community, you will be empowering a generation of future leaders to know that they are loved.

*We would see Jesus!*

In Christ,  
Respectfully Submitted by; Wayne Hove,  
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### Be Challenged:

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon is in an exciting time, as we envision a new future. We are building around the invitation to “Be Challenged,” encouraging potential ELCIC leaders to “Challenge Yourself. Challenge Others. Challenge the World.”

### New President:

We have called a new President, the Rev. Dr. William (Bill) Harrison. Dr. Harrison is an Anglican, coming most recently from the Diocese of Huron (Southwestern Ontario), where he served as Director for Mission and Ministry. In that role, he led the Diocese in strategic planning, facilitating church transformations (different formations, closures, new formations), and teaching about evangelism.

Previously, he served as Director for Mission and Ministry, and as parish clergy in the Diocese of Kootenay (BC). From 2000 until 2005, he was Professor of Theology, in addition to filling the roles of Registrar and Vice-Principal, at the College of Emmanuel & St. Chad in Saskatoon; there, he co-taught with LTS faculty in a shared effort to combine Lutheran and Anglican formation, when possible.

### Breadth of Ministry;

Today’s complex world, in which the church has shrinking resources, demands that we take seriously the multiplicity of ministries and the need to work in teams. LTS continues its strong commitment to preparing ordained clergy for parish leadership (Master of Divinity) and continuing education for ordained leaders (Doctor of Ministry). At the same time, we are developing programmes to strengthen the work of people in other church leadership roles. The Lay Academy is becoming a significant part of the Seminary’s work, offering programmes of interest to laypeople and developing training for Authorized Lay Ministers. LTS offers the Certificate in Diaconal Ministry and has recently provided the only course available in Canada on Diaconal Theology and Practice (required for Diaconal Ministry). In the Fall of 2018, we will enroll the first cohort in our Master in Health Care and Parish Nursing degree, an advanced degree meant to increase Christian theological reflection on the health care system and to strengthen the parish nursing system by responding to major issues in the field. We strive to prepare people for the whole breadth of ministry in today’s ELCIC.

## Flexible Delivery Curriculum:

Today's LTS looks very different from the seminary of days gone by. Nearly all of our students live at a distance from the Seminary. Our courses are offered in intensive formats (usually two weeks on campus, one week for courses during internship) and on-line. Students are formed in their home parishes and in internship parishes. They can continue with their families and existing support systems. The learning community is strong. It develops in new ways, especially through use of electronic media; community is sustained partly by its development in the ordinary walk of life and family, so that ties continue after time at LTS.

## Challenge Scholarships:

We are very pleased to announce a new scholarship programme at LTS. For each of the next three years (2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21), we will offer up to a total of 5 scholarships per year for new students. A Master of Divinity degree student receiving a scholarship will be given a total of \$50,000 (\$20,000 for each of the first two years, while in classes, and \$5,000 for each of the internship years). A Master of Theological Studies degree student receiving a scholarship will be given a total of \$40,000 (\$20,000 for each of the two years of classes). Priority will be given to spreading the scholarships across the 4 Western Synods of the ELCIC. Share the news! Invite people to apply!

## Recruitment:

Recruitment has become a significant issue in church life, as we all work together to encourage people to consider new roles in church leadership. The Seminary's strategy is multi-pronged: the Challenge Scholarship programme improves funding, while we reach out to people in parishes, schools, and elsewhere, using the language of "Challenge" as our theme of invitation. The Seminary invites people to "Be Challenged" with us, asking that potential leaders recognize that a call to church leadership of any kind will involve three aspects: "Challenge Yourself" (using and increasing all of your skills, and adding new ones), "Challenge Others" (as you help to lead a transforming church), and "Challenge the World" (in a church that is now counter-cultural, participating in God's work of changing society). We believe that today's people are up for a challenge, and are most excited by a life committed to growth and transformation.

We are reaching out with these themes to all parishes, post-secondary institutions, and secondary schools that are prepared to welcome us. We are striving to build (in some

cases, re-build) ties to institutions that have prepared students for ELCIC leadership in the past, such as camp ministries and traditionally Lutheran colleges and high schools. We welcome invitations to parishes and church events where we can share the joy of life in church leadership and in the kind of formation that LTS offers.

## Attendance:

For the 2017-18 academic year, we have 19 full-time students and 10 part-time students registered. We have 12 candidates for ordained ministry and 2 candidates for the diaconate. Six people are currently enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry programme, which is playing an expanded role in the Seminary's life. Rising interest in the D.Min. is very encouraging; it shows that parish clergy have a thirst for developing their skills at a challenging time in the church's life.

## Finances and the Future:

The Seminary faces significant financial issues. After years of austerity measures that cannot be sustained over the longer term, we continue to have a structural deficit of over \$100,000 annually. The Board is considering a variety of options for moving forward in a way that will serve the synods and will best cater to the Seminary's revised needs in a world where our course delivery is in an intensive format or online, and where our numbers are relatively small.

Submitted by:

The Rev. Dr. William Harrison, President