



DECEMBER 2023
NEWSLETTER OF
LAKELAND LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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Rev's Words:

As we wait together during this time:

Grant Me Your Sense of Timing

O God of all seasons and senses,
grant me your sense of timing
to submit gracefully
and rejoice quietly
in the turn of the seasons.

In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white cold,
teach me the lessons of waiting:
of the snow joining the mystery
of the hunkered-down seeds
growing in their sleep
watched over by gnarled-limbed, grandparent trees
resting from autumn's staggering energy;
of the silent, whirling earth
circling to race back home to the sun,

O God, grant me your sense of timing.

In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white cold,
teach me the lessons of endings:
children growing,
friends leaving,

jobs concluding,
stages finishing,
grieving over,
blaming over,
excuses over,

O God, grant me your sense of timing.

In this season of short days and long nights,
of grey and white cold,
teach me the lessons of beginnings:
that such waitings and endings
may be a starting place,
a planting of seeds
which bring to birth
what is ready to be born -
something right and just and different,
a new song,
a deeper relationship,
a fuller love-
in the fullness of
your time.

O God, grant me your sense of timing.

Join with me during Advent to pray daily:

I Am Silent ... and Expectant

How silently,
how silently
the wondrous gift is given.

I would be silent now,
Lord,
and expectant ...
that I may receive
the gift I need,
so I may become
the gifts others need.

[Guerillas of Grace by Ted Loder]

Blessings to all as we wait for the Christ Child.

Pastor AnnE



December 2023 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

We are taught by the morning newspaper headlines and by the evening news broadcasts to know names like: Donald Trump, Kim Jong-Un, Vladimir Putin, Emperor Augustus, Quirinius - governor of Syria. World leaders. Politicians, some of whom use power, who keep records - who announce that the world should be registered - and the entire world moves at their command - even the poor and the pregnant!

Rome reaches out its long arms to the little towns of Nazareth and Bethlehem and tightens its grip on its subjects through taxation and military might and population control – the empire-building business!

But the name Augustus meant more than just an inconvenient government decree for an imperial document carved forever in marble heralded the birth-day of Augustus as the birthday of a god! Set in stone, this declaration announced the birth of Augustus as good news to the world! As emperor he was called *soter*, which means, “savior.” He was: “god on earth in human form, protector of the state, cause of peace and of blessing in the inhabited world!” His laws were presented in official propaganda as, “good tidings of great joy.”

The official party-line proclaimed that if you want to see deity at work look to the Emperor, savior, god, the rising star, the bringer of peace, the one who brings “good tidings of great joy!” And yet, what the record tells is of organized violence, militarism and exploitation of the poor. Of an emperor - a savior - who killed three of his sons and one of his wives, and a number of close advisors because he feared their disloyalty.

This is how the Christmas gospel begins - with a word of power - a decree - with powerful, important people in the powerhouse cities of Rome and Jerusalem. But the gospel writer doesn't stop there instead the writer tells of a bunch of politically powerful nobodies - like Joseph and Mary from the backward town of Nazareth - in a stable, in a dot-on-the-map-town called Bethlehem, surrounded by a group of scraggy low-life shepherds who lived in the fields and who, likely as not, smelled to high heaven!

The gospel writer invites us to listen carefully and to look closely as the stone-cut declaration about Emperor Augustus is countered with another word - this one delivered by heavenly messenger rather than Roman decree.

This gospel writer, you see, is busy re-arranging and contrasting our ideas about power, about history, about good news of great joy - in this child lying in a manger - heard against the backdrop of empire builders, power brokers and census takers.

To people suffering under unbelievable oppression, under the thumb of imperial Rome - Luke proclaims that they will hear and see truly good news not in imperial decrees, but in a manger in this “good news of great joy for all the people” - in a birth announcement which calls forth worship and adoration, amazement and awe, wide-eyed wonder and running feet - and hope.

If we are not stunned by this declaration, perhaps it is because we fail to see what God is up to for when God chooses to challenge the empire and the idolatry of imperial power God comes as a helpless infant; when God chooses to bring hope God comes not as a declaration cut into marble but as a babe wrapped in strips of cloth; and when God chooses to embrace us and all of humanity with the gift of love God comes not as a decree but in flesh.

This gospel writer invites us to ask the very real questions. The very real questions during the candle lighting and the gathering with family and friends, with strangers and friends; in the midst of our very real grief, and our very real concerns for our family and friends and for this world: who saves and who gives peace? And who claims our ultimate loyalty? And who is it that brings good news of great joy?

*Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king.*

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

In Christ Jesus –
Shalom,
+Larry



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada**
ELCIC *In Mission for Others*



Anglican Church of Canada

**The
Moravian
Church** 

Who are these Moravians?” That is how Rev. James Lavoy, a Moravian pastor, began his introductory remarks to the Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) in Calgary this past July. It is also a question that was often first on the minds of many people when hearing about a new ecumenical initiative being undertaken by representatives from the ELCIC, the ACC, and The Moravian Church in North America Northern Province (MCNA) in early 2020.

Yet, just over three years later, at Assembly 2023, a declaration of trilateral full communion through the One Flock, One Shepherd agreement was ratified by each church. How did we “get here from there?” It makes for a good story, with some inspiring and important lessons to be learned- both for the church of today and the church of tomorrow.

SNAPSHOT OF KINSHIP

The opening chapters of the story were written long before three years ago. The Lutheran, Anglican and Moravian denominations of church understand themselves as part of the Christian family tree going all the way back to the time of the first apostles. They also all locate themselves on a branch which grew from that tree in a particular way during the time of the great Reformation movement of Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Lutherans, of course, can look back to the preaching and teaching of people like Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon, and to the definitions of the Augsburg Confession, as clarion calls for renewal of the church and the Gospel of grace in their part of what was then the Holy Roman Empire.

Anglicans likewise have individuals like John Jewel, Thomas Cranmer and Richard Hooker, who sought to advocate for a reformed and catholic church that was more reflective of the cultural context of their home in England.

Moravians too, predating both the Lutheran and Anglican movements by a generation or more, draw similar reform-oriented inspiration from the theologian Jan Hus and the community “Brethren” initially grounded on Bohemian lands. These advocated for a simplified discipleship that purged ecclesial excesses and abuses, tried to make worship and spirituality more accessible to the people, and encouraged an outward-looking emphasis for the ministry of the Church.

Although each of these communities were dispersed from one another geographically and in various other ways, each of these movements was aware of the others, lent and borrowed ideas between them, and saw themselves in some way as all part of a common cause to transform the church catholic by a recovery of what they felt to be certain long-overshadowed scriptural and doctrinal truths.

Even as late as the 18th century there are records of German Lutherans collaborating with Moravians in support of missional efforts, and of the Moravians pursuing partnership possibilities with the Church of England in causes of mutual concern.

Those are some snapshots of kinship from the earlier decades and centuries of their respective church histories. Over the years, however, many leaders and members of this once extended family sort of lost touch with one another as they became more focused on their own internal agendas and concerns.

DISTINCT DENOMINATIONS

Though none of their Late Medieval/Early Modern founders intended it at the time, they gradually grew up to be distinct denominations of church which could be broadly grouped within the category of churches of the Reformed/Protestant Mainline.

Through a combination of positive evangelistic mission on the one hand, and sinful complicity in European colonialism on the other, church communities continuing to bear the name of Lutheran, Anglican or Moravian came to exist in many diverse places across the world and are today each Global Communions of many national and regional churches.

Today, the larger numbers of those who adhere to these denominations live not in Germany, England or Eastern Europe, but rather places around the world. These are, of course, contexts that have seen these traditions at both their worst and best, and where there is much to be reckoned with and amended for on the former.



The foremost of Czech reformers, John Hus (1369-1415) was a professor of philosophy and rector of the University in Prague. The Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, where Hus preached, became a rallying place for the Czech reformation. Gaining support, he held a protest movement against many practices of the Roman Catholic clergy and hierarchy. Hus was accused of heresy, underwent a long trial at the Council of Constance, and was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

The Moravian Church, or Unitas Fratrum (Unity of Brethren), as it has been officially known since 1457, arose as followers of Hus gathered in the village of Kunvald, about 100 miles east of Prague, in eastern Bohemia, and organised the church. This was 60 years before Martin Luther began his reformation and 100 years before the establishment of the Anglican Church.

A LIVELY DISCUSSION

What it means to be Lutheran, Anglican or Moravian is a very lively discussion in all three of these churches, intensified even further by the shared realities of their changing demographics, membership, resources and so on. It is from within this new and still emerging phase of liminal uncertainty that the origins of interest in a potential Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian (LAM) full-communion partnership in Canada are best reflected on and understood.

THE CONVERSATION BEGINS

Admittedly, there was a good measure of curiosity – and perhaps even a little anxiety – about where this direction might lead, even among the members appointed to the LAM Working Group. Meeting regularly online amid the height of the COVID-19 restrictions, 12 members were appointed by the National Church Council of the ELCIC, the Council of General Synod and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples in the ACC, and the Canadian District of the MCNA to lead the initiative forward.

Rev. Matt Gillard, a Moravian minister who has served in several Moravian congregations in Canada and is now the pastor of the ELCIC congregation in Hanna, AB, recounts, “I thought that I would be sitting around a table filled with people who put the theology of their denomination above the desire to work together.... But what I experienced was a group who decided that the individual differences of our denominations were much less than the beauty that made up each of our churches. Love always creates more, not less.”

The Rev. Danielle Key, an Anglican priest and rector of Holy Trinity parish in Edmonton, was also moved through her participation in the Working Group to appreciate the process of being able to move from the starting place where we

tend to emphasise the ways that “our various denominations may have different policies and procedures in how we govern ourselves” to an increased awareness of how “our core values and beliefs...unite us in ways which mere policy could never prevent.” “The relationships formed through exploring, talking and learning from one another is such a tremendous gift not just to those who worked diligently to get this agreement drafted, presented and moved, but to our wider community of the followers of Christ,” Key shares.

THE WATERLOO DECLARATION

Of course, the ELCIC and ACC have been working together as churches in Full Communion for a little over two decades, ever since their mutual affirmation of *The Waterloo Declaration* in 2001. This relationship has been like a training ground, of sorts, for these churches learning the valuable spiritual and theological lesson that unity-in-diversity and diversity-in-unity are not contradictions but are in fact a source of blessing and an expression of God’s deepest dream.

However, while *The Waterloo Declaration* stands as a major highlight on the Canadian ecumenical landscape, it was never meant to be the end of the road but rather perhaps simply an important early leg of the ongoing journey. Commitment #9 of *Waterloo* says that the ACC and ELCIC will utilise the blessings and strength of their full communion partnership to “continue to work together for the full visible unity of the whole Church of God.”

Exploring this with Moravians was one logical place to see that continuation take place. This is true particularly because of the intersections and ties which Lutherans and Anglicans have had with Moravians in their early histories, as well as the substantial bonds that Moravians have developed with both of those traditions in other parts of the world in more recent years.

The Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, cites the fact that both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the US-based Episcopal Church (TEC) had established full communion with the Moravian Church in North America in 1999 and 2011 respectively as something which made seeking to extend this partnership across the 49th parallel a “natural next step.”

ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson agrees, referencing the growing vision of a “Churches Beyond Borders” partnership between ELCIC and ACC and their ELCA and TEC counterparts in the United States as a strong inspiration for exploring deeper relationship with Moravians in Canada and elsewhere.

THE MORAVIAN CHURCH

Although the Moravian Church may not be a particularly large church in Canada, having less than 15 identifiable local ministry expressions in just three civil provinces, the Northern Province of the MCNA, which includes northern portions of the United States, counts nearly one hundred. Regardless

of such differences in size or geographical dispersion, Nicholls writes, “wherever we can promote and act on deeper communion partnerships, we need to do so!”

Johnson goes further, saying, “I think any new full-communion agreement is a witness to the unity we share in Christ. The theme of the recent Lutheran World Federation Assembly [was] ‘with one body one spirit one hope.’ This, for me, is a sign of hope...[an opportunity] to grow in faith and understanding, and in deeper discipleship, because of our encounter with Moravian siblings in Christ.”

One place where the LAM Communion is particularly poised to take root in significant ways is in the Province of Alberta. Migration patterns from either central Europe or the Caribbean are largely the reason that Alberta is home today to eight Moravian congregational communities, and several associated ministry outreach expressions. Rev. Dr. Faith Nostbakken, an ELCIC deacon serving in the Synod of Alberta & Territories (ABT), member of the LAM Working Group, and ecumenical officer for the northern portion of the synod, celebrates full communion declaration because of the way it “formalises and creates even greater opportunities for collaboration and ministry sharing, especially here in this area where Moravians are present and are already so open to working together with Anglicans and Lutherans in our worship spaces and in ways we can live out the gospel in our common communities.”

In her context, Nostbakken looks forward to “continuing the ecumenical journey with even greater internationality” because of the official agreements arrived at in June and July. This will very likely include expanded possibilities for things like clergy being called to serving in one another’s churches, the sharing of buildings and worship service, and a commitment to undertake all new ministries of witness and service in the wider community in a spirit of perpetual partnership rather than the old modes of comfortable isolation.

In time, there are similar kinds of hopes for Newfoundland and Labrador. While local expressions of Anglican-Lutheran full communion are not very numerous in Atlantic Canada due to a much smaller Lutheran presence in that part of the country, there is a long history of Moravian ministry on the East Coast. While the multiple Moravian congregations located in communities along the eastern edge of Labrador, belong to a different Provincial jurisdiction than that of the Northern Province Moravians who have already affirmed the One Flock, One Shepherd agreement, it is hoped that, in due course, and through their own future synodal actions, the partnership will also come to extend into this area of Canada, leading to fresh possibilities for living out the joys and challenges of full communion in this region as well.

THE INFLUENCE OF SMALL THINGS

While some may suggest that this full communion agreement between three relatively small church communities in a place like Canada might be a rather small step in the grand scheme of challenges facing the Church of God in a

changing world, it is important not to underestimate the influence of small things in God's hands.

In this vein, Archbishop Nicholls reflects that "so much of what we see around us is about the fracturing of relationships – of seeing differences as irreconcilable. Full communion invites us to see differences as a source of rich possibilities to see new and different aspects of the gospel – of God and of being church."

Pastor Levoy echoes much the same, recognising that "we know this is a time of partisan division. Yet we also believe and pray that the Spirit will bring us all together, if we can only practice what we preach."

Rev. Gillard projects that the coming decades are likely "going to be difficult for the institutions which we know and love, and working together when we feel our institution changing is hard." How we "rely on each other [as churches] to help through the upcoming shift," he continues, "is going to be more important than we realise."

ALL THINGS IN LOVE

ABT bishop, Rev. Larry Kochendorfer, finds profound meaning in a motto which has long been at the heart of the Moravian tradition, the famous and variously attributed quote, "in essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things love." Indeed, Kochendorfer sees in these words what could be considered a foundational principle for the entire project of seeking Christian unity and especially of the full communion vision.

A full communion approach does not envision that diverse expressions of faith, worship and discipleship in the way of Jesus Christ all need to be merged and subsumed into an institutional and confessional uniformity. Rather, it seeks to create multifaceted community where the unique gifts and styles of each respective church can continue to be honoured and preserved without standing as unnecessary barriers to unity and in common witness to the gospel and mutual service to the common good in every other possible way.

This is the vision to which the Lutheran, Anglican and Moravian churches in Canada have now and newly committed themselves. It is a compelling one, and one which not only explains how we "got here from there" but may also project a way forward that will in time also "get us to there from here"-i.e., into the fullness of God's vision expressed in prayer of Jesus, "that all may be one."

Rev. Cannon Dr. Scott Sharmon is the Anglican Church of Canada's animator of ecumenical and interfaith relations.

Worship Service Lessons for December

Sunday Dec 3 – Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12

Sunday Dec 10 – Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

Sunday Dec 17 – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

Sunday Dec 24 – 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

WORSHIP INFORMATION – DECEMBER

Dec 3rd – ADVENT I 10am Worship Service with Communion

Dec 10th – ADVENT II 10am Service of Word and Prayer, Lay led by Shirley Kirstien

Dec 17th – ADVENT III 10am Worship Service Children's Christmas Program

Dec 21st – 11am Long Term Care Christmas Service; 7pm Longest Night Service

Dec 24th – ADVENT IV 10am Worship Service with Communion; 7pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Dec 25th – 10am Christmas Day Worship Service with Communion

Dec 31st – 10am Service of Scripture and Carols led by Helen & Tom Stolfa

The prayer families for December are: [Benoit \(T&J\)](#), [Bjerkseth & Broussard](#)

Worship Service Lessons for January

Sunday Jan 7 – Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Sunday Jan 14 – 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Sunday Jan 21 – Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-16

Sunday Jan 28 – Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-12; Mark 1:21-28

WORSHIP INFORMATION - JANUARY

Jan 7th - Baptism of Our Lord 10am Worship Service with Communion

Jan 14th - 10am Worship Service with Communion

Jan 21st - 10am Service of the Word

Jan 28th - 10am Worship Service with Communion

The prayer families for January are: [Chernesky](#), [Cobb & Coultis](#)

Are You Available?

Are you available to go with Pastor AnnE to her Long-Term Care Services?? (See church monthly calendar for Service schedule). Anyone willing to help with the singing (as part of the congregation not solo), play the piano, assist members of the congregation in following the service? Please let Pastor AnnE know, any help would be greatly appreciated.



A thought and invitation for support sharing together

Everyone is welcome to a time of sharing - an opportunity to talk, be together as we remember those who we love and have passed away and/or relationships broken through, our siblings, friends, spouse, or family members. This may be what you have experienced recently in loss of a relationship or loss in the far distant past. Just listening and being together may be what you desire.

Pastor AnnE

Information from our Education Committee

Looking for Children, Youth and Adults to join our Intergenerational Christmas Program

For unto us a child is born!

A colorful illustration of a nativity scene. In the center, a baby Jesus lies in a wooden manger. To the left, a shepherd in a blue robe holds a staff, standing next to a white sheep and a brown donkey. To the right, three wise men in yellow and blue robes kneel in prayer. Above the manger, a large yellow star shines brightly, with a white angel with wings and a halo flying nearby. Small orange stars are scattered around the scene.

Lakeland Lutheran Church
Christmas Program
Sunday, Decemeber 17
Contact Bernie - 780-207-7155

Please know that there will be no Sunday School of 24th December.

If you are looking for something new to do in the new year, maybe you would like to sit on the Education Committee, teach Sunday School, or help out with our youth? Please contact Bernie Hartman if you would like further information.

Information from our Service & Care Committee



Service and Care would like to invite you to help us Celebrate the Children after their Christmas program on December 17th. We will have our "Christmas Potluck" so bringing your favourite dishes to share !!

"SAVE THE DATE"

Service and Care will host our annual adult games night on Friday January 26th!! 7pm to 9pm you can join in on the fun and munch on popcorn! Please feel free to bring a friend and your favourite game. See you there!

Worship Committee – WE NEED YOU

As you all know by now, Helen Flaming has stepped down as a member of the Worship committee, so we are looking for volunteers to join us. If you are interested or would like to know more about the duties of the Worship Committee, please contact Cheryl Benoit.



Anyone who is willing to play for church - especially for the winter months and/or lent services please let Cheryl Benoit know - It doesn't even have to be playing for the entire service - you can do a prelude, play during offering or play just one hymn that would be great. Also, If you play any instrument, or sing and are open to sharing your gift with us at worship - this invitation is for adults and children - We'd love to hear what you do so please let us know.

Church Safety

Now that we are finally back in our building there are a few safety instructions we all need to follow when leaving the church. If you are the last person to leave the building, please do the following:

- **Check all blinds are lowered so that rooms are not visible from the outside**

- **Make sure all internal doors are closed**
- **Set the alarm using your code**
- **Lock the external door on leaving**

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy in the office and she will be happy to run you through any of these procedures.

Witness & Outreach Committee

Advent Grocery Gift Bags

Again, this year the Witness Committee is asking the congregation to take part in doing a Reverse Advent Calendar. You can pick up a December Calendar at the greeter's table in the Narthex. Each day add the listed item into a reusable grocery bag. We would like to have the bags completed at the December 17th Worship Service so they can be blessed. They will then be taken to the Cold lake Food Bank. Thank you for your generosity.



Adopt-A-Family



More funds are needed so that we can make one family's Christmas a little brighter. We purchase gifts for the children and a Christmas food hamper for the family. The gifts are wrapped and delivered together with the food hamper before Christmas. This project is taken on by the Sunday School and the Witness Committee.

BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

Elise Laberge Kaelyn Ahenakew
Molly Pedersen Cal Gerber



ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER



Mary & Ron Pelechosky
Bernie Hartman & Keith Scheidt
Irene & Wayne Crites
Helen & Tom Stolfa

BIRTHDAYS IN JANUARY

Reegan Singleton Lisa Broussard Anne Tucker
James March Vivian Amalia
Josephine Sinclair Nancy Gerber
Katherine Amalia



ANNIVERSARIES IN JANUARY



We have no known Anniversaries

CHECK OUT THE DECEMBER & JANUARY CALENDARS FOR ALL ACTIVITIES

Are we missing anything from our newsletter? Is there something you wish to have in our newsletter on an ongoing basis?

Please make sure that any inclusions for the February Newsletter reach the church office by January 23rd

If you would like to ask Pastor to include anything in the newsletter or her Rev's Words' she will need to receive it a week before this date.

Make the Thursdays in Black Pledge

*I commit to Thursdays in Black. In solidarity, In protest, In mourning, For awareness and In hope
By supporting Thursdays in Black I stand:*

- In solidarity with 1 in 3 women worldwide who face violence in their lives,*
- In protest against systems and societies that encourage violence in any form,*
- In mourning for men, women and children who are harmed and killed in sexual violence,*
- For awareness and knowledge about the challenges of sexual and gender-based violence,*
- In the hope that a different reality is possible.*