

# CHURCH Matters



Glory Lutheran Church Newsletter - 03.21 Edition

## 2021 Church Council



**Pat Becker**  
Council Chair  
Worship & Music



**Barb Anderson**  
Community Outreach



**Maggie Hensel**  
Congregational Life



**Greg Jeffrey**  
Education



**Gord Cruikshank**  
Facility Rental  
and Booking



**Kurtis Ashton**  
Stewardship



**Lynn Spain**  
Property



**Dave Hauf**  
Property



**Sebastian Montoya**  
Technology / Youth



**Rose Schlegl**  
Human Resources

## 2021 Financial Officers and Office Coordinator



**Rhonda Berg**  
Council Secretary



**Markus Wilhelm**  
Pastor  
"Ex Officio"  
All Committees



**Chelsea Ashton**  
Financial Secretary  
& Finance



**Lynda Kiel**  
Treasurer & Finance



**Heidi Jones**  
Office Coordinator



**Pat Becker - Council Chair, Worship & Music**



Pat and her husband, Mark, have been members of Glory since 2004. They have two daughters, two sons-in-law, and 3 grandchildren. Pat has been a member of church council for 5 years. She is also very much looking forward to once again directing the Worship Choir – sometime in the future! Pat was an elementary school teacher and the music specialist before her retirement. Spare time is occupied with many things including reading, music, reading, gardening, and reading.

**Maggie Hensel - Congregational Life**



I started to attend St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Edmonton when I met my husband, Leo, whose family attended St. Paul's, I made it my church as well from 1977 thru closing in 2019.

Glory Lutheran Church's warm, friendly, atmosphere and welcome made it easy for us to decide where to worship next. Unfortunately I think we had only 7 or 8 months to begin to settle in before the pandemic occurred.

Finally, May 2020, I retired (thank you Covid). I have been reading, baking, cooking, tending plants and flowers, walking, talking, cross stitching, colouring and trying to entice my husband to a game or puzzles or cards. Somehow he has no time and I don't have enough time. I just can't seem to get a balance. Looking forward to going back to South East Edmonton Seniors Activities when it opens to get together with friends and the programs and of course to Glory - God willing.



### **Kurtis Ashton - Stewardship**

Kurtis and his wife Chelsea joined Glory over 10 years ago and have enjoyed being part of the congregation since day one. Chelsea has been the Financial Secretary at Glory for the past number of years and Kurtis is excited to join his wife in giving back to Glory by joining Church Council this year.

They first moved to Sherwood Park in 2009 and now live on an acreage with their four children: Blake (8), Warner (6), Randall (4), and Paige (1). Kurtis and Chelsea are both Chartered

Professional Accountants and Kurtis currently works as the Senior Vice President of Finance at SCM Insurance Services in Edmonton.

Kurtis volunteered previously at Glory from 2017-19 on the Intern Lay Committee for Pastor Seth, and he currently sits on the Finance Committee for the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton, as a member of the CPA Alberta Complaints Inquiry Committee, and as a board member and the former Treasurer for the Affiliate Management Committee of Special Olympics Edmonton.

In his spare time, Kurtis enjoys spending time and traveling with his family, and also remains active by participating in hockey, slo-pitch, and golf.



### **Rhonda Berg - Council Secretary**

Along with my husband Tim and two adult children, Ashlynn (now living in Victoria) and Cole, who is in Sherwood Park, I have been a member of Glory Lutheran Church since the days of worshipping in the lower level of Franklin's Inn. This is my second time on church council for our congregation. It is an honour to be a part of this ministry.

With decades of experience working with families and individuals in varying states of crisis, I found my niche in the education field supporting students with disabilities and look forward to retirement in the next 5 years.



### **Rose Schlegl - Human Resources**

Rose grew up in Lethbridge and was confirmed at Christ Trinity Lutheran Church. She has been a member at Glory since 2017 and is starting her second year on Council. She has also served on the Internship and Stewardship Committees.

Rose lives in Edmonton and practices law in a small firm in the areas of wills & estates, adult guardianship & trusteeship matters, and residential real estate purchases and sales. She is an avid reader and enjoys discussing books in two different book clubs, where she has the distinction of being the oldest member of one group and the youngest member of the other.

She is looking forward to being able to gather together in person again for worship at Glory.



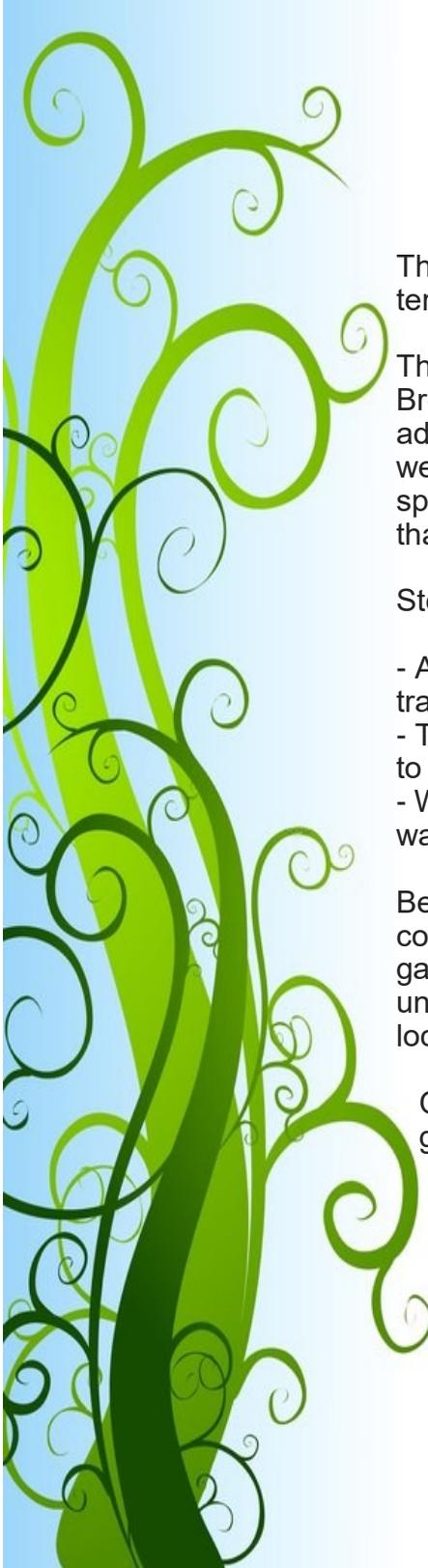
### **Sebastian Montoya - Communication Technology / Youth**

Sebastian was born in Bogota, Colombia, and came to Canada at the age of seven. At that time, his family joined the United Church in Whitecourt, Alberta. He started attending Glory Lutheran Church with his wife, Dani Montoya. Sebastian and Dani live in Edmonton with two pets, Winston (a German Shepherd mix), and Frosty (a cat), with Azi (Dani's horse) a short drive away. Currently he works as an I.T. Systems Analyst at Elk Island Public Schools. He provides tech support at Glory Lutheran Church. His hobbies include soccer, tinkering with technology, and barbecuing (when the weather permits!).



### **Barb Anderson - Community Outreach**

Barb Anderson has been a member of Glory for over 10 years and very much enjoys being part of the Council at Glory. She is also Chair of the Community Outreach Committee. When not busy with church obligations she enjoys golf, travel, spending time with her grandsons and walking or hiking.



## **Community Garden, BIG MOVE in time for Spring (mid May 2021) planting**

The Glory Community Garden will be moving to its long-term location to the south of the church this spring.

The garden area has been mapped by Nic Ronsko and Brett Woodrow (thank you, guys) and will have the advantage of a small parking area near the garden, as well as a full sun exposure for the garden spaces. Hopefully it will also benefit from less wind than the prior location.

Steps over the next weeks will include:

- Alignment of new garden, parking area and driving track to garden (last week April);
- Tilling of the new location, addition of organic material to supplement existing black soil (first week May);
- Work bee to establish new garden spaces, move water containers, compost bins (second week May).

Between now and May, Marjorie and group will communicate the garden guidelines and locations for gardening spaces. Thank you all gardeners for your understanding as we move to this new and long term location. It will be lovely!

Order those seeds and get your bedding plants going! (If you intend to go this route.)

Tim Kihn  
Garden Coordinator



# **‘Rink of Dreams’ offered new challenges for farm boys**

by Mark Kihn

Iowa may have its baseball Field of Dreams, as depicted in the 1989 movie, but it has nothing on my brother Tim.

In December 2014, he made his own Rink of Dreams near his Sherwood Park, Alta., home.

I was headed to nearby Edmonton on business, and on a hunch we might meet, I tossed my skates and a stick into my vehicle.

In the evening, I called him. He told me to head for his Lutheran Church parking lot on the northeastern corner of Sherwood Park. Once there, he led me down into a tree-lined ravine where the Old Man Creek flowed. Except now it was frozen. Perfect.

Tim had strung Christmas lights through the trees, cleared and scraped a winding ice route, chopped off a few branches, and created a crooked 400-foot long, five-foot wide rink.

Stick-handling the puck was tough, a breakaway would take forever, and the serpentine loops wreaked havoc with generating speed. Plus, you could get body-checked by a spruce.

Tim’s rink was unique and idyllic. It tested our faded skills. We were hockey crazy farm boys again. Tim’s 20-year-old son Nathaniel joined in.

Tim mentioned that church members used it minimally, and mostly sat around the firepit he had built there.

Tim got the fire going and we drank the hot chocolate he had brought.

Like Field of Dreams — all Tim needed was a movie. Oh, and for Wayne Gretzky to come out and show us how it’s done.

<https://www.producer.com/news/rink-of-dreams-offered-new-challenges-for-farm-boys/>

This article first appeared in the *Western Producer*, Canada's largest circulation farm newspaper, on Dec. 17, 2020. It is reprinted here with permission.

# Glory Skating Pond - 2014



Here is a photo of the pond rink in 2014. Lots of fun! - Tim Kihn

## Church Keys

We have some new council members that need a key to the church. We are blessed with many active volunteers that have keys to the church, and it is time to ensure our record of keyholders is up-to-date. If you have a key and you are still using it, can you please confirm with Heidi in the office. If you have a key that you are no longer using, please make arrangements to return the key to the office.

~ Thank you! ~



# Thank you



Thank you to **Audrey Scott** for donating a high chair to Glory. This chair will be wonderful for the wee ones in our congregation.



*"How are you at doing jobs no one else wants to do?"*

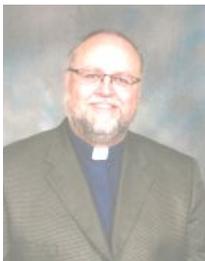
Thank you to Cole Berg and crew for taking down the Christmas lights from the evergreens beside the parking lot and to Tim Kihn (and the honeybees) for looking after the straw bales.

# Thanks



Thank you to **Ellen Sitler** for cooking a variety of wonderful meals and thank you to **Community Outreach committee members** for delivering them to members of our congregation.

## Bishop's Message - March 2021



Dear Beloved of God –

Recently the Annual Study Conference concluded. During the Conference, as is our Synod's long practice, I shared a Bishop's Time with those gathered...this year via ZOOM.

It's nearly been one year....COVID-19. It is incredible to note that a year has come and gone. Together we continue to seek to listen,

discern and explore how we might support, encourage, and innovate for mission and ministry in a constantly changing context.

There are new opportunities and possibilities before us, including recommitting to a missional model of listening, discerning, experimenting, reflecting, and learning. And, all the while, asking the questions: where is God in our neighborhood? Our community? Our world? And equally importantly: how might we join God in God's mission?

In this liminal time, we are seeking to wonder, reflect, pray, discern, imagining what wants to emerge, to be birthed:

What have we learned about what is most important in our life together as the body of Christ? And how can we use that knowledge to shape how we will live, work, and serve together? What might we bring into the future from this experience?

What new skills have we picked up? What other skills and gifts will we need to embrace a new future?

What relationships/collaborations/partnerships will we need to initiate or strengthen in the months ahead?

What were the things that seemed so important before the coronavirus crisis that we might give less attention to, or let go of altogether?

What is/are our greatest asset(s) now? I believe...and what I am hearing across our Synod...is that we are discovering that we have the capacity to be more creative and flexible than we had imagined.

I believe...and what I am hearing across our Synod...is that we are discovering that we have the desire and willingness to work cooperatively, with innovation, and are learning together from our experiments, including our missteps.

I continue to be moved, impressed, and filled with gratitude during this coronavirus wilderness for rostered and lay leaders, congregations, specialized ministries, and our strengthening relationship across the synod and church. For pastoral support, connection, compassion and care offered. For creativity, ingenuity, openness, support, encouragement and trust-building.

Opportunities for imagining, experimenting, risk-taking, innovating, and learning abound in this time even in the midst of yes, anxiety and disorientation.

May our Lenten journey be one of deeper as we seek to be the Beloved of God.

In Christ Jesus – Shalom, +Bishop Larry Kochendorfer





ALL OF US FROM TIME TO TIME NEED TO REFOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON CHRIST. If you haven't had time yet to re-focus during LENT during this Church Year, now IS a good time!

Lent's final week is called **Holy Week** which begins 28th March with

**PALM SUNDAY** -remembering Jesus entry into Jerusalem on the Way to the Cross. He was received with palm branches -- do you have yours from a previous year?

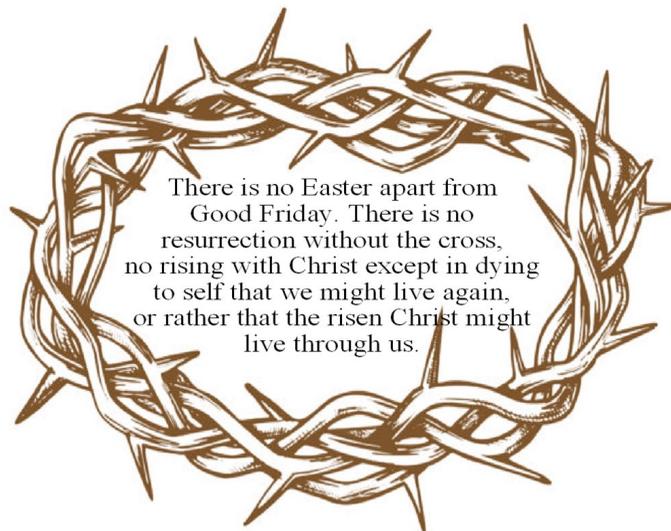
**DURING HOLY WEEK** - Jesus taught, ministered, healed.

**HOLY THURSDAY/MAUNDY THURSDAY** - Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples.

**GOOD FRIDAY** - Jesus died on the Cross for us, for our sins, to give us new life and the promise of eternal life, and more.

**BIBLE VERSES:** go to Matthew, Mark, or Luke; toward the back, look for Palm Sunday events -- and go from there...

Details about Holy Week worship opportunities will be shared soon.



# Owen's Head-Shave & Hair Donation Challenge Fundraiser

March 1-31, 2021

Watch my head shave on March 20, 2021 @ 12PM on Facebook Live

"Raising money for cancer is important to me because I have many loved ones that have faced cancer and I know it is hard on families. I want to help other people facing cancer.

I challenge my community, friends, family, schoolmates,  
and fellow Scouts members to participate.."

*A participant is anyone who wishes to help spread the word,  
collect pledges, shave their head or donate their hair.*

For more information and to watch the Live event please see my Facebook Event here:

<https://fb.me/e/24Swm8oja>

For those not on Facebook, information and a recording of the  
Live Event will also be published on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgEEh3SSj7PYpBK3gbiYJsw>

## Participant Registration & Donations

100% of funds raised will go to the Cross Cancer Institute,  
all donations over \$15 will receive a tax receipt.

Participant Registration & Online Donations:

<https://p2p.onecause.com/owens-headshave>

I will also collect cash or cheques made payable to "Alberta Cancer Foundation".

Will you accept  
my challenge?



Owen's Head Shave and Hair Donation Challenge is a fundraiser supporting:

The Cross Cancer Institute



Thank you for your support!

Contact: Owen's Mom, Heidi Jones: [hformanski@hotmail.com](mailto:hformanski@hotmail.com) (780) 271-8277

#owenschallenge

# Our *Spiritual* Journey

*A Message from Pastor Nickel*

## SO WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

One way we express our faith and what we believe while on OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY is by speaking together a -- **CREED**.

First, "belief", as a part of a CREED.

Once upon a time, some very young boys were playing by the lakeshore on holiday. They were acting out things they remembered, this time, a baptism from their home church. With one boy being carefully dunked, the drier boy asked, "Do you believe?"

After the response from the wetter boy, "I do", they repeated everything.

Finally after several times, after the wetter boy came upright, the drier boy again said: "Do you believe?" "Yes", followed. Then, "What do you believe?" The wetter boy exclaimed, "I believe you are trying to drown me!" ...A statement of belief!

A CREED is a statement of belief, what we believe that has been focused over the years by our Church. The Creed starts with "I believe in..." Our Christian Creeds help us relate our Trinitarian faith and understanding to the challenges we face in this world.

## SO YOU say you BELIEVE IN THE CREED?!?

There are a few ways to relate to the Creeds as we say them:

1. We can study and learn and really believe everything in them to the best of our knowledge -- and our faith.
2. We can accept the wording on faith and in trust of what the Councils of the Church decided.
3. We can accept some or all of the wording simply on faith. Any or all -- that's ok.

We can also use the word of a creed to encourage ourselves to learn more about God and our Faith.

Early origins: After Jesus Christ returned to heaven, his followers told others about Jesus and their faith from their own personal experiences.

They answered questions from those around them, using their personal knowledge. When people asked about their Christian faith, called "The Way" at that early time, some wrote down who Jesus was and what he did and said, as well as answers to questions they were asked.

Some of these writings focused on God the Father and Jesus Christ. They had examples, as in the Old Testament, "The Lord, He is God" [1 Kings 18:39]. Or, "But who do you say that I am?", asked Jesus, followed by the answer, "You are the Christ" [Mark 8:29]. The

answers expanded in length as the church grew and more people had more questions. [Compare Romans 1:3-4, or 1 John 4:2 for statements that were 20-30+ words long, with Philippians 2:6-12 which is much longer as it explained more about what Jesus did for us.] ["Teaching" types of informal creeds include: 1 Cor. 15:3-7, 1 Cor. 8:6, Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14.]

### Councils and Church Leaders get involved.

From writings that have survived to this day, we know that Councils and church leaders began to formally discuss correct wording about what the Church believed. Better known examples are: Ignatius of Antioch [100 c.e.] and Justin Martyr [165 c.e.] before he was martyred by the Romans.

We have a letter from the Church Council in Smyrna condemning someone and telling what the Church really believed [180 c.e.]. A letter, The Balyzeh Papyrus, 100 c.e., is the oldest preserved writing we have about the Christian faith that approximates the outline of our present creeds -- using a Trinitarian formula of belief.

Expanding summaries of Christian faith beliefs, known as "Rules of Faith", circulated via letters, copies, and re-copies. A few date from around

150+ c.e., with more from around 200 c.e. Some were much longer than our creeds because they were explanations in answer to specific questions about beliefs and faith.

### First Creed.

Finally, common statements of Early Christian faith were circulating around the Mediterranean. Around 215 c.e., these creeds and statements of faith

were gathered and shared among various church leaders and councils. One African contribution was a reconstruction of a Bishop's Sermon.

The shape of our Apostle's Creed was agreed upon and, by 225 c.e., was widely used -- in various forms.

Wording continued to be changed slightly for a number of years after 225, with the final form as we know it coming from later Councils, but this common wording, this early creed, became known as the "Apostles' Creed", named in honor of the Apostles.

### Second Creed.

After 225, the Early Church answered more and more questions that people had about what was believed, particularly about Jesus. The explanations grew longer -- that is why later creeds are longer than earlier ones.

Councils met to discuss and debate beliefs and understandings about Jesus, most notably the Councils of Antioch, 268 and 325. New questions about Jesus arose -- was he God, or Man [human], or both, and resulted in the Council of Nicaea, 325. Some bishops believed one way, other church leaders another way, and the Council was to decide. One side even brought false murder charges against a chief debater on the other side (they came from the losing side and were exposed). There were more intrigues

than in a good "soap opera" of the 20th Century. Finally a decision was made, but then -- various alternate wordings were offered and debated by various parts of the Church for another 50 years, with Councils meeting to debate possible wording changes. In the end, the Christian community affirmed the Declaration of Nicaea. It became our second Creed, the Nicene Creed, named for the place where the Council of 325 had met. That affirmation? -- that God has fully come into human history in Jesus Christ, that he was both God's Son and born human.

Some of those opposed had a "Imperial" political agenda for their preferred wording, while others focused on Jesus being not "like God".

What prevailed was that Jesus Christ was "of one essence [reality] with the Father", along with a clear Trinitarian understanding of God.

### Old but current problems.

The Councils of the historic Church included both representatives of the Eastern [Constantinople] and the Western [Rome] branches of the Christian Church. One was Greek-thinking while the other was Roman-thinking in philosophy and understanding, so Councils needed a lot of time to come to common agreement. These Councils primarily met together to affirm the doctrines and practices of the faith.

One smaller "decision" about the Nicene Creed continued to be under debate and discussion and therefore was not yet officially agreed upon. Then years later, the Eastern and Western branches of the Church broke apart before 1000, and the an official decision was never made. The question: does the Holy Spirit come from the Father and the Son, or only from the Father. The Western Church said "both" but that is not indicated in the Bible so the eastern church said they didn't agree.

Today, we are historically a part of the Western Church so we usually include words indicating "both". But officially, that issue has not been determined by the Church as a whole, so for us the words in the Nicene Creed, "and from the Son", are optional when speaking that part.

Also, a third Creed, the Athanasian Creed, was agreed upon by Christian Councils, and came into being around 600. It is much longer, needing the space to deal with a heresy, and its length more fully explained the Trinity and about Jesus Christ. It was named for the place where the second creed debates were held, and is seldom used in the world today because of its pages of length.

Since the Creeds are a statement of what we "stand for", Creeds are usually said while we stand in worship services, using the latest modern language version or earlier ones.

Lenten Blessings,  
Gary Nickel



AND SINCE YOU ASKED further about:

**"GRACE"** - since we think of it as "a gift freely given", thus, God the Father's Gift of Jesus Christ who died for us on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins, is a gift of GRACE. There's nothing that we can do to get it; it's God's gift to us.

**"DISCERNMENT"** - think of it as seeking God's help in making our bigger decisions -- by taking the concern/problem to God in prayer; plus you have additional ways to help "discern" or decide.



LENT IS a time in our Church Year for you and I to make a PERSONAL SPIRITUAL JOURNEY of following Jesus Christ's Journey Toward The Cross -- The Cross upon which he died for you and for me.

Prayer: Lord, Draw us more deeply to you as we begin our journey through Lent. Surround our lives with your presence so that neither fear nor loneliness can invade our lives. During our journey, show us the joy and freedom which come from trusting in you. Remind us that not only did Jesus reach out with a loving hand, but he gave his whole body so that we might be saved. Help us to witness to your work in the world during our journey in your footsteps. In Jesus' name. Amen

LENT is a time for self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and meditating on the words of scripture. In short, Lent is a season for getting real. For getting real with ourselves about what in our lives is good and what in our lives we might need to get rid of.

In Lent we acknowledge that life is fleeting and beautiful. Life is long and full of suffering. Life is a burden too heavy to carry alone. Life is a gift too precious to hoard. In Lent I invite you to do both an external and an internal audit -- What about your life is really good? Is life-giving for yourself and others? What do you need more of in your life? What gift do you have to offer the world? And I invite you also to look at your shadow side and to say, "What might I need to let go of? What about my life is destructive to myself and others, to God's beautiful creation?"

--Anna Greenwood-Lee, B.C. Anglican Pastor



## Creation Care Support Team

Glory Lutheran Church has been a participant in the ELCIC Greening Faith Community Initiative since 2008. The ELCIC Greening Faith Community Initiative has been revised requiring participating congregations to up-date their accreditation on an annual basis.



Thank you to **Doug Sime and Lynnette Woodrow** (Creation Care Support Team) for looking after the paperwork involved in the Accreditation Registration Renewal Application.

# Thank You



In Doug's words:

"Since 2008 our congregation has expanded its commitment from humble beginnings of minimizing the use of Styrofoam cups and participating in community clean-up campaigns to where today there are a broad range of initiatives being implemented with many of these initiatives evolving into everyday regular routines."

You will find a letter from Rev. Paul Gehrs written in response to the application renewal following this note. A copy of the application and the Stewardship of Creation certificate will be available to see at Glory.



ELCIC

*In Mission  
for Others*

# Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

600-177 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0W5 Canada. [www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca)  
Toll free: 1.888.786.6707, Phone: 204.984.9150, Fax: 204.984.9185

March 1, 2021

Glory Lutheran Church  
22577 Highway 16  
Sherwood Park, Alberta T8A 4T7  
[glorylc@telus.net](mailto:glorylc@telus.net)

To Doug Sime, Member Creation Care Support Team  
and the members of Glory Lutheran Church, Sherwood Park, AB.:

Congratulations on being affirmed as an accredited Greening Faith Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC)!

The ELCIC appreciates your attention to God's creation, your support for the ELCIC's Stewardship of Creation Initiative, and your partnership in being a church *In Mission for Others*. Your annual review is truly comprehensive. Your stories are inspirational and your sense of connection to the land is beautiful. You are a great model for other congregations and faith communities.

Please find attached a certificate recognizing your choice to be a greening congregation. It serves as celebration, reminder and encouragement to live out the goals you have chosen for your faith community.

As I read your report, I am reminded how urgently our current context is calling us to recognize the earth as a neighbour who we are commanded to love. May the Spirit of Christ bless and encourage your faith community, as we all seek to live in respectful and healthy relationship with the earth.

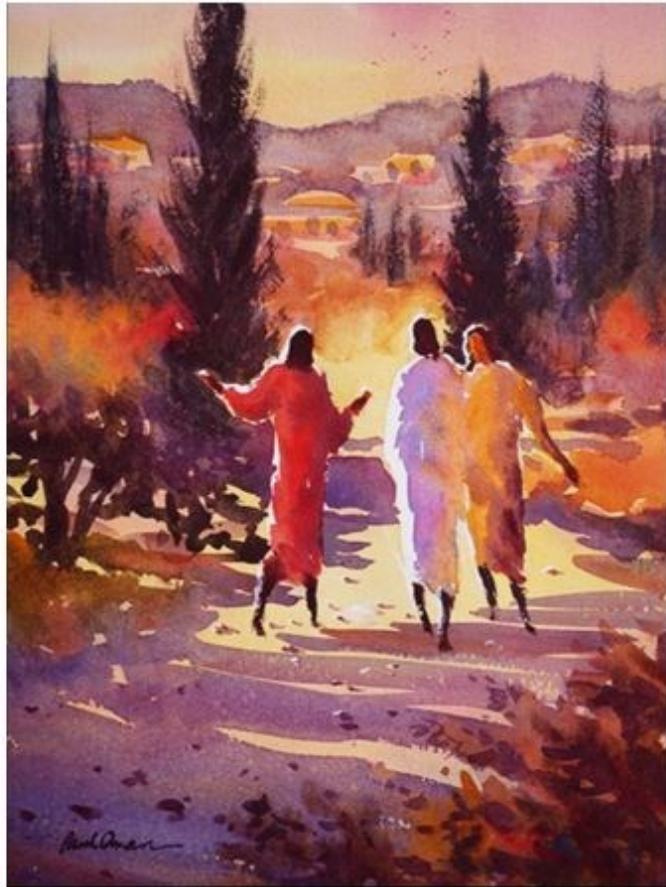
*Jesus answered, "... 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'  
... 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'  
Mark 12:29-31 (NRSV)*

Peace

Rev. Paul Gehrs  
Assistant to the Bishop, Justice and Leadership



Then  
they told  
what had  
happened  
on the road,  
and how [Jesus]  
had been made  
known  
to them....  
Luke 24:13 -35



"On the Road to Emmaus" by Paul Oman used with permission  
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# ON THE ROAD

18<sup>th</sup> Synod Convention July 17, 2021  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

## Synod and National Conventions

### 1. The Eighteenth Convention of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories

The 2021 Synod Convention will be held virtually via Zoom on **Saturday, July 17, 2021**, with an orientation session the evening of July 16. The 2020 Convention theme is ***On The Road***.

*The theme, based on the Emmaus Journey from Luke 24, reminds us that Christ journeys with us, sustains us, protects and transforms us, and invites us to consider how the Spirit of God is calling us to new opportunities and possibilities wherever we might be “on the road” during this time.*

Glory Lutheran Church is eligible to have one voting delegate attend this convention. If you would like to be considered; if you would like to nominate someone else; or if you would like further details, please contact Pat Becker.

Registration deadline is May 15, 2021.

### 2. ELCIC National Convention

The ELCIC National Convention will be held **July 13-17, 2022** at SAIT in Calgary, Alberta.

Delegates to this convention will be elected from a list of nominees during the Synod Convention this summer.

If you would like to be considered; if you would like to nominate someone else; or if you would like further details, please contact Pat Becker.

The deadline for National Convention nominees is May 15, 2021.



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



March 4, 2021

Dear members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,

We write to you today out of ongoing concern for domestic violence in our country and within our church. Especially troubling is the recent rise in domestic violence. The realities of the COVID-19 pandemic have made those living in difficult and dangerous situations only worse while at the same time limiting access to family and other support systems.

We know that this is an uncomfortable subject for some people to discuss and too often this has stopped us from speaking out. But we must speak out and advocate for those who are living in these dangerous situations.

Social isolation and current lockdown measures have led to this dramatic increase in domestic violence. The UN describes this as shadow pandemic alongside COVID-19, “a pandemic within a pandemic.”

In a survey last year of 376 staff and volunteers working at transition houses, shelters, immigration centres and other social agencies coast-to-coast, almost half said they noticed changes in the prevalence and severity of violence. 82 per cent said the violence had increased and got more frequent. A fifth said abusers’ violent tactics changed and control over their victims increased, including a sharp uptick in cases of strangulation. There have been “many more cases of strangulation and serious physical assaults leading to a higher risk of lethality,” said one worker surveyed.

As a member of the World Council of Churches, the ELCIC joins with other churches in lifting up Thursdays in Black—a weekly reminder of our commitment to end gender-based violence including domestic violence ([www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black](http://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black)). You are invited to join in this campaign by wearing black on Thursdays and posting on social media your commitment to ending gender-based violence.

In November 2020, Thursday in Black Ambassadors issued a statement urging both awareness and protection from the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and gender-based violence.

“Gender-Based Violence is not only physical, it is emotional, mental and even structural,” said the ambassadors. “We know that violence against women and girls occurs virtually and literally in every strata of society: in households, at school, in religious spaces and in the workplace. And with ongoing physical restrictions due to the spread of the coronavirus, violence against women and girls has intensified. The resolve to end Gender-Based Violence must remain strong.”

National Bishop Susan Johnson and Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) also released a joint video in November 2020, speaking out against domestic violence.

“This isn’t just a role for church leaders. All of us are all called, through our baptismal vocation, to this work,” said the leaders. “Jesus Christ calls each Christian, and the whole church, to denounce and stop the beating, sexual abuse, raping, and killing that take the lives and safety of people everywhere. All of us can encourage greater awareness, support the work of organizations that provide safe spaces, and advocate for preventative policies at all levels of government.”

As a church we are called to journey in solidarity with those who are experiencing hurt, brokenness or exploitation. Our 2011 *Social Statement on Human Sexuality* calls on us to, “deepen our awareness of the root causes of sexual injustice and exploitation...[and] advocate for policies, practices and resources that uphold dignity and address particular issues surrounding sexuality.”

If you or someone you know are experiencing domestic violence you can find resources for help here: <https://endingviolencecanada.org/getting-help-2/>.

We encourage you to reflect on your own sense of discomfort around this issue and adopt practices that nurture your courage and wisdom for action. We also encourage all leaders and faith communities to maintain a list of relevant resources in your area.

It’s time for all of us to break the silence and speak up against domestic violence. Our hope and prayer is that you will join us in speaking up, advocating for better services for victims, and speaking out against male privilege that allows domestic violence to flourish and to remain hidden.

Yours in Christ,



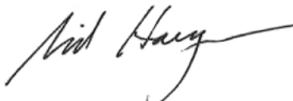
The Rev. Susan Johnson  
National Bishop, ELCIC



The Rev. Dr. Greg Mohr  
British Columbia Synod



The Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories



The Rev. Dr. Sid Haugen  
Saskatchewan Synod



The Rev. Jason Zinko  
Manitoba/Northwestern  
Ontario Synod



The Rev. Michael Pryse  
Eastern Synod



**SYNOD OF  
ALBERTA  
AND THE  
TERRITORIES**  
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*Collaborative  
Partnerships*

February 24, 2021

Dear Beloved of God:

***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.***

During this time of continued restrictions in response to public health concerns regarding the ongoing COVID pandemic, we again enter the season of Lent. A time of waiting, pondering, and reflection. We slow down. We refrain. We anticipate resurrection.

These past eleven months have been trying ones at best. They too have been a time of waiting, pondering, and reflection. We still have a long way to go before our social interactions, at church and in our wider communities, can fully resume as we so dearly desire. I am confident that the Holy Spirit, who has sustained us these difficult months, will uphold and lead us throughout the duration of the pandemic. Thank you for your sacrifice, your persistence, and your loving care for those you are called to serve.

I am deeply grateful to the rostered and lay leaders of our synod for your diligent protection of our communities and congregations in refraining from in-person worship, as I have repeatedly recommended. By utilizing means of worship and congregational life not reliant on in-person gatherings, and by adhering to the guidelines set forth by Alberta Health Services and our Chief Medical Officer of Health, you are acting in love to protect both the members of your congregation and the communities in which they live, study, and work.

Recently, as many of you know, Rev. James Coates of GraceLife Church, Spruce Grove, was arrested after repeated violations of public health directives including refusal to maintain social distancing at worship services, wear masks, and limit the number of attendees as directed in the provincial mandate. On their website, Rev. Coates and his congregation urge churches to disregard public health directives and encourage Albertans to resume social interaction around meals, in defiance of provincial guidelines aimed at preventing the spread of

*continued on next page...*

COVID-19. Protests in support of Rev. Coates and against public health measures took place in Edmonton over the weekend.

I am sorely disappointed, frustrated, and concerned when I hear of those who have chosen to openly defy the good work, advice, and directives of Alberta's public health officials.

As Christians, the call to love others is inseparable from our call to love and serve our God. The protection of our neighbours from COVID-19 is, in itself, an act of worship, in that so doing honours and glorifies God by the offerings of mercy and compassion. Conversely, actions that endanger others are not compatible with either the worship of God or our confession of faith in Christ.

During this pandemic, which imposes restrictions echoing practices common during the season of Lent, let us show mercy and compassion. Let us refrain. Let us anticipate resurrection.

***"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---  
Shalom,



+ Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Bishop  
Synod of Alberta and the Territories  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/gracelife-church-defies-closure-order-yet-again-holds-service-in-violation-of-covid-19-rules>

<https://gracelife.ca/> paragraph 10

# LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS



## Do you remember when?????????

How many times do we start a conversation with those thoughts? As I reviewed the Sundays & Seasons for Lent, it said, *“Lenten practices rightly invite us to individual acts of repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love. Lent is also a time for deepening of community.”*

This caused me to remember the times we had as we met together, enjoyed some soup and then worshiped at our midweek Lenten services. I would love to replicate that experience. So here is the plan:

We can't get together, but we can make soup and we can attend the online Lenten worship service. I invite you to **email or call Heidi at the office with your favorite soup recipe**. Heidi will post some of the recipes in the weekly e-news bulletin for us to try. So let's make some soup, either new or familiar, to enjoy before attending the Lenten Service.

As a bonus, please **take a picture of yourself** making or eating your favorite soup. Send the photo to [danielle.elise.b@gmail.com](mailto:danielle.elise.b@gmail.com) who will post the picture for the regular Sunday Worship Service.

(Heidi may include your pictures with the recipes in the *Church Matters* newsletter.)

Blessings to you all.  
Dwayne

## Tuesday - Friday, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Please note that Heidi may be working from home due to the pandemic. Email and phone calls will continue to be answered during office hours. Please call the office if you would like to visit the church.

# OFFICE HOURS



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