



**17th Biennial ELCIC National Convention Report**  
**Regina, SK July 11 - 13, 2019**  
**Saskatchewan Synod Delegates**

## **Report of the National Bishop**

Submitted: Doug Schmirler, rostered delegate; Darlene Stelmacowich, lay delegate

In her address to the delegates of the 2019 National Convention of the ELCIC in Regina, Saskatchewan, Bishop Susan Johnson spoke of the convention theme – ***“Called to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation”*** and opened her report by reminding the delegates we have all been called, by our baptism, into a ministry of reconciliation. She then went on to speak on how this call has manifested itself in our church.

We have been called into full community with over 75.5 million Christians in 99 countries through our partnership with the Anglican Church in Canada, the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, and Kairos.

Bishop Susan told the gathering how the ELCIC has made strides in our commitment to reconciliation but there is so much work yet to do. She said we live in an unravelling world where over 70 million refugees and displaced persons exist; where 40 wars and armed conflicts are waged every day; where 16,306 species of creation are endangered; where glaciers are melting, and ocean levels are rising at unprecedented rates; and where there are 68 long term drinking water advisories posted in indigenous populations.

After leading the group in the chorus of “Bind Us Together”, Bishop Susan went on to say, “and yet we are still a church with hope.” There are new and creative ministries because God is still in control. She spoke of the ELCIC visions taskforce and talked about the National Church’s strategic plan which included four vision priorities.

Under the vision of courageous innovation, bishop Susan spoke of the unique situation in Medicine Hat where a Lutheran and a church of another denomination actually switched worship buildings because the size of the other was more suitable to each other’s needs.

For the vision of reconciled relationships, Bishop Susan spoke, in general terms, of the on-going efforts to connect, more intentionally, with our Aboriginal brothers and sister and specifically of the blanket exercise at the CLAY (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth) gathering in Thunder Bay last year. It was, at the time, the largest such exercise ever undertaken.

In the vision priority of one body - working together, again we heard about the exceptional working relationship our national church enjoys with the ELCA, the LWF and our South American partner Synod in Argentina.

The final vision priority centres around empowering disciples. It was here Bishop Johnson urged all delegates and members of our church throughout the country to continue to live and strengthen our faith through prayer, reading, worship, and love.

Bishop Susan said, in closing, “I love our church. I am proud of what we do, and I am proud of what we stand for”.

# **The Call to Faithfully Journey with those who are Dying; An ELCIC Resolution**

Submitted: Eunice Morck, lay delegate

*We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

Romans 14:7-8

This report may be lengthy, but little has more gravitas than dying.

The Committee explained that, as part of the process in deep exploration of this topic, they sought input concerning the sanctity of life, received feedback from churches across Canada and prayed. A lot. The following is gleaned from the Committee's presentation and their thoughtfully-written document on a weighty topic.

## **Baptismal Calling**

We regard life as a sacred gift from God. In Baptism, we are called to be in relationship with God and with one another, to be a loving and supportive community. Life is a sacred journey; both being born and dying are truly sacred times.

## **Pain and Suffering**

Life's journey includes pain and suffering: physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. God calls us to comfort and support others in difficult times, but we cannot alleviate all of life's pain. When accompanying someone who is dying, we recognize that each person's experience is unique. Our primary calling as disciples is to say to a dying person, "We will support you and journey with you whatever you decide."

## **Compassionate God**

Lutherans believe in a God of compassion, mercy and grace. It is our responsibility to respond to the needs of others respectfully, non-judgmentally, valuing their unique experience. As we work to faithfully journey with those who are dying, it is valuable to periodically be reminded that God is also preparing for the death of each of us.

## **Dignity**

We will not all agree with a dying person's choice. But we can treat the person with dignity and respect their right to make their own decisions. Individuals will be most empowered to make wise decisions when they are surrounded by a caring community.

## **Cluster of Companions for the Journey**

We do not journey through life alone. One of life's realities is that those working to give support may or may not actually be helpful to a particular individual. The Committee identified three inter-related clusters of support: Supportive Relationships, Professional Health Care and Spiritual Care.

## **Supportive Relationships**

Family is the primary place most people look to for support. When a dying person loses capacity to communicate their own choices, decisions may fall to particular family members. Some friends may be as close as family. Access to fresh air, sunlight, walks and a favourite place to sit can also bring comfort. A pet may be a source of comfort.

## **Professional Health Care**

These supports exist in a system that offers specific aspects of care based on their expertise. We trust professionals to uphold the dignity of individuals through competent and compassionate care.

## **Spiritual Care**

Offering spiritual care is a calling of the whole faith community. Care by rostered leaders may be of particular comfort to some individuals. We trust authorized leaders to uphold the dignity of individuals through conscientious ministerial care and with respect for the individual's role in decision making. Compassionate and respectful Spiritual Care providers are essential to our faith walk.

## **Palliative Care**

Suffering may not be limited to the physical but also spiritual, psychosocial, financial or systemic concerns. Where and if available, palliative care often includes a team of professionals working with the whole person and their family.

## **Medical Assistance in dying**

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD or MAID) is now legally recognized as a medical treatment in Canada, but under strict criteria of protection. Health-care professionals have long sought to improve palliative care for dying person by finding effective ways to address physical pain and to attend to needs of the whole person. But not all pain can be addressed with palliative care.

The church's long history of healing ministry seeks to offer competent and comprehensive care with rich regard for the needs of the whole person: body, mind, heart, soul and community.

It is likely that medical assistance in dying will be an option for the foreseeable future. Both society and the church will be presented with difficult, sometimes uncomfortable questions. Over time, through experiences, conversations and on-going reflection, many of us will find that our perspectives may be modified.

We affirm that people have a right to assistance in dying. This includes good medical care and good palliative care. Some people who are going to die will be interested in medical assistance in dying.

## **Safeguards to Limit Medically Assisted Death**

There are strict criteria around who is eligible for an assisted death. There is a rigorous decision process when an assisted death is requested.

## **Love Your Neighbour**

When a person receives medical assistance in dying, the cause of death on the death certificate is listed as the disease that made them eligible under the criteria for medical assistance in dying. From this perspective, assistance in dying is not murder and it is not suicide. It is one option among many in a respectful treatment plan developed under difficult circumstances with the best interests and the desires of our neighbour in mind.

Desiring death can be an expression of joy and thankfulness and can be the final act of choosing life in the sense that the dying person is embracing his or her own sense of destiny.

The call to journey faithfully with those who are dying is a holy calling. We affirm the dignity and value of each individual. The vast majority of people who request assistance in dying have given it careful consideration.

## **Principles for Journeying with those who are Dying**

We affirm that whenever we enter into a context where death is near, we are standing on holy ground. We affirm that we do not all have to agree on all matters. We affirm the church's call to offer spiritual care. We encourage all people to discuss their wishes with their families. We encourage congregations to offer safe space for conversations, listening and prayer. We affirm just access for all to dignified, quality palliative care. Lack of or poor quality palliative care may lead to increased requests for assistance in dying. We affirm the value of a compassionate church following a compassionate God. We affirm that God is with us through the sacred journey of life, including birth, dying and death.

## **The Call to Faithfully Journey with those who are Dying; An ELCIC Resolution**

Submitted: Murray Patzwald, lay delegate

Society is always changing. So is the Church. We must be the people God calls us to be now, in this time and place to empower individuals to make sense of their lives.

I attended the session on Assisting the Dying or another way of saying is to provide comfort care for those who are dying. I must admit I came away torn. It is a common human tendency to ignore our own mortality and pretend that death is something that is "far away" that we don't have to worry about right now. But the reality for Christians is that death is not the end, but rather the beginning of a new, resurrected life with God almighty

C.S. Lewis wrote in the Problem of Pain that, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Our view of death affects how we as Lutherans make decisions regarding care at the end-of-life. For some people, end-of-life care involves the blessings and struggles that accompany old age. For others, it involves medical decisions that must be made without warning as a result of a sudden illness or accident that can afflict people of any age.

I learned that comfort care is an essential part of medical care at the end of life. It is care that helps or soothes a person who is dying. The goals are to prevent or relieve suffering as much as possible and to improve quality of life while respecting the dying person's wishes.

I would have preferred that we as a church would have taken more time (maybe next convention) and pray that God would provide us with her guidance and wisdom as we struggle with this important decision. But the church at large approved the motion that we move forward in our walk with those who need and comfort.

## **The Call to Journey Faithfully with Those Who Are Dying**

Submitted: Wanda Walter, lay delegate

At the 2015 national convention MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) was addressed due to its legalization. A task force was created to discuss and review decisions regarding respectfully journeying with those who are at the end of life. The task force was diverse in terms of perspectives considered including pastoral care, theology, health care and spiritual care. This group was commissioned to create a resolution that balances the sanctity of life with the right of the individual to choose, which is complex with many components.

The task force gathered a significant amount of feedback from the churches (a study guide was and is available to all churches on the ELCIC website).

At this convention, the task force members shared their thoughts, experiences and feelings about being on the task force. One of the members, a spiritual care practitioner in the health care field, said it was truly Holy ground to journey with those who are dying.

Convention delegates were given time to discuss the following questions: What surprised you about the document; how did it shape/inform your thinking and what are the implications for the ELCIC.

Both society and church are undergoing reformation. Reflection, while dwelling in the Word, is needed so that we can be God in this time and in this place. We are called to be respectfully present with, listen to, and to be spiritual care givers of those who are on their end of life journey – how to be and how to see in journeying with those who are dying. In this walking alongside we are called to trust and respect individuals in their end of life decisions. Many affirmations were made and are located on pages 12 and 13 of the in “The Call to Faithfully Journey with Those Who are Dying: An ELCIC Resolution” document located at:

<https://elcic.app.box.com/s/ghr8b9rjgpsay5jjdtzepn2mq5zigqgh/file/464902268712>

## **NCC – Constitution Amendments**

Submitted: Lori James, rostered delegate

One does not often think of the Constitution and Bylaws as the most exciting part of convention, but these documents are foundational to how we do church. At this convention, we had the opportunity to pass several changes in both the constitution and the administrative bylaws that were required as a result of several motions passed regarding public ministry in the ELCIC. The changes that were made included:

- Ensuring consistency throughout the documents (i.e. using term administrative bylaws; numbers written out instead of numerals; etc.)
- Correcting grammatical errors
- Allowing National Church Council (NCC) to have a vote at National Conventions
- Changing language to reflect changes in public ministry (i.e. Rostered Pastors and Rostered Deacons)

## **NCC - Reimagining Our Church: Public Ministry in the ELCIC**

Submitted: Lynn Robertson, rostered delegate

*Reimagining Our Church: Public Ministry in the ELCIC* is a 56 page document found at this link: <https://elcic.app.box.com/s/ghr8b9rjgpsay5jjdtzepn2mq5zigqgh/file/464887179844>)

with an accompanying 8 page reader guide found at this link:

<https://elcic.app.box.com/s/ghr8b9rjgpsay5jjdtzepn2mq5zigqgh/file/464884015802>)

For those who find 56 pages too long to wade through, the 8-page reader guide was recommended. The full document consists of 5 sections:

**Section 1** Aspects of the ELCIC in Context: The Situation as it Exists

**Section 2** Theological Foundations: Traditions, History, and Public Ministry

**Section 3** Theological Reflection: Toward a Theology of Organization, Mission, and Ministry for our Present Moment

**Section 4** Principles and Possibilities: An Emerging Vision for the Church in Mission and for its Public Ministers

**Section 5** A Vision for the ELCIC: Principles, Aspirations, and Recommendations

The heart of this document is Section 5 (p.45-52) where the principles and aspirations for laypeople, deacons, pastors, and bishops are clarified. It was recommended that convention delegates read section 5 carefully and in its entirety. The recommendations are found on page 53. Convention motions 12 through 17 focused on this document. All the motions were passed by an overwhelming majority of the delegates which expresses strong support for this document.

**Motion 12: Ordination and First Call** - That the ELCIC recognizes that “ordination” is the rite which marks and celebrates the acceptance of a first call into public ministry of a deacon, or a bishop or a pastor.

**Brief words of explanation:** With this motion we establish deacons on the same footing of ordination--as has always been the case for pastors and more recently been the case for bishops. In a sense, we are catching up to some work already noted when we clarified the ordination of bishops and which was even already flagged in the commitments related to the Waterloo declaration.

**Observations/reflections:** Diaconal ministers are currently consecrated. It was asked if there was a difference between consecration and ordination. The response provided was that they are essentially the same thing.

I recall attending the national convention in which we were discussing the ordination of bishops. It seemed to me (at that time) that in practice, bishops were already set apart for a specific ministry that is different than an ordained pastor, so ordination of bishops was a logical acknowledgment of that particular ministry. Pastors and deacons are also called to specific, yet different ministries, so a 3-fold ordination makes sense. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (of the ELCA) commented that we in the ELCIC are taking a more organized approach to the 3-fold ministry of bishops, pastors, and deacons that the ELCA could learn from.

**Motion 13: Unified Rite of Ordination** - That the 2019 National Convention requests the Program Committee for Worship to develop a unified *Rite of Ordination* containing alternative and variable pieces appropriate to the ordination of a deacon, a pastor or a bishop.

**Brief words of explanation:** Having clarified the question of ordination, we must reshape the way in which we treat ordination for our deacons and pastors and bishops. We have one ordination with three expressions. This motion ensures that our rite of ordination is consistent with our theology.

**Observations/Reflections:** This was delegated to the Faith, Order, and Doctrine committee.

**Motion 14: Presiding at Weddings and Funerals** - That the ELCIC authorizes deacons to preside at weddings or funerals with the permission of the synodical bishop. Normally, a pastor presides at weddings and funerals by virtue of their call to a particular congregation or similar

setting. Normally, a deacon's invitation to preside at a wedding or funeral emerges from those relationships formed while exercising their ministry in the setting into which they are called.”

**Brief words of explanation:** This motion allows for deacons to perform weddings and funerals which may grow organically out of their ministry in their particular context.

**Motion 15: Reviewing Public Ministry Policies** - That Reimagining Our Church: Public Ministry in the ELCIC, be referred to the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry for review and revision when necessary of (1) ELCIC Candidacy Manual and (2) the policies regarding Authorized Lay Ministries, Synodically Authorized Lay Ministry of the Word and the Alternative Route for Admission to the Roster of Ordained Ministers.

**Brief words of explanation:** A review of our policies and procedures is necessary to bring them into conformity with the actions of this convention.

**Motion 16: Communicating with Public Ministry Partners** - That the 2019 National Convention refers Reimagining Our Church: Public Ministry in the ELCIC, to ELCIC synods and seminaries to help inform their preparation of candidates for public ministry in the ELCIC.

**Brief words of explanation:** We will want to bring all of our partners, whether Lutheran or otherwise, up to speed with respect to the actions of this convention.

**Motion 17: Reimagining Our Church: Public Ministry in the ELCIC** - That the ELCIC approves the document Reimagining Our Church – Public Ministry in the ELCIC and that NCC share this document with ELCIC pastors, deacons and bishops; with ELCIC synods, congregations and other ministry setting; with ELCIC seminaries and schools; with the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and Lutheran and Diaconal Association; with The Lutheran World Federation and with the Lutherans and ecumenical partners.

**Brief words of explanation:** With this motion, we adopt a vision for our church which is missional, diaconal and prophetic; a vision which is aspirational and one into which our church is invited to live; a vision in which we seek to reclaim the ministry of laypeople, reimagine the ministry of deacons (as we have now done) and refocus the ministry of pastors; a vision which fully participates in God's mission to restore and reconcile the whole of creation.

**Observations/reflections:** This last, underlined line is at the heart of this entire document. Pastors have taken on (or been given) more than their ordained role in ministry. This document seeks to empower lay people and diaconal ministers to take their God-given rightful place in ministry. As we seek to empower lay people in the ministry of the church, may we also seek to intentionally equip them.

## **NCC Recommendation/Resolution - Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission**

Submitted: Bob Lewis, rostered delegate

National Convention approved the motion to affirm that our relationship of Full Communion continue to exist within The Episcopal Church, The Evangelical Church in America, The Anglican Church of Canada and The Evangelical Church in Canada.

As a pastor in a Shared Ministry between an Anglican congregation and a Lutheran congregation, I appreciate this great body of witnesses to our local ecumenical relationship. For our local congregational leaders this Memorandum of Mutual Recognition provides a context for our local relationship. When ever we are reminded that we are in communion with an ever greater number of saints, this brings confidence to our young (3 years) relationship, that we are walking a journey with those who have gone ahead and now have come back to help us on the way.

I did speak before the convention a hope expressed by some of the people of our congregations that maybe one day there would be a liturgy created for ours and similar relationships that united together through a common liturgy our expression of one in Christ can have a liturgical flavour.

We were also blessed on Friday morning to worship God through the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples' "A Disciple's Prayer Book". If someone were to ask, "What has been a benefit of being in Full Communion?" Worshipping through this prayer book has been one such gift.

Lastly, I want to give thanks for Betty. Betty was the 4 Corners Representative. She seemed to always be at her booth selling coffee, tea, chocolate, clothing, stoles and other products for small-scale farmers that are 100% fair traders. She worked 2 - 10 hour shifts and a 6 hour shift. Betty is walking the path of reconciliation with creation, people of colour, and people of different faiths. Her presence was a gift of grace.

### **NCC Recommendation / Resolution – Single Use-Plastic**

Submitted; Al Scholz, lay delegate

The resolution passed after some discussion 134 for and 4 against. The resolution was to recognize the growing concern about the ecological impact of the production, consumption and disposal of many plastic products, particularly single-use plastics. While acknowledging that some members of our communities may require access to single use plastic items to ensure their full inclusion in the community, the resolution encourages individuals, congregations, faith communities and synods to reduce the single-use plastic products, and for the church to encourage public support for this action.

It was noteworthy that all Luther College service for NCC meals and breaks used reusable plates, cups and cutlery with no use of single-use plastics. Well done!

### **NCC – Recommendation/Resolution - Investigating Becoming Carbon Neutral**

Submitted: Al Scholtz, lay delegate

The resolution passed 119 for and 18 against: That the ELCIC acknowledges the call by the 2017 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Assembly for "the global communion to strengthen its efforts even more for climate justice;" and the call "for the LWF to be carbon neutral by 2050." The National Convention directs the National Church Council to investigate what would be required for the ELCIC to be carbon neutral by 2050, and to report to the 2022 National Convention.



## **NCC Recommendation/Resolution - Becoming Greening Faith Communities**

Submitted: Al Scholtz

The resolution passed 132 for and 6 against: That the ELCIC joins the 2017 Lutheran World Federation Assembly in “affirming the fact that the global ecological crisis, including climate change, is human-induced. It is a spiritual matter. As people of faith, we are called to journey together toward a healthy relationship with the earth.” And in “affirming its commitment to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “Creation Not for Sale” points out our responsibility to care and to maintain God’s creation, and our needed efforts to advocate for climate justice.”

The resolution encourages congregations, faith communities, ministry organizations, areas, and synods to participate in the ELCIC Stewardship of Creation: Greening Faith Communities program as an expression of commitment to stewardship of creation.

## **NCC Recommendation/Resolution - Respect for LBGTQ2SIA+ Persons**

Submitted: Sarah Dymund, rostered delegate

A motion was brought to convention by National Church Council that the national church choose words and actions that intentionally affirm the dignity of members of the gender and sexually diverse community. This motion included affirmations that people of all expressions and identities of gender and sexuality are beloved children of God, made in God’s image, and have the right to have their identities and pronouns respected in their communities of faith. The motion called on the national church to encourage the whole church, including synods, congregations, ministry areas, and individuals to speak and act for the rights and inclusion of gender and sexually diverse people, and to speak out against discrimination and hatred. This motion passed 134-5.

## **NCC Recommendation / Resolution: - NC-95-11 (Relationships, Interconnectedness and Responsibilities in the ELCIC: One Body Working Together)**

Submitted: Marilyn Fowlie-Neufeld, rostered delegate

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

~ 1 Corinthians 12:12

This is an update and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of our church body. We affirm that we are one body and we recognize that there are different roles within the church. All working together so that we can live out our Christian calling.

There are three inter-related aspects of our church body: the local faith community, the synod, and the national church. The responsibilities of each are outlined following these areas within our constitution: worship, witness, education, and service.

The presentation of information begins with a visual representation and then presents an easy to understand table outlining the details of the policy. This document would be a good addition to the orientation package given to new church council members. This document also provides assuring information for all members of the congregation so that we understand that none of us, as individuals or faith communities, stand alone.

## **Reconciliation with Creation (Drs. Mary Vetter and David Sauchyn)**

Submitted: Deb Roberts, lay delegate

On July 11, during the second session of the 2019 ELCIC National Convention, Dr. David Sauchyn, University of Regina and Dr. Mary Vetter, Luther College presented on the topic of Reconciliation with Creation. They presented many statistics which demonstrated that climate change is happening and is an issue which desperately needs to be addressed. Some of what they highlighted were things such as how we depend on snow melt and rainfall, but the intensity and timing of precipitation and the water supply has changed and is changing; and that Saskatchewan is the number two producer of greenhouse gases only after Wyoming.

We heard about how Data leads to Information, which leads to Knowledge via the axes of Context and Understanding, and how Spiritual Guidance then brings us to Wisdom. We had table discussion surrounding questions regarding personal connections to nature, barriers to acting in more environmentally friendly ways, and what would be effective to build reconciliation with creation in our communities.

Bringing together everything we heard shared from the discussions the two presenters connected us to the process of Reconciliation with Creation by showing the steps used in the TRC paralleled by the steps to use in the Science of Creation: Awareness/Knowledge of the past, Acknowledgement/Enumeration of harm done, Atonement for/Analysis of causes, and Action to change behaviour/Lists of possible changes. We then heard that we need to “find another place to stand”; it is very hard to know how to atone, and what really makes a difference. In order to move forward and make change we need to have a full cost assessment which takes into account all areas impacted by change, and in order to consider all these impacts we need to stand in another place and look at all of it differently.

This presentation certainly made me think again about how we are stewards of Creation, and what can we do differently in that role to move forward as good stewards. Please make sure to also read the article from the ELCIC Convention Highlights ([elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=527](http://elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=527)).

## **Journeying with Indigenous Peoples**

Submitted: Lynda Erlandson, lay delegate

Janine Windolph was our guest presenter on Friday afternoon at National Convention. She was born and raised in LaRonge and currently lives in Regina and is Curator of Community Engagement at MacKenzie Art Gallery.

She began by telling us her story which is a complicated one which she had to piece out over time because of the residential school trauma experienced by her grandparents. She is partially Woodland Cree on her dad's side. Her maternal grandmother was Atikamekw Cree from James Bay area. She described herself as having a "grandparent gap" on her maternal side. Her masters title is "More questions than Ancestors" As a child she suffered sexual abuse, depression, and suicidal thoughts. She asked questions of her mother to determine her background and loss. The "I love you's" from her mom were not verbal but rather by cooking, teaching skills etc. Her mother ran away from residential school and learned traditional skills to live on her own and escape truant officers. Her mother told her "The best way to heal is to focus on education. " Her mother upgraded and got degrees from U of R and Janine followed suit.

Cree Narrative storytelling is what she learned and uses in her art. Janine did truth gathering for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). She heard many stories. This was done in tents in a larger setting but it was very intimate to listen to the stories. She learned that there was a variety of stories ... some negative, some positive. It is important to listen and understand history to begin healing. The TRC experience opened her eyes and after she returned home she felt a "what do we do now?". A wound has been opened, how do we heal it? She tries to provide a path to move forward through her work.

Together with Trudy Stewart she was approached by the United Church to create a documentary on the Regina Indian Industrial School (RIIS). They were given free rein to tell the story and they realized that the story was really the cemetery. There was no surviving generation so she had to work with descendants. They were also in the situation where nobody talked about it. They heard phrases like "My grandfather was not the same when he came back." or "That's why he drank a lot.". When children could not speak their own language they could not speak to their grandparents and those relationships were broken. For Janine, the journey was about relationships. Reconciliation is a larger healing journey together. We need to be respectful of the diversity in indigenous communities. The best way was to create an open space for descendants of various backgrounds to come and pay respects. A non-profit RIIS Commemorative Association was created to do that. She found that part of being a leader is encouraging other leadership to come forward.

Work on the video led to Janine working with Reconciliation Regina (non-profit organization) when the city adopted TRC recommendations. She has hope that she will raise her children without trauma. Her most recent project is with the NFB and involves her children. She wanted them to learn how to trap, fish and carry on the skills of her background. What she offers is her story, her family's story and how they connect to reconciliation.

Janine's presentation was followed by some questions about what we can do to help in the reconciliation process. Again, the answer is in relationships. Reconciliation requires two people trying to understand each other through story-telling and listening. We can educate ourselves and others about treaties and present-day circumstances. Reconciliation will take time. Some people are easier to reach than others. Some are still healing. A lot of the work Janine did was possible because of the community and networks. It starts with having conversations and moving forward. Find someone who can guide you.

Janine was asked about resources for education and she named a number of books including her favorite, "Marrow Thieves", as well as recommending the Regina Public Library 'Read for Reconciliation' list.

## **Journeying with Indigenous Peoples**

Submitted: Brooklyn Lane, lay delegate

This session was led by Janine Windolph. The session encompassed a presentation and table group discussion. Janine Windolph works at Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan. She recently completed her Master of Fine Arts, Interdisciplinary in Media Production and Indian Fine Arts at First Nations University of Canada. Janine talked about her Indigenous and diverse heritage, with her family coming from Quebec and Germany. Janine is a storyteller and she shared some of her story with us.

Janine discussed her grandma and the trauma her grandma went through. Her grandma was a victim of domestic abuse and was told by the hospital nurse that she needs to leave her home to survive.

Janine helped with the Truth and Reconciliation process. She heard stories that were traumatic and stories that were positive. She said, “It is important to listen...people came to talk for a reason.”

She spoke on residential schools and the Regina Indian Industrial School (RIIS), which was active from 1891 to 1910. Janine helped push for the RIIS to gain heritage status and a plaque was revealed in 2018, demonstrating the history of RIIS. The graveyard marking the school grounds and its dark history now have heritage status.

Janine invited people to work with people who are already doing things in terms of reconciliation. There are many partnerships that can be made. Reconciliation Regina is an organization in Regina that provides: information on treaties, educational sessions, ways to get involved, resources, and workshops.

Lastly, she shared, “part of reconciliation is sharing.” This goes both ways. It is important to get educated and stay informed.

## **Journeying with People of Other Faiths Panel (Brenda Anderson, Maysa Haque, Hannah Grover, Sean Bell)**

Submitted: Pat Simonson, rostered delegate

This session consisted of each of the four presenters speaking from their particular focus on the topic.

Brenda set the stage for the panel by asking us to consider some searching and important questions,

- I. “Why do we dialog? What do we want to achieve?”
- II. “With what attitude do we approach dialog?” She offered three possible positions –
  - i) Exclusivism – an approach that comes with the attitude’ “I’m right. You’re wrong.” The aim of any conversation is conversion. The stance is that outside of the church, there is no salvation. The goal is the universal “kingdom.”
  - ii) Inclusivity – an attitude that Christianity is superior. It tends to be paternalistic and, on the surface, tolerant. The appearance is of being “nice,” but there is little substance behind the façade.
  - iii) Pluralism – the attitude, the conviction, that there may be many paths to one truth. The perspective that others can be different without casting doubt or judgment on our own belief.She cautioned against boxing ourselves in by our own restrictive vision.
- III. With whom do we dialog? And how?

She suggests that by engaging in a process of “dialogical activism” - by entering into dialog to address common concerns or issues - boundaries, creeds, and doctrines fall away and that, in working together for justice, we move towards reconciliation.
- IV. She left us to contemplate just what the role of religion is in the public space today.

Maysa presented us with a specific example of dialogical activism from her work as a Muslim woman Peer Chaplain at Luther College. She asked herself, “Where would LGBTQ+ Muslim people on campus go for support?” She was sure it would not be to a mosque for fear of community backlash. So, she decided to hold a multifaith discussion group on “Queering Faith,” inviting people to come together across faiths to discuss issues, her rationale being that, in a small city such as Regina, people within each faith group might not find much support.

Hannah shared her personal story of being bisexual and Jewish. She spoke of learning about the holocaust and coming to an understanding of the intersection of faith and politics – that, for her, being Jewish is political. She described her experience of interfaith dialog as being open-minded and respectful, not disrespectful, but welcoming.

Sean spoke, as the Lutheran Chaplain at Luther College, of having to learn “to turn off the salesperson,” to just listen, to let conversation flow naturally, and to engage with others as conversation partners. He talked of developing “multifaith fluency,” of learning a new language of how others live out their faith. He asked us what sort of Canada we wanted to live in- fearful and anxious? Or open and welcoming? He suggested that when we come together in conversation, we learn not only about others, but about ourselves.

## **Journeying with People of Other Faiths Panel (Brenda Anderson, Maysa Haque, Hannah Grover, Sean Bell)**

Submitted: Arlene Tangjerd, lay delegate

This presentation was provided by Rev. Sean Bell, chaplain at Luther College, U of R campus, and his associates, Dr. Brenda Anderson of Luther College, Maysa Haque who is Muslim and is involved in the Master of Religious Studies program at Luther College, and Hannah Grover, a tutor at the Student Success Writing Centre and film producer, also described as a bisexual Jewish woman and activist.

Dr. Anderson spoke about inter-religious dialogue, looking at why we dialogue, with whom and how. She suggested there are three reasons why:

1. Exclusivism – which has a basis of colonialism, conversion of people, involves violence and still continues today.
2. Inclusivism – which involves judgment, power, paternalism and superiority and focuses on tolerance.
3. Pluralism – which looks at similarities, uses curiosity and listening and doesn't require judgment.

Dr. Anderson suggests that all three of these reasons place people in religious boxes and create a religious other.

On the question of who engages in dialogue, she pointed out it is mostly men, that politics plays a role, and that the talking involves a “representative” of each religion. The question of how involves sharing and learning but usually still maintains the concept of “other”.

She then spoke of an alternative she calls dialogue activism. This dissolves boundaries, involves reconciliation, uses listening to enact justice and moves marginalized people to the centre.

Maysa Haque talked of her involvement in the multi-faith peer chaplaincy at Luther and the need to create safe space. She was involved in creating a list of speakers who represent a wide variety of religions and gender expressions and positions and emphasized the importance of the multi-faith approach.

Hanna Grover, a Master's student, talked about her family history and her Jewish heritage and of the impact of learning about the holocaust in grade 6. She had kept her Jewish identity limited as a youth but seeing the rise of white supremacist symbolism in recent times, particularly in the U.S. led to a heightened interest in her identity and heritage. She also emphasized the importance of dialogue with other faiths.

Rev. Sean Bell, as chaplain, completed the panel presentation with an overview of how the multi-faith approach developed and how it operates in practice. Various faith groups use the same room as a chapel with a mixture of religious symbols on display. He spoke of multi-faith fluency as similar to learning a new language. At a Soup Group event, 55 people came out to learn about Muslim, Sikh and Jewish headgear. Joint prayer vigils have taken place in times of tragedy. There is sharing of food, culture, values, and experiences in a safe non-judgmental space.

The presentation given by this panel was very informative, interesting and inspiring.

## **A Targum on Rev. Dr. Martin Junge, General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation (LWF)**

Submitted: Bob Lewis, rostered delegate

To begin with Martin, we need to begin with Martin's rooster! Rev. Junge gave the sermon at our opening worship. His rooster story of grace set the tone for a convention that would deal with a difficult topic; reconciliation. We would consider reconciliation not in a general fashion but focus on four relationships; to creation, to people of colour, to people of different genders, and to people of different faiths. We touched the surface of these 4 relationships that we, the church, believe we are called by God to live by reconciliation. To be honest that is a lot of hard work. So, to begin our convention with grace showed us of Dr. Junge's gift of discernment of what we most need for the journey of reconciliation; grace.

On the way to LWF we heard from CLWR. They recognized LWF as the resource to enable CLWR to be as effective as it can be. For those of us who watch women make quilts, we say amen.

Rev. Junge reminded us of who we are; statistics that show us the global relationships we have: 148 member churches, from 99 countries, embodied by 75 million people. Rev. Junge spoke of the four themes which give life to LWF: Service, Mission, Theology, Unity. Recognizing a new reality of the LWF, the largest member churches are from Ethiopia and Tanzania, we are growing into this new reality of inter-mutuality and solidarity. To grow in our understanding of how we can serve and be in mission, we are called into Jesus Christ's ministry of reconciliation. Through this ministry can we be truly ecumenical. Or as Rev. Junge said, "To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical." Martin ended with his own targum on a quote by Jaroslav Pelikan, "Tradition is the living faith of dead people to which we must add our chapter while we have the gift of life."

The sun has risen. Martin's rooster, so I hear, is giving thanks.

## **Reports: Luther High School and College; Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute (LCBI); Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR); ELCIC Group Services**

Submitted: Al Scholtz, lay delegate

### **Luther High School and Luther College, Regina, SK**

Dr. Brian Hillis, President, reported that due to holding the NCC every three years, Luther College amended the Provincial Act on December 2018 to operate independently and hold its own annual general meetings each year. The purpose is for responsible governance. Luther College still maintains close links to the ELCIC through board of director positions for both the National Bishop and the Provincial Synod Bishop. Luther High School focuses on developing the whole person in body, mind and spirit pursuing excellence in service. The High School reports 95% of grads to on to post-secondary education, the highest percentage in Saskatchewan and possible the highest across Canada. Luther College at the University of Regina has 600 students, which is full capacity encouraging multi-culture and multi-faith faith to foster global understand and leadership.

### **LCBI, Outlook, SK**

Wayne Hove, President, reported that student enrolment for grades 10-12 has been increasing 10% per year recently with the aim of 90 students each semester. Core principles of LCBI include the believe that all students are gifted. There is a focus on the whole person who are loved and returning love. There was a short video by LCBI students of student testimonials.

Although the founders of LCBI was the Norwegian Lutheran Church there is a broad base of support from many faith backgrounds. The approximate background of the student body is: Catholic 10%; Anglican 10%; Lutheran Church Canada 10%; Lutheran Brethren 10%; and the balance ELCIC. The LCBI focus is to instill Christian character and encourage students to support their home faith communities. The business meeting discussed the broadening of support from non-ELCIC faith bodies, approved three new appointments to the board for 6-year terms and withdrew constitutional bylaw changes for consideration at the next National Church Convention.

### **CLWR (Canadian Lutheran World Relief)**

Dr. Rev Karin Achtelstetter gave a report on the work of CLWR. This is her first National Convention. She was appointed as the executive director on January 2018. She brings 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.

The VISION of CLWR is to strive for a world where people live in peace with hope, justice, dignity and equality, empowered to achieve their universal rights to quality of life and to have their basic needs met.

The MISSION: Inspired by God's love for humanity, CLWR challenges the causes and responds to the consequences of human suffering and poverty. As a specialized agency of the Lutheran community in Canada, CLWR offers Canadians opportunities to understand and serve the needs of others.

## **ELCIC Group Services**

There was a report to the convention by the ELCIC GSI board on 20 years of service. There have been steps to improve governance and improve market (investment) strategies to support members with a focus on financial, physical and mental wellness. Going forward the board will focus on strategy, vision and decision-making.

## **General Comments**

The convention was very well organized and well run. Luther College was a superb host. There were significant issues discussed in great detail followed by thoughtful decisions. In particular, the discussion and vote on the resolution “The Call to Journey Faithfully Journey with Those Who Are Dying” was done with knowledge, insight, respect, sensitivity and the fact that we are on Holy Ground with a person who is dying.

Next convention theme(s) could consider broader seniors’ issues, ageism in society and the role of the church on ageism.

## **Election Results – National Convention 2019**

Submitted: Cheryl Bauer Hyde, lay delegate

**National Bishop:** Rev. Susan Johnson

### **National Church Council**

Secretary:	Linda Grainger
Treasurer:	Gene Blishen
BC Synod, Rostered:	Jane Gingrich
ABT Synod, Lay:	Kathleen Jensen
SK Synod, Lay:	John Nilson
MNO Synod, Lay:	Linda Sander
EAST Synod, Lay:	Pat Lovell
EAST Synod, Rostered:	Kimberlynn McNabb

Note: people elected above will join continuing NCC members:

Vice-chair:	Sheila Hamilton
BC Synod, Lay:	Curt Satre
ABT Synod, Rostered:	James Hendricksen
SK Synod, Rostered:	Iris Kristjansdottir
MNO Synod, Rostered:	Chris Bishopp
EAST Synod, Lay:	Bruce Cook

### **Court of Appeal**

Lay (position 1):	Joan Meyer
Lay (position 2):	Jennifer Moroz
Rostered (position 1):	Kayko Driedger Hesslein
Rostered (position 2):	Terry Richardson

Note: the people elected above will join continuing Court of Appeal member:

Lay (position 3):	David Schulze
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## **2022 Committee on Nominations**

SK Synod:	Cheryl Bauer Hyde
BC Synod:	Patricia Giannelia
EAST Synod:	Doug Reble
ABT Synod:	Wayne Street
MNO Synod:	Tyler Gingrich

## **Committee on Reference and Counsel**

Submitted: Bryan Tastad, lay delegate

The Committee on Reference and Counsel handles motions that may be presented during the course of national convention. The committee was made up of delegates from each synod as follows:

Deacon Faith Nostbakken (ABT) – Chair  
Bryan Tastad (SK)  
Rev. Dennis Serfas (SK)  
Rev. Joanne Lam (EAST)  
Laurie Knott (EAST)  
Leslie “Skip” Triplet (BC)  
Tom Brook (MNO)  
Rev. Trudy Thorarinson (MNO)

The committee received nine motions from delegates and also presented two of its motions to the meeting. The result was that nine resolutions were adopted, one was defeated, and one was referred to National Church Council. These were in addition to the 22 motions placed before the assembly by National Church Council and which will be reported on separately. The resolutions handled by the Committee on Reference and Counsel are summarized below. The full text of resolutions and accompanying rationale are available on the ELCIC Convention website.

### **Resolutions that were adopted**

#### RC-1

- Support for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as it advocates on behalf of asylum seekers and detainees;
- Continuing support got the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Canada.

#### RC-2

- The National Bishop communicate with GSI (Group Services Inc) regarding the proposed changes to the benefit plan to address concerns about fairness.

#### RC-3

- Any unfinished business be referred to the National Church Council.

#### RC-4

- ELCIC share resources and ideas regarding carbon reduction with synods and congregations as they arise rather than waiting for the 2022 national convention.

#### RC-5

- ELCIC develop methods whereby synods and congregations may share their ideas and initiatives regarding carbon reduction with the whole church.

#### RC-7

- ELCIC create and support three separate National Task forces to address:
  - Ableism;
  - Racism, White Supremacy, and issues of Racial Injustice;
  - Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia.
- The task force members include People with Disabilities; People of Colour; and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Two-Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, and all other identities not listed but known within the community (LGBTQ2SIA+).
- That the National Task Forces report to the National Convention in 2022.

#### RC-9

- National Church Council adopt the practice of taking part in an anti-oppression training together at one of their in-person meetings in the year following each National Convention.

#### RC-10

- ELCIC in Convention, express regret and offer repentance for the ways in which both members of the diaconate and laypeople have had their vocations and their ministries marginalized or dismissed as second class in the life of this church. We affirm the deep value of their ministries and vocation in the life of our church and commit to an ongoing journey of healing and ministry together.

#### RC-11

- Resolution of thanks to all who helped with convention.

### **Resolution that was Referred to National Church Council**

#### RC-8

- ELCIC Administrative Bylaws, Part VIII: Nominations and Elections, Section 1.e. to add the words be amended to state “The committee on Nominations shall select at least two nominees for each vacancy...”

### **Resolution that was Defeated**

#### RC-6

- ELCIC national church further examine the issue of religious exclusion in our public schools, and if this examination suggests further action by our church, that our national church together with each Synod begin discussions with the human rights commissions and authorities to bring religious practices and ceremony into our public schools.

### **Leadership Award; ELCA Presentation; Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) Greetings;**

Submitted: Janet Kostyna, rostered delegate

#### **Leadership Award:**

ELCIC Leadership award is presented to rostered or lay members who have given outstanding contributions in service to the wider church and have been nominated by others to receive the award. The past recipient was David Storch.

This year the Leadership award was presented to Carolyn Ethier. Upon receiving the award her response included this quote “What stands out immediately is that I was never called to act alone. I am filled with gratitude for companions who have shared the journey” Carolyn has served locally, nationally and synodically in many roles predominantly in worship. She has deepened the spiritual lives of many through her contributions to Eternity Today and Sunday liturgies.

### **ELCA Presentation:**

Bishop Eaton opened her presentation by demonstrating her solidarity with ELCIC or at least Sask, Synod by donning RIDER SWAG... She opened her greeting by expressing that the ELCA is experiencing many of the same issues as we in Canada at all levels, decline in numbers and resources, and the challenges of changing times. The ELCA is working on the same issues as the church in Canada. What are the priorities? “everything we are doing right now”.

Bishop Eaton affirmed the work of the ELCIC in respect to issues of social justice, climate change, inter religious relationships, and ordination rites for deacon. The ELCA will also be focusing on these issues in their assembly later this year. They will be voting on “Faith, Sexism and Justice: A Lutheran Call to Action” at their upcoming assembly. They will also be voting on the four-way full communion between ELCIC, ACC, ELCA and the AMERICAN EPISCOPAL communions. Bishop Eaton thanked ELCIC for being the first to approve this full communion.

In the ELCA this year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of women and especially the first woman of colour in the ELCA. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LGBTQ marriage and service in the ELCA. The ELCA takes part in Shoulder to Shoulder with the Muslim community. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ELCA Declaration to the Jewish Community”.

Bishop Eaton concluded “when you hear of your neighbours to the south with problems, that is us”. She emphasized appreciation of our prayers and advocacy and the unity of the church.

### **ACC Greetings:**

Bishop Fred Hiltz was unable to attend as the ACC was meeting at the same time as ELCIC but on the west coast. His greetings were given via video. The first thing to note was that on the table in front of him he had placed the chalice made especially for the Celebration of the Declaration of Waterloo.

In his greeting he affirmed the relationship between ACC and ELCIC and underlined the special relationship that has grown between himself and Bishop Susan as well as the relationships that have grown between churches and individuals at many levels. This is the last term for Bishop Fred Hiltz as Primate of ACC.

## **Worship & Music Report**

Submitted: Doug Schmirler, rostered delegate; Darlene Stelmacowich, lay delegate

The worship services were very inclusive, inspirational and uplifting. The music, liturgy, prayers, scripture readings and guest speakers weaved a common thread as we were “*Called to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation*”.

The opening worship marked the official opening of the convention beginning with a greeting and formal welcome to Treaty Four Territory given by local elder Betty McKenna. The service continued with the singing of hymns, service of Confession handcrafted by Regina Indigenous Christian Fellowship minister Bert Adema, message from our guest speaker Dr. Martin Junge, General Secretary of Lutheran World Relief, sharing the peace and sacrament of Holy Communion.

Dr. Yunge, compared the similarities between the story of Nicodemus and the idea of being born again/born from above and the theme of our convention. We were reminded that we are invited to receive the gift of new life not because of who we are nor what we do but because of who God is and what God does in Christ. He reminded us of the four foundational pillars on which LWF is grounded – service, mission, theology and unity – and how these are still shaping us today.

Closing worship began with the Ecumenical guests and ELCIC Synod Bishop Susan gathered around the Baptismal font giving thanksgiving for Baptism.

Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, delivered the sermon for the closing worship focusing on Jesus' message of the Beatitudes. Reminding us that just as God has blessed us, we are called to be a blessing to & to serve others by reconciling our relationships with Creation, with our Indigenous People and to understand that multi-religious neighbours are also children of God.

Bishop Eaton offered her reflections on the mission and ministry of the ELCIC particularly for the leadership role being taken in the Care for Creation, their commitment to restoring a relationship with our Indigenous People as well as Welcoming the Stranger.

Following the sermon, those assembled participated in the Blessing of the National Bishop and the installation of the National Church Council. Bishop Susan presided over Holy Communion before officially closing the 2019 ELCIC National Convention.