



Martin Luther
**Evangelical
Lutheran
Church**

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Member of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Partnered with
the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

Congregational Newsletter

December 2018 • January 2019

“I Am a Stranger and an Inhabitant Among You.”

During the first seven days of November, the Parliament of the World's Religions took place in Toronto. Over 7000 people from around the world gathered to celebrate the cooperation of different faiths, and I was one of them. This week became especially meaningful to me because of my encounters with people. I met familiar faces, as well as new ones. On one day, I attended a shabbat service and heard the Rabbi preach about the words from Genesis 23, Abraham's words as he asks for a place to bury his wife. He begins by saying, “I am a stranger and an inhabitant among you.” (Gen 23:4)

Quite contradictory and yet so honest and relatable. Throughout the week at the Parliament these words came back to my mind over and over again. They came to life especially during lunch at the Langar. Langar comes from the Sikh tradition to serve your neighbour without the distinction of religion, caste, gender or ethnicity. You simply go there, take off your shoes, receive a head scarf and a great vegetarian meal—for free. While everyone sits in rows with their faces in the same direction as a sign of equality, the Sikh men and women go around, offering seconds.



You often hear people saying, it does not only fill your belly but also your heart and soul. After being there, I can fully agree. I went there as a stranger, unfamiliar with their religion, traditions and rituals. Still, I never felt viewed that way. I felt at home. No one ever asked about where I came from and why I wanted to be there in that particular moment. I didn't have to justify myself and it was just as if they were saying: “To us, you are not a stranger”.

Abraham found a place to bury his wife because his neighbours didn't see him as a stranger. His story shows me that being welcoming is not only about serving food or offering clothes. It is first of all about your heart and soul. When my heart says, “To me you are not a stranger”, the rest of me, my mind and body, will go in that same direction. Especially as we are celebrating the birth of the one who lived his life as a stranger and an inhabitant in this world, let us follow his example and meet each other as neighbours and not as strangers. Let us focus on our similarities instead of our differences. Let us look at each other and say: To me you are not a stranger.

Your Vicar,

Mirjam Steinebach

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

As we move out of the fall season, we move in the direction of Advent—4 Sundays before Christmas. Advent is one of my favourite times of the church year. It's a time to slow down, reflect and prepare; prepare for the coming of Jesus. I find myself reflecting on what is important to me as a Christian. I think about what the real meaning of Christmas is. Is it the gifts I receive or those I give? It's a time of being with family and friends, enjoying each other's company and sharing what we have with others. Christmas is a time to give, a time to show our generosity and share the wealth with those who need it more than we do.

It has been a busy fall in Martin Luther. Some of my favourite moments include:

- Enjoying the concert in the backyard of our church with the brass ensemble from Germany. Many of our neighbours came and I learned that sometimes it's just too intimidating to enter our church for the first time through the front doors, but it's much easier to come in through the back.
- Church council had their annual retreat, where we thought about what it means to be more missional and how can we be a missional church, making changes to draw in new members, but also remain true to who we are. I am very excited to see where we end up.
- Thanksgiving was such an inspiring time in our church. Just to see how much we were able to donate to the food bank was amazing. Thank you to all of you who donated not only food, but also gave a monetary donation. Know that your help has been greatly appreciated.

Sunday worship has seen participation from the youth and the lay preachers. It's wonderful to see how enriching services can be and how supportive the congregation is of all who participate.

December will be a busy time beginning with the Bazaar and Welsh Choir concert on the First of Advent, then the Children's Play on the Third of Advent and finishing with the candlelight service and tree decorating on the Fourth of Advent.

As always, we are able to help Wesley Mimico United Church by offering our basement to their Food Bank and Community Lunch. If you are looking for a chance to volunteer

some of your time, please come on by.

Every time I come to church I leave feeling a little more inspired—inspired by the work we do, inspired by members of our Congregation who have given countless hours to making Martin Luther a place where you want to be. If you are as inspired as I am by all that we do, please consider giving a significant donation this Christmas season. We would like to move into 2019 without a deficit. Please reach into your pockets and into your hearts.

—Tanya Zielke, Church Council President

Welcome to MLC, Vicar Mirjam Steinebach

Dear Congregation,

Some months ago, you read about me in this newsletter. In the meantime, I had the chance to meet some of you, had some great talks, experienced summer camp and started the journey with our confirmands and youth. It was a pleasure and I am happy to announce that I will now work at Martin Luther Church as a full time vicar until next June. I am looking forward to all the encounters, ideas and surprises that await us these upcoming months and I am happy to walk this part of our life's journey together with you.

Best wishes,
Mirjam Steinebach





Dinner Church By The Lake

Potluck. Worship. Conversation.

Dinner Church is a place where all are invited to come together, share a meal, and explore faith and spirituality.

Whoever you are, wherever you're at – this is for you!

Come join us at 6:30 pm on December 5th

You're invited to come early to help set up beginning at 6:00 pm or stay after Dinner Church to help clean up.

Location: 2379 Lake Shore Blvd West, Toronto, ON, M8V 1B7
Contact: 416-251-8293 or churchoffice@martinluther.ca

Please bring some food to share!



Impressions of Dinner Church by the Lake from Two New Friends

We are both new to Toronto, having moved here from Germany only a couple of months ago for an internship. A friend invited us to go to Dinner Church. We didn't know what to expect, but were overwhelmed by the kindness of the people and the delicious food we shared.

The evening started off with a bit of singing, then we sat down at a long table in front of the altar. Members of the Outreach Team of the Martin Luther Church and other guests had very generously prepared various tasty dishes and we couldn't help but try them all.

The dinner progressed with good conversations, prayers and an overall feeling of being welcomed. We thank the Martin Luther Church and everybody involved in the preparation of this evening. It was a great experience and a good opportunity to come together, to meet lovely, supportive people and to share an evening of joy.

—Charlotte and Melina

All are welcome to join the next Dinner Church on December 5. Please also consider making a donation to the Outreach Team to support our church's mission in the community.

Survey

Imagine if all churches could be strengthened across Canada, ours included. Imagine if we could shape our church in a way that matches our needs and dreams. Our congregation has partnered with the **Flourishing Congregations Institute** to be part of this transformation, and we would like your help!



Please take 20 minutes to fill out the online survey:
<https://tinyurl.com/fc145c>

Encourage those you know to do the same. Please know that no one in our church will have access to individual responses. We hope for 50% or more of our adult attenders to fill out the survey. With strong survey involvement from those in our congregation, we will receive uniquely helpful information about our own congregation that we can use as we seek to flourish and faithfully minister in our particular context.

If you have any questions, either check the website www.flourishingcongregations.org/ or ask Vicar Mirjam (vicar@martinluther.ca).

If you would like to fill out the survey but do not have

access to a computer or internet, please contact the office to make alternate arrangements.

Thank you, in advance, for completing this survey!

Our New Intern for December

Dear Congregation,

My name is **Nils Timm** and I'm from Hannover, Germany. I am 18 years old and finished school (Gymnasium) this summer. I want to come to Canada to visit my relatives (Vancouver, Kelowna, Toronto), get to know the country and improve my English.

I hope to be work with the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) in Toronto for a four-week internship in December 2018. I really look forward to having a great time in your congregation, full of new experiences and interesting encounters.

Within this internship I want to learn more about the job as a pastor and life in a foreign congregation. Back in Germany I want to start studying theology at university.

In my own congregation I am busy with children and youth; Kinderkirche: 6 to 10 year olds, summer camp: 8 to 12 year olds, Confirmation: 12 to 14 year olds).

I am very excited to get to know you in December. Hope to see you soon!

Yours, Nils Timm



Christmas Play

As it gets colder outside, the days become shorter and snow is falling we are getting ready for our annual Christmas Play.

It will take place as always during the joint service at 11:00 am on the third Sunday of Advent, Dec.

16, 2018. It's all about Angels, Shepherds and of course baby Jesus.

As we are getting ready for the rehearsals it becomes even more obvious, that we need your help. There are plenty of roles to play, from small to a lot speaking. Everything is possible, even behind the scenes.



2018 Christmas Play Rehearsal Schedule:

- Sun. Dec. 2, 11:00 am-12:30 pm
- Sun. Dec. 9, 11:00 am-12:30 pm
- Fri. Dec. 14, 5:00 pm dress rehearsal and pizza dinner
- Sun. Dec. 16, 9:00 am, followed by presentation of play during the joint service at 11:00 am

Contact: Ann-Christin at intern@martinluther.ca or Tel: 905-717-5937

*See you soon!
—Christmas Play Team*

Confirmands and Youth

Hammering, spray painting, and the sound of laughter all over the place: maybe you can already guess what this is about. It's about our confirmation and youth program this year. In September, our youth built the planters at the entrance to 5 Superior Ave, while our confirmands spray painted their prayer benches. Our overnight program in October was all about Advent. A little early you might think. But only because you don't know what they are preparing for: They made plans for the candle-light service on December 23rd.

We can look forward to a service which the youth shape with their very own gifts and ideas. Consciously

Save the Dates

Jazz Service on New Years Day, January 1 at 5:00 pm

Family Camp Sunday on January 20

Pulpit Exchange on February 3

Pastor Peter Lisinski from Thornhill Lutheran at MLC,
Pastor Ceconi at St. George's Lutheran Church

**Annual General Meeting
on February 24**

taking the time to wait for Christmas—that’s what our youth invites you to do **on December 23 at 7:00 pm at Martin Luther Church**. During the service we will also decorate the church Christmas tree.

We’re Bringing the Peace Light Back to the Lakeshore

On December 1 the peace light will again arrive from Bethlehem at the Christmas Market in Toronto’s Distillery District. It will be passed on at Martin Luther Church **during the services on the 4th Sunday of Advent**. Bring a lantern to take it home and to bring the light of peace to all your friends.

Maybe you’d like to volunteer to bring the light to our church on December 1. If so, please contact Tanya (tanya.a.zielke@gmail.com) or Marlena in the church office.



An Appeal to Help the Church

With fewer people coming to church and lower attendance this summer, our financial committee is projecting a deficit of over \$20,000 this year.

If, like me, you haven’t been at church as much this year, consider signing up for the Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR) program like I have. The form is attached and also available from the church office. Just add a void cheque. You determine the amount you want to give monthly for automatic donations to the church. It can be cancelled at any

time and all donations appear on your annual statement.

Like a constant paycheck or pension, a reliable stream of donations will help reduce our deficit, help council plan better and keep our church a strong and welcoming place for all.

Please contact Martin Haefele if you want more information.

—Peter Schweiger

We would like to thank everyone for their ongoing generous donations to Martin Luther Church. Please also consider donating by choosing one of the following options:

- Online via our web page with a credit card, using our partner “Canada Helps”. A minimal fee is deducted from donations so this is best for people who are unable to donate directly to the church.
- Bequests or gifts of securities in your last will and testament.
- Naming Martin Luther Church as a beneficiary of a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) or Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) or of a life insurance policy.
- In lieu of flowers at a funeral, a request can be made for donations to Martin Luther Church.

The Website Team Needs Your Help

If you are familiar with HTML and website programming, please contact the office. Also, even if you are just willing to write articles and learn about the backend of our website, we’d love to have you on the team too.

News from ELCIC, EKD and DELKINA

Our Congregation is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Eastern Synod. We are partnered with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and member of the Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz in Nordamerika (DELKINA)

Lutherans Toronto Lunch and Learn January 26, 2019: Learning and Understanding the Culture Around Our Congregations

If you want to reach people you need to understand how they feel, think, act. You need to engage with their every day questions and learn how they live. Because the

people around you might be seekers, but they obviously don’t show up in your church. We will teach ways how to change that.

Be prepared for interesting insights and inconvenient questions. Learning culture and context is the foundation for successful outreach.

News from the Community



**The Neighbourhood
Came to
Our Church
for Treats
on Halloween**

We Congratulate...

On October 14, 2018, **Karina and Annika Vidulin** were blessed together with their parents during the worship service. God bless their whole family.

We Mourn...

- At the age of 83 on August 18, 2018, **Else Walker** passed away.
- At the age of 83 on October 2, 2018, **Horst Zimmer** passed away.
- At the age of 82 on November 17, 2018, **Dora Schmidt** passed away.

Remarks and Reports



**Concerts by Brass Ensemble from Germany
at New Daycare Playground**



**Pastor Vetter's Presentation and Discussion on the
Topic of "Dealing with Goodbyes and Death"**



Transit Townhall in October

Retreat for Volunteers

From October 20 to 21, ten volunteers took part in a leadership retreat at the Geneva Park YMCA in Orillia.

Speaker **Zack Ingles** (member of the leadership team of **Fresh Expressions Canada**) led three working groups based on the thematic focus "community building and networking with the neighbourhood from a management perspective," enabling the participants to show their church and mission from a new perspective. The following questions were addressed:

- What characterizes a volunteer passionate for mission-work?
- What joys and obstacles can be expected?
- How do we initiate, animate and promote the transition to a mission-active congregation?



The Volunteers from Martin Luther Church

Another working group provided the opportunity to set goals within the framework of newly acquired knowledge. A report of the conference and the resulting objectives will be fine-tuned at the November church council meeting. The greatest challenge was identified as being the degree of willingness to innovate with new members of the congregation.

Holocaust Education Week: Book Talk at MLC for School Children

On behalf of the students at the German International School of Toronto who visited the Martin Luther Church on November 1 to take part in a book talk about the story "The Promise" I wish to say 'thank you' to the church for hosting us. The team at the church offered such a warm and inviting space to learn and feel safe to ask questions and really engage.

The books writers **Pnina Bat Zvi** and **Margie Wolfe** hosted a highly informative and personal session describing their mother's experiences in a concentration camp, the fears and horrors and real life warmth/strength they had by being able to stay together. It was a thoughtful and appropriate experience for the students to meet and hear directly from the authors of the book about the real stories of their mothers who survived being prisoners in Auschwitz.

Our students were deeply engaged and enjoyed being able to ask questions and get real answers from the authors. The discussion provided them with new insights. After the talk ended our group lingered to discuss the ideas



of the book and each child shared some thoughts. The event certainly left a lasting impression on us all, as they paused and considered how they can make their world a better place by working together to extend kindness and dignity to all.

*With Kindness and Character,
Sarah Miles, Vice-Principal*

New Daycare Manager— Katina Haselsteiner

Q: What would you like the members of Martin Luther Church to know about you?

A: I am a teacher, and I hold in high regard the value of education and excellence in child care. I have always been drawn towards children and having the opportunity to work at Martin Luther Daycare as the office manager/administrator allows me to utilize my skillset in management.

Q: What are your first impressions working at Martin Luther Daycare?

A: My first impression was that the Daycare was warm and inviting. On my first tour of the facility I was happy to see laughing happy children and smiling teachers. There is positivity radiating throughout the center. I was pleased to see how engaged each member of the staff is at making Martin Luther Daycare the excellent child care center it is. The welcome and support that I have felt in my time here has been truly moving.

Q: What skills from your prior world can you apply in your position?

A: I have worked in education at various levels for the last eight years. I have had the pleasure of teaching in various countries throughout the world and have developed a knack for working with different educational programs and learning systems. I have an appreciation for diversity, and love being a part of the global village that is so evident in Toronto. Having worked in management for educational and hospitality-based organizations in years past means I am equipped for the duties that my role encompasses.

Q: What are your goals for the daycare in the coming year?

A: I look forward to watching the Daycare grow. Having watched the backyard project blossom within the first two

months of my time here has ignited the passion for development, and now we as a staff all eagerly look forward to expanding the offerings at the center.

Q: What role do you think Martin Luther Church plays in the future of the daycare?



Katina Haselsteiner

A: I love the relationship between the Daycare and the church. It's wonderful to see the Church support the Daycare through its various projects. The advice the Church offers through Pastor Christian and Marlena has been invaluable to me throughout my transition into

my role, and it has been lovely to be welcomed into the Martin Luther family from the various church members that I have met during my time here. I foresee the relationship that has developed between Daycare and Church will continue to remain grounded in friendship, respect and compassion.

Senior's Group



The Käthe Kollwitz Exhibit at the AGO and tour of the new playground

Groups and Contacts

Altar Flowers

Sign up on the list in the church entrance. Arrange to have flowers delivered or drop them off before the services on Sunday. You can also donate to the flower fund. Please notify the church office of your plans. You and the person(s) you are donating for will be included in the church announcements.

Contact: Church office, Tel: 416-251-8293, churchoffice@martinluther.ca

Bible Study Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7:30 pm

Next meeting: December 4

Contact: Pastor Ceconi, pastor@martinluther.ca

Choir

Practice every Tuesday at 6 pm for First of Advent and Christmas Eve.

Choir Director: Linda Marcinkus, Tel: 416-255-2612, choir@martinluther.ca

Family Camp Sunday Team Once a month

Contact: David Sykes, dsyskesis@hotmail.com

Senior's Group

2nd Wednesday of the month at 11 am at church.

Next meeting: December 12

Contact: seniorsgroup@martinluther.ca

Summer Camp Planning Team

Next meeting: TBD

Contact: Anna Lisa Wienecke, Tel: 905-939-7494

Sunday School Team

Sunday School every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month (not in summer).

Next meeting: TBD

Contact: sundayschool@martinluther.ca

Website Team

Next meeting: TBD

Contact: Marlena Muller, churchoffice@martinluther.ca

Youth Group

Next Meeting: Confirmands' Weekends

Confirmation Classes

Classes: January 26–27

Contact: Pastor Christian Ceconi,
Cell: 416-567-2487, pastor@martinluther.ca

Martin Luther Daycare Office

Contact: Katina Haselsteiner (Manager) and Teresa Kurek (Supervisor), Tel: 416-259-2861, daycareoffice@bellnet.ca

Martin Luther Daycare Board

Contact: Cam Watson

Visiting Ministry Team

Next Meeting: TBD

Contact: Gisela Wilhelm, Tel: 416-763-3789

Outreach Team

Next Meeting: January 16

Contact: Prerit Gomes

Refugee Support Team

Usually 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm

Next Meeting: January 24

Contact: Greg and Anneli Andre-Barrett,
refugeesupport@martinluther.ca

Church Coffee Team

Contact: coffeeduty@martinluther.ca

Altar Guild

Contact: Annette Rowles & Patricia Mills via the church office, Tel: 416-251-8293, churchoffice@martinluther.ca

Translation Team

Contact: Church office, Tel: 416-251-8293,
churchoffice@martinluther.ca

Drum Circle Wednesdays at 10 am

Contact: Iris Schweiger, iris.g.schweiger@gmail.com

Community Partners

Wesley Mimico United Church Community lunch 12–1 pm every Saturday and **Food Bank** 11–1 pm (except for the last Saturday of the month).

Contact: Kim, Tel: 647-677-5628

Stonegate Ministry & Great Finds

Offering quality gently-used items.

Store hours: M–Th: 9:30 am–5:30 pm; Fri: 9:30 am–6 pm

Contact: Carol-Anne, Tel: 416-255-6282,
2358 Lakeshore Blvd. West Toronto M8V 1C3

Delmanor Prince Edward Retirement Home

Services by Pastor Ceconi with Holy Communion

the third Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am at
4180 Dundas St W, Etobicoke

Next Services: December 19 & January 16

Lakeshore Lodge Long-Term Care Services usually on the third Sunday every other month at 2 pm,
3197 Lake Shore Blvd West, Toronto

Next Service: December 16

Moll Berczy Haus Senior's Home German services the second Tuesday of the month, and the last Wednesday of the month at 10 am, 1020 McNicoll Ave, Scarborough

Next Service: January 8

We're Here For You

Pastor Christian Ceconi

Cell: 416-567-2487, Email: pastor@martinluther.ca

Office Hours and Visits: by appointment. Please call or send a short email.

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German Radio Devotion Sundays 9:30 am on AM 530

Worship Service Plan

Dec. 2, 2018	First Sunday of Advent		11:00 am Joint Service with the Church Choir 11:00 am–12:30 pm Christmas Play Rehearsal 12:00–4:00 pm Christmas Bazaar 2:00 pm Refugee Fundraising Concert with the Welsh Choir	Pastor Ceconi and Vicar Steinebach
Dec. 9, 2018	Second Sunday of Advent		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service with Farewell to Margarete and Peter Kaufmann-Buehler Both with Holy Communion 11:00 am–12:30 pm Christmas Play Rehearsal	Pastor Ceconi and Vicar Steinebach
Dec. 16, 2018	Third Sunday of Advent		11:00 am Joint Service with Christmas Play 2:00 pm Service at Lakeshore Lodge	Pastor Ceconi
Dec. 19, 2018			10:30 am Service with Holy Communion at Delmanor Prince Edward Senior's Home	Pastor Ceconi
Dec. 23, 2018	Fourth Sunday of Advent		11:00 am German Service 7:00 pm Candlelight Service with Christmas Tree Decorating	Pastor Ceconi Vicar Steinebach and Youth
Dec. 24, 2018	Christmas Eve		4:30 pm German Service 6:00 pm English Service —Both with Church Choir	Pastor Ceconi
Dec. 25, 2018	Christmas Day		11:00 am German Service with Holy Communion	Pastor Ceconi
Dec. 30, 2018	First Sunday of Christmas		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi
Dec. 31, 2018	New Year's Eve		5:00 pm Joint New Year's Eve Service	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 1, 2019	New Year's Day		5:00 pm Joint Jazz Service with Farewell for Intern Ann-Christin	Vicar Steinebach
Jan. 6, 2019	Epiphany		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 8, 2019			10:00 am German Service at Moll Berczy Haus Senior's Home in Scarborough	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 13, 2019	Baptism of our Lord		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service Both with Holy Communion	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 16, 2019			10:30 am Service with Holy Communion at Delmanor Prince Edward Senior's Home	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 20, 2019	Second Sunday after Epiphany Family Camp Sunday		11:00 am Joint Service followed by lunch	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 27, 2019	Third Sunday after Epiphany		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Vicar Steinebach
Feb. 3, 2019	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany Pulpit Exchange		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Peter Lisinski (Thornhill Lutheran Church)

A library of Pastor Ceconi's German Radio Devotions is also available online at martinluther.ca



Sundays with the Sunday School symbol have Sunday School take place at the same time as the worship. The children meet in the Church and have their own program after Children's Time.

Christmas Play rehearsals take place instead of Sunday School at 11:00 am November 25–December 9.