



Martin Luther  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church

Inside:

65  
years of  
Martin Luther  
Church

Hello and  
Farewell

Coming up in  
Advent

Office 416 251 8293  
churchoffice@martinluther.ca  
2379 Lake Shore Blvd West  
Toronto, Ontario M8V 1B7  
www.martinluther.ca

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

# Merry Christmas!

December 2020

## May God bless you and your loved ones!

It is the middle of November. I am sitting here in the Junction writing this devotion for our Christmas newsletter. Outside the window the rain is falling so heavily that the whole world is turned blurry and grey. Not what you'd call a Christmassy atmosphere. Then again, what is a Christmassy atmosphere? For most of us it probably includes mulled wine, hot cocoa, candlelight, the smell of Christmas trees and turkeys, being with loved ones, listening to Christmas music, going to the Christmas market and to church. I, too, love it and am craving for a Christmas where I can have all of these things.

Yet when we read the accounts of Jesus' birth in the Gospels, that's not at all what the first Christmas was like. Hearing especially Luke 2 on Christmas Eve gives me a warm and fuzzy feeling every time. So much so that I don't even think about how things must have been for Mary and Joseph. The Christmas story is not about a couple going on an idyllic journey. It's a story of displacement, teenage pregnancy, people seeking refuge. A story of loneliness, fear and discomfort. A story of a first-time mother giving birth in a stable without the comfort and help of a mother, grandmother, aunt or older sister. And yes, it is also a story of hope, love, faith and trust. As much as I wish that we could all have a Christmassy Christmas, I wonder if the discomfort of Christmas 2020 will enable us to see the story of Jesus' birth with new eyes and maybe even on a deeper level. And that doesn't mean I'll brush away how hard this Christmas will be for many of us. For the past three years I've spent Christmas and New Years mostly on my own or rather: mostly without my family. While I was still in Germany my parents drove three hours or more to spend some time on Boxing Day or Christmas Day with me. And there were always people who invited me to spend time with them. Something I'm incredibly grateful for. And yet, I also felt so lonely and homesick, to the point where I began to dread Christmas after the first year on my own. So, I know the fears and worries of so many people when they look ahead at Christmas 2020. All those feelings are valid!

Yet I think it is important to start thinking now about how this can be a good Christmas for us. To make plans that are beneficial for our mental health, while also trying to sit in the discomfort of this Christmas and take the time to reflect upon what Christmas is about: That God loves us so much that he came to Earth as a baby boy in the Middle East. The promise that God is with us every moment of our lives. The trust that God knows us and knows how we are doing, even when we can't put it into words. And as hard and difficult as this Christmas season will be for a lot of us: This is not the end. Things won't stay like this forever. We will have other Christmases again where we can have services where every seat is filled; where we can meet our loved ones and do all the things that make this season special.



Yours,

Vicar Silke Fahl

# Hello!

## Welcome Pastor Hille



A few days ago I counted the years that I've been involved with Martin Luther Church. It's been more than 18 years. I gave my first sermon at the 2002 New Year's service. I was visiting Pastor Wolf. I arrived the day after Christmas. As we were planning out my time in Toronto and the surrounding area, it turned out that it was getting a little tight for Pastor

Wolf, because he still had two services to prepare for the New Year. Spontaneously I said: "It's really easy. You do one, I take over the other for you." No sooner said than done. We both sat in his study preparing the sermon for the turn of the year, and we had gained time for each other. That was the beginning.

In the meantime I have "gained a lot of time" to help in the MLC with church services and funerals, visits to sick people and the elderly at home, in hospitals and seniors homes. It was a very meaningful time for me. The contact with people in a Christian congregation has always been the most important focus of my pastoral work for me, and has been for 45 years now. I would

like to continue this as an interim pastor. I look forward to shared worship and to meeting you on different occasions. I am happy to be available for conversations, be it in church, at home, in the hospital or in the nursing home and even if COVID-19 forces us to do all of this on the phone.

So I'm looking forward to this time with you, not just on Lakeshore but wherever we may meet!

Best Regards,

Pastor Hille

## Confirmation 2020

Marlen Endruweit, Alex Boettcher, Erik Herrmann and Alba Klemenz were confirmed at Martin Luther Church on October 18.



Congratulations to all of our brand new confirmands!

## Farewell!

### Dear Vicar Silke,

Initially, you signed up to be part of a 12 months experimental international ecumenical internship team of four at Martin Luther and Redeemer Lutheran Church. The underlined words in italics alone show that this was not a commitment for the faint of heart. Then, when it became known that Pastor Christian would leave for good in March, you signed up once again to step into unknown territory as lead minister at our church. This could have and should have been enough, yet COVID-19 added a whole new level to the word experimental. We, the people of the Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church, are grateful beyond measure to your commitment to us as individuals and community. May God bless you in your future ministry and may you find happiness in knowing our prayers are with you and our doors are open for you when it will be once again safe to visit.



Inspiration in Pandemic Times: Younes refugee family welcomed to Canada

## Pastoral Search Update

All interested candidates had to apply by October 15, 2020. We have learned that we received many applications. According to EKD regulations and scheduling, the first round of interviews with EKD officials was supposed to be conducted in person in November but with the current lockdown in Germany, those interviews had to be postponed until January of next year.

Martin Luther Church will be hosting the second round of interviews online. Three pastor candidates will have lead worship for our congregation and a Q&A will follow. Please save the dates: February 21 and 28, as well as March 7, 2021. Our Pastoral Search Committee will recommend a candidate to church council. If they are in agreement, church members will vote yes or no to this candidate.

After that we will start with our voting process. According to ELCIC regulations, the voting has to happen by mail ballots. Further instructions will be mailed to you then. All our members have the right to vote, so please ensure that MLC has your correct mailing address.

## Masken

### Martin Luther Masks

Please let us know if you'd be interested in MLC logo masks and grocery bags. We would like to order these as a fundraiser.

### Masks for Halloween



## Angels

### Prayers and Angel Ornaments by Mail

During this season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We are sending these ornaments to bridge the distance between us all this year. Please write out your prayer for the year to come on one of the angel ornaments and mail it back to the Church today in the enclosed envelope. It will be hung on the Christmas tree in the sanctuary and the prayer shared during the Christmas Eve service. Keep the other, which has a prayer for you.

### Why it's important that you reply to us via mail

Mail gives us the best chance to reach as many church members as possible. Not everyone has access to the Internet. Since the vote for a new pastor next year will likely need to be by mail in ballot, not in-person, we'd like to practice the mail in process with these ornaments. We hope to reach a quorum with your mailed responses.



**Thank you  
Family Schmidt  
and Schwab  
for your  
donation to the  
Martin Luther  
Evangelical  
Church  
Toronto  
Mission Fund.**

**In memory of  
John and Anna  
Schmidt (nee  
Susnak)**

**1926 - 2016  
1925 - 2019**

# Advent Calender

In accordance with the recommendation from public health and our Bishop's office, our church services are online only (no longer in-person) on our YouTube channel until further notice. The Church Council will re-evaluate as more information becomes available. The church will continue to look after all members and friends. Please contact the church office with your needs.

# 29

## 1. Advent

*With Vicar Fahl on YouTube*

The 65th anniversary of the Martin Luther Church on November 27 will be celebrated during the online service at 11am on November 29.



## 2. Advent

*With Vicar McComb on YouTube*

Join us for the Service live at 11am followed by the coffee hour on Zoom, or find the recording on our website.

# 6

# 13

## 3. Advent

*With Vicar Fahl on YouTube*

Join us for the Service live at 11am followed by the coffee hour on Zoom, or find the recording on our website.

## Dinner Church

*Together on Zoom*

On Wednesday December 16 at 7pm, we will come together over Zoom once again to worship, sing, and catch up with each other over dinner.

# 16

# 20

## 4. Advent

*With Vicar Fahl on YouTube*

We will say goodbye to Vicar Silke on the 4th of Advent, December 20. She will preside at her last service in German at 11:00 am. Her farewell blessing is planned to take place during the in-person outdoor candlelight service at 7:00 pm.

## Christmas Eve

We are all in agreement that normal Christmas worship services on December 24 will not be safe nor wise.

# 24

If it is allowed to gather in-person, we are hoping to open the church for an extended period of time for people to drop in for an hourly devotion, 2-9 pm. This would give people the opportunity to pray in church or talk to a minister present. To keep with tradition and have some certainty about Christmas despite COVID, we will also celebrate worship on YouTube in German at 4:30 pm and in English at 6:00 pm. Each service will be followed by a Zoom call to wish each other a blessed Christmas.

## Christmas

# 25

We wish all of you a very safe, happy, and merry Christmas!

