



Martin Luther
Evangelical
Lutheran
Church

**Inside:
Refugee
Support
Update**

**Christmas
& Advent
Services**

**Confirmation
weekends**

**Welcoming new
leaders &
volunteers**

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

Merry Christmas!

December 2021 - Congregational Newsletter

The joy of giving

Joy - for me this feeling is somehow part of Advent like candlelight and cookies, spending cozy hours with family, preparing and decorating your home for thoughtful and happy moments.

After two years, during which last Christmas season was fraught with social distancing and restrictions, many people are longing for a normalcy. We in the Martin Luther congregation are also carefully and hopefully planning services and events for the next few weeks. And yet we have to be prepared for the fact that these plans may have to be changed again. Looking forward to what is coming without knowing what it will exactly be - this is a challenge!

I therefore find the verse of the month for December from the book of the prophet Zechariah very comforting: Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For lo, I will come and dwell in your midst, says the LORD. (Zechariah 2:10)

Although the prophet himself has gone through difficult times, he does not look back. He does not bury himself in resentment, bitterness and complaining. He reminds me of what Advent is about: Jesus' arrival into the world and into our hearts. God wants to live with us and that is cause for joy! He will come regardless of the circumstances - whether we can meet in church or online in our living rooms. I can trustingly wait and prepare for this - in prayer, in silence, in community with others, while making music or baking. In doing so, I can experience what it personally means to me when God comes to me and lives with me? How can hope for it change my life? Last year the Martin Luther Church answered these questions with the Bowls and Blessings project for people from



our neighborhood, which will take place again in the next few weeks. I'm curious what else we can think of! The conscious waiting for God and the readiness to meet him in our everyday life, that is God's gift for us during Advent. I wish for all of us, especially this year, the joy of receiving something and thereby being inspired to help others.



A. Klappert
Pastor Annika Klappert

Don't miss the Christmas Bazaar!

The Online Christmas Bazaar will be open for browsing and online orders for 5 days only! The website <https://www.mlcbaazar.ca> opens on Monday December 6 and closes at midnight on December 10. Quantities are limited so fill your online baskets with great handmade gifts and home-baked treats. Purchases will be ready to pick up on Sunday December 12, 2021 after the 11:00 am service. **It is not too late to show off your talent and volunteer!** Contact Leanne at bazaar@martinluther.ca and send a description and photos of what you can offer by Friday December 3, or sign up to assist with the collection and distribution of the products for the bazaar. Thank you to all those who have already signed up to contribute, we couldn't do it without you!

Using our God-given gifts...

Celebrating Annika Klappert's Installation



The Service took place on October 17, 2021 led by Pastor David Tin (Dean of the Central Toronto ministry area, ELCIC) with special guest Pastor

Marcus Garras (Oberkirchenrat from the EKD in Germany). We are grateful also to Pastor Katharina Moeller from St. George's Lutheran and Vicar McComb, and for the musical talents of Linda Marcinkus, Tanya Zielke, and Sylvia Kunde.

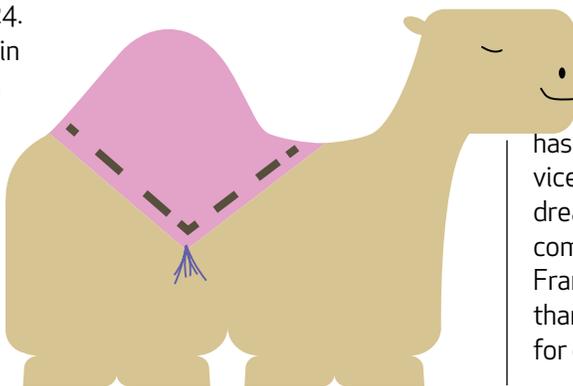
Welcome Emma, our new Bowls and Blessings coordinator!

Hiya! My name is Emma. I'm a small town British girl, newbie to the big city. I lived in Bordeaux France previously. I'm a mother, a wife, a writer, and an advocate for pancreatic cancer and endometriosis. My life motto is to make a difference wherever I can and also to create positivity spanning out around me. This summer on my usual daily walk, music blaring from my headphones, a skip in my step and in a world of my own, the revealing of the pantry outside the church sparked my interest. I thought this was a great idea for the community and proves to be so. I signed up to help with a park clean-up, which was very successful. Then I signed up to help with "Bowls and Blessings" and again I see the positive impact this has on our community. I love being able to help, chat and connect with those in our community. I have met so many lovely souls through the church. I love that there is such an amazing sense of community. I found somewhere I belong.

Please pop by between 12 and 1pm Mondays and Fridays for our delicious soup, or just for a chat. **Interested in volunteering?** Please contact me at volunteer@martinluther.ca. Hours volunteered can count towards community service hours for those in high school. We hope to serve soup every day from December 1-24.

The Food Pantry in front of the church continues to be open for the community. There are also plans for a little library.

-Emma



Martin Luther Church Building Project

The Project to make our Church building more accessible and flexible is back after an 18-month hiatus! Dan Sommerfeld, Cam Watson, and Sonja Schweiger are joined by Pastor Annika Klappert and Kristine Stuef on the steering committee, and Larkin Architects remain on board. A new Altar Art committee is to lead the art procurement process. Thanks to a generous donation, the project is on its way to being well funded, but contributions remain welcome! **To learn more or join the Altar Art Committee, e-mail buildingproject@martinluther.ca.**

My first confirmation weekend

When I think of my first confirmation class, I think of community! I am thrilled how Annika and Adam have included us Confis in activities, conversations and thoughts and we have grown together into a group! Saturday and Sunday October 30/31 were packed with unforgettable activities: The worship service was at the center of our time together. We were all assigned roles, were able to ask questions and practice! I was happy about the valuable conversations I was able to have about faith and the church. I gained a deep understanding that continues to accompany me and makes me happy! Cooking together, the traditional trip to the ice cream shop, the campfire, singing together - it was so successful all round that I can hardly wait until the next Confirmation weekend! Many thanks to everyone who helped to shape and organize the weekend! It was just great!

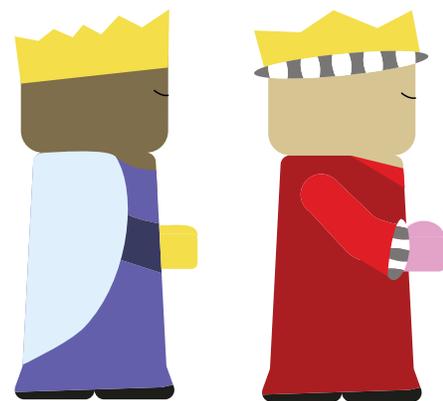


-Your Frederica

Church Council Updates

Council Retreat took place on November 6 and the Annual General Meeting took place on November 7. Continuing in

their roles are Iris Schweiger as president and Martin Haeefe as treasurer. Kai Herrmann has taken over the role of vice-president from Andrea Dannecker. We welcome Mona Kakoschke-Frantzke to Council and thank Dan Sommerfeld for completing his term.



... to share with others!

Services at Seniors' Homes

Moll Berzy Haus celebrated 25 years in November! Pastor Klappert will start monthly German services there again in December. She also started services again at Delmanor Prince Edward Seniors Home in October and led the annual Remembrance Day service in November. We are working with Heather Medhurst, the coordinator of Spiritual & Religious Care at Lakeshore Lodge Long-Term Care Home to provide pastoral care there soon, too. **Heather will be the guest speaker at Dinner Church on Thursday December 2 at 7 pm.**

Refugee Support Team Update

We in the Refugee Support Team are happy to update the congregation on the many successes of the refugee families whom we have been assisting (a total of five families!).

Congratulations to Mary Rosto, Ritta Resto and family!

Both Mary Rosto and Ritta Resto, her cousin, have graduated from community college. Several members of their two families have become Canadian citizens. Mary is successfully employed as a Customer Experience Associate at the Toronto Dominion Bank. We congratulate Mary Rosto and Victor Tamras on the occasion of their wedding on November 12!

A new home for the Barsoum family

After arriving in Canada in August 2020, Ritta Nissan's parents Lahdo and Nayl and brother Fadi Barsoum have moved into their own apartment near their daughter's family.

The Younes Family's Progress

The six-member Younes family celebrated their one-year anniversary in Canada on October 28. Ibrahim, the father, is teaching Arabic to children online and hopes to get a job very soon. He has gotten his Driver's License and bought a car. His wife Deena is enrolled at Sheridan College in the Early Childhood Education program. Their oldest son is attending Guelph University in microbiology, and Omar is in Grade 12 and will be going to university next year. The two younger ones are loving school and are already very fluent in English. They are all extremely grateful to be in Canada.



The Kifles are here!

At long last, the Kifle family of six arrived safely in Canada on November 18 from conflict-torn Ethiopia. Although they will now be settling in Kitchener-Waterloo near their brother Tewelde, the joint Refugee Support Teams of Martin Luther Church and Christ Church St. James Anglican will continue to provide settlement and financial assistance as

we are able. We are also delighted with the promise of local assistance and liaison from Pastor Heike Toeller, St. Luke's Evangelical Church in Kitchener. The family continues to be grateful for the significant funds generated by Martin Luther Church back in 2019. These funds have been held for them, and the family will be relying on them during this first year in Canada.



Refugee Applications in Progress

Along with Canadian Lutheran World Relief, we are also helping the following private sponsors prepare and submit refugee applications for their relatives. We are not responsible for providing twelve-month financial support to them, however, when they arrive we look forward to providing non-financial practical resettlement support (with education and ESL, clothing and furniture donations, finding work, etc).

Luwam Kiflom Gebremichael

Eritrean refugee now in Ethiopia. Sponsors are Million Tesfay and Hanna Tesfay. The application has been approved.

Gebrekidan family of five

Eritrean refugees now in Sudan. The Sponsor is Melat Beyene. The application is in progress.

Harmoush family of four

Syrian refugees now in Kuwait. Sponsors are Riyadh Younis and Ibrahim Younes. The application is in progress.

We are grateful for the continued generous practical and financial support of our congregation with all of the above families!

- Anneli and Greg Andre-Barrett on behalf of the MLC Refugee Support Team



December Service Calendar



COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS AND POLICY

You are welcome to attend services when you feel healthy, and comfortable to worship in-person. Please wear a mask, maintain physical distance, and bring your vaccine passport. To learn more about our new vaccine policy, please visit our website. Registration is not required for most services (see details below), but appreciated. Please call the office or register online on Eventbrite via our website. Sermons can also be viewed on YouTube via our website after each service.

German Radio Devotions

Listen to a German devotion at 9:30 am every Sundays on CHLO Radio AM 530 or anytime through our website.

Thurs. Dec 2 **Advent** **Celebration**

11:00 am German Devotion on Zoom together with St. George's, First, Thornhill and Epiphany Churches.

Dinner Church **by the Lake**

7:00 pm with speaker Heather Medhurst, Coordinator Spiritual and Religious Care, Lakeshore Lodge

Sun. Dec 5 **2nd Sunday of** **Advent**

11:00 am Worship Service in German with Holy Communion and our Church Choir

Sat. Dec 11 **Service with** **Holy Baptism**

9:30 am English Service with Holy Baptism

Sun. Dec 12 **3rd Sunday of** **Advent**

11:00 am In-Person Worship Service in English and German with our Impromptu Christmas Play
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Sun. Dec 19 **4th Sunday of** **Advent**

7:00 pm Candlelight Service in English

Fri. Dec 24 **Christmas Eve**

Worship Services In-Person & Livestreamed on YouTube at 4:30 pm in German with our Church Choir and at 6:30 pm in English
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Sat. Dec 25 **Christmas Day**

11:00 am In-Person Worship Service in English and German

Sun. Dec 26 **First Sunday of** **Christmas**

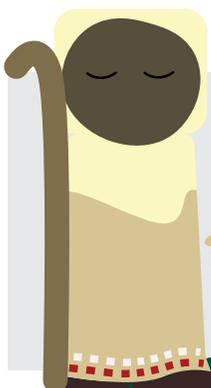
English Devotion on our website, no in-person service

Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir Concert

Save the date for our Fundraising Concert with the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir next year, on Sunday December 4 2022!

Bible Study

Online Bible Study will be starting again on January 17 2022 at 7:30 pm. Reading the Bible and talking about the experiences we make in our faith is a key component to Christian fellowship. After exploring a passage of the scripture together we will decide in which form and structure we want to continue as a group. Please register via our office, then we'll send you the Zoom link.



Impromptu Christmas Play Invite

All are welcome to this year's Impromptu Christmas Play on the 3rd Advent Sunday, December 12, 2021 at 11am. Prepared by our confirmands with many participatory elements for everyone, including angels, sheep, shepherds and the three wise men. Following the play there will be caroling outside the church! Register here: <https://mlcchristmasplay2021.eventbrite.ca>