



Martin Luther
**Evangelical
Lutheran
Church**

Inside:
**President's
Farewell
Treasurers's
update**
**World
Day of
Prayer**
**Help
wanted**

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

Winter warmth at church

February 2023 - Congregational Newsletter

Who laughs with God laughs best

Dear congregation!

The season of Lent is about to start. It invites us to reflect on the suffering and death of Jesus. The big question here is: How can our faith help us to cope with mortality and the brokenness of our lives?

Humor! Could be the answer, at least if we follow the bible motto for February from the first book of Moses: "God made me laugh".

Sarah's son Isaac has just been born. She's laughing here because she's a little embarrassed to be an old woman showing off her baby. But she is overjoyed and will overlook all of the talk because God surprised her.

About ten months before, she had laughed for the first time. That's when Abraham and Sarah had a visit from God's messengers who predicted a pregnancy to them, the ancient couple! Sarah had laughed then too, still in disbelief and perhaps a little bitter after all the disappointed expectations of pregnancy. But then indeed - she becomes pregnant and has Isaac! Now she laughs with all her heart, proud and overjoyed.

Perhaps only a few of us have had such existential experiences with God. And unfortunately, this story is not a blueprint for all women struggling with infertility today. No matter how firm our faith and prayers, the dream of becoming a mother remains unfulfilled for some of us. Nevertheless, Sarah's story can remind us that God is not limited by our human ideas of life. And those who are ready to be surprised by him can experience that nothing is impossible for him. When we can laugh with our heart and tell others about it, too that is a blessing for as a community of believers! When was the last time God made you laugh? Feel free to send us your story to office@martinluther.ca and we will share it on our social media! I hope we can experience together in the coming time how God surprises us and puts a smile on our face!

Pastor Annika Klappert



PASSAGE OF THE MONTH

**But Sara said
"God made
me laugh"**

Genesis 21,6



Messages & updates

President's farewell

Dear congregation,

In the Gospel of Matthew (7:8) it says: For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

As my tenure as President of the Martin Luther Church comes to an end, I reflect on the many years of responsibility. Many Bible verses have accompanied me on this path. But none as much as the one above. Very little happens in the church without asking, without searching, without knocking. In the office of President, it means boldly moving forward. I asked for prayers, for money, for support, for volunteers, for patience, for love, for time... The list of requests in public announcements, in the church newsletter, on the website and in personal conversation is long.

Then you had to keep looking. Three times during my time on the council I was directly involved in the search for a pastor. After a candidate was found and chosen, the search for the right path to change began. Every pastor brought new talents and ideas. The search led to trial and adaptation. Throughout, it was important to keep an eye on the whole congregation. Because what used to be could not be found again and yet we had to go on.

Knocking also filled many hours and days of my work in the Martin Luther congregation. That meant knocking directly on front doors to pay visits. That also meant knocking on the door of foundations, sponsors, our government and synod so that the ledger of the congregation remained in the green and the set budget could be adhered to. This has required a lot of strength and courage to knock everywhere, especially in the last six months, because we, the Martin Luther congregation, want to live. We have so much to give and would like to be the Lutherans by the Lake for many more years to come. The Lutherans who worship, serve and inspire.

And no matter how difficult and impossible the respective problems of the time felt, always and really always, I was able to witness receiving, finding and opening. Most importantly, it is a pleasure to finally see the church doors wide open again after this long COVID period, and to see you streaming in. I am grateful for the outpouring of support in the recent financial crisis. Thank you for bringing, sending and signing up for regular donations.

Thank you very much for your kind support, for the many prayers and encouragement. And lastly, I ask forgiveness for those I have wronged, just as I have forgiven. Wishing you God's rich blessings in the new year.

- Iris Schweiger, President

Treasurers' update

In the last three months of 2022 we received almost \$150,000 in unrestricted income, which includes donations and rent. This is 53% of the total for the whole year and gave us a surplus in budgeted household accounts. Our cashflow for the year was still about negative \$16,000, but that was mainly due to the about \$28,000 that was paid out from the building fund for our renovation project.

Thank you very much for this amazing increase of your financial donations as a response to my letter to the congregation in October 2022, whether you donated \$5 or several thousand. I would like to give a very special thanks to congregational members who started or increased their monthly donations through pre-authorized remittance (PAR).

We set up the option to make monthly donations through PAR a few years ago and this is still the best way to make donations to support everything we do in our church and the new treasurer, because it can give us financial stability throughout the year and forgo the huge efforts made last year

to avoid a large deficit.

Thank God we have a lot of generous donors!

Kind regards,

- Martin Haefele, Treasurer

Student Iris Mak's shares her findings

A big part of my learning last term was to be curious and explore the "why" of my faith traditions. For my paper, I explored the use of the lectionary in worship and discussed why we should continue this tradition, with modification to today's context. Coincided with the development of the church calendar, the reading of prescribed sets of scriptures traced back to the early church when specific passages were selected to set aside for celebration of important church festivals or commemoration of saints. Since the lectionary passages follow the life of Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church, the repeated cycle of key events and narratives guides and frames us as we live our Christian lives. The use of a common set of readings among churches (for many Lutheran churches, we use the Revised Common Lectionary) also build unity and corporate identity as we share a common experience of the scripture. In today's post-Christendom context, the use of the lectionary is all the more important in giving believers a wider exposure to the Bible as one whole continuous story.

- Iris Mak, Theology Placement Student



Building Project update

On November 13th of last year a town hall was held to vote on a proposal by the Building Project Committee regarding how to proceed with the Building Project. The committee presented its progress and proposed that, in light of budget constraints, the available funds would be used to complete a revised scope: to renovate the back meeting room of the church into an accessible daycare room, and make the foyer space more usable for meetings, mission, and potential renters. The congregation voted in favour of proceeding to permit, tender and construction with this revised scope. Throughout January the committee has continued to work with the architect to revise drawings and complete engineering reviews to move forward. A progress update will be given at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Any further input or questions are appreciated. The e-mail project@martinluther.ca is an open line of communication.

What's happening?

Fun at Family Services

On January 15, the 2nd Sunday of Epiphany, we marked the first bilingual English-German Family Worship Service of 2023 at Martin Luther Church. The children had a great time with Pastor Klappert -assisted by theology student Iris Mak-leading the kids' activity with dedication and humour.

We hope to welcome more kids (and their parents) at our next Family Service on **February 12, 2023**. We also welcome any activity suggestions and volunteers from our congregation, friends and neighbours!



Documentary "From Then 'Til Now: Martin Luther Church"

Being fairly new to Toronto and even less familiar with the church, the newly baptized me had the idea to create a documentary, to not only show the history of the church and its contents, but to create a legacy for the people who made it what it is today and for those who are still doing God's work. Got a story to tell? An idea to share? Can you help with pre-production, production or post production? Please contact me, Emma Latham, through the church office.

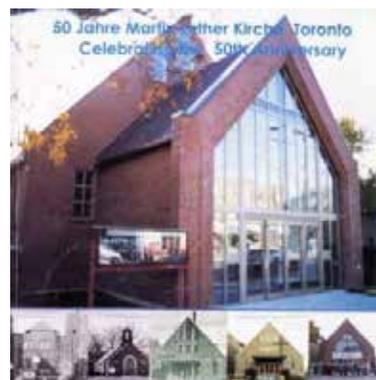
Our 50th Anniversary Book is now Online!

In 2006 our Church published a history book on the occasion of its 50th anniversary covering the years from 1955 to 2005. Now, this book is available to read online in both English and German!

To read the book online please visit our website

at: www.martinluther.ca >> [About Us](#) >> [Our History Book](#).

Happy reading!



Mission Fund Applications

The Mission Fund's goal is to support Mission work initiatives in the local Martin Luther Church community with specialty focus areas of children and youth, the disadvantaged requiring access to critical services and through support for programs designed to change and sustainably ameliorate the community. We also look for project proposals and initiatives that increase the vitality of the congregation per the Eastern Synod's guidance.

We invite you / your team to submit an application available from the church office for early consideration in 2023 after reviewing grant criteria. Annual requests are welcome. The submission deadline seeking funding for 2023, is March 31, 2023.

Grant Criteria

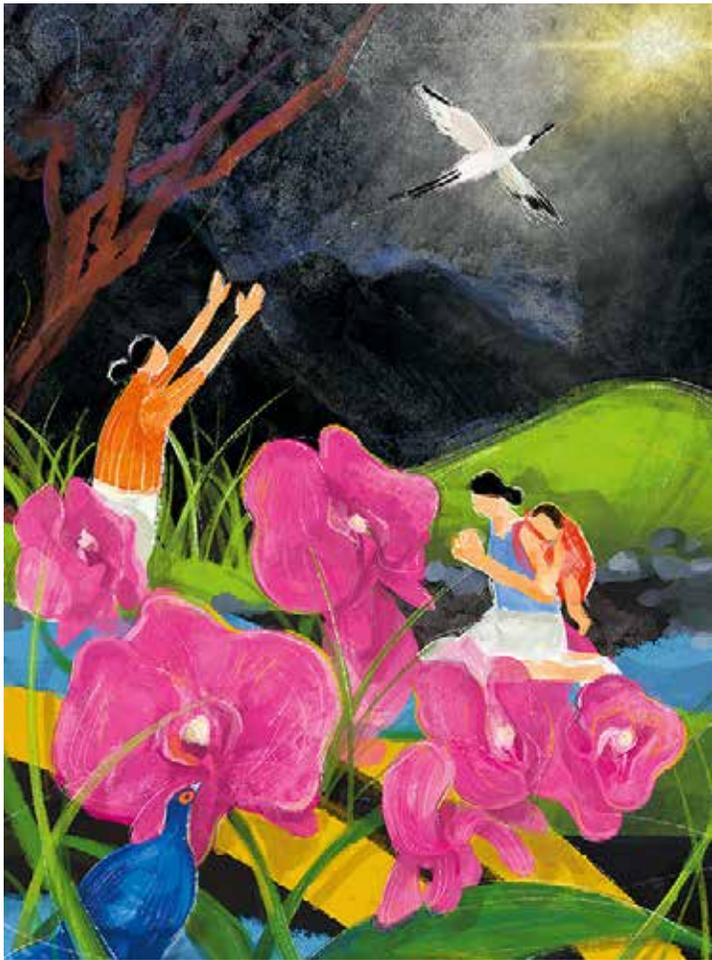
1. Seek to make a long term, sustainable difference in the community;
2. seek to address a challenge you are facing in your context in relation to the Church's mission
3. seek to develop relationships with others in local community and neighbourhood
4. encourage participation in God's mission in local community and neighbourhood

Thank you for your interest!

Discover the Bible: Exodus to Deuteronomy

We continue to meet on Thursday evenings on Zoom with the congregation members of Martin Luther Church in Ottawa. Just like us, they have German and English church members and a German pastor, so we can meet as a group and sometimes split into smaller German and English groups for discussion. Our next date is **Thursday February 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm!**

"I Have Heard About Your Faith"



The theme of the World Day of Prayer 2023 program is based on Ephesians 1:15-19, the letter sent by Paul to a faith community to express gratitude. Paul gave thanks to God for the Ephesians living out their love and faith, and prayed that they could see these three truths: the hope to which God has called the disciples, the riches of God's glorious inheritance among the saints, and the immeasurable greatness of God's power.

Worship service materials are written by the women of Taiwan as an invitation to active listening, which is the ground of our prayers. This year's World Day of Prayer artist is a young Taiwanese artist named Hui-Wen Hsaio.

We will celebrate the day with a German Service on **Tuesday, March 7 at 11:00 am** at our Martin Luther Church. Please contact the office if you are able to help with set up, serving during the reception or clean up.

Tech Team: Changes and a call to action

We thank all of those who have helped in the Tech Team over the years and all members, friends and relatives who have watched our videos and we actively encourage any prospective volunteers interested and willing to help out, to contact us.

If anyone would like a particular service --apart from important dates in our liturgical year (Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, German Thanksgiving, Reformation Sunday, All Saints Sunday, and Christmas Eve)-- filmed, i.e. baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc., they are asked to contact the Church Office at least a week in advance, and make a commensurate donation to the Church (suggested amount: \$150/event).

Easter Breakfast

Every Easter Sunrise service is followed with a magnificent breakfast in the church basement. We thank Dan Sommerfeld for many years of making sure we had a feast after the service or so many years! We are now looking for a new coordinator and volunteer cooks. If you are interested in coordinating or sharing your culinary talents on Easter morning, please contact the church office.

Brand new Church Band

We are looking for people who are passionate about worshipping in a band-setting to help make our church life more colourful. We can discuss different opportunities to perform. Our first meeting will be held on **Friday March 10 at 7 pm** at the church. Contact Pastor Annika if you are interested and would like to help coordinate.

Get involved with the Refugee Support Team

Please let the church know if you are interested in leading, or being a member of, the important Refugee Support Team. Over a year ago Anneli and Greg announced that they were stepping down from co-chairing this team, as, after five years of profoundly fulfilling volunteer work, the time had come for them to move on. They will happily mentor any new members and potential leaders who wish to "join the team."

Help needed on Church Council

Would you like to be involved in shaping the future of our Church? Are you curious about the inner workings of the Church Council? We would love to welcome you to the team!

Both Iris Schweiger and Martin Haefele will step down from their posts this year as they have fulfilled their six years of duty as per our Martin Luther Church constitution. We are once again aiming to fill our council with 12 members.

If you are interested in joining the council or would like more information, talk to anyone on council, contact the church office, or attend our Annual General Meeting on **February 26, 2023**.

Reflections

We celebrate...

Our **Christmas Play** and the **Christmas Bazaar** on Dec 4, 2022!



On December 18, 2022, **Emma Latham** was baptized at MLC during the candlelight service. We welcome her to the congregation and congratulate her!



Seniors Advent Celebration held on on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, December 11, 2022



Christmas Eve in our church for the first time since 2019!



Our special thanks to all who helped set up and trim the christmas tree this year, letting it shine all season long, and of course to Annette Rowles for festively decorating our sanctuary!



We mourn...

Manya Brunzema passed away on January 18, 2023 at the age of 58 years. A celebration of life took place at our church on February 4, 2023. We are so grateful for all of her gifts, talents, and contributions to church life, in particular the translation team. She will be greatly missed.



Upcoming services & events

On Sundays every other week until April, there will be one service in English at 9:45 am and one in German at 11:00 am, or one bilingual service at 11:00 am. We will plan the worship schedule for the rest of the year based on your feedback and our resources, both of available volunteers and our financial situation.

February 5, 2023, 5th Sunday of Epiphany

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

February 12, 2023, 6th Sunday of Epiphany

11:00 am English-German Family Service

February 19, 2023, Transfiguration of our Lord

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

February 26, 2023, 1st Sunday of Lent

11:00 am English-German Service with Holy Communion followed by our Annual General Meeting

March 5, 2023, 2nd Sunday of Lent

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

March 12, 2023, 3rd Sunday of Lent

11:00 am English-German Family Service

March 19, 2023, 4th Sunday of Lent

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

March 26, 2023, 5th Sunday of Lent

11:00 am English-German Service

April 2, 2023, Palm Sunday

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

April 6, 2023, Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm Dinner Church

April 7, 2023, Good Friday

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German
Both with our Church Choir

April 9, 2023, Easter

6:30 am Sunrise Service // 10:00 am English-German Family Service with our Church Choir

April 16, 2023, 2nd Sunday of Easter

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

April 23, 2023, 3rd Sunday of Easter

11:00 am English-German Service

April 30, 2023, 4th Sunday of Easter

9:45 am English // 11:00 am German

Save the Dates!

Annual General Meeting on February 26, 2023

2022 Reports will be available as of February 12, 2023. 2022 Contribution receipts will be distributed at the AGM and afterwards will be mailed to those who are unable to attend.

Dinner and Taize Service on March 1, 2023

A Lenten opportunity to gather for fellowship and prayer with our church friends in Mimico! The event will take place at Christ Church St. James Anglican, 194 Park Lawn Rd, from 6:00 -8:00 pm.

World Day of Prayer March 3 and 7 2023

March 3 English Service at 6:30 pm at St. Margaret's New Toronto Anglican Church, 156 Sixth St, Etobicoke and on **Tuesday, March 7 at 11:00 am** at Martin Luther Church.

1000 Islands boat trip

Come with us to the 1000 Islands and experience a boat trip in picturesque surroundings! On June 4 we are planning a day trip to Rockport together with the Martin Luther Church from Ottawa. You do not need your own car to participate. More information will follow. If you are interested, please contact the office at office@martinluther.ca. Registration deadline is April 11.

Family Camp at Camp Lutherlyn

Family Camp will take place from August 7-13 this year. Please save the date and sign up through the church office!