



Martin Luther  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church

**Inside:  
Building  
Project  
update**

**Let there be  
greening**

**Return of  
Tanya Zielke &  
Katja Brittain**

**Godspeed to  
Christine Coutourier**

**Service schedule  
September to  
Christmas Eve**

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)

# Being Grateful in All Things

Fall 2023 - Congregational Newsletter

## Relatable Faith!

Dear congregation!

"What is it that holds the world together at its core?" is what Goethe's Faust wished to discover in his famous monologue after much study and effort, and yet he found no satisfactory answer. What do you think?

Is it our thoughts, ideas or atoms with their electrons, protons, neutrons and quarks that span space and time for us? Or is it the network of data, of bits and bytes, which increasingly determines our everyday life?

With different "glasses" we look into the universe and it is difficult to find the answer.



"May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness - an abundance of grain and new wine." (Genesis 27,28) These words from the First Testament answers the question from the perspective of faith. Isaac thus blesses his son Jacob and officially makes him his heir. He wishes all kinds of good things. The dew of Heaven. And fat from the earth. And grain. And wine in abundance.

What a wonderful wish!

There is something joyful in the words of Isaac! Being full in body and soul! No bored shrugging of shoulders. But fullness of life, given by God and brought forth by man's cooperation. Sowing and ripening; growing and harvesting; pressing and fermenting. A healthy rhythm of work and rest, of receiving and giving, of everyday life and celebration. Of freedom and moderation. It derives from an open view of the world and trust in God at the same time. A joyful testimony of life and faith. This is what according to the Bible holds the world and us together: Relationship.

That is the wish Isaac has for the life of his son. He tells him: Be blessed in all relationships in your life! But not long after both will realize that such a blessing can be squandered. Where we live in relationships, we inevitably become guilty of each other, have different needs that collide. This has consequences - not only in Isaac's family and Jacob has a long way to go before he is finally reconciled with those who are close to him.

My wish, for all of us this Autumn, is this: May we reap something of what we have sown, feel connected with each other, even across great distances and - with God's help - find ways of reconciliation after a quarrel or an injury. And that in all our efforts as his Church on the Lakeshore, we may feel the dew of Heaven falling, refreshing and invigorating us, entirely without our doing.

Amen.

Pastor Annika Klappert

# Messages & updates

## Message from the Co-Vice President

Dear Congregation,

I hope you have been enjoying these Summer months! After my graduation this June from Trent University, I am certainly grateful for a chance to slow down from the fast pace of academic life. What have you been grateful for this summer?

To begin, I would like to give a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who responded to our Summer Donation Drive! Your contributions provide fuel for our church programs, so we in turn can serve you to the best of our ability.

We also say farewell to Christine Couturier, who is moving back to the United States. We sincerely thank you, Christine, for your time spent with us, your generous financial contributions (most recently in memory of Ollie Gilker), and of course your lovely vocal talents. You will be missed in our congregation, but we wish you health, happiness, and the joy of spending more time with family. Godspeed!

This newsletter is jam-packed with information, including stories from two of our amazing lay preachers on their worldwide travels, updates from the EKD and ELCIC conferences, an introduction to our new intern, and reports from various sectors of our church such as the renovation project, financial task force, and altar art committee. Please also note that Council will be on a retreat from Friday September 15 to Sunday September 17, 2023, so Katja Brittain will preside over the services for that Sunday.

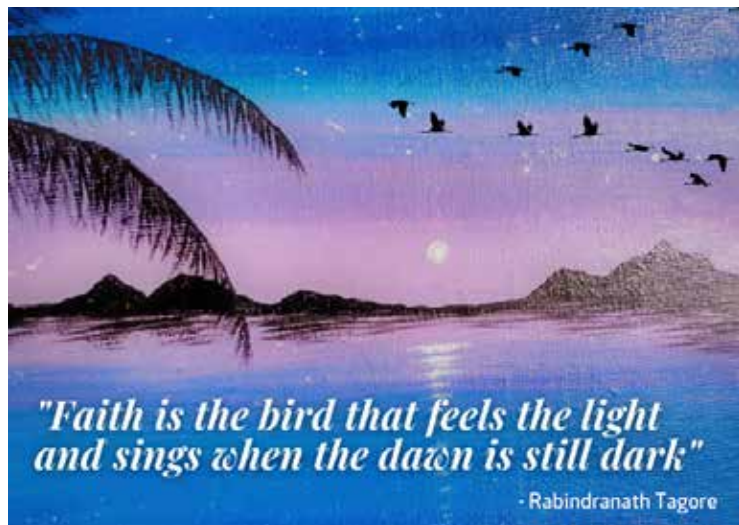
I'll leave you with a beautiful quote and picture (which I painted recently), and wish you all the best for the upcoming fall season!

If there is anything you need from Council, please feel free to reach out.

Happy reading!

- Jocelyn Sommerfeld

Co-Vice-President of Martin Luther Church  
vicepresident@martinluther.ca



## Intern Jessica Glasner (Sep 3-30th 2023)



Hi everyone!

My name is Jessica Glasner, I am 22 years old, and I come from the historic town of Rottweil in Baden-Württemberg. Currently, I am studying Theology in Heidelberg, in my sixth semester, but I spent my first four semesters in Tübingen. There I completed my first pastoral internship, which is a mandatory part of our education, at the Airport Chaplaincy in Stuttgart. However, as it was during the time of the pandemic and was a special pastoral position, I didn't gain insights into the "regular" congregational work of a pastor. Therefore, I then researched on the EKD website and came across your church community.

During my childhood, I loved attending the Children's Church and the Children's Choir of our church. Later, after confirmation, I also led the Children's Church for a while. Unfortunately, currently, we don't have as many volunteers and staff who would be willing to do that, so it's not offered anymore. That's why I am even more delighted that there are committed congregations like Martin-Luther-Church, that I can learn from for my upcoming work.

I am looking forward to all the upcoming challenges, experiencing a different culture, the so called "Punkteparty" that I get to organize, and – of course – all the encounters during the four weeks that I am allowed to be here!

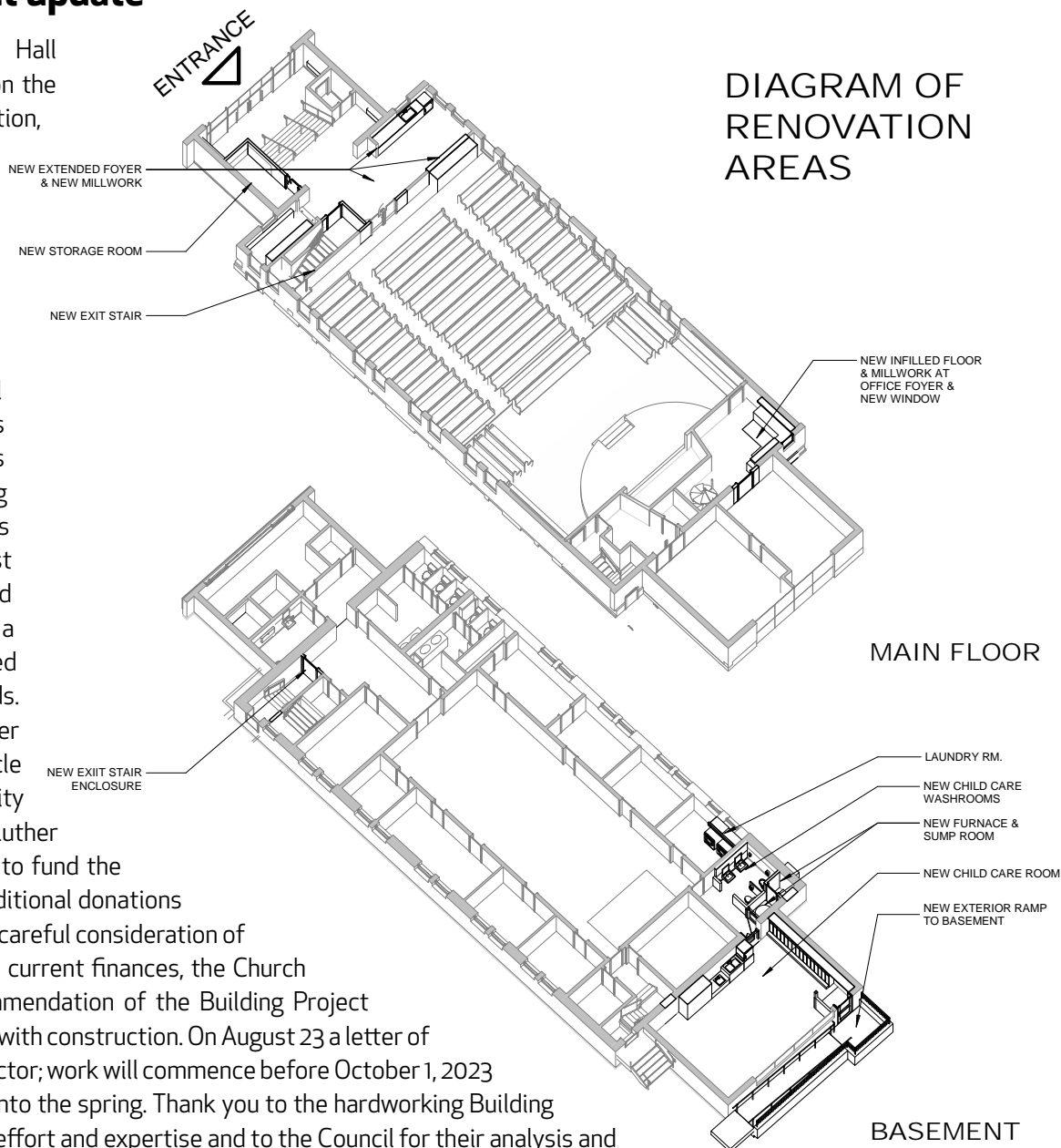
See you soon!

- Jessica Glasner

## Renovation project update

Last November, a Town Hall meeting was held to vote on the scope of the church renovation, and it was confirmed that a new Child Care program room in the basement and improvements to the foyer would be made. The aim of the project was to aid the church mission to serve the community, increase our rental income and opportunities for partnerships, as well as create more flexible meeting space for church programs during the week. After almost a year of further design and engineering investigations, a final drawing set was issued to three contractors for bids. Although the bids were higher than anticipated, some miracle funding sourced from the City of Toronto by the Martin Luther Child Care made it possible to fund the project without requiring additional donations from the congregation. With careful consideration of the future of the church and current finances, the Church Council voted on the recommendation of the Building Project Committee to move forward with construction. On August 23 a letter of intent was sent to the contractor; work will commence before October 1, 2023 and is intended to continue into the spring. Thank you to the hardworking Building Project Committee for their effort and expertise and to the Council for their analysis and leadership in getting this long-awaited project to the construction phase. We pray for smooth sailing through this next chapter and have faith that the renovation will help our church to carry out its mission now and into the future! More information will be shared when scheduling details become available.

## DIAGRAM OF RENOVATION AREAS



- Sonja Schweiger

## An artist in the attic

Sam Zarlenga, a local artist, has been renting space in the church attic over the summer and inspires us with his creativity!



## Altar Art update

The Altar Art Committee is still searching for creatives who are interested in producing a piece of art to live in our church sanctuary niche behind the altar! A document has been created outlining the parameters of the project, and this information has been shared at various art fairs and distributed via e-mail and social media. If you or someone you know would be interested in taking on such a commission, please visit our website at: <https://martinluther.ca/2023/04/call-for-submissions-for-altar-art-we-have-faith-we-need-art/>

The deadline for expressing interest is **October 15, 2023**. It is our hope that work on this piece will begin in the spring of 2024 and be completed by the end of the year.

## Financial update

Over the course of the past year, it has become increasingly clear that our church's current funding model needs to change in light of our membership structure. Therefore, this summer the church board formed a new committee to work on finding ways to financially sustain Martin Luther Church. Among other things, we are currently addressing the following questions: How can we optimize the rentability of the church building after the upcoming renovations? How can we build up a reserve fund? At the moment this group, led by our president Mona Frantzke, is getting an overview of our situation. Important documents and information about the church and its buildings are being reviewed. We are contacting successful churches in our area and consulting with the Eastern Synod in regards to optimizing our governance structure and insurance. Members of the committee are currently Mona Frantzke, Martin Häfele, Kai Herrmann, Katja Brittain, Monika Schmidt, Stefan Sohns, and Vern Kakoschke. We welcome additional members who have expertise in building, finance, business and law.



### Roofing at the parsonage

Thank you to Dan Sommerfeld and Tim Büchner for re-roofing the parsonage!

- Roof style, area, and slope: Hip/1500 ft<sup>2</sup>/22 degrees
- Shingle style: IKO Cambridge Earthtone Cedar
- Quantity and weight of shingles: 1000/approx. 3000lbs
- Quantity of nails: approx. 3400
- Total hours spent: 100
- Number of times soaked by thunderstorms: 1
- Material cost: \$3,000
- Amount saved by doing it ourselves: \$7,000



## What's happening?

### Online Bible Study

We continue with our discovery of the bible with congregational members of Martin Luther Church in Ottawa. Because we have two pastors present in the online meetings, we can split into English and German speakers if so desired.

On Sundays, in the worship services you only hear certain passages, which are part of a much larger story. We walk through the books of the bible together to get the bigger picture, ask questions and learn a lot about the historical and cultural background of the scriptures to help us make sense of them today.

- Thursday September 14, 2023 at 7:00 pm: 4 Gospels
- Thursday October 12, 2023 at 7:00 pm: Paul's letters
- Thursday November 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm: Letters that are not from Paul

To participate check our website for upcoming calendar dates and contact [office@martinluther.ca](mailto:office@martinluther.ca) for the Zoom login information.

### Confirmation classes 2023-24

We traditionally celebrate Confirmation on Pentecost. We invite children 11-16 years of age to sign up with the church office for classes **beginning in September 2023**. We look forward to getting to know the Bible and the basics of Christian tradition with you and to finding out how you can strengthen your faith and actively shape it!

Please contact the church office or Pastor Annika Klappert with your interest and any questions!

## Choir practices

Tuesday Choir practices for the service on German Thanksgiving, October 1, begin on **September 5 at 6 pm** in the church.



## EKD Worship Volunteer Training in October

Pastor Christhild Grafe (Bogotá, Colombia) in cooperation with Pastor Annika Klappert (Toronto, Canada) is preparing a seminar on behalf of the EKD for the further training of volunteers who conduct or participate in church services. The seminar on the topic of "picture sermons and the I in the sermon" will take place from October 17-22, 2023 in Bogotá, Colombia.

Tanya Zielke and Katja Brittain, two of our laypreachers, will also be attending from our church, as well as Karin Schemeit from St. George's Church (she led services at our church this past July) and Friedrich Brunzema from First Lutheran Church.

Godspeed to all and we look forward to hearing about their experiences in Colombia!

## Good Grief! Befriending Loss in Ourselves, Others & our World

Change and loss are part of our lives, whether it be the moving on of a significant spiritual leader; the loss of our personal soulmate or parent; the loss of our own mobility or of someone we are now caring for: and then there are the sorrows of the world, including the climate emergency. In confronting life's major challenges, we can feel inadequate to the task.

On Saturday November 18, 2023 a grief workshop will be held in our church. In this workshop:

- We will normalize the experience of loss and grief by exploring psychological and spiritual dimensions associated with significant life changes.
- We will explore the challenge and opportunity of loss through presentations, personal and group reflection.

Please sign up by **November 4** if you want to be part of this free workshop sponsored by our synod. More information will be shared in the coming weeks. Donations to the church are as always welcome!

## Let there be greening

Hello Martin Luther Church family,

The 2022 and 2023 National Church Convention was guided by the theme "Let there be greening". I got to learn about, discuss and share, with Christians from all walks of life, a deep love for creation. The creation of all types of people and how that translates into a joyful accepting church that nourishes people in faith and body. Having reflected on the theme in the fall of 2022, the church council decided to apply for a grant to partially fund the pollinator garden and extend the raised beds. One small way our church tries to become more visible and giving in our direct neighbourhood. It was granted.

Now, it is time to work on our dream. Are you a builder? Would you or your family like to donate your time and skill to help with the project of building a raised bed, or maybe filling this raised bed with appropriate soil, or are you more of a planter/gardener? Please contact Marlena at the church office if "let there be greening" is a project that speaks to you.

Also, please consult our website for more information on the ELCIC Convention topics and decisions from June 2023.

Blessings,

- Iris Schweiger



# Reflections

## Return of our Lay Preachers Tanya Zielke and Katja Brittain

Dear Congregation,

After 366 days of travel around the world, I am finally home (well, until the next trip!). Over the last year I visited 34 countries, went on 17 tours, took 15 flights, met 136 fellow travellers and visited 8 EKD congregations. I visited Athens, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Cairo, Mexico, Pretoria, Swakopmund and Brussels.

Each congregation welcomed me warmly and I had the opportunity to meet other German-speaking congregation members. Many aspects of the services were similar to our German service, as were the hymns. I absolutely enjoyed visiting German churches in other countries.

Not only did I visit EKD congregations, I also visited with former MLC Pastors and Vicars. I visited Stefan Wolf (and family), Alexander and Heike Mielke (and family) and of course, Christian Ceconi (and family). I also saw Kati Prosenjak, Thara Klein, Mirjam Steinebach, Silke Fahl and Caroline Raddatz. It was lovely celebrating services and catching-up with former MLC Pastors/Vicars.

I am already looking forward to sharing my adventures with the Congregation. Stay tuned for more information on those presentations!

- Tanya Zielke

Thank you to MLC for welcoming me back!

My husband, Chris and I spent the past 13 months in Germany, as he had an academic sabbatical year. Our base was in Berlin. I was able to reduce my full-time work in Canada to a few hours per week. I also found employment in Germany for six months to fulfil the required months necessary for the minimum pension in Germany.

We didn't set ourselves too many objectives for the year, but one was to attend one cultural event per week, be it a concert, museum, theatre, etc. Also, we sought to attend a Sunday church service in as many places as possible. We were able to witness examples of great ministries and church growth but also declining membership numbers - if anything, we can be assured that here in Canada, we all face very similar issues.

Such a great mixture of different experiences made it such a rich year. On another note, being Germany was very good for us to be with my aging, ailing mom and to engage with my brothers about the situation.

Returning to our old lives involves a culture shock, as much as our start in Berlin had been. Overall, it was a great opportunity to realise that the grass is not always greener on the other side. But, we were able to fine-

tune our vision for what we want to do until the next sabbatical.

Regarding Sabbatical years, for example, in Leviticus 25:4 we read that after seven years, one is to rest with work on the fields. We didn't quite rest as such but our work here rested, and the change of context helps us return to our work in Canada with a refreshed perspective.

- Katja Brittain



## Farewell and godspeed to Christine Couturier!

Almost 20-years ago I crossed the border into Canada with my French-Canadian husband. We landed at Marina del Rey (an amenable location for a retired professional yacht captain) as I endeavoured to establish myself professionally in Toronto.

In selecting our rental condo, I had also noted the proximity to Martin Luther Ev. Lutheran Church. When I attended the first time



I was welcomed by Pastor Wolf from the pulpit, but then embarrassed when he suggested perhaps I was "a professional singer" (which I've never been.) Then this lovely woman approached me and said I should join the Christmas caroling that was being planned at Marina del Rey. That is when Ollie and I discovered that in addition to sharing Lutherans roots, we were living just floors apart! Many of you know that our lives became intricately intertwined, and that I had the privilege of accompanying her into the final stages of life.

Ollie also accompanied me in key moments of my life: the end of my first marriage; a period of uncertainty of what the future might hold; and the unanticipated joy of meeting a new mate (whom she also grew to love.) Robert and I often laughed when she insisted that she be our "Flower Girl" should we marry. We did, and she was.

Belonging to MLC helped "ground" me in Toronto. I believe I also related well to the Pastors assigned from Germany, and to the challenges their families faced. My own experience as an MK (Missionaries' Kid) in Argentina allowed me to understand the complexities of their lives away from their "Heimatland".

The opportunity that was afforded me to use my (non-professional) vocal training at MLC was especially gratifying, as there had been a hiatus of my avocation for 20 years while I pursued my corporate career in International Management. And while to some my membership may have seemed a bit "itinerant" at times, I see the gift of music and the compassionate care for a "Pillar of the Congregation" as my legacy to the MLC Church Family.

Auf-wiedershen/Hasta Siempre/Until We Meet Again.

-Christine Couturier

## EKD Conference in Washington in April



From April 18-21, I was in Washington at the regional conference of the EKD together with the pastors of the congregations from North, Central and South America. I carpoled together with my colleague Judith Kierschke to save emissions and to see something of the country and its people. On the way there we stayed overnight in Pittsburgh, and on the way back we made a detour via the hometown of our Altar Guild leader Annette Rowles, Philadelphia.

The theme of the conference this year was "White Privilege." We explored both theoretically and practically how the legacy of colonialism continues to shape our society today and what churches can do to participate in the process of coming to terms and reconciliation. Particularly memorable for me is the tour of the historical monuments in the center of the city, which tell a lot about the changing history of this country: The Lincoln Memorial, in front of which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his world-famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and the large statue further down the waterfront dedicated to him and the civil rights movement. I was also impressed by the new African American Museum, which shed light on aspects of the culture and history that were previously unknown to me.



In addition, the exchange with colleagues, whom I now know a little better, was enriching and strengthening. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to the pastor from Costa Rica and the pastor's family from Chile, as they will be returning to Germany in the fall. I am grateful for the broadening of horizons, the many impulses and valuable conversations that I was able to have. I would also like to sincerely thank all the volunteers and my assistant Marlena Müller, who more than worthily represented me in my absence and carried the parish work with a high degree of professionalism and a lot of heart and soul.

-Pastor Klappert

# We celebrate....

Our **volunteer appreciation reception** on Pentecost, May 28



**Church Trip to 1000 Islands** on the weekend of June 4



....



**Baptism of Oliver and Lena Sohns** on June 11



**Church Picnic** in the park on June 25



**Dinner Church** on July 12 with Guest Speaker AshleyN Fung



# We mourn....

**Hanna Wiegand** passed away on May 11, 2023 at the age of 84 years.

**Irene Birute Penkauskas** passed away on July 2, 2023 at the age of 94 years.

**Olga (Ollie) Gilker** passed away on July 15 at the at age of 101 years.



# Save these Holiday Dates!

## Order your Advent guide and 2024 calendar!

Place your order of "Der Andere Advent" 2023/24 with the church office by **September 15 2023**. "Der Andere Advent" accompanies you through the Advent and Christmas season with texts and pictures from the evening before the 1st Advent until January 6. The poems, stories and narratives invite you to think about our time, our togetherness and our confidence. There is also a "Anderer Advent" calendar for children.

If you are also interested in the 2024 Neukirchener Kalender, please place your order via the office by **October 10**.



## Thanksgiving food drive

Please donate non-perishable food and/or hygiene items (e.g. cereal, canned soup, vegetables, tuna, ham, salmon, beans, tomatoes, pasta, pasta sauce, peanut butter, rice, sugar, toilet paper, laundry detergent, soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes and baby food) for the Martin Luther Church Thanksgiving Food Drive starting in **September** to support our Community Pantry and Wesley Mimico United Church (WMUC) Food Bank. Financial donations to support our food ministry are also appreciated.

Bowls and Blessings continues and you can volunteer to make and/or serve soup, bread and other treats in front of the church on Tuesdays and Fridays, 12-1 pm. Contact the office to sign up.

## Christmas Bazaar

Kick off your advent with our Christmas Bazaar in the church on **December 3 2023 from 12-2pm** where crafts and delicious homemade goods will be sold. If you are interested in creating items for donation or volunteering to help run the event, please contact Joceyn and Leanne at [bazaar@martinluther.ca](mailto:bazaar@martinluther.ca).

## Seniors Advent Gathering

A gathering will be held on **December 10** to celebrate Advent together with the senior members of the congregation. More details will follow.

## Christmas Play



Please contact Pastor Annika Klappert if you and your family are interested in participating in the play! The final performance will take place on an

**Advent Sunday** with rehearsals in the weeks leading up to the show and a dress rehearsal before the final show. All ages and stages welcome!

# Christmas Bazaar



**December 3, 2023  
12-2 pm in-person!**

**Volunteers needed** to create unique items to donate for our bazaar fundraiser. Have an idea, and would like to participate?  
Email: [bazaar@martinluther.ca](mailto:bazaar@martinluther.ca)



**Call for clever creators and crafty contributors!**

# Upcoming services

## Update on English services

As the English services were not as well attended as the bilingual and German ones in the past 6 months, we looked for a worship setting that suits a smaller group better. For the fall we will try out a new model: On Sundays where there is a German service at 11am, we will have an English devotion with a simple liturgy, music provided by pastor and volunteers and conversational elements at 9:45 am. From 10:15-11am there is time for fellowship and coffee (if possible). German speakers are invited to come early if they want to participate. On Fridays when there is Dinner Church, there will be no English devotion on the following Sunday morning.

## Fall and Advent service schedule

### September 3, 2023, 14th Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion & Fellowship // 11:00 am German Service

### September 10, 2023, 15th Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am English-German Family Service with Baptism

### September 17, 2023, 16th Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion and Fellowship // 11:00 am German Service led by Lay Preacher Katja Brittain

### September 24, 2023, 17th Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am English-German Service

### Friday September 29, 2023

7:00 pm Dinner Church

### October 1, 2023, German Thanksgiving

11:00 am German Service with Holy Communion and Choir

### October 8, 2023, Canadian Thanksgiving

11:00 am German-English Service

### October 15, 2023, 20th Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion & Fellowship // 11:00 am German Service led by Lay Preacher Iris Schweiger

### October 22, 2023, 21st Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am English-German Family Service led by Lay Preacher Iris Schweiger

### Friday October 27, 2023

7:00 pm Dinner Church

### October 29, 2023, Reformation Sunday

11:00 am German Service

### November 5, 2023, All Saints Sunday with Remembrance of the Dead

11:00 am German-English Service with Holy Communion and Church Choir

We especially invite those who have lost a loved one to attend.

### November 12, 2023, 24th Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion & Fellowship  
11:00 am German Service

### November 19, 2023, 25th Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am German-English Family Service

### Friday November 24, 2023

7:00 pm Dinner Church

### November 26, 2023, Christ the King

9:45 am English Devotion & Fellowship  
11:00 am German Service

### December 3, 2023, 1st Sunday of Advent & 68th Anniversary of Martin Luther Church

11:00 am German-English Service

### December 10, 2023, 2nd Sunday of Advent

9:45 am English Devotion & Fellowship  
11:00 am German Service

### December 17, 2023, 3rd Sunday of Advent

11:00 am German-English Family Service

### December 24, 2023, 4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve

5:00 pm German Service  
6:30 pm English Service

**Note:** Pastor Annika will be away from October 9 to the 22. Lay Preacher Iris Schweiger will be presiding at the services on October 15 and 22. Pastoral care coverage is TBD.