



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)

Creativity takes Courage

April 2024 Congregational Newsletter

The Art of Faith



Dear readers,

What role do creativity and artistic creation actually play in your spiritual life? Do music, paintings and poems help you to connect with God and express your relationship with Him? Or is beauty and art something that you find distracting and would rather not see in churches and sacred spaces?

"Seeking God's Splendor - thoughts on Faith and Art" was the title of an issue of Yale Divinity School reflections. One student's thoughts were so inspiring, that I would like to share some of them with you. Megan Mitchell will graduate in May with an M.A.R. in religion and the arts. She earned a B.A. in Community Art and Missions from Wheaton College. She titled her essay "What the World Needs Now":

"In a world of immense suffering, is art a luxury, limited to those with the time and resources to spare? Beauty doesn't feed people, doesn't stop wars. What does it do? I have stood in opulently glorious churches, both enraptured by their beauty yet sick with the awareness that histories of hypocrisy and exploitation lurk beneath the glittering surfaces. In less extreme ways, all churches today face the dilemma of how to allocate resources: "Should we tune the organ, commission a sculpture for the altar, or keep up the foreign missions fund?"

For Christians trying to follow the example of Christ and the early church by caring for the poor and living simply, a focus on art can seem self-serving. The urgent needs of the world force artists of faith to ask what truly matters in each note, paint stroke, or stanza. Yet my conviction is that art goes beyond luxury. Art and beauty address the human need for hope. For me, hope is functionally inseparable from beauty, for beauty is a reminder that there is, in the words of Abraham Heschel, "meaning beyond absurdity."

Beauty helps me believe that divine good does prevail. Seeking to bring the Kingdom of God to earth includes restoring the beauty that is present in creation – and adding to it.

Facilitating public murals in the U.S., Africa, and Haiti, I have come to see the process of collaboration itself as art. The effort of people making a mural together involves creative problem-solving and communication. Participants must learn to voice their own opinions but also be willing to make sacrifices for the unity of the whole. Art-making is metaphorically linked to other life-building processes – and helps people tap into the transformative resources already present within themselves...

...Art is about making space – both physical and mental – for listening, searching, and expressing. Art cultivates the ability to imagine a future and so transcend the present moment. This is inherently hopeful...

That's what the world needs now: space to take notice of each other, our own souls, and the ... voice of the Lord who calls but will not force us to hear if we do not desire to listen.

To give hope to the hurting, the church must be invested in the question of what is truly beautiful – both in the work we create and the way we create."

In this sense I invite you to enjoy our newsletter with all the beautiful images, updates and visions shared with you. If you dare to go and seek the beauty of God in your daily life and engage with his creation I'm sure you'll find the art of faith already existent in your life. Amen.

Pastor Annika Klappert

Messages & updates

Summary of our 2024 Annual General Meeting

Dear Congregation,

We had our annual general meeting on February 25, 2024. It was a productive day with a great turnout! Here are the highlights:

- 43 Members attended in person.
- Our annual report package in German and English, which shared highlights from the previous year, was made available.
- It was an opportunity to look at last year's finances, comparing them year-over-year, and approve the next budget. The Pastor and President reported on the work done in the last year.
- Four new council members were appointed, and we thanked Andrea Dannecker for her 6 years of service on Council.
- Two resolutions proposed by Council - to become Incorporated and to Restructure the Mission Fund to a Reserve Fund, moving from a by-law to a policy of the church - were accepted by the congregation.
- Five new goals were set for the upcoming year.
 1. Complete the renovation project
 2. Incorporate Martin Luther Church
 3. Restructure the Mission Fund
 4. Develop a rental policy committee and framework
 5. Foster a welcome culture for all ages and stages, and empower our volunteers

Many thanks to all of Council for their hard work preparing for this meeting, for everyone's insightful questions and comments, and the general goodwill that was felt by all. See you at next year's AGM on February 23, 2025!

Sincerely,

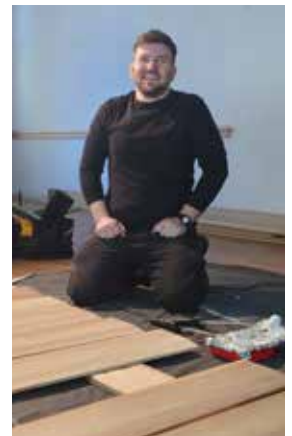
- Tanya Zielke and Jocelyn Sommerfeld
Secretary and Vice President of the Martin Luther Church Council



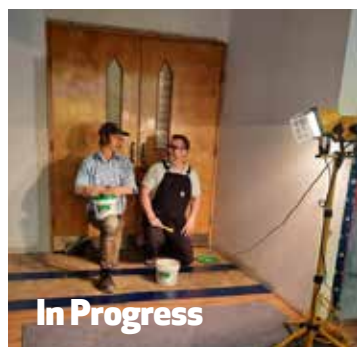
The Martin Luther Church Building Project Before and After Photos

The contractor's work is in large part completed! The stairs to the basement in the foyer are now open and coat check is available in the sanctuary. The next steps will be for our church groups to set up and organize. Stay posted for an Open House to celebrate the opening of the renovated space later this spring.

We thank our dedicated building project team and helpers, especially Dan Sommerfeld, Kai Herrmann, Matthias Gutsch, Peter Schweiger, Martin Haefele and Tim Buechner!



FOYER



NEW CHILDCARE ROOM



OFFICE FOYER



ACCESS RAMP



Message from Cathy O'Toole, Executive Director of Martin Luther Child Care

Martin Luther Child Care is so pleased to share our exciting news with all of you, about the upcoming EXPANSION of our child care programs and services coming this spring/summer. As many of you may already know, the child care was able to join forces with the Church's renovation project, and what used to be the downstairs conference room, has been converted into a beautiful new child care space. This space will accommodate 16 preschool children (for children 2.5 to 3.8 years of age). The construction is just wrapping up, but the pictures will show the beautiful new playroom with new millwork with cupboards and storage for cots, and a child and adult sink. On the other side of the room are 16 new cubby areas that children can 'hang their hats' while attending. And not to mention a brand new child size bathroom adjacent to the classroom. With accessibility funding we were able to add a ramp to a brand new entry door at the south end of the building. There are some small construction details to wrap up before we can get all our final approvals and licensing complete, but we are really hoping to have our grand opening late spring or early summer, considering all goes well! On behalf of all members of the child care (board of directors, staff, parents and most importantly... the children!), we are so very grateful for our continued and invaluable partnership with the church. We appreciate the consideration always extended to ensure our programs can always grow and improve! Thanks to all of you for being a part of that! Happy Easter to all!

Altar Art

In January 2024, the altar art committee decided to commission artist Michelle Reid from Kingston ON. She accepted the offer and visited our church in February. The committee welcomed her with a potluck luncheon meeting, walk on the lakeshore and engaged in discussions to provide final inspiration and guidance for the artwork. The artwork will be a triptych (set of 3) pieces that will fill the altar space.

Michelle Reid is an award-winning Canadian artist who has quickly become recognized for her unique abstract-impressionism. Her contemporary landscape paintings in oil are distinct, vibrant, and full of hope. Examples of Michelle Reid's artwork can be found here: <https://www.michellereidart.com>

Let there be greening Community Garden in partnership with the GARDENS Pod Project

We are looking for people with green thumbs and those who would like to learn how to get them. There will be flowers and vegetables to be planted, weeds to be found and pulled, watered and harvested. If gardening is not your thing yet you like educating. This is a great project for you as well. Help us label plants, find recipes, write articles, create short videos, and recruit volunteers. We are also looking for builders for raised beds. Please contact Iris Schweiger or the church office for more information.

What's happening?

Painting Fundraiser for Community Outreach

You are invited to paint a piece of art at our church **this Spring**. Supplies and snacks will be provided. Please sign up with Marlena in the church office with a donation of \$25 or more. Funds raised will support our community outreach projects like Bowls and Blessings and gardening. Please contact the office if you or an artist you know can guide this session. **Please direct all applications and inquiries to office@martinluther.ca**

Pastor Annika Klappert in Ecuador Beginning of April

From April 8-13, the regional conference of all EKD partner churches in North, Central and South America will take place in Ecuador. This time we are meeting in Quito, where my colleague Walter Basler (retired pastor) is looking after the local German-speaking congregation. We will be looking at the situation and importance of the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest for the global climate and visiting local sustainability projects. The political situation in the country will also be discussed during a visit by the German ambassador. In addition, relevant news for our congregations from the EKD Church Office in Hanover will be communicated and there will also be room for collegial exchange and supervision from trained specialist staff. Before the official start of the conference, I will take a trip with some colleagues to a bird conservation center in the

rainforest, which was set up by lay preacher Heike Brieschke over decades of loving work. I am already looking forward to sharing my experiences with you afterwards!

-Pastor Annika Klappert

Bible Study with 3(!) German churches

On March 12, 2024 at 7:00 pm we met online again via Zoom for Bible Study. Since we had so much fun with our friends from Martin Luther Church Ottawa (Pastor Judith Kierschke) last year we thought: Why not draw the circle wide and invite even more North American German Congregations? We were very excited to welcome participants from the German Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C. (Pastor Dr. Martin Eberle) for the first time! Our bible passage for the day was John 12:20, which we reflected on using "the seven steps Bible sharing" method, in two groups of English and German speakers. 15 people joined us and shared their questions and thoughts with each other. How enlightening! We still have room for more, so be part of an inspirational hour in the coming months!

Upcoming dates so far (7:00 pm each time!)

Tuesday April 16, 2024

Tuesday May 14, 2024

Tuesday June 11, 2024

Ascension Day Thursday May 9, 2024

On May 9 at 11:00 am we will celebrate our traditional German service for Ascension Day as like every year, we welcome all German-speaking Lutheran congregations in the GTA. We will gather in the church to sing and pray together and reflect upon the meaning of this special day, when Jesus finally said goodbye to his friends and left this earth to be with his father in eternity. Afterwards we will meet for lunch, coffee and cake in the basement - cake donations are welcome!



Mother's Day Bake Sale Sunday May 12, 2024 after the 11:00 am Bilingual Service

Our Mother's Day Bake Sale is back - and we're opening it up to all kinds of goodies! Whether it's cookies and squares, jams and jellies, or granola bars and protein bites, the only requirements are that donations are homemade, shelf-stable, and pre-packaged. Everything will be sold for \$5 each! **(Please note this is a cash-only fundraiser!)** Please contact me, Jocelyn Sommerfeld, at jocelynsommerfeld270@gmail.com if you want to contribute to the sale! Funds raised will go towards an urgent organ repair.

Pentecost, Celebrating Confirmands and Affirming Faith! May 19, 2024

Pentecost is the birthday of the church and we invite you to celebrate with us! On this Sunday we will bless all members who are confirmed, as well as those of you who want to affirm their faith or become new members of our congregation. Come together for a service full of worship and praise to give thanks for the gift of faith and God's loyalty to us. Afterwards we invite you to a light lunch and reception! **Please RSVP to the church office with your Confirmation year and sign up to help with hospitality.**

7 x7 Radio Devotions and Sermons May 26-July 7

About two years ago, Pastor Annika Klappert and Iris Schweiger joined the Circle of Reconciliation and Justice at the request of our Eastern Synod here in the eastern part of Canada. They were looking for people who were interested in learning more about our Indigenous neighbors and our shared history. The mission of this group is to advise and support communities so that together we can learn how to support ongoing efforts by First Nations, Metis and Inuit to address the devastating effects of colonization. The Circle for Reconciliation and Justice (CRJ) invites all churches in Canada to reflect and learn about Indigenous culture and spirituality as part of our Reconciliation ACTION in response to TRC Call #60 as a larger community.

Like many other Lutheran churches, we are offering seven weeks of reflection in our worship services and on the radio on the wisdom of the Seven Sacred Teachings. They are based on human qualities: courage, respect, sincerity, wisdom, truth, humility and love. In addition, each of these words is symbolized by animals. The initiative began with an exhibition at Martin Luther University College (<https://luther.wlu.ca/>) in Kitchener last fall. Dzauggee, also known as Paul Shilling of Rama First Nation, had asked three other artists from different backgrounds to creatively engage with him about the Seven Sacred teachings. The resulting artworks were then accompanied by seven weeks of prayers and devotions by Rebekah Ludolph, PhD. She linked biblical texts and theological thoughts to these teachings and recorded how we understand them in our faith tradition.

We will take the exhibition and devotions as a template, adapt them to our particular preaching situation and translate them into German, as well. We will endeavor that this cross-cultural exploration will strengthen our capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and respect in faith.

- Iris Schweiger

Church Trip Sunday June 2, 2024

We are planning this year's Church Trip on June 2. Last year it was 1000 Islands boat cruise in Rockport, the year before Petroglyphs Provincial Park near Peterborough. Stay tuned for more details about the 2024 trip!

Church Picnic

June 16, 2024 - Father's Day!

We are planning this year's Church Picnic to again take place at Amos Waites Park on Father's Day. The park is only a short distance away from the Church building.



German-themed bike ride with the German Consulate

Saturday June 15, 2024

Iris Schweiger will be our guide and share her many insights into German heritage sites in Toronto. It's a great way to bring together the bike community and the German community in Toronto. Last year the final stop was our Martin Luther Church. Stay posted for more information about how to sign up and the route this year.

Eastern Synod Assembly

June 20-22, 2024

The Eastern Synod Assembly will gather under the theme "Let There Be Greening" at the Delta Hotel, in nearby Mississauga. The logo, which features a world and flowing leaves symbolizes change. The world/church is cradled in God's hand.

The Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada will also elect four new officers at this Synod Assembly: Bishop (Chair), Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. If you want to find out more about the process and its structure, please go to the synod website: Synod Assembly 2024 – Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

We are sending our Pastor Klappert and Iris Schweiger as our delegate layperson from our congregation.

Reflections

Church Council 2024-2025

Installed on March 25, 2024

We asked our newly installed council: "What is your favourite part of our church?" Here are some of their answers!

Mona Frantzke, President

Jocelyn Sommerfeld, Vice President

"The people! I love coming to church on any day of the week and having conversations with the amazing members of our church and community.

Kai Herrmann, Treasurer

Tanya Zielke, Secretary

"For me it's always the music! I love not only singing hymns and liturgical elements, but also enjoy being part of the choir and church band. Making music helps me connect to God and my faith."

Andreas Boettcher

Monika Schmidt

Peter Kearns



Gisela Wilhelm

"My favourite part of our church is that I am with like-minded people. Of course, I love singing with the congregation, especially when accompanied by the organ. Our Church just makes me feel good!"

Greg Andre-Barrett

"Like Aristotle said, I believe 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.' However, my top three would be the sermon, music, and the people. "



German Connections - Goethe Institute

On March 14, 2024 The Goethe Institute Toronto (<https://www.goethe.de/ins/ca/en/sta/tor.html>) hosted an event for its partners to introduce our newly opened Media Lounge at the Goethe-Institut Toronto!

Alongside unveiling the innovative concept, they showcased upcoming exciting projects with authors and literary festivals. Afterwards, guests were able to explore their wide range of media. I also got to know the new media officer Julian Engel and we talked about great ideas for cultural cooperation this year.

Thanks, Goethe Institut for a fun, informative and collaborative afternoon! We're thrilled about future partnerships and can't wait to bring amazing projects to life in our Media Lounge!

-Pastor Annika Klappert

World Day of Prayer at MLC Host Country: Palestine

On Saturday March 2, 2024, Martin Luther Church hosted the World Day of Prayer 2024 together with our local community. This year's service was based on a program written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Palestine, prepared and adapted for use in Canada by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada with the theme "I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love," based on Ephesians 4:1-7.

A big thank you to Iris Schweiger for organizing the event. We welcomed members from 6 churches who took us through the readings, prayers and reflection:

Christ Church St. James Anglican Church, Mimico Baptist Church, Mimico Presbyterian Church, St. Leo's Catholic Church, Wesley Mimico United Church and members from our own Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Sharing a potluck lunch, with mostly Palestinian food, was a great way to start the afternoon. A presentation and slideshow with background information about Palestine was then presented to us by Anneli, with Greg as technical support, using material from the Women's Inter Church Council of Canada. A nine member band provided the musical accompaniment. We are grateful for the participation of volunteers and attendees. Thank you to all that helped with the set up, brought food, presided, presented and mingled.

World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian lay women's initiative, a prayer movement that invites us to enrich our faith experience with the experience of Christians from other countries and cultures and to bring hope to women touched by injustice.



Church Band Reunited!

After our first performance last year, the band finally got together again - for the World Day of Prayer we rallied and could get 8 musicians for the service on Saturday March 2nd. It was great fun to jam together and bring Palestinian and English hymns to life in an acoustic band setting. In fact, it was so much fun that part of the group rejoined just two weeks after to accompany the congregational singing and offer two modern songs - one of them being the German Classic Schlager "Ein bisschen Frieden" by Nicole with which she won

the Eurovision Song Contest for Germany for the first time in 1982. Thank you Iris, Deen, Kristine, Lori, Pat, Philippe, Tanya! We hope for even more instrumentalists, singers and drummers to join us in the future!

We celebrate...

Christmas Play, December 17, 2023



Christmas Eve Choir performance directed by Linda Marcincus



Christmas tree donated and delivered by Iris and Peter Schweiger, put up by Dan Sommerfeld, Matthias Gutsch and Chandeeep Singh



Christmas Eve 2023



Advent Celebration on December 10, 2023



Candlelight Gathering and Tree Decorating party on December 20, 2023



Looking back on the **Dinner Church** gathering on January 31, 2024



Dinner Church Dates:

April 24, 2024

Guest Speaker Katja Brittain on the topic of thinking outside of the church box

May 29, 2024

Guest Speaker Pastor Tuula Van Gaasbeek on the topic of food ministry at St. Philips Lutheran Church

June 2024 (date TBD)

Guest Speaker Iris Schweiger on the topic of the 7 sacred teachings

Baptism of **Theodore Mahon** on March 10, 2024



Easter Sunrise Service on March 31, 2024



We thank **Andrea Dannecker** for her term on church council. She was released from duty on March 24, 2024.



We mourn....

Elfriede Kummer passed away on December 25, 2023 at the age of 86 years.

Kate Mason passed away on January 7, 2024 at the age of 50 years.

Elisabeth Knopp passed away on January 17, 2024 at the age of 94 years.

Horst Schmidt passed away on February 6, 2024 at the age of 83 years.

Inge Zwingenberger passed away on February 27, 2024 at the age of 95 years.

Rosemarie Knauer passed away on February 22, 2024 at the age of 94 years.

Helmut Schmidt passed away on March 5, 2024 at the age of 95 years.

Upcoming services

Sunday April 7, 2024, Second Sunday of Easter

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship, 11:00 am German Service, both led by lay preacher Katja Brittain (Pastor Annika Klappert in Ecuador)

Sunday April 14, 2024, Third Sunday of Easter

11:00 am German - English Worship Service led by lay preacher Tanya Zielke (Pastor Annika Klappert in Ecuador)

Sunday April 21, 2024, Fourth Sunday of Easter

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship, 11:00 am German Worship Service

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

7:00 pm Dinner Church

Sunday April 28, 2024, Fifth Sunday of Easter

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with Holy Communion

Sunday, May 5, 2024, Sixth Sunday of Easter

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship, 11:00 am German Worship Service

Thursday, May 9, 2024, Ascension Day

We are planning to have a German Service at 11:00 am at Martin Luther Church for the German Cluster of churches in Toronto.

Sunday, May 12, 2024, Seventh Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with Bake Sale

Sunday, May 19, 2024, Pentecost

11:00 am German-English Service with Church Choir and blessing members who are confirmed and new members, followed by a reception. Please RSVP to the church office with your confirmation year.

Sunday, May 26, 2024, First Sunday after Pentecost (Trinity)

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship, 11:00 am German Worship Service

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

7:00 pm Dinner Church

Sunday, June 2, 2024, Second Sunday after Pentecost

We are planning a Church Trip, in which case the usual 11:00 am German-English Worship Service will be cancelled.

Sunday June 9, 2024, Third Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship, 11:00 am German Worship Service

Sunday, June 16, 2024, Fourth Sunday After Pentecost (Father's Day)

11:00 am German-English Worship Service as a church picnic at Amos Waits Park

Sunday, June 23, 2024, Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship, 11:00 am German Worship Service with Holy Communion

Sunday June 30, 2024, Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am German-English Worship Service

***Summer Schedule**

Only 11:00 am bilingual services on Sundays, with a 9:45 am English Devotion / 11:00 am German service once a month.

Sunday, July 7, 2024, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service

Sunday, July 14, 2024, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with Holy Communion

Sunday, July 21, 2024, Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am German-English Worship Service

Sunday, July 28, 2024 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

11:00 am German-English Worship Service

Choir Practices Resume April 23, 2024

Practices resume Tuesdays at 6 pm on April 23 in preparation for Pentecost on May 19.

Emergency Pastoral Coverage April 2-15, 2024

While Pastor Klappert is in Ecuador, emergency pastoral coverage is provided by Pastor Rasma Caune, reachable at 647-382-5093.