



Martin Luther  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church

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The Year in  
Review**

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

# A Season of Hope

## December 2024 Congregational Newsletter

Dear congregation,

I often notice how quickly time flies, especially at the end of the year. "Another year has passed!" I sometimes hear very different members of the congregation say, but of course also my family and circle of friends. I have to admit, sometimes there is a slight note of surprise or amazement, and from time to time a little disappointment and a very light pinch of underlying pessimism. The changing times are indeed something that we are consequently "at the mercy of" - and then there is often a tendency to quickly see and evaluate the whole thing as something negative. Events and especially the passing of time are equated with impermanence. This part of human world-weariness is particularly noticeable in winter for many of the people I deal with in my work.

Nevertheless, a change of perspective can sometimes be very helpful in this respect. I would like to share a little anecdote with you from my early years: When I was a little girl, I thought for a very long time that the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year on the first of January also heralded the start of spring in nature. Because I didn't know any better back then and had no knowledge of the calendar and meteorological date of the beginning of spring, I rushed outside on the first day after the Christmas vacation in kindergarten and looked for the first daisies under the snow or dandelion blossoms on the barren lawn. For me, New Year's Eve was also the beginning of spring, which is why my hope for new colourful flowers in the winter garden was unbridled. Despite my childish naivety at the time, I still draw strength from these memories today when the dark winter months make my mood a little less cheerful. Even as a child, I knew that even if I was disappointed to find no flowers or buds in the dormant winter nature, spring would always return - and with it, ultimately, the blooming garden.



My faith in Christ is also strengthened anew each time by this former childhood hope. For nothing remains the same - and yet we as believers are assured of this one permanence for eternity through the Christmas coming of Christ into the world. Even within ourselves, bare branches can bear tender buds again. If we open ourselves up a little, new light can shine into our very own inner gardens and what has died within us can sprout, grow and blossom anew. "Open up and become light. For your light is coming." (Isaiah 60:1) says the prophet Isaiah. Our waiting by no means leads us into the mist, because our path has a goal: Christ himself as the bud of life under the white snow comes to us and wants to blossom in all of us. So for the coming winter months, may you remain patient in this waiting and be gentle with yourself, so that you become ready and open - blessed with a completely new beginning (of the year).

- Your Vicar Alice Rothgordt

# Messages & updates

## Presidents' Report: Year End Review

24 has been a year of great change: from the joyous news of our Pastor Annika's pregnancy and birth of her daughter Elisabeth Marisol, to the devastating flood in our 5 Superior building and newly finished church basement this summer. However, one thing is constant: in times of need, good people show up to lend a helping hand. In our search for pastoral coverage, we were supported by our team of lay preachers - including Tanya, Katja, and Iris - and we found Pastor Nkanyiso and Vicar Alice to help lead our worship services. When urgent repairs were needed for our basement and at the 5 Superior building, items had to be organized and handy helpers like Dan, Peter, Iris, Kai, Matthias, Tim, Gisela, and many others were there to make sure work was completed. Of course, Marlena's constant communication between everyone involved in these events was (and continues to be) an invaluable resource.

To all those who graciously gave their time, money, and/or prayers to help get us through these changing times, we express our heartfelt gratitude!

- Mona Frantzke and Jocelyn Sommerfeld  
*President and Vice President of the Martin Luther Church Council*



## Rental Update

We are happy to report that Martin Luther Child Care was able to return to both the main floor of 5 Superior and the church basement on October 28 after flood recovery. We hope to have all restoration work completed by the end of the year.

The All Nations Seventh Day Adventist congregation continues to hold their sabbath services on Saturdays at our Martin Luther Church. Both parties are pleased with the arrangement. We will be meeting in early December to discuss extending the arrangement for a full year.

Many volunteers also worked hard to renovate the 1-bedroom apartment at 5 Superior Ave and find a suitable new tenant.

Requests for one-time and long-term rentals are considered by our church council and rental committee. We thank everyone who has volunteered to coordinate and supervise these rentals. We also thank those who have adjusted their schedules and worked around outside users in the church. We hope this rental income will help us to continue our church's mission. Join the rental committee to learn more and help!

## Altar Artwork

### December 1, 2024

On the first Sunday of Advent, as we began our journey toward Christmas, we came together to celebrate not only the season of hope and preparation, but also to unveil something truly special—something that will be part of our worship and our shared life here at Martin Luther for many years to come.

In early 2018, Reiner Mauke, a generous and thoughtful member of our congregation, made a significant donation, with a special request: to create an altar picture—an artwork to be placed above, on, or behind our altar. This gesture was not just about enhancing our sanctuary; it was about providing us with a visual reflection of our faith and spirituality, a piece that would invite us into a deeper connection with God.



In March of 2022, our Altar Art Committee was formed, made up of six members of this congregation, including our pastor. Together, we worked on crafting a 15-page "Expression of Interest" document that would guide this process—outlining our church's history, spiritual inspiration, the unique architecture of our space, and even the beauty of the existing windows. This document helped us reach out to artists, to invite them into this meaningful project, and to ensure we would find the perfect artist for our vision.

We received many submissions from talented artists across Canada, and after much careful thought, discussion, and prayer, we selected Michelle Reid, a Canadian artist from Kingston, Ontario, to bring our vision to life. Michelle's artwork resonates with peace, harmony, and a deep connection to nature. Her work has the ability to draw you in, making you feel as though you are standing in the forest, surrounded by its quiet beauty and tranquility.

What you now see above the altar is a triptych, a three piece artwork created using acrylic paint on canvas that not only brings colour and beauty into our worship space but also infuses our sanctuary with a sense of hope, connection, and peace. Michelle's paintings are not just works of art; they are invitations to experience the sacred in new ways, to find moments of quiet reflection, and to deepen our relationship with the world around us. The artwork also reminds us of the lakeshore community surrounding our church. We are blessed with open space and access to the beauty of Lake Ontario, and water plays an important role in both nature and in our spiritual lives. Just as water nourishes and sustains creation, so too does it symbolize cleansing, renewal, and the life-giving presence of God.

We are incredibly grateful to the Altar Art Committee, to Michelle Reid for her creative vision, and to each of you for your support in making this project a reality. It is with great joy and reverence that we unveiled this beautiful altar art, a gift to our church, a gift to each of us as we continue our journey of faith. May this artwork serve as a source of inspiration and reflection, guiding our hearts as we move through the Advent season and beyond.

Thank you, and may God bless you all.

*Leanne Grammenz, Chair of the Altar Art Committee*

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## Worship Team

Thank you to the many people who contribute to our Sunday worship services in German and English!

- Pastor Kingdom, Vicar Rothgordt and lay preachers Iris Schweiger, Katja Brittain and Tanya Zielke are taking turns to lead services while Pastor Klappert is on maternity leave. Usually Pastor Kingdom presides once a month, Vicar Rothgordt presides twice a month and one of our lay preachers presides at the remaining service every month.
- The web team ensures that dates are listed on our website calendar and all roles are tracked in a Google doc.
- The presider begins to prepare the liturgy at the beginning of each week so that our organist/pianist Linda can rehearse the chosen hymns and Marlena can prepare the service sheets in the office.
- Annette, our one-woman Altar Guild, often comes midweek, as well as early on Sundays to set up and stays late to help with Holy Communion, change the paraments and decorate.

- Council members, ushers and other helpers are scheduled to greet, read, enter donations, and more.
- Our church choir rehearses on Tuesdays for performances during special services which are recorded and shared on YouTube by our tech team. Tanya often sings with the congregation at the microphone to lead us through hymns. You may have also enjoyed the coffee and cake prepared by volunteers in the new kitchenette in the foyer.

If there is a role you'd like to take on, please contact the church office!

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## Message from Pastor Kingdom

Educational psychology teaches that learning is a two-way process of assimilation and accommodation. The former is when a learner encounters and implements new information. The latter is when in the process of implementing new information the learner employs who they are. This process encapsulates my time, thus far, at Martin Luther Church.

I have assimilated to the rhythm of Martin Luther Church: Friday office meetings and Bowls & Blessings, monthly church council meetings, confirmation class weekends, and pastors' trimester meetings. I have assimilated the bilingual service (having conducted three of these services, I must confess, I am still learning). Thanks to the welcoming spirit of Martin Luther Church, this has also been a time of accommodation. Through her welcoming spirit, Martin Luther Church has allowed me space to be myself.

I am grateful for the support I am receiving from all members of this faith community. I thank the ministry team in general, and Vicar Alice in particular for a wonderful working atmosphere.

My prayer is that as we are all engaged in the process of assimilation and accommodation, that we continue to uphold each other in love. As Paul says, "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love" (Corinthians 13: 13).

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## Message from Vicar Rothgordt

Almost two months have now passed since I began my term abroad as a vicar at Martin Luther Church in Toronto. First of all, I would like to say how grateful I am that the congregation has welcomed me so warmly. This not only made my general start in this Canadian metropolis easier, but also significantly eased my initial melancholy about the distance from my home in northern Germany. And even though it hasn't been very long since I arrived, I already realize how many new things I learn every day and how valuable the diverse and meaningful encounters with very different people both inside and outside the congregation are. The pastoral work at Martin Luther Church gives me great pleasure overall, despite some Canadian "differences" that still surprise me at times but broaden my horizons in a significantly positive way! The fact that my work is focused primarily on the core pastoral tasks, such as Sunday worship, pastoral care of all kinds and at almost any time, as well as the essential guarantee of pastoral-spiritual support for the congregation, is very rewarding for me. From the very first week, I was particularly impressed by the outreach commitment to the "Bowls & Blessing" project, which invites everyone in the neighbourhood to a warm lunch twice a week. I would also like to make a big case for the monthly "Dinner Church", which I have already come to appreciate very much - and I am very excited about everything else that awaits me in the coming months!



# What's happening?



## Christmas Card Campaign

Christmas will be here before we know it! I started writing a pile of Christmas cards to give to those who may feel a little lonely this Christmas season. Please add to my pile by writing as many unaddressed cards as you wish. If you struggle with writing, you can donate cards that I can write. Please leave your cards in the church office. Thank you!

-Emma Serina, Volunteer

## Annual Christmas Play 3rd Sunday of Advent, Dec 15 at 11 am

We are seeking actors and audience members for our Christmas play. No memorization necessary! We will have 2 rehearsals: 5:30 p.m. Saturday Dec 14, 2024 and before the service on the morning of Sunday Dec 15th. Those interested in participating in the show are asked to contact Alex Boettcher at [tech-team@martinluther.ca](mailto:tech-team@martinluther.ca).

We hope to see you there, whether on stage or in the audience!

## Candlelight Christmas Gathering Wednesday Dec. 18 at 7 pm

Hang ornaments & share in a potluck meal to spread good cheer! This year's tree was donated by Giesela Schmidt. Though a church member for the first 40 years, she can no longer attend. The Gutschs and Sommerfelds paid her a visit recently. We thank everyone who plays a role in the tradition of having a real, tall decorated tree at our church.



## World Day of Prayer

A World Day of Prayer service in German will be held at our church on Friday March 7, 2025 at 11 am. The focus will be the Cook Islands. All German-speaking congregations in the GTA are invited. Volunteers are needed to help with the service and hospitality.

## Hannover Choir Ensemble

Save the date: A Choir Ensemble from Hannover ([www.vokalensemble-hannover.de](http://www.vokalensemble-hannover.de)) will perform at our church during the service on July 13, 2025, followed by a short concert!

They are a mixed, "semi-professional" choir of 40 singers under the direction of Prof. Klaus-Jürgen Etzold and are quite active with concerts, recordings and international guest performances. They have now traveled to all continents and have partner choirs all over the world who also visit them in Hanover (frequent choir exchanges). However, all choir members and the choir director have been working on a voluntary basis since the choir was founded in 1981. They are currently planning a guest performance tour to Ontario/Canada from July 11-25, 2025. As they always try to take part in a service in a German congregation on their international concert tours, they found our church on the Internet.

Sign up to perform a song together with the choir and/or help with a reception.

## Choir Practices Resume

Choir rehearsals will resume on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. on in March 2025 in preparation for Good Friday and Easter.

## Chairs available

The red padded chairs we use in our church basement have served our congregation well. In the interest of space and functionality, we have sorted out 30 of the best chairs to keep at church. Many have found a new home. There are still a few available until the end of the year if you'd like to take some.



# Reflections

## Refugee Arrival

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the support and help you provided during Luwam Kiflom's immigration to Canada. Thanks for your help, she successfully arrived on August 8 and is now enjoying her new life in Canada.

Luwam is currently working as a babysitter and is looking forward to improving her English through ESL classes. She recently completed her language assessment and received a Level 5. So far, she is enjoying her time here and is excited about her future in Canada. Once again, thank you for your continued support and for making such a positive impact on our lives.

Sincerely,  
Million Tesfaye

## Godspeed Family Giroux

We wish the Giroux family well after moving away this past summer!

"On behalf of Ashley, Peyton, Evelyn and I, we want to thank you for welcoming us so warmly into the community at MLEC and we're going to miss you all. We wish all the best to the congregation and the church in the future and will be sure to keep you in our thoughts and prayers." - Scott Giroux

## German Unity Day at Queen's Park Oct 3, 2024



Pastor Nkanyiso Kingdom, Vicar Alice Rothgordt and attendees from the Martin Luther Church visit Queen's Park in Toronto for the German Unity Day with the German Consulate and government officials.

## Welcome Elisabeth Marisol

We congratulate Pastor Annika Klappert and her husband Tim Buechner on birth of their daughter, Elisabeth Marisol on October 4, 2024!



Dear friends of Martin Luther Church,

Since the arrival of our firstborn daughter things at the parsonage have changed for sure. Every room shows signs of Elisabeth's presence and we're clearly on HER schedule now ;-). It's really amazing how much she has grown already and despite sleepless nights and fussy phases she is a bundle of joy that makes us laugh all the time! Transitioning into parenthood is a process - even more so for us being far away from our own families at this time. That's why we are so incredibly thankful for all the thoughtful gifts and warm words we received as well as the helping hands reaching out to us. Hopefully you'll see more of us at church again once we've gotten more used to being out and about with her. God bless you and keep you in his loving arms that encompass us all, big or small!



German Thanksgiving, Oct 6, 2024

## Church Choir Performances Oct 6, Nov 3, Dec 1, 2024

Our church choir performances on German Thanksgiving, October 6, All Saints Sunday November 3 and 1st Advent, December 1 can be viewed on YouTube. A friend of a choir member in Germany shared the following after watching our choir:

"Your small choir sang wonderfully. I think you can hear the joy with which your choir friends sing. I also love the songs your choir director always chooses. I would sing along with all of them too!"

## Lay Preacher Tanya Zielke's Time in Bolivia October 22-27

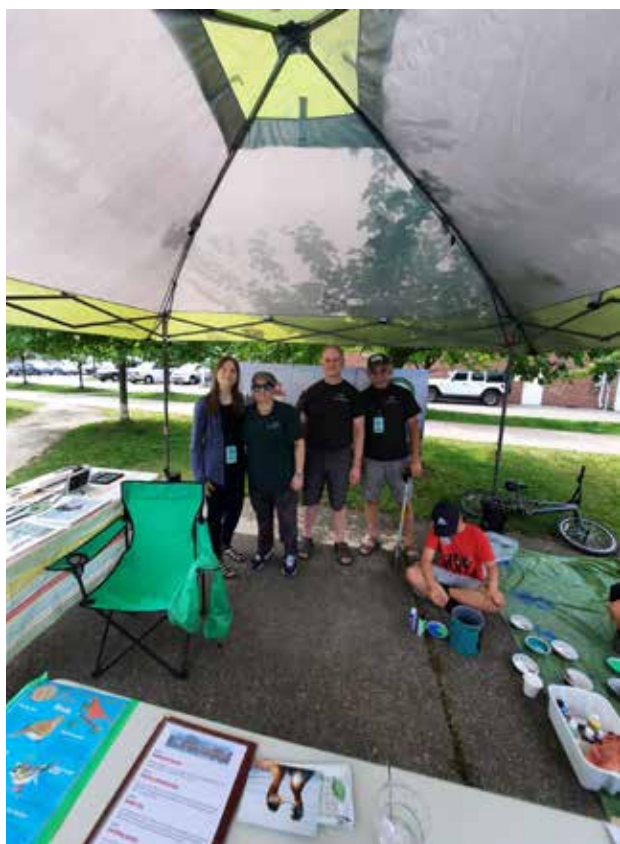
From October 22-27, I had the opportunity to participate in the lay-preacher meeting for North and South America in La Paz, Bolivia. There were 11 participants from 7 Countries. Accompanying us were 3 Pastors (Bogota, La Paz and Buenos Aires). We participated in workshops around the theme of "Seelsorge" (pastoral care). We each also presented a sermon. We also enjoyed a day trip to Copacabana, where we learned about the history of Bolivia and how the faith of the Spanish is blended with that of the Incas. I definitely came back with new friends, new thoughts on preaching and wonderful memories.



## Winter in the Community Garden

Our community garden was winterized at the beginning of November. Garlic cloves rest under the straw for early spring growth.

Our partnership with The Gardens Lakeshore was a wonderful success. Thank you to all our volunteers and the enriching partnership with the team from Humber Polytechnic.



## Partnership with Friends of Humber Bay Park Nov 20, 2024

Jocelyn Sommerfeld, the Vice President of Martin Luther Church Council, expressed Martin Luther Church's support for the Friends of Humber Bay Park at their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday November 20, 2024. She highlighted their efforts to keep the community clean and our collaboration on various events, particularly the Humber Bay Farmers Market. Jocelyn also commended Emma's significant contributions to both our organizations. She emphasized the shared goal of preserving the natural beauty of the Mimico by the Lake community for future generations. She thanked the Friends of Humber Bay Park for their dedication to engaging the public in environmental conservation through initiatives like nature walks and shoreline cleanups.



## Art painting session Nov 24, 2024

10 people brought creativity, colour and life to blank canvases in the church foyer and created their own work of art. Church member Kristine Stuef brought art books for inspiration and set the bar high with her background in fine arts. Painting materials and snacks were donated by Lala and Andrew Schultz. Some participants also brought food to share. We thank LAMP Community Health Centre for lending us easels. Everyone present contributed to the afternoon in a special way. The youngest aspiring artist was only 5 months old! Over \$250 was raised for community outreach.



## Looking back on Dinner Church

We celebrated dinner church in our sanctuary throughout the autumn months with a series of guest speakers and

September 25, 2024 with Pastor Kingdom as guest speaker

October 30, 2024 with Vicar Rothgordt as guest speaker

November 27, 2024 with the year in review

Dinner church will return in the spring.



## Church Pews find new homes

After reaching out to interested parties in the neighbourhood and on Kijiji, two of our well loved but now dusty, unused pews were moved to Muddy York Brewing Co in Whitchurch-Stouffville, freeing up space in the organ loft.





## Christmas Bazaar Dec 1, 2024

We had our annual Christmas Bazaar on Sunday December 1, 2024! We had a variety of unique handmade items for sale, including knit socks and hats, pillows, jewelry, artwork, and ornaments, as well as sweet treats like cookies, jams, truffles - and of course our famous gluhwein (non-alcoholic)! Pastor Annika Klappert and her husband Tim made the day even brighter by bringing their daughter Elisabeth to church for the first time.

Funds raised from this event will be used towards recovering from the devastating basement flood which occurred this summer. Thank you for your support!

Your 2024 MLC Christmas Bazaar Team,  
Leanne Grammenz and Jocelyn Sommerfeld



## Appreciating our members wherever they are

### Hello from Delaware...

**Christine Couturier** recently wrote from her home in Delaware, USA, "I think of my church family in Toronto often." She sent a picture from Barcelona on Canadian Thanksgiving. We wish her and her family well!



### ... and from the GTA!

Church members like **Ursula Pahnke**, **Ursula Scholz** (pictured left) and **Erika Schmitt** miss us and would appreciate a visit and/or a ride to church. Contact the church office to help our seniors and connect with people in similar situations.



Erika Schmitt's daughter would like to grow the German presence at her mother's retirement home, Venvi - Kingsway at Royal York and Dundas, so that our seniors might enjoy each others company. If there are any people currently look for a respectable place that still allows their aging parents some independence then this one is at a decent rental price. If you mention Erika Schmitt's name, it will be clear that you are coming to see it because of the German Lutheran ties. Go for a tour and enjoy a free lunch!

## We mourn...

**Jacob (Jack) Schaeffer** passed away on September 21, 2024 at 88 years of age. A funeral service led by Iris Schweiger was held for him at Hogle Funeral Home on September 27.

**Walter Berg** passed away on October 23, 2024 at 91 years of age.

# Upcoming services

## **December 8, 2024, Second Sunday of Advent**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **December 15, 2024, Third Sunday of Advent**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with Christmas Play (Iris Schweiger, lay preacher)

## **December 22, 2024, Fourth Sunday of Advent**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Tanya Zielke, lay preacher)

## **December 24, 2024 - Christmas Eve**

5:00 pm German Worship Service with church choir / 6:30 pm English Worship Service with church choir (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **December 29, 2024 - First Sunday after Christmas**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **January 5, 2025 - Second Sunday after Christmas**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Tanya Zielke, lay preacher)

## **January 12, 2025 - 1st Sunday after Epiphany (Baptism of our Lord)**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with Holy Communion (Pastor Kingdom)

## **January 19, 2025, 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **January 26, 2025, 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **February 2, 2025, 4th Sunday after the Epiphany**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **February 9, 2025, 5th Sunday after the Epiphany**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service (Pastor Kingdom)

## **February 16, 2025, 6th Sunday after the Epiphany**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (lay preacher Katja Brittain)

## **February 23, 2025, 7th Sunday after the Epiphany**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with Holy Communion (Vicar Rothgordt), followed by Annual General Meeting

## **March 2, 2025, Last Sunday after the Epiphany (Transfiguration of our Lord)**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (lay preacher: Tanya Zielke)

## **Wednesday, March 5, 2025, Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent)**

Service TBD

## **Friday, March 7, 2025, World Day of Prayer**

Land: Cook Islands, Service TBD

## **March 9, 2025, 1st Sunday of Lent**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **March 16, 2025, 2nd Sunday of Lent**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service with Holy Communion (Katja Brittain, lay preacher)

## **March 23, 2025, 3rd Sunday of Lent**

11:00 am German-English Worship Service with installation of church council (Pastor Kingdom)

## **March 30, 2025, 4th Sunday of Lent**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **April 6, 2025, 5th Sunday of Lent**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Worship Service (Katja Brittain, lay preacher)

## **April 13, 2025, Palm Sunday**

11:00 am German-English Service (Pastor Kingdom)

## **April 17, 2025, Maundy Thursday**

7:00 pm Dinner Church

## **April 18, 2025, Good Friday**

9:45 am English Devotion with Fellowship + 11:00 am German Service, both with Holy Communion and Choir (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **April 20, 2025, Easter**

Sunrise Service at 6 am Humber Bay Park West at Etobicoke Point, 2225 Lake Shore Blvd West, followed by Easter Breakfast in the church / 10:00 am German-English FAMILY Service with Choir (Vicar Rothgordt)

## **Annual General Meeting**

Our Annual General Meeting will follow the 11 am service on February 23, 2025.

Reports will be due at the end of January and will be distributed before the meeting.