



# "Some Mohr Jottings"

by Bishop Greg Mohr

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## Words to Catch the Ear

Have you ever said these nine words? "I will, and I ask God to help me." They easily can become "church language." Yet the depth, breadth and power of these words was profoundly evident on December 6, 2015, as Rev. Kathy Martin was installed as the Assistant to the Bishop for Missional Renewal. (As I have reported previously, this part-time position was created through the graciousness of a grant from the Church Extension and Capital Fund of our church.)

It was fitting that the worship service was held at King of Life Lutheran Church, Coquitlam, where Pastor Kathy serves as pastor. The congregation was willing to enter into a partnership with our Synod, sharing Pastor Kathy's time with all of us.

There are times when liturgical rites use predictable language. Necessary and appropriate were these three:

Pastor Kathy Martin, in the presence of this assembly will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, in the confidence that it comes from God through the call of the church? R: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

Will you carry out this ministry in accordance with the holy scriptures and with the confessions of the Lutheran church and in harmony with the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada? R: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

Will you be diligent in your study of the holy scriptures and faithful in your use of the means of grace? R: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

But then there was one question whose words were poetic, profound and poignant. It is worth reading over several times in order to embrace the symbolism, hope and promise embedded within:

**Trusting in God's care, will you witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed, pray for God's people, seek to grow in love for those you serve, strive for excellence in your skills, and adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ with a godly life?** R: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

These words are not just for Pastor Kathy. I believe these words are for each of us. Therefore, as I said to Pastor Kathy that evening in December I now say to you: "Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them." Amen.

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## **BISHOP'S REPORT FOR CONGREGATIONAL AGMS**

I soon will be able to finish my Bishop's report that is intended for inclusion in your congregational AGM reports. If it's too late to include in the packet of materials, please print it separately (or forward it by email) and make it available to members of your congregation. Thank you!

## **ROSTERED MINISTERS STUDY CONFERENCE**

A new venue awaits this year's participants in the annual rostered ministers Study Conference. Our gathering place for the Feb 29 to March 2nd event will be the Loon Lake Conference Centre just outside of Maple Ridge. Another change being introduced this year is that the gathering will begin on Monday afternoon rather than on Sunday evening. This allows for easier travel schedules for some participants, but also helps in keeping costs down.

The guest speaker for the Study Conference will be well-known theologian, author and presenter Rev. Dr. David Lose. Dr. Lose currently serves as President of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Archbishop John Privett of the Diocese of Kootenay will be our ecumenical guest.

## **SYNOD CONVENTION 2016: LIBERATED BY GOD'S GRACE**

This year's Synod Convention will begin at 2:00 pm on Thursday, April 28, and will conclude with the worship service on Sunday, May 1. The hosts for this year's convention are the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran, Coquitlam.

We will be using two venues for the convention. The majority of the sessions will be held at the Executive Plaza Hotel, Coquitlam (North Road, near Lougheed Mall and Skytrain station) with the opening and closing worship services being held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Something new will take place during convention this year! Rather than spreading a guest speaker's presentations throughout the convention schedule, we will experiment with holding a "Synod Learning Event" on Saturday, April 30. ALL ARE WELCOME to join with convention delegates for this Synod Learning Event at the Executive Plaza Hotel. Rev. Dr. Craig van Gelder will be this year's presenter/facilitator. Van Gelder is a recently retired professor of Congregational Mission at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, and is a member of The Missional Network. More information as well as the registration form will be forthcoming regarding this Synod Learning Event.

I hope that as many people as possible will participate in this event, in addition to those who are Synod Convention delegates. While we are not in a financial position to provide travel equalization beyond those who are Convention delegates, I hope nonetheless that congregations throughout our Synod will be able to partake of this important event.

Delegates attending the convention will work hard on Thursday and Friday, attending to the ministry and business of the convention. In addition to the reports of the bishop, treasurer, secretary and committees, there also will be the necessity to address proposed bylaw changes. These changes are intended to bring our synodical Constitution and Bylaws in line with decisions made by delegates to the 2015 National Convention. Among other things, such changes include the establishment of Synodically Recognized Ministries; the switch to a 3-year cycle for conventions and the implications this has for the election of Synod Council members and the Bishop; and the establishment of Ministry Areas instead of Conferences.

There is another change that will greet convention delegates this year. The election of delegates to the 2017 National Convention now must take place at the Synod Convention in the year preceding the national convention. National Conventions will have a maximum of 150 delegates, which means that congregations no longer will elect one delegate per congregation. Instead, Synod Conventions are to select the synod's delegates.

We therefore need to do things differently at this spring's Synod Convention. However, our current Bylaws do not address this new situation. As a result, Synod Council has adopted a policy to govern the process for the election of delegates to the 2017 National Convention. This policy has been distributed to all congregations. It provides information on how nominations may be made, as well as how we as a synod will financially provide for the delegates to the National Convention. The BC Synod is entitled to 17 delegates (9 Lay, 1 Youth, 7 Rostered), but the cost to send these delegates will be shared equitably across the congregations.

**CONGRATULATIONS AND GOD'S BLESSINGS TO ...**

Rev. Jane Gingrich (Hills of Peace, Kamloops) and Rev. John Boyd upon the celebration of their marriage on December 29, 2015. May God's richest blessings be upon them and may joy and thanksgiving be theirs.

**CONGREGATIONS IN TRANSITION**

On Sunday, Jan 17, Rev. Thomas Keeley was installed as pastor (half-time) at Benediction, Delta. He continues to serve the congregation of Dunbar, Vancouver, also on a half-time basis.

**CONGREGATIONS IN CALL PROCESS**

Chetwynd, Chetwynd Shared Ministry  
Port Alberni, Trinity (Lutheran-Anglican parish)  
Richmond, Our Saviour  
Surrey, Christ the King (1/2 time position)

**CHANGES TO THE BC SOCIETIES ACT**

The provincial government has undertaken a multi-year study and analysis of the Societies Act and recently has introduced changes to the legislation. These changes will become effective in 2017. The synod's Constitution Sub-Committee will review these changes and will report back to the synod with its findings.

**GLOBAL MISSIONS UPDATE: PRAYERS FOR PERU**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peru (ILEP), our Companion Synod, has been experiencing significant challenges and conflict these past few years. I recently met with members of the Missions Committee to discuss our Companion Synod relationship with the church in Peru. We were provided with the latest information regarding the turmoil that has embroiled the church in Peru and we want to convey some of this information to you so that you might remember our Companion Synod in your prayers.

The ILEP has undergone a split, but 8 of the 14 congregations continue on as a member church of the Lutheran World Federation and have changed their name from ILEP to that of ILP (The Lutheran Church in Peru). We are still studying what all of this might mean for our Companion Synod relationship. However, we felt it important to share with you, however briefly, that there have been significant changes.

In the meantime, let us increase our commitment to pray for them. We hope that we soon will have some clarity as to how we might re-engage our companion relationship.

At the meeting, we were reminded that the church in Peru prays for us regularly. Relationships are important. So let us also pray for them even more rigorously in light of their current situation.

**BISHOP'S SCHEDULE****WINTER-SPRING 2016**

Jan	4	Synod Council teleconference
	6-11	Bishops' Academy (ELCA + ELCIC), Tucson AZ
	14	Travel Day
	15	Provincial Multi-Faith Council planning meeting
	19	Meetings
	20	Lay Academy Planning Committee (Western Synods)
	23	Meeting: Grace, Victoria
	24	Worship: Church of the Cross, Victoria
	24	Worship Service: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Victoria
	27	Meeting: The Missional Network
	28-31	Board of Governors meeting; Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon
Feb	2	Meeting: Trinity, Port Alberni
	4	Missional meeting with Assistant to the Bishop
	7	Worship: Spirit of Life, Vancouver
	10	Presentation: Lenten Lunches, South Burnaby United
	14	Worship: Emmaus, Burnaby
	18-20	Missional Conference for Denominational Leaders, Seattle, WA
	23	Conference of Bishops teleconference meeting
	24-25	Meeting with Conference Deans
	25-27	Synod Council meetings
29-2	Rostered Ministers Study Conference	
Mar	3	Conference of Bishops meeting, Winnipeg
	3-5	National Church Council meetings, Winnipeg
	13	Worship: St. Paul's, Maple Ridge
	19	Committee for Theological Education and Leadership meeting, Victoria
	27	Worship: TBD
	31-1	Western Synods Examining Committee, Edmonton
Apr	3-6	Conference of Bishops meeting with Anglican House of Bishops meeting
	17	Worship: TBD
	24	Worship: TBD
	28-1	BC Synod Convention: Coquitlam (includes Synod Learning Event on Sat. April 30 with Dr. Craig Van Gelder; NOTE CHANGE in date from earlier announcements)
May	14	Meet with missional Renewal Guiding Teams #3
	15	Worship: TBD
	18-24	Holidays
	27-28	Joint Conference Convention for Peace River and Northwest, Dawson Creek
	29	Worship: Grace, Dawson Creek