



BRITISH COLUMBIA SYNOD

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
80 East 10th Avenue,
New Westminster, BC V3L 4R5

Phone: (604) 524-1318 | email: bcsynod@elcic.ca

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Bishop's Report for the 2019 Congregational Annual General Meetings

Dear Friends,

I bring you greetings from your sisters and brothers in Christ across our BC Synod. As you gather for your Annual General Meetings, I invite you to pray for one another — encouraging one another in the love of Christ and in the ministry context in which you are placed. Pray also for your Synod Council members, who seek to be faithful to the calling given them on your behalf. And please also continue your prayers for Pastor Kathy Martin (Assistant to the Bishop) and for me in our ministry among you. We are encouraged and renewed by your prayers, and for them we are extremely grateful.

As we continue to live into our missional work as a synod, it is amazing to see the breadth and scope of missional engagements in our congregations and communities. Missional theology, habits and practices are becoming embedded in our day to day lives as we continue to explore how God is at work in and among us, and how God is at work in our neighbourhoods and communities. People are trying new things, then learning and reflecting upon these things. We have started “field trips” for rostered ministers in one of the Regions; there also is a group that are delving into the theology of Lutheran missiology and reflecting on the world we are living in. And there are many congregational members who are trying things in their communities, exploring what God is up to and what it is that God is inviting them to.

We have been able to expand our capacity in missional training so as to provide an individualized approach for more congregations. This means that the learning can be offered in weeknight or weekend workshops, which allows congregations to work at their own pace and also allows for a larger segment of the congregation to receive the training in missional practice.

Newly Elected Synod Council for 2018-2021

At the May 2018 Synod Convention held at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Langley, the following people also were elected or re-elected for service on our Synod Council.

Chairperson	Stephen Holmes	(First, Vancouver)
Secretary	Rev. Kristen Steele	(Shepherd of the Valley, Langley)
Treasurer	Jerry Nieman	(Good Shepherd, Coquitlam)
Lower Mainland Region	Rev. Eric Krushel	(Good Shepherd, Coquitlam)
North Region	Joan Beek	(Our Saviour's, Prince George)
Southern Interior Region	Rev. Erik Bjorgan	(Deo, Salmon Arm)
Vancouver Island Region	Skip Triplett	(Church of the Cross, Victoria)
At Large, Lay	Brenda Eastman	(Benediction, Delta)
At Large, Lay	Karen Lee	(Peace, Vernon)
At Large, Rostered	Rev. Dean Andersen	(Christ, Chilliwack)
At Large, Rostered	Rev. Fleming Blishen	(Our Saviour's, Prince George)

Synod-Wide Conversations

Throughout February and March, we will be engaged in synod-wide conversations, facilitated by consultant Charles Holmes. The conversations will help us explore questions of who we are as the people of God in our BC Synod, what is it that God is calling us to, where is God leading us in the days and years ahead,

what shall our priorities be, and how might we best support and encourage one another as individuals, congregations and synod. These synod-wide conversations will provide us with an opportunity to listen to each other, to pray for discernment, and to share in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Once all of the synod-wide conversations are held, Synod Council will meet in retreat later in the spring along with our consultant to review all of the comments and conversations, and begin to discern what priorities shall guide us in our decisions and our ministry for the coming years.

Canada Lutheran — BC Synod Section

2019 sees us welcome a new BC Synod editor for the BC Synod section of the Canada Lutheran: Rachel Genge. Rachel will be familiar to many of you, for she previously served as secretary/receptionist for the BC Synod office. We give thanks for the work of Joshua Hergesheimer who served as the BC Synod editor from the fall of 2017 to the end of 2018. Our BC Synod editor is always looking for stories of what God is up to in your midst, and welcomes your suggestions or submissions.

Healthy Boundaries Workshops

Rev. Kathy Martin, Assistant to the Bishop, recently completed the training course that will enable her to provide workshops throughout our synod in Healthy Boundaries training. She also is authorized to be able to train the trainers. Workshops will be held for rostered ministers, as well as workshops for congregational leaders and for congregational members.

Synod-owned Property on the University Endowment Lands

At the May 2018 BC Synod Convention, the delegates passed a motion to sell the synod-owned property across from the UBC campus. Synod Council wishes to report that we have received and accepted an offer to purchase from the Mennonite Church, which owns the facility next door to ours. The closing date for the purchase is July 2019.

Study Conference

The rostered ministers of our synod gather each year for a time of study. This year's guest presenter is Dr. Karoline Lewis, associate professor in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. She is the author of "John: Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries" and "SHE: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry."

Lay Academy Courses and Workshops

The Lay Academy, a joint initiative by the western synods and our Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, provides a range of courses and workshops through the use of live-streaming video. Please watch for the advertisements as they are produced and consider taking part in these courses. Bear in mind that the live nature of these courses means that BC participants should not plan on sleeping in those mornings! An example of the kind of courses offered by the Lay Academy is that provided on two Saturdays this February: "Pathways to Prayer, Part 2," which explores the Lord's Prayer and its invitation to intimacy with God.

National Worship Conference and Western Synods' First Call Program

The ELCIC-Anglican National Worship Conference was held in Victoria this past July, under the theme of "Responding to Disaster: Sing, Pray, Worship." Thank you to all who were part of the organizing team and providing hospitality and welcome. Your ministry of service and hospitality was noted by those visiting from across our church.

May God continue to work in, among and through you. And may the God of surprises call you into unexpected and intriguing places this year.

Peace be with you all,
+Bishop Greg Mohr