

**Tenth
Biennial
Convention**

Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in Canada

University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg,
Manitoba

July 21–24, 2005

Contents

Lutherans/Anglicans	2
Group Services	2
Johnson & Jensen	3
Listening Circles	3
Same-sex vote	3
Bridges to SA	4
New worship book	4
Registration Info	4
Convention Tidbits	4

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Re-elected!



On a five-day retreat at a Jesuit Centre this past winter National Bishop Raymond Schultz was contemplating whether to announce his intention to retire. For five days, he said, he listened for God’s voice, and what he heard God say was: “This is a management issue, can’t you take care of it yourself?” So he didn’t say anything to the

church and simply let things unfold as they would.

On the third ballot, with 401 votes cast, and 202 needed to elect, Bishop Schultz was re-elected with 214 votes. The report was greeted with applause and a standing ovation.

Bishop Schultz told the assembly that it has been an honour to serve these past four years in a position that he never sought, and that hasn’t always been easy. He remains hopeful and encouraged about the church of the future, even through struggles, in which people gifted with creativity and enthusiasm serve. He remarked on how blessed we are to have the participation and exposure of those gifts.

Bishop Schultz accepted the election and stated that he would continue in this office for a second term. ■

C2C4C 2005 (Church to Church for Christ)



Eight weeks on the road this summer for 13 cyclists travelling from Ottawa, ON to Richmond, BC has been both gruelling

and transformational. Their stop in Winnipeg coincides with this convention and so they made a visit to our assembly Friday afternoon.

The group includes

three parents and 10 students, between ages 13-50, among them the congregation’s pastor, Greg Kjos, the chairperson Paul Skinner and his daughter Hanna, and one of the congregation’s musicians. Along the way they’ve tented and also stayed in ELCIC, LCC and ELCA congregations who’ve offered a hospice ministry: lodging overnight, a hot meal, and various other services like showers or laundry.

Through injuries, physical hardship and

continued on page 2

Lutherans and Anglicans to meet jointly



We're already in full communion. Now we'll also be in full convention.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada will hold a joint national convention June 21-24, 2007 in Winnipeg, ELCIC delegates were told yesterday.

It will be the first joint convention for Canadian Lutherans and Anglicans since the Waterloo Declaration of 2001 placed the two churches in full communion with each other.

This allows members of both churches to commune in each other's parishes. It also enables Lutheran pastors and Anglican rectors to be called to each other's pulpits and to administer the sacraments.

The ELCIC and the Anglican Church will hold their business sessions separately. But there will be opportunities for some joint sessions, said Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada,

Hutchison brought greetings from the Anglican Church of Canada to the ELCIC convention yesterday morning. ■

Group pensions committee delivers good news



ELCIC Group Services Inc. (GSI) members John Wolff, (CMA) and Executive Director Hildy Thiessen, (CA), jointly delivered what appears to be a more upbeat picture of the latest Canada-wide pension situation for the church. The issue of "unfunded liability" continues to be of concern, but, as Wolff remarked, "slow progress" has been achieved in reducing the liability since the last national convention in 2003.

As well, Wolff stated that GSI now provides expanded services in offering at "no cost or obligation" to personalized retirement planning.

He noted that education sessions have already been held in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. The GSI Board was also kept busy with activities related to the transfer of all financial responsibilities of Augustana University College (Camrose) to the University of Alberta.

With new efficiencies in place, early plans, according to Wolff and Thiessen, look good for the future of the group pension planning for the church, as long as controls and sound investing remain.

Concerns were expressed about investments, with comments made from the floor regarding socially-responsible investing of the church's pension funds. Wolff responded that a decision had actually been made within the last year to "divest of investments in two tobacco companies." ■

"C2C4C 2005" continued from page 1

a 100-120 km/day pace, the cyclists have persevered to bring awareness and encouragement to the work of CLWR, to make connections with congregations across Canada and to develop Christian friendships. They also have a target goal of raising

\$10,000 in donations to be presented to CLWR.

So far, the group is healthy and in good spirits. They've already travelled 2400 km and anticipate finishing somewhere between August 15-20. ■

Prayer

O God, your ears are open always to the prayers of your servants. Open our hearts and minds to you, that we may live in harmony with your will and receive the gifts of your Spirit; through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Johnson and Jensen team up to provide tsunami relief up-date

Rev. Paul Johnson, Assistant to the Bishop (Ecumenical Relations), and outgoing CLWR Executive Director Ruth Jensen provided updates on GHDA and CLWR and how they have responded to developments and emergencies worldwide on behalf of the national church body.

Johnson praised the church for its 20% increase from June 2004 to now in undesignated gifts (up from \$149,000 to \$181,388). Special efforts were made to facilitate timely disaster relief response by funneling

funds directly to CLWR. Tempted to thank all Canadian Lutherans, Johnson first gave thanks to God, for opening the hearts of Canadians beyond belief through the tsunami disaster—and opening their wallets later!

Jensen is leaving the director's post with CLWR after nine years to move to a new endeavour in New Delhi, India next year. She further informed the assembly that the Canadian government, through CIDA, would match on par directed offerings to relief organizations in this special situation. Donations received totaled \$1.3 million dollars. CIDA's matching grant made significant relief work, especially on southeastern coastal India, possible. "Isn't that awesome," she exclaimed, to a rousing ovation from the convention floor. ■



Response to listening/talking circles

Some delegates commented on the process:

- Our circle had prayer time and people expressed gratitude for what we'd shared and heard.
- Too bad this way of talking and listening couldn't have happened at the grassroots leading up to these deliberations.
- I don't think anyone's mind is really changed, but it was a good way for all to feel safe in sharing.
- We heard a wide variety of opinions, with good and valid comments.
- I sensed the fear that the church could divide over this.
- No matter how the vote goes, this exercise has made me feel that the church will not divide, will remain the body of Christ.
- Although not all agreed, everyone listened respectfully.
- Because we were asked to speak from personal perspective, I felt restricted--after all, my church paid for me to be here and I couldn't speak on their behalf.
- Taking turns talking, and being timed so all had the opportunity if they wanted, seemed like a fair process.

Same-sex blessing vote today

ELCIC delegates will vote this morning on a resolution to allow pastors to perform blessings for same-sex couples.

The resolution forwarded to the ELCIC convention by the National Church Council would provide "local options" for congregations to recognize and bless same-sex committed relationships.

Authorization to perform such blessings would require the consent of the pastor and a two-thirds approval vote by a special congregational meeting.

If the resolution passes, the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship will be asked to develop a rite for the blessing of same-sex couples in committed relationships.

The resolution follows nearly a year's study by the ELCIC national council. Scholars and theologians were asked to submit essays on the issue of allowing a local option for same-sex blessings. Private individuals and congregations also responded with comments. All are on the ELCIC's website, along with a study guide.

The practice, if approved, would be to recognize and bless same-sex relationships, not to perform actual marriages, according to the council.

The convention is debating the issue during the same week as same-sex marriage became law in Canada. However, the legislation doesn't require churches to performing marriage ceremonies for gays and lesbians.

Currently, the ELCIC has no official policy on same-sex blessings. In practice, however, the church follows a 1970 statement by the former Lutheran Church of America which defines marriage as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman. ■

Noteworthy
The 2006 and 2007 budgets were passed without discussion.

Bridges to South America

Pastor-President Alan Eldrid of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina and Uruguay greeted the assembly and spoke of the developing relationship of our two churches. From early Lutheran missionary roots,



we have grown into a more reciprocal partnership. In a country like Argentina, where 90% of the culture is Roman Catholic, the Lutheran church has had to establish new ways of knowing, and doing and understanding. Significant relationships resulted, especially with the indigenous peoples of the Patagonia region. The particular affinity with Canada might also have something to do with the cooler climates in that part of the world, he joked.

Pastor Eldrid spoke of the “bridge of trust”—a two-way bridge—that our churches have built; an exceptional accomplishment. ■

New worship book on its way

Coming soon to your Lutheran congregation: a new book of worship.

It doesn't have a name yet. The colour of its cover hasn't been decided. But the new book represents a comprehensive approach to developing a new primary worship resource for Lutherans in North America.

Renewing Worship, the five-year church-wide project by the ELCIC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America expects to have the book in the hands of worshippers by October 2006 and in time for Advent.

The new book is intended to replace the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, in use since 1978. It will still contain the same liturgy and many of the same hymns as the *LBW*. But it will also include different hymns, additional rites and extra worship material, a breakfast meeting yesterday was told.

“This will be a much larger book,” said Rev. André Lavergne, a member of the Renewing Worship committee.

The book is seen as a core collection of hymns and liturgical material, Lavergne said. Besides print, it will be available in CD format and on a website (www.renewingworship.org).

Lavergne noted the average lifespan of a hymn/worship book is 20 years and the *LBW* has already surpassed that. Its predecessor, the *Service Book and Hymnal*, lasted from 1958 to 1978. A worship supplement titled *With One Voice* came out in 1995.

The cost of the new worship book has yet to be determined.

The old *LBW* with its familiar green cover will not be retired. Congregations will still be able to use it as resource material. But the new worship book represents a response to changing times and different technologies, he said. ■

Registration Information

Total registration as of the report of the Committee on Registration and Credentials at the first business session:

Friday morning:

Delegates

Lay	244
Ordained	162
Total Delegates	406

Visitors	159
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Total registered attendance	566
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Convention Tidbits



Lay Delegate Alvin Stedel from Grace Lutheran Church in Dawson Creek BC travelled 2000 km to get here on his motorcycle.

A question from a passerby at the Hospitality Desk: “What does *Ellsick* (ELCIC!) stand for?”

Newsletter Deadlines:

Items for the newsletter need to be submitted by 1:00 p.m. on Saturday for the Sunday morning edition. Drop them off at the Hospitality Desk.