



**ELCIC**

*In Mission  
for Others*

## **Summary of the Report of the National Bishop to National Church Council (NCC)**

**For the Quarter ending February 28, 2014**

*Dear Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada,*

*I share quarterly reports with NCC that give updates on the life and work of our church including updates on the work of the National Office. Recently, members of NCC have encouraged me to share this information more widely, and I am happy to do so. I know it is a lot of information! The report is organized around the four goals of our strategic plan. If the whole report is daunting you may want to focus in on one of the areas of work that interests you.*

*The other thing you need to know is that this document cannot stand on its own. To see how NCC responded to this and other items that came before it you need to refer to the 2014 March NCC Release and to the minutes of NCC which will be posted to the ELCIC website.*

Dear Members of NCC:

In December, the Joint Planning Committee for Joint Assembly met to do an evaluation of our gathering in Ottawa. The Joint Planning Committee rated Joint Assembly as a very positive experience. We noted ways of making improvements in the future, but felt strongly this was an experience worth doing again! We recommend that NCC approve in principle holding a Joint Assembly with the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) in 2019.

December also included meetings with the Lutheran Council in Canada, a meeting with the Presiding Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), ACC, and The Episcopal Church (TEC), and the Officers Consultation.

I also had a meeting with the Primate and the General Secretary of the ACC and we discussed how we can continue to work more closely within our full communion relationship. One of the things we discussed was another joint meeting of NCC and Council of General Synod (COGS). We would see a particular focus of this meeting as being a check-in on our joint work around the Joint Declaration on Homelessness and Affordable Housing and Responsible Resource Extraction. I have run this past the officers and the National Office staff and have found support. Therefore I recommend that NCC approve in principle holding a joint meeting with COGS November 13-15, 2015.

The months ahead are very full with the Truth and Reconciliation National Event in Edmonton, 5 synod conventions, CLAY youth gathering, the National Worship Conference and an LWF council meeting to name a few events. I do want you to know that I also say 'no' to things. I have turned down 3 LWF requests for participation this year so far. I'm doing my best to keep

balance in my life and have energy for what the ELCIC requires me to do!

I have been very excited to participate and promote #fastfortheclimate. This monthly fast on the first day of the month focuses attention on the need for climate justice. I love the way it brings together two of our strategic goals – Spirited Discipleship and Compassionate Justice. I just got notice that my picture will be included in a new Lutheran World Federation (LWF) youth-sponsored website in their “gallery of heroes”. I’m so pleased to be able to support the initiatives of Lutheran young adults. Why not join me as we #fastfortheclimate?

We have received the new LWF Gender Justice Policy with a request for study. We will move this to our September meeting agenda.

At this meeting we will be dealing with several matters to which I want to draw your attention.

- Planning for the ELCIC commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. The Report of the LWF Special Committee and the report from ELCA will be the basis for our plans. A draft proposal will be coming to you from National Office Staff and will be provided to you at the meeting.
- Report from the Finance Committee regarding revisions to the Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) Management Handbook, the National Office Personnel Policy Handbook, and the 2014 budgets as well as the proposed 2015 National Convention fees and financial policy motions. The Department of Finance and Administration will present the unaudited December 31, 2014 financial statements.
- A report from the Officers Consultation for us to review and discuss
- The theme for the 2015 National Convention. A suggestion will be brought from the staff to the meeting.
- I want to have a discussion about Spiritual Renewal for a community to see if I have interpreted the Strategic Plan correctly!

And now here is some reporting on how we are living out our strategic plan.

### ***In Mission for Others, we will practice Spirited Discipleship***

Work on the new [www.worship.ca](http://www.worship.ca) is ongoing with a focus on developing regular content for worship planning and access to past resources. The goal is to provide Canadian based online resources for weekly and seasonal worship planning for ministries of the ELCIC and beyond.

We are close to beginning the testing phase for an *Eternity for Today* app. *Eternity for Today* is currently a print publication that serves as a devotional resource primarily for ELCIC members. It has a strong and committed subscriber base and we will be continuing the print publication. The app will be available via iPhone, Blackberry and Android and it is hoped that this new resource tool will draw in a new audience, and also address concerns with an existing audience who would appreciate the option to change text size.

The 2014 ELCIC Praise Appeal was launched in January. The theme for the 2014 ELCIC Praise Appeal, ***Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk Humbly with Our God***, comes from Micah 6:8

and outlines what God requires us to do in a way that is both memorable and compelling. NCC members are encouraged to champion this appeal in their own congregations by sharing information and requesting an ELCIC Praise Appeal Sunday be held on a date that works best within your own context. Resources for the 2014 ELCIC Praise Appeal can be found online at [www.elcic.ca/praiseappeal](http://www.elcic.ca/praiseappeal) .

Resources created this quarter to assist members of our church in lifting up specific areas of ministry include: Diaconal Sunday and Scout-Guide Week.

Nominations for the Companion of the Worship Arts will close at the end of this month. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the worship life of the ELCIC and to the Anglican Church of Canada.

Registration continues for the Anglican Lutheran National Worship Conference, *Weaving Strands, Living for Liturgy*, [www.nationalworshipconference.org](http://www.nationalworshipconference.org) July 20-23, 2014 at the Providence Renewal Centre in Edmonton, AB with featured presenters Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers, Professor of Liturgics at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley CA, and Dr. David Cherwien, Cantor, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN and special guest presenter Rev. Paul Fromberg, rector of St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church of San Francisco. Over twenty workshops are being offered covering a variety of worship subjects. Presenters are from across our churches including bishops, pastors, musicians, educators, and artists. Pre and post conference events on worship music and preaching are also being offered. It should be a wonderful event for pastors, musicians, worship planners and anyone interested in worship, music and the arts.

Registration is open for the Annual Conference of the North American Academy of the Catechumenate [www.catechumenate.org](http://www.catechumenate.org) “*Reclaiming our Baptismal Calling: Discipleship in a Post-Christian Culture*” at Vancouver School of Theology, August 5 – 8, 2014 with presenter Bishop William Willimon and worship leaders Scott Weidler, Lyle McKenzie, Paul Palumbo, and Bishop Susan Johnson. Lyle McKenzie is on the planning team. The Program Committee for Worship will publicize that bursaries are available (from Worship Royalty Reserves) to interested rostered and other leaders who have not had the chance to use the resources and rites associated with the catechumenate.

Three new pieces have been posted at <http://elcic.ca/Youth/RightToWater.cfm> in support of the National Youth Project Right to Water in support of the addressing water needs in the community of Pikangikum, ON: a Brochure, a FAQs and a PowerPoint.

Registration has opened for *WORTH IT*, the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering (CLAY 2014, August 14-17, 2014). [www.claygathering.ca](http://www.claygathering.ca)

The Canadian Mission Consultation meets February 20-22, 2014. Rev. David Webber of Cariboo Presbyterian Church will speak on the house church model used by his parish, and the consultation will update each other regarding the mission areas and strategies.

## ***In Mission for Others, we will nurture a Healthy Church***

We are working on several communication initiatives that will be used for upcoming Synod Conventions and other key events that will help share more of the stories across the church. The Director of Communications has requested that NCC make available a brief portion of the agenda to hear more about the launch of a new campaign.

The Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry (PCLM) met January 30 and 31, 2014. Lutheran Theological Seminary provided an updated list of the courses offered by the seminary for Diaconal candidates. PCLM is asking the Candidacy Manual be amended to update the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) Approved Theological Courses for Diaconal Candidates” (Candidacy Manual, Appendix 5) as per the information received from LTS.

Based on a suggestion from the Joint Western Synods Examining Committee, the National Office investigated the idea of submitting a photo with the colloquy exam. This included seeking legal opinion. The ELCIC lawyer recommended not requesting a photo, due to potential perceived bias based on factors such as gender, age and skin colour. Upon meeting a candidate face to face, all this information is revealed. However, a photo provides that information prior to meeting the person. The Candidacy Manual currently requests a photo as part of the application process for rostered ministry and for lay ministry of the word (pages 97 and 175/185 respectively). Based on the legal opinion received, PCLM recommends ending the practice of requesting photos as part of the application process.

PCLM received and reviewed feedback regarding NCC Motion **CC-2013-07** *That NCC send the Future of Theological Education task force report to the synods and their candidacy committees, seminaries and boards for consultation. We ask them to reflect and provide feedback via the PCLM by December 15, 2013 on this question: “What do you see as the five key priorities for leadership for ministry?” The PCLM will report back to NCC at the March 2014 meeting.*

PCLM summarized the responses received from the synods and seminaries. All submissions emphasized the interconnectedness of their leadership priorities. After considering connections between the various submissions, PCLM identified five groups of priorities, and considered some possible next steps:

### **1. Foundational Concerns**

There was a common interest that leadership for ministry have: mission focus, theological grounding, a clear theology of ministry, and abilities to understand context & connect faith with reality. Frequently, discussion moved to shifting the culture of all expressions of this church to be mission minded. PCLM made no specific recommendations on foundational concerns. However, the work of Faith Order and Doctrine is addressing these concerns through study and conversation.

### **2. Leadership Outcomes**

After reviewing the materials submitted, PCLM felt that the Outcomes identified in the Future of Theological Education report are an accurate summary of many of the priorities

identified as important leadership qualities for rostered leaders. These outcomes are grouped under Association of Theological Schools (ATS) categories of Religious Heritage, Cultural Context, Personal & Spiritual Formation and Capacity for Ministerial & Public Leadership. PCLM recommends additional work on how to measure these outcomes.

### **3. Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning was regularly cited in the submitted priorities, most often in relation to its importance for effective mission. PCLM identified a few communication ideas for encouraging lifelong learning, which will be worked on with GSI and the National Office. PCLM also shared a brief report on the Continuing Education Plan with the National Bishop as information for the Conference of Bishops.

### **4. Recruitment for Rostered Leadership**

The low number of candidates was regularly mentioned in the priorities and in discussion. PCLM Synod representatives committed to discuss recruitment with their synod bishop, including the possibility of hosting a workshop for pastors and congregational leaders on “How to recruit people for rostered ministry”. PCLM is recommending that NCC declares a “Day of Prayer for Vocations to Rostered Ministry” on Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and on the fourth Sunday of Easter in each succeeding year.

Rationale: This would be an opportunity to remind the congregations of their responsibility to foster and encourage vocations to the rostered ministry. Several churches use Good Shepherd Sunday for this purpose (Roman Catholic, Church of England, Methodist Church of Great Britain use this Sunday. For example, see <http://www.methodist.org.uk/prayer-and-worship/methodist-special-sundays/vocations-sunday>.

### **5. Congregation / Culture**

The congregations role in theological & leadership formation, vocational awareness, encouraging lifelong learning and identifying leaders/candidates was mentioned many times.

PCLM will prepare a “A simple guide of ways that congregations contribute to leadership formation.” Information from the FTE report will be helpful in this process.

PCLM also suggests that, as part of the plan to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation, NCC consider including a challenge to each congregation to host a theological event/conversation related to the LWF theme “Liberated by God’s Grace” and/or the “Not for Sale” subthemes.

PCLM awarded Continuing Education Plan Long Term study Grants to three pastors studying for Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) degrees.

On January 27, 2014 the National Bishop met with Rev. David Tin, President of the Chinese Special Interest Conference (CSIC) and Esther Au, CSIC Treasurer. CSIC leaders highlighted

the importance of relationships in the Chinese ministry context, and shared recent experiences in the CSIC. It was a very helpful conversation. In the midst of several congregations leaving the ELCIC, the CSIC as an organization has been relatively quiet during the past couple of years. Rev. Tin is looking to schedule a meeting later in 2014, and the National Bishop plans to be present.

### **Faith, Order and Doctrine Committee (FOD)**

FOD continues work on the question of the Provision of Word and Sacrament Ministry. By mid-2013, FOD had received some 275 responses to an on-line survey; reflections from the synod bishops; contributions from doctors of the church; and several background documents. FOD has created a four-session congregational *Study Guide*. Print copies of the *Study Guide* will be made available to 2014 Synod Convention delegates. Additional copies will be available for download from the national website. The *Study Guide* will also be circulated to the LWF, WCC, CCC, ELCA, ACC and companion synods.

An FOD meeting is planned for February 2015, during which recommendations will be prepared for the March 2015 meeting of NCC.

### ***In Mission for Others, we will practice Compassionate Justice***

Plans are underway for the final Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) National Event in Edmonton March 27-30, 2014. This is an important moment in the life of our country. The National Bishop will attend the event and make an Expression of Reconciliation on behalf of the ELCIC. As the TRC events have moved across the country, the ELCIC National Office has shared information with the respective synod offices, who in turn have engaged local ecumenical opportunities. Currently, we are thankful to the ABT Synod for their engagement in this process.

In early March, the National Office sent a mailing to every congregation that includes a pastoral letter, the Joint Assembly Declaration and resources on the issues of mining (KAÏROS), housing (ELCIC) and human trafficking (Canadian Council of Churches). Also included was information about the ELCIC Praise Appeal.

On November 11, 2013, the National Bishop signed a statement of concern regarding the Quebec government's proposed "Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality."

[http://elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/InterfaithStatmentOnQuebecValues\\_2013-11-11.pdf](http://elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/InterfaithStatmentOnQuebecValues_2013-11-11.pdf)

The Montreal Lutheran Council also made a statement which can be found at

<http://elcic.ca/ecumenical/interfaith.cfm>

On December 9, 2013 the National Bishop issued a pastoral letter inviting members to pray for peace in the Middle East.

<http://elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/ELCIC-Pastoral-Letter-2013-12-Re-Prayer-For-Peace-In-The-Middle-East.pdf>

On December 10, 2013 (Human Rights Day), the National Bishop endorsed a public statement in support of refugees.

<http://elcic.ca/From-the-Bishop/documents/Human-Rights-Day-Statement-2013Dec10.pdf>

On January 20, 2014 the National Bishop encouraged participation in a Monthly Day of Fasting for the Climate (#fastfortheclimate) on the first each month.

<http://www.elcic.ca/news.cfm?article=349>

On February 7, 2014 the National Bishop wrote letters to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the Minister of International Development in support of Augusta Victoria Hospital, Jerusalem, regarding a growing debt that the Palestinian Authority owes the hospital. The request to address our government came from the Lutheran World Federation and went to several other churches as well. (Tabs 11 & 12)

Through communication vehicles such as new releases, elcic.ca, the Our Church in Mission page in *Canada Lutheran*, E-Communique, and media mentions – the work of our church *In Mission for Others* is shared. A few of the news releases produced include the following: ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson encourages members of the church to pray for peace in the Middle East this Christmas season; Week of Prayer For Christian Unity: January 18-25; ELCIC National Bishop participates in, encourages monthly day of fasting for the climate; celebrating Diaconal Sunday - February 23; and lifting up World Interfaith Harmony Week. We received media attention with regards to: our participation in #fastfortheclimate; and the four-way dialogue meeting between leaders of the ELCIC, ACC, ELCA, and TEC.

## ***In Mission for Others, we will practice Effective Partnerships***

### **Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission (JALC)**

The first face-to-face meeting of JALC III will take place February 26-28, 2014. The co-chairs and staff have met by phone to draft the Agenda.

### **Anglican-Lutheran International Coordinating Committee (ALICC)**

ALICC has initiated a process promoting Anglican-Lutheran collaboration in the observance of the 2017 Reformation anniversary: “[ALICC] intends to provide study material based around the official LWF theme ‘Liberated by God’s Grace’. This material would be designed to be used in joint Anglican-Lutheran study groups where both denominations are present as well as by separate groups. It is hoped that this material will relate to different ages and contexts. The purpose is to highlight that reformation is ongoing and that 16th century Reformation thoughts are relevant for Christians today...” (ALICC Communiqué, September 27, 2013). Bishop Pryse serves as co-chair of ALICC.

### **Heads of Church Meeting (ACC - ELCIC - TEC - ELCA)**

The four bishops met in December, 2013, the first such meeting for the ELCA’s Presiding

Bishop Eaton. Common areas and themes were advanced and discussed. The four agreed to create a mechanism whereby the four churches would offer a united voice in times of need, distress, celebration, etc.; to do some work on the Doctrine of Discovery; to prepare joint devotions for Advent, 2014; to contemplate how bishops might do formation together; to look at possibilities for a pilgrimage of accompaniment to the Holy Land; to consider the possibility of establishing a joint calendar for observing something akin to ACC's Jerusalem Sunday (Easter 7); more. The four bishops have agreed to meet next in Toronto this July.

### **Joint ACC-ELCIC Staff Meetings and Staff Cooperation**

A proposal is taking shape for ACC and ELCIC to have joint semi-annual staff meetings to look at common programmatic possibilities. The first will unfold on May 22 in Toronto.

The communications teams between the ELCIC and Anglican Church of Canada are working on a joint Find a Congregation website which will be accessed off of either elcic.ca or Anglican.ca websites. The site will allow individuals to search for a congregation/parish from either of the two churches, provided information on individual congregations such as worship times, contact information, photos, and even link to Google Maps for specific directions. Many other advanced search options will also be available.

The director of communications and resource generation and the Anglican Church of Canada's interim director of resource general have begun to hold monthly calls to discuss further the work that our two churches do in this area.

Continuing a yearly tradition that has become a warm reminder of the full communion partnership enjoyed by our two churches, ELCIC Bishop Johnson and Anglican Archbishop Hiltz jointly prepared [\*\*Christmas video message\*\*](#) with Lutherans and Anglicans across the country. New this year, Bishop Susan Johnson and Archbishop Hiltz also [\*\*shared a New Year's greeting with Lutherans and Anglicans across Canada\*\*](#). In their joint message Johnson and Hiltz reflect on highlights from 2013, including Joint Assembly, the Anglican-Lutheran gathering in Ottawa this past July-particularly on the Joint Declaration on homelessness, affordable housing, and responsible resource extraction.

### **Canadian Council of Churches (CCC)**

Pastor André Lavergne has agreed to serve on the Nominations Committee of the Canadian Council of Churches.

### **World Council of Churches (WCC)**

The WCC is populating the various commissions and joint working/consultative groups following the Busan Assembly (October-November, 2013). While the ELCIC does not have the capacity to participate directly, it collaborates with a number of Canadian denominations to keep abreast of WCC work.

In the lead-up to the Busan Assembly, the WCC released a document entitled *The Church:*

*Toward a Common Vision.* This ecumenical convergence statement on ecclesiology is the result of 20 years of work by the Faith and Order Commission and stands in the lineage of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM), the ground-breaking text produced in 1982. Member churches have been asked to respond to this document. Later this spring, the document with study questions will be circulated to ELCIC synod bishops, doctors of the church, seminaries and schools (and to NCC) for response. These will be gathered (as other Canadian denominations are doing) to guide an ELCIC response (2015).

### **Other partnerships**

The Lutheran Council in Canada met December 5, 2013. The Council continues is applying for a postage stamp to be issued in commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.

In honour of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, ELCIC staff participated in the annual lunch for denominational leaders and staff who serve out of Winnipeg.

### **Other**

I certify that, for the period of December 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014 payments have been made as they fall due for amounts owed or accrued in the specified periods related to obligations owed to or for the benefit of employees, the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba. These amounts include but are not limited to:

1. Employer and employee payments and deductions related to salary, wages and remuneration to employees and clergy such as income taxes, Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan;
2. Wages and other remuneration to employees and clergy including vacation pay;
3. Income and excise taxes (including Goods and Services Taxes);
4. The premiums due on insurance, including Directors and Officers liability insurance.

I further certify that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada:

1. Has duly filed on a timely basis, all tax returns, reports and other required filings;
2. Has made all contributions to the Pension and Benefits Plan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in compliance with the funding agreement;
3. Is not in default of the terms of the credit facility arrangements with the National Church's bankers;
4. Has complied with all legislation, policies and procedures applicable to its operations and employees including, but not limited to, the Employment Standards Act, Labour Relations Act and Occupational Health and Safety Act;
5. Has complied with the requirements of the Manitoba Human Rights Code and that no discrimination or harassment complaints have been filed or reported;
6. Has complied with the provisions of the Access and Privacy Code, and has not communicated or allowed to be communicated to any person not legally entitled thereto, any information relating to the confidential affairs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada nor has it allowed such persons to inspect or have access to any confidential

books or documents belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada or relating to its business.

Further, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the ELCIC is in compliance with all applicable legislation, policies and procedures.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly "Aron".