

Section 3 – Reports of the Bishops, Vice Chair, GHDA, LPG and Conferences

Report of the Bishop – Synod Assembly 2008

Introduction

Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! It's a privilege to be able to formally welcome all of you to London for this Twelfth Biennial Convention of our synod. For the past several months, a hardworking and committed local arrangements committee has been preparing for our arrival. It's been a wonderful team effort and I am deeply appreciative of all the work that has been done on our behalf. Thank-you London Conference and thank-you members of the local arrangements committee for all of your efforts in support of this gathering!

Special Guests

We welcome several special guests to this year's assembly. From our wider Lutheran family we welcome our **National Bishop Susan Johnson**. How wonderful it is to have you back among us for these few days! Also joining us from our national offices will be **Ms. Hildy Thiessen**, the Executive Director of **ELCIC Group Services**, who will also be present for a portion of our agenda and present a workshop on Friday afternoon.

Key ministry partners from partner churches, agencies and institutions will also bring greetings to us through these days. **Mr. Robert Granke**, Executive Director of **Canadian Lutheran World Relief**, and the **Rev. Dieter Kays**, President and CEO of **Faith Life Financial** will join us at some point in our agenda, as will the **Very Rev. Peter Wall**, co-chair of the **Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission**.

Our very special guest at this assembly is Ms. Tana Kjos. Tana and Kelly Fryer are the leading forces behind A Renewal Enterprise, the organization we've been working with over the past two years in a process of encouraging mission renewal within the life of our synod. Tana will be leading us in Bible Study, prayer, reflection and conversation at several points in our agenda. It's a real delight to be able to welcome you to this gathering Tana, and we thank-you in advance for the leadership you will be providing for us.

Our Theme

The focus for our time together is the biennial theme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, In Mission for Others – A People Called.

At our 2006 Synod Assembly we adopted a Renewed Vision for Mission for 2006 to 2008. That document articulated six pictures of the kind of synod we wanted to be and included a number of possible actions which might help these hopes to become more of a lived reality. At this year's Synod Assembly you will act on a recommendation from the Synod Council asking us to re-commit to this vision for the coming biennium. As the prayer from the Anglican Church of New Zealand says, "there are some things that have been done, but many things still left undone!"

In my report to you this year, I will comment on the life of our synod using the six statements we are using to describe what we want to be most characteristic of our life together.

We want to be a synod that is passionate about our relationship with God, in Christ.

At last count 49 of our synod's 200 congregations have participated in an "In Mission for Others – Taking it Home" training event. This September an additional thirty or so are scheduled to participate in two events that were snowed out in March. God is stirring up some good and wonderful things in our midst!

This fall we will move into phase two of this synod wide emphasis. Through the continued generosity of our supporters in the Bishops' Company for Mission, we have been able to put together a programme for 2008 – 2009 that will include:

- A year-long subscription to monthly online training seminars for all pastors and professional leaders in the synod as well as the members of any congregational leadership team that attended a phase one event, that would:
 - Equip these leaders in the process & the principles of missional renewal
 - Provide a forum for these leaders to engage each other in conversation and share best practices
 - Teach these leaders a common "missional" language, helping to ensure that leaders across the synod are "on the same page" in regards to being In Mission for Others
- The design and onsite facilitation of up to three further regional training events in fall 2008 and spring 2009 that will be open to leadership teams from ALL congregations.
- A synod wide study conference in 2009 that will provide training in the missional practices and an introduction to various tools for congregational renewal such as Natural Church Development.

I'm really excited to see the signs of renewal that are sparking across our synod! I'm deeply grateful to have such wonderful and gifted partners to help provide leadership in this effort. Special thanks to those who have served on the Taking It Home Leadership Team this past year: **Pat Lovell, Kimber McNabb, Dennis Eaton, Andre Lavergne, Tanya Ramer, Lori Pilatzke and Joel Crouse**. And welcome aboard to two new members of the team, **Eunice Hogeveen and Heidi Wachowiak**.

God is truly doing great and wonderful things among and within us! At various points during this assembly you will hear some of the stories from congregations who have embarked on this process over the past year. This is a terrific programme and if your congregation isn't already on board, you'll want to be paying close attention.

We want to be a synod that nurtures leaders who encourage and equip other leaders.

In March of this year I was please to announce the appointment of several synodical Ministry Directors. The appointment of these individuals is a key component in the renewed staffing model that was approved by Synod Council for implementation in 2008. Under this model, two (rather than three) full time Assistants will serve in the Bishop's Office and these seven, part-time Synod Ministry Directors will provide leadership to key areas of our synodical mission. the **Rev. Joel Crouse - Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries; Debbie Lou Ludolph - Director of Worship Ministries; Jackie Nunns - Director of Learning Ministries; the Rev. Lori Pilatzke - Director of Witness and Evangelism Ministries; the Rev. Phil Heinze - Director of Public Policy and Service Ministries; the Rev. Beth Wagschal - Director of Ecumenical and Multi-Faith Ministries; Jeff Pym - Director of Stewardship and Resource Development**. I am so excited to

be working with each of these gifted persons, both individually and collectively! I also think it's important that in these appointments we have recognized and lifted up the ministry of both the clergy and the laity in our midst.

During the first week of April the Ministry Directors met with the Conference Deans and the Eastern Synod Council in a retreat to begin establishing new working relationships and fleshing out the parameters of this new expanded leadership team. Under the gifted leadership of Tana Kjos from A Renewal Enterprise we engaged in two days of prayer, Bible study, purposeful conversation and reflection. We articulated a purpose statement to guide us in our work with one another. "To Call & Equip Partners to Fully Engage God's Mission Today!" In conclusion, the Synod Council, Deans and Ministry Directors met in separate groups and made commitments as to how that purpose statement would inform the work we will do in the coming year. It was a thoroughly engaging and enlivening process for all of us!

I also want to thank and acknowledge the efforts of the approximately 200 committed and faithful volunteers who provide leadership in our synod through participation in its various committees, agencies, management boards and working groups.

At this assembly you will be asked to support a number of bylaw change recommendations from the Synod Council that will alter our committee and working group structure in some significant ways. We are asking you to disband the existing set of Congregational Life Working Groups and the associated appointment of conference-based Congregational Life Resource Persons.

Late in 2007 we initiated a review of this aspect of the synodical programme and found that the present system was not working. In essence, it was a "one size fits all" system that was not well suited to the peculiarities of our various regions and conferences. Key participants found that the system seemed administratively heavy when compared to the actual programmatic freight being provided.

Synod Council is proposing that the work currently done in these areas be picked up by the synodical Ministry Directors who would, in turn, establish more fluid networks of interested and talented individuals who would function without appointment and collaborate together as the work requires rather than as the "system" requires. I welcome these recommendations and ask for your support of them.

In conclusion, I would also like to express thanks to those who have served our synod so ably as Conference Deans. During the past biennium the following pastors have served in this capacity; the Rev. David Tin, the Rev. Stephen Weber, the Rev. Hans Borch, the Rev. James Garey, the Rev. Elina Salonen, the Rev. David Wunderlich, the Rev. James Slack, the Rev. Kimber McNabb, the Rev. Thomas Arth, the Rev. Dr. Bart Beglo, the Rev. Annette Smith, the Rev. Paul Roellchen-Pfohl and the Rev. Riitta Hepomaki.

I would like to thank each of you for the support, encouragement and good counsel that you have provided me these past two years, and I would also like to ask this assembly to join me in thanking you for the generous leadership you have provided, both within your respective conferences, and also within the general life of our synod.

I am particularly grateful for the willingness of our conference deans to take on an expanded leadership role whereby they are assisting in the transitions between parish pastorates and

conducting services of installation on my behalf. I thank each of you, as well as the congregations within which you presently serve, for readily answering this call to new responsibilities.

We want to be a synod that works in partnership with others.

Our primary partner is, of course, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and its component synods.

In the early years following the formation of the ELCIC, I was at a gathering where a prominent participant told me that there were three Lutheran churches in Canada, The Lutheran Church – Canada, The ELCIC and the Eastern Synod! His comment set me back somewhat, but reminded me that we must always be mindful of how we are sometimes perceived by other segments of this church!

I don't believe that there are three Lutheran churches in Canada and I think we have been faithful and committed partners in the ELCIC. We have been good corporate citizens. I do, however, believe that it is easy for us, and any other individual unit of this church for that matter, to function in isolation.

With the election of Bishop Johnson, we cannot claim to have leadership that is unmindful of our particular context. During her first year in office she has already proven herself to be an exemplary leader and a bold visionary. I am committed to working with her and with the whole ELCIC, a commitment that I trust you all share with me.

I would also like to express thanks to those members of our synod who serve us so capably and ably on the ELCIC National Church Council: the Rev. Claudine Carlson, Maaïke Froelich, Elizabeth Hachborn, the Rev. Doug Reble, the Rev. Peter Mikelic, Teddy Pope, and, what the heck – I'll claim her – every other synod does – our own Bishop Susan Johnson! We have a solid and strong voice in our church's national expression. We need to use that voice prophetically, but also wisely and prudently, always making sure to support and encourage those who represent us in this sphere of the church's life.

We also work with our Companion Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana whose newly elected president, Errol Ishanally sends his greetings to you. Regrettably, he is not able to be with us at this assembly, but we look forward to welcoming him to our synod sometime in the future. We work with ecumenical agencies and partnerships such as the Atlantic Ecumenical Council, the Ontario Multi-Faith Council and the Interfaith Social Assistance Review Commission.

Our Full Communion relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada continues to be a source of happiness and growth in our life. I am delighted to note co-operative efforts which are taking place throughout our synod, both programmatically at the synod and diocesan levels, and very practically at the congregational level where Lutheran and Anglican clerics and congregations are partnering in some very exciting ways. As you all know, this relationship is a particular passion of mine and I am simply thrilled to see our growing partnership being expressed in so many places!

We want to be a synod that reflects the diversity of our society.

Here's a place we've still got a lot more work to do! At the end of the day, we are not as good at reaching out to our communities as we might hope or want to be, particularly with those persons whose cultural background may be different from our own. There are, however, signs of hope.

In the past biennium our synod has welcomed clerics to our midst from the Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia and several European countries. My office is presently in correspondence with clerics and sending churches in South America and the Middle East. ELCIC congregations whose cultural background is Chinese have recruited and supported several candidates for ministry in the journey toward ordination. Those who were once the recipients of our missionary activities are returning the gift, and oh so generously!

I applaud those of our congregations who have so happily and willingly received pastors from other cultural backgrounds. It warms my heart and allows me to hope that we really might be growing in our understandings of life, culture and ministry! Perhaps one day we really will see Lutheran congregations whose cultural and ethnic composition does in some way approximate that of the communities in which they are called to serve!

We want to be a synod that is generous.

For the past twenty years, total congregational benevolence offerings to the synod have remained remarkably consistent: approximately \$1.7 million. While consistency is appreciated in most situations, in our financial context it means that inflation has eroded 43% of the purchasing power since 1986. This is not a sustainable situation for the Eastern Synod.

In response, the Synod's Resource Development Committee has initiated the Vision Visits programme. Each congregation of the synod will be visited in 2008 or 2009. The objective is increased benevolence commitments and contributions over a 3-year period. If each congregation meets their giving target, benevolence should total approximately \$2 million by 2011.

Teams of lay and clergy leaders are going out two by two, meeting with congregational councils. The message they bring is an invitation to participate more fully in the synod's Renewed Vision for Mission. The tools they have include a DVD, a set of six posters and a series of council devotions. All are focused on the theme, In Mission for Others.

The first visitor teams were trained and commissioned in April of this year, and the initial round of visits has almost been completed. The response so far has been enthusiastic and supportive. More than one team of visitors has been told, "This programme is long overdue."

The next group of teams will be trained in the fall, and they will visit congregations in the Georgian Bay, Hamilton-Niagara, K-W, Toronto, London and Ottawa-St. Lawrence conferences. Training for teams in the Atlantic and Northern conferences will take place in the spring of 2009. I hope you will welcome these visitors when they call upon your congregational council.

We want to be a synod that is engaged by challenging questions.

Our synod continues to engage significant issues of social policy through the Public Policy Advisory Committee, the Service working group and the work of numerous volunteers who represent us in a variant of church relation social justice collations. We have addressed questions of aboriginal rights, social housing, health care and poverty. The question we face that stirs the most controversy, however, concerns theological struggles around questions of inclusivity and the place of gay and lesbian persons in the church.

On April 20, 2008, Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newmarket, ON voted to issue a call to a candidate who has not been approved for ordination through the candidacy processes of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). This action marked a serious breach of the

constitutional obligation of all congregations and rostered persons to “abide loyally by the constitution, administrative bylaws and enactments of this church and those of the synod of which it becomes a part.” ELCIC Constitution Article VI, Section 3. Specifically, by issuing this call, Holy Cross congregation has chosen to disregard its obligation to “assure that only those on the roster of this church serve it in a pastoral capacity, except as this principle is waived in a specific instance with the approval of the bishop of the synod, subject to review by the synod council.” ELCIC Administrative Bylaws, Part II, Section 2h. Since that time, I understand that an irregular service of ordination occurred and that several of our synodical pastors participated in the service by vesting and/or participating in the rite of laying on of hands. I am aware of some, but not all, of those who participated in this way. Regardless, neither the ELCIC nor any of our Full Communion partners will recognize the validity of this irregular rite and Mr. Ketola is not recognized as being a rostered minister of this church.

After much soul searching, conversation and considered reflection, I have come to the conclusion that any rostered person who vested for this service and/or participated in a rite of laying on of hands will have chosen to publicly participate in an action that our church prohibits and, as such, is subject to subsequent disciplinary action.

The ELCIC Manual on Discipline for Rostered Ministers specifies a series of disciplinary consequences, one of which constitutes public censure and admonition. Given the circumstances and present context, I have concluded that this is an appropriate response. As such, I am today, in the presence of this synod, publicly censuring and admonishing those clerics who participated in this unauthorized act.

I am also publicly censuring and admonishing Holy Cross congregation and have concluded that I am obliged to, in due time, appoint an investigative committee to examine this situation as per ELCIC Administrative Bylaws, Part II, Section 6c. This committee will then report and bring recommendations to the Synod Council at their November 2008 meeting. While the constitution does not specify a range of discipline for congregations in such circumstances, it does say that the Synod Council may, upon recommendation of the committee, suspend or exclude the congregation from this church.

As noted in previous communication with Holy Cross congregation and the Eastern Synod clergy roster, “I am committed to working toward ending practices that preclude the full participation of all God’s people in the life of the church, regardless of sexual orientation. I realize that many ... share a similar commitment and might see participation in this service as a way of giving public expression to this position. Indeed, when viewed from a very local perspective, some may be tempted to think this is an appropriate way to proceed. However, when viewed from a wider perspective, I believe that this action required participants to abandon several foundational and confessional principles which inform our church’s understanding of ecclesiastical polity and the role, identity and functioning its rostered leaders. In short, these are principles whose affirmation we owe to one another as we engage important questions as a wider community of faith.”

In recent years, our synod has advanced the cause of full ecclesial inclusivity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered (GLBT) persons in a number of ways. We have done so honestly and with integrity in a way that is respectful of the opinions of our partners in the life of the wider church. I am not unmindful of the appropriate role that acts of civil disobedience can play in significant process of political change. I do, however, believe that such actions are only warranted under conditions where legislative mechanisms to achieve change are either unavailable or so corrupted as to be ineffective. I do not believe that either of these scenarios is the case within the ELCIC.

Such mechanisms are available to us, and while not without fault or frustration, are ultimately the only effective means of achieving the reform that some of us might seek. Change is possible and I believe it will, indeed, happen. I believe that we will soon experience a day when individuals in circumstances such as Mr. Ketola will be regularly ordained by the whole church and not irregularly ordained by a small segment of the church. This is the goal I seek.

I am also, however, not unmindful of the pain, suffering and violence which is daily visited upon GLBT persons throughout the world. This is more than just an arcane church fight. This is an issue which affects a great many people in very real and tangible ways. As such, our church's inability to address this situation in a way that acknowledges the legitimate differences that Christian people can experience with regard to this question is deeply distressing to me. It troubles me even more, that good, faithful members and leaders of our church have come to the conclusion that disobedience is the only way this cause can be advanced. The status quo cannot be allowed to continue.

I have made my case in a variety of other forums and won't repeat my arguments here except to say that the so-called "local option" is the only way forward. I intend to continue to advance this cause within the ELCIC and encourage our synod to do likewise. We need to agree to disagree. Let's get on with it!

Special Thanks

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Synod Council for the wonderful work they have done during this biennium. Thanks also to my fellow officers, Dorothy Froom, Keith Myra and the Rev. Wendell Grahlman for their committed efforts. What a wonderful, wise and generous group they are.

On Saturday evening, we will have an opportunity to more properly thank those of you who are concluding terms of service, but I think it is also important that we take this opportunity to offer a heartfelt word of thanks for the faithful and inspired leadership you have provided during this biennium. Thank-you for your willingness to serve this community of faith and to lead in difficult and challenging times!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the very talented and committed team of colleagues who have served with me in our synod office during this biennium. Assistants to the Bishop Phil Heinze and Susan Johnson, who continue to work with us, albeit in a very different capacity; Guenter Dahle, who carried much of the load during the several months of major staff transition in the office; and lastly, Mark Harris, who has proven himself to be even more gifted and hard-working than I could have ever imagined. Each of you has served so faithfully and generously! You have given so much to our church, to our synod and to me, personally! Thank-you so very, very much!

Likewise to our outstanding support staff of Connie Davison, Christine Archer, Cathy Caron, and Lynn Becker. And to Karen Gastmeier who has done such wonderful things with the Eastern Synod Lutheran and with Lutherhostel! How wonderful it is to work with each of you. Thank-you for everything you do to help advance God's mission through the life of our synod. Thank-you for your hard work, good humour and faithful partnership!

In Closing

In the bump and grind of everyday work and life, there is a temptation to always look forward toward that which we want but hasn't yet come to fruition. That's probably a good thing. Reports such as this, however, give us an opportunity to look back at what we've achieved and for that I am

truly thankful. In conclusion, as frail and fragile as we might be, God has been good to us and I feel we have taken many significant steps toward becoming a church that is truly In Mission for Others. Personally, it has been a roller coaster of a biennium! Busy schedules of parish visits and pastoral conferences – my greatest source of joy and rejuvenation; the requisite number of parish crises – not so great a joy, but these things happen!; a long anticipated and wonderful sabbatical leave - thank-you so very, very much; staff changes – enough said!; renewed visions and new ministry partners – great people and new wind in the sails! And then, finally, a significant crises of shared discipline – difficult, to be sure, but not at all unexpected.

This job never ceases to surprise, inspire, frustrate and discourage. I've experienced each in spades. But after ten years in office – it's hard to believe – I am committed to fulfilling the call which you have issued to me and to doing so as faithfully as possible.

Thank-you for your generous words and expressions of support and encouragement. Thank-you for your prayers and best wishes. They carry me more than you will ever know and are deeply appreciated! I am humbled by your continued call to serve you in this capacity. May each of you be blessed richly, even as you have been such a blessing to me!

AMEN



ELCIC National Bishop Susan C. Johnson's Report to the Synod

Listen, listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort, and joy.

Many of us are familiar enough with *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymn #513 that we know the words by memory. Several times a year we include this hymn as part of our daily worship service at the National Office. During these and other moments, we are more keenly aware than ever of our need to listen to where God is calling our church. This is one of the reasons why in March 2008, the ELCIC's National Church Council spent extra time together discerning the mission and vision of the ELCIC and determining the strategic priorities for our church in the coming years.

During our 2005 National Convention, we embarked on a journey to be a church *In Mission for Others*. Four simple words that together form a powerful statement reminding us of our call to be an outward-focused church. It was hoped that by setting this theme the members of our church would be encouraged to connect with others to fulfill this call and the response has been overwhelming. We thank you for seeking out your call to this mission. Your involvement has made a difference on so many different levels – locally, nationally, and globally.

Jesus gave his mandate; share the good news that he came to save us and set us free.

In so many different ways, the mission of the church is carried out each and every day because of you.

The attentiveness of our youth to listening to their call is inspiring and encouraging. ELCIC youth from congregations across our church, including some Anglican Church of Canada youth, gather together every second year and offer a creative witness and opportunity to experience being part of a larger body of Christ. Through the 2004-2006 National Youth Project, youth raised \$146,000 for Habitat for Humanity, building a house in Winnipeg, as well as supporting Habitat projects in the four other synods.

We thank those who feel the call to serve through mission opportunities. October 2008 marks the 20th anniversary of Rev. Brian Rude's involvement in El Salvador, Lori Endress continues in her mission placement in Thailand, and Margaret Sadler and Marcus Busch serve as Short-term Missionaries in a joint placement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) office in Cambodia. We also express our thanks and gratitude for the dedicated service of retiring missionaries Rev. Katharine Bergbusch, 13 years of service in Peru, and Bonnie Wepler, 10 years of service in Papua New Guinea.

Even though you may not be serving a mission opportunity yourself, these opportunities are only possible because of your generous donations to the ELCIC's Mission and Missionary Sponsorship.

Let none be forgotten throughout the world.

The work we do together through the ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal (GHDA) is something we can truly celebrate. Giving to GHDA has shown a steady increase with donations, including designated giving to Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), growing 12% from \$1,074,927 in 2006 to \$1,205,308 in 2007. Through this, our church helps make a difference in the lives of the world's poor and marginalized.

Our relationship between GHDA and CLWR allows us to be *In Mission for Others* by responding with international emergency relief, development programming and refugee resettlement. CLWR continues to help communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America find sustainable solutions to extreme poverty, violence and injustice. Financial contributions from donors in the past year have enabled CLWR to assist over half a million people living in 181 communities to improve their access to nutritious food, safe water, health care, education and human rights.

ELCIC congregations are also vitally important to the work of GHDA. Increasingly, congregations live out the commitment to be a church *In Mission for Others* by feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless, and providing education, encouragement and hope to those in need.

Within ELCIC Synods and congregations, your participation in projects, programs and committees helps us keep connected to the wider work of the church. The following are just a few examples of your involvement:

- Stewardship Consultants coordinate and make available stewardship resources to every congregation in the synod. Their experience assists with the development of stewardship programs and identifying opportunities and strategies.
- GHDA Consultants work with ELCIC members and congregations to identify opportunities for projects, programs and activities in the Synods.
- Lutheran Planned Giving (LPG) Consultants help identify opportunities within the Synods and share information with congregations and members.
- *Canada Lutheran* Synod Editors help tell the stories of our church.
- A task force comprised of a diverse representative of individuals from our church are involved in the process of developing a social statement on human sexuality. Eventually calling on the whole church for input and feedback, the anticipated outcome of the study is the development of a social statement which will be brought forward at the 2011 National Convention.
- National Church Council (NCC) members gather together at least two times a year to carry out the business of the church between National Conventions.
- The Church Extension and Capital Fund (CECF) committee oversees seed money for new church buildings and new mission initiatives. Through the administration of this fund, many congregations receive support for their first building.
- Those who serve on the Program Committee for Leadership for Ministry and synodically on Committees for Theological Education and Leadership (CTEL) work with congregations, seminaries, bishops and candidates for leadership to identify, prepare and certify on behalf of the ELCIC gifted women and men who are called by God to serve in public ministry.

Without these individuals and many others, we would lose our vital connection to the local levels of our church. We thank all those who feel called to contribute their gifts of time and talent to work *In Mission for Others*.

Help us to be faithful, standing steadfast.

Across the country, ELCIC congregations are living out the commitment to the Stewardship of Creation initiative adopted at the 2007 National Convention. We have heard the call to be attentive to the environment; a vital challenge to our current lifestyle, habits and economics. Through KAIROS, we were involved in lifting up water as a sacred gift and a right. We questioned the use of bottled water and explored the international issue of communities being denied access to clean water. As a part of our Stewardship of Creation initiative, we continue our partnership with KAIROS through their Re-Energize campaign, moving us towards a just and sustainable energy future.

Increasingly, we realize the need to work together ecumenically. We not only recognize our call to be good stewards as it encompasses our sharing of resources with other denominations but this cooperation makes for a stronger Christian witness to the world.

With our full communion partner, the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), we celebrated the six year anniversary of the signing of the Waterloo Declaration at our respective national gatherings in 2007. This relationship has impacted not only local congregations where joint services are enriched by this partnership, but also in the National Office where colleagues from the ELCIC and ACC work together and collaborate in the areas of communication, justice and advocacy.

Through our involvement with the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), we join with 20 other church bodies to work together to promote understanding among one another, as well as to come together to speak out and act on conditions that involve moral and spiritual principles: securing a \$1.4 billion commitment from the Canadian government for affordable housing; encouraging the government in the pursuit of peace in Afghanistan; and calling on the government to take immediate steps to develop and implement a national poverty reduction strategy.

Within North America, we have worked to strengthen our partnership with the ELCA. Through the LWF North America regional office we were blessed with the friendship and collegiality of Kathy Magnus, who has moved on to new opportunities. We look forward to welcoming the Rev. Teresita C. Valeriano, who was recently appointed to the position.

Through the ELCIC's Mission in the World, we are connected to world mission partner churches in Peru, Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Guyana, Cameroon, Papua New Guinea and Jordan and the Holy Land.

Globally, *67... now 68, million Lutherans DO make a difference.* Through our participation in the global community of LWF we, along with 140 member churches in 78 countries, impact the lives of others through the humanitarian, mission and development, and ecumenical work of LWF.

And through our participation in the World Council of Churches we are able to connect with 347 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world – representing over 560 million Christians.

On so many different levels, your partnership and support allows our church to make a difference. Locally, Nationally, Globally.

In the midst of this, we understand that our work is certainly not without challenges. We are facing an aging demographic within our church that affects us on so many different levels. We need to discern and understand how our church does (or doesn't) connect, engage and is relevant to young adults. We need to ensure we are attentive to discerning God's call and how we can assist in making

the Gospel known in today's skeptical and hectic, modern world where people are faced with societal demands.

The E.L.W. (Evangelical Lutheran Women)'s challenges of redefining itself and finding ways to be viable within the church indicates that our fear of change need not hold us back from being the people God is calling us to be. We need to be open to these new realities that will develop and encourage support and participation in its programming.

The ELCIC strives to inspire, encourage and share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Amid our challenges, it's easy to lose sight on this and get bogged down in administrative tasks or just be content with how we've always done something. This is when it is most crucial for us to listen. *Listen God is calling.* Hearing this call and the life giving power of the Holy Spirit is energizing. It strengthens us in our faith, provides guidance and empowers us... *offering us forgiveness, comfort and joy!*

As you gather together as a Synod, I want to thank you for your ongoing partnership and support in our common mission and ministry. I look forward to sharing with you in person the results of the National Church Council's visioning process. And I invite you to join with us in listening to how God is calling us all to be a church *In Mission for Others.*

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop

Report of the Vice Chair

As we read Matthew 25:31-45 we are reminded that what we do for others we do for Jesus. Matthew 25:39b – “Truly I tell you, just as you did to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” And in verse 45, then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me”. So we have a mission to carry out for our Lord and we can do that by being “In Mission for Others - A People Called”.

Reflections

Reflecting on the past biennium, I am reminded of all the opportunities I have had to be *In Mission for Others* and to share our Lord's ministry with others, each one of you in the Eastern Synod, the wider church, and in our communities.

I have attended officers' meetings, synod council meetings, the Bishop's Retreat, and the Laypersons Spiritual Retreat (for which I am the Retreat Director) in Niagara Falls. Attended, and at some brought greetings on behalf of Bishop Pryse and the Eastern Synod, at installation services, retirement celebrations, celebrations of years of ordination of pastors, anniversary celebrations of congregations, and worshipped with the students and faculty of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. I attended Georgian Bay Conference Clergy and Conference Council events, and ELW events. I attended the National ELCIC Convention in Winnipeg and the Installation/Ordination of Bishop

Susan Johnson in Winnipeg and the Eastern Synod worship of Celebration for our National Bishop Susan Johnson at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

As I reflect on the past and look to the future, I am reminded that God has called us to be *In Mission for Others*. As Christians we embrace our call to do the work which God has given us. We are all ministers serving in the Eastern Synod and the wider church and for that I thank each of you for serving. As we are *In Mission for Others* let us explore what it means to be *A People Called* to share in mission.

God did not promise us all sunshine, but with God's help we will grow and we will leave a rich heritage for others. Let us continually challenge ourselves to newer heights. Let us be there for others when they need someone to listen to them about their concerns. Let us involve all ages in our church as we continue to do for others. We never stop learning and for that I am thankful. Take a chance, do something different, you may fail, you may not.

As I make my journey and am involved in leadership I have received much more by my involvement than what I have given. Many people have been mentors for me and for that I thank God for every day. As a child of God, what is more, when God calls us God empowers and equips us to serve. God helps us like Isaiah to say. "Here I am Lord, send me."

Thank you to Bishop Pryse, Secretary Rev. Wendell Grahlman, Treasurer Keith Myra, Synod Council and to all the members of the Eastern Synod for your support and for giving me the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chairperson of the Eastern Synod. Thank you to my husband and family for walking this journey with me as I serve. With God's help, your prayers and your support, I am able to serve. Thank You!

My hopes and prayers for the upcoming biennium are that we the Eastern Synod will show our love of God by showing justice to all. That as a family we can pursue new ministries, share our concerns with each other, agree to disagree, and always keep reminding ourselves of Jesus' message to us in Matthew 25:31-45.

I am reminded of the young lady in Guyana who closed her meditation to the youth, telling them that, "They not only need to speak about their Christianity but they need to live their lives every day in a way that others can tell they are Christians, without having to say the words." Good advice for all of us. Do others see the face of God in us?

Thank you for your commitment and your prayerful participation at assembly. Together we are working *In Mission for Others*.

Let us always be *In Mission for Others* and then we will be *A People Called*.

Dorothy M. Frook
Synod Council, Vice Chair

Global Hunger and Development Appeal 2007

Serving in Christ's Name – In Mission for Others



**ELCIC's Global Hunger
and Development Appeal**
www.elcic.ca/ghda

As a church we are *In Mission for Others: A People Called*. This is a call rooted in the water of our baptism in which we were called to “care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace” (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p.228). The ELCIC's Global Hunger and Development Appeal (GHDA) is how we respond

together to this call by addressing human need with justice and compassion.

Through GHDA we carry out this calling by: providing relief in response to emergencies; addressing the causes and effects of poverty through long-range development both in Canada and globally; educating the church to understand and confront hunger and injustice; engaging in advocacy to address the root causes of hunger, poverty and injustice. GHDA is also an appeal by which we raise money in order to carry out this work. What follows is an overview of what we have accomplished in these areas and how you can join us in this work.

Providing Relief in Response to Emergencies 2006-2007

GHDA works with partners Canada Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) and Action by Churches Together (ACT) International to respond to emergencies around the world. In 2006-2007 we responded to emergencies in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Ethiopia, Guyana, Mozambique, Sudan/Darfur, Lebanon, Peru, Uganda, Bangladesh and the ongoing HIV/AIDS emergency. Over the past two years together we raised \$110,279. Thank you to all of you who responded so generously to these emergencies.

How You Can Be Involved

When there is an emergency in the world we work with CLWR to identify if and how we will respond. When we issue an emergency appeal, bulletin inserts are created which can be used in your congregations. These can be downloaded at <www.elcic.ca/ghda>. Donations can be made by making a donation through your offering or through <www.canadahelps.org>, selecting the ELCIC and designating your donation for that particular emergency. If there is an emergency and you want to find out if you can send a donation through GHDA, visit <www.act-intl.org/>.

Addressing Poverty Through Development – Internationally 2006-2007

GHDA works with its partner CLWR in order to carry out international development work and refugee resettlement. This work focuses on five focus countries: Bolivia, Peru, India, Mozambique and Zambia. In addition, special programs include working with the Canadian Food Grains Bank in Ethiopia, supporting the Augusta Victoria Hospital, village health clinics and the LWF Vocational Training Program in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and the National Reconciliation Program in Burma.

How You Can Be Involved

One of the most important ways that you can support our international development work is through your contributions to GHDA. 70% of undesignated donations to GHDA go to support our international development work through CLWR. If you would like to become more personally involved consider volunteering. To find out more contact Sr. Monica Denk at <monicad@cwlr.mb.ca>. Your congregation can also consider sponsoring a refugee, to learn more contact <clwr@clwr.mb.ca>. You can also support community development by supporting fair and alternative trade products through CLWR's *Four Corners*.

Addressing Poverty Through Development - In Canada 2006-2007

GHDA works to address poverty in Canada by partnering with synods and congregations in Canada. 9% of donations to GHDA are returned to the synod from which they were given so that they can be used to address poverty and carry out education in that synod. Congregational and synod projects feed the hungry, provide shelter to the homeless, send needy children to summer camp and educate us all about the need for justice in the world. A list of specific projects supported by GHDA is sent to each congregation in the fall as a part of GHDA's annual mailing. GHDA also addresses poverty in Canada through our support of KARIOS and its Anti-Poverty Fund.

How You Can Be Involved

Each congregation finds itself in a community which can have a variety of social needs. As a part of the calling that we all share, we encourage congregations to develop means by which it can address those needs. GHDA provides funds which can help congregations carry out these projects. To learn more about how you can access these funds contact your synod GHDA coordinator, Rev. Guenter Dahle at <gdahle@elcic.ca>.

Education and Advocacy 2006-2007

Education and advocacy through GHDA is how we work as a church to both learn about and address the underlying causes of poverty and injustice. Most of this work is done ecumenically through KAIROS, the Canadian Council of Churches, Project Ploughshares and the Church Council on Justice and Corrections.

Within the last two years, a major highlight has been the launching of our *Stewardship of Creation* initiative, which coincided the launch of KAIROS's *Re-Energize* campaign. We were also involved with the KAIROS initiative to address water as a right; helping to secure \$1.4 billion from the Canadian government for homelessness; calling for a national poverty reduction strategy, urging our government to work towards peace in Afghanistan; calling on our government to sign the UN's *Declaration of Indigenous Rights*; and working to have the Canadian government implement the Canadian Corporate Social Responsibility Frame work for Canadian Corporations functioning abroad.

How You Can Be Involved

Everyone can become involved in the work of education and advocacy. To find a way that you and your congregation can become involved in our *Stewardship of Creation* initiative visit <www.elcic.ca/Stewardship/Stewardship-of-Creation/>. When you see issues in your community, province or around the world, take the time to write a letter or visit with your elective representative. Our voice together can bring about real change. One of the key foundations on which the work of GHDA rests is the education that is done in congregations and homes that teaches how justice and

compassion is a part of our faith. Resources to help your congregation in its justice education efforts can be found at <www.elcic.ca/ghda/resources>.

Fund Raising 2006-2007

One of the most important ways that you can help us carry out the work of justice and compassion through GHDA, is through your financial contributions. Gifts of money can be used to make a difference in people's lives in your community and around the world. In 2006, GHDA received \$1,074,930. In 2007, this amount grew to \$1,205,309 - a 12% growth. Thank you to all of you who contributed. Your generosity is truly a sign of hope in this world. This amount includes general gifts to GHDA and gifts designated to emergencies or one of our partners such as CLWR and KAIROS.

This past year, in partnership with CLWR, we launched a shared *Gifts from the Heart* gift catalogue encouraging gift giving that could help someone in need. GHDA also has an endowment fund for which gifts are gratefully accepted. To order GHDA envelopes, *Gift from the Heart* catalogues or other tools to help you in helping us raise funds, e-mail <randersen@elcic.ca>.

How You Can Be Involved

Gifts to GHDA can be made through your regular offering, on-line through <www.canadahelps.org> (type in ELCIC and designated it for GHDA) and we have now begun a pre-authorized contribution plan (visit <www.elcic.ca/ghda> for more details). In your congregation you can help us by making GHDA envelopes available for people to contribute, and lifting up the work that GHDA does. Every contribution, from a few dollars to several thousand, helps us carry out service in Christ's name and be a church *In Mission for Others*.

Bringing People Who Are Homeless Into Their Own House

"Is this not the fast that I choose . . . Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house?" Isaiah 58:7

A home is a place of safety, a place to be nurtured, a place for family and a place to offer hospitality. A home is something we all need, yet many in Canada lack a home, or are at risk of losing their housing.

- The United Nations has called homelessness in Canada a national emergency.
- About 1.5 million Canadians are at risk of losing their homes. Between 150,000 and 300,000 are considered homeless.
- Currently \$2.6 billion in federal funding to provide affordable housing set to expire at the end of 2008.

Now is the time that we can make a difference.

The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada are together calling on the federal government to:

- Renew and increase the affordable housing funding which is set to expire at the end of 2008.
- Join with the provinces to develop a comprehensive housing strategy as part of an overall national poverty reduction strategy.

You can help to end homelessness in Canada. Write or visit your MP and ask what they will do to respond to this national emergency. If there is a federal election, ask your local candidates how they will address homelessness in their riding and in Canada.

Details about this campaign and tips for working with your MP can be found at <www.elcic.ca/ghda> or <www.anglican.ca>.

Rev. Ryan Andersen
GHDA Coordinator

Report of Lutheran Planned Giving

LPG Director
Jeff Pym

Mandate and Ministry

Lutheran Planned Giving exists to encourage and enable members of the church to make planned gifts to the church in all its expressions — congregations, the Synod, the ELCIC, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary or any of the other agencies and institutions of the church. LPG's ministry is not designed to raise funds for any particular program or agency of the church. Donors choose the beneficiary of their gift.

Cumulative Results to date:

Table 1: New Vs Existing Gifts

	<i>Number</i>	2008	<i>Expected Value</i>
New gifts recorded:	238		\$3,495,782
Existing gifts recorded	230		3,782,107
Total gifts recorded:	468		7,277,889
Number of donors:	280		

Table 2: Gifts By Type

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	2008	<i>Expected Value</i>
Annuity	37		\$425,587
Bequest	280		3,563,228
Life Insurance	60		1,086,239
Lifetime	77		1,702,845
Retirement Plan	13		399,990
Strip Bond	1		100,000
Totals	468		\$7,277,889

Many of the lifetime gifts listed in Table 2 were donated in the form of securities, primarily stock and mutual fund investments. In the past biennium alone, donors have contributed over \$945,000 in gifts of securities. Some of this money went into endowment funds, while the rest was used to fund current ministry programs. Securities are becoming an increasingly important form of planned giving to all Canadian charities. The Eastern Synod is no exception.

Table 3: Gifts By Beneficiary

	2008	
<i>Beneficiary</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Expected Value</i>
ELCIC	52	\$843,216
Evangelical Lutheran Women	3	10,331
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	16	353,993
Eastern Synod	79	1,430,922
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary	76	1,976,676
Lutheran Homes: K-W	5	166,599
Congregations	219	1,782,190
Other	17	713,962
Totals	468	\$7,277,889

Table 4: Designations on Gifts to the Eastern Synod

	2008	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Expected Value</i>
Assistance to Congregations	1	\$40,000
Benevolence Fund	2	55,000
Campus Ministry	3	23,819
Canadian Missions	14	588,297
Global Hunger (GHDA)	3	8,399
Outdoor Ministry	6	141,000
Scholarship Fund	2	93,999
Student Bursaries	11	97,998
Other	1	2,500
Undesignated	36	379,910
Totals	79	\$1,430,922

Table 5: Realized Gifts

	2008	
<i>Beneficiary</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Realized Value</i>
ELCIC	19	\$261,094
Canadian Lutheran World Relief	3	74,662
Eastern Synod	20	998,514
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary	28	819,378
Lutheran Homes: K-W	2	152,606
Congregations	38	512,085
Other	6	379,371
Totals	116	\$3,197,710

Notes on Results

- All results are to February 29, 2008.
- A gift expectancy is one that has been made or promised, but its proceeds have not yet been received. In many cases the proceeds will not be received until the death of the donor.
- Tables 1-4 include gifts that may have been realized. Those gifts are reported separately in Table 5.

- Annuities arranged before December 1, 2002 are valued at the amount of the principal donation. The amount of the benefit actually received by the church will be determined by investment experience and the age of the donor at the time of death. Annuities arranged since that date, are valued at the amount of the gift actually received in the reinsurance agreement.
- Bequests are valued at the amount of the gift, if known. Where the gift is a percentage of the residue or where the donor has not revealed the actual amount, LPG records a token amount of \$999. Bequests are revocable, so there is no guarantee on how much will be received by the beneficiary.
- Gifts of life insurance are valued at the amount of the contractual death benefit or the cash value at the time of the donation, whichever is greater.
- Lifetime gifts are valued at the cash value of the gift at the time of the donation or commitment.

Future Directions

Effective January 1, 2008, Lutheran Planned Giving has become a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Foundation of Eastern Canada (ELFEC). This will not change the Lutheran Planned Giving mandate; it will continue to serve individuals, congregations and institutional expressions of the church as it has in the past.

In addition, ELFEC will be able to offer new services to the people of the Eastern Synod.

Congregations will be able to pool their endowed funds with other funds held by ELFEC. This relieves congregational leaders of the burdens associated with investment management and regulatory compliance. It also opens up the opportunity to benefit from the improved investment returns that sometimes result from a larger, more diversified portfolio.

Individuals will be able to create Donor Advised Funds (DAF). Such a fund allows donors virtually all of the flexibility of a family foundation with no start-up costs. Each year the donor (and family members, if desired) will sit down with ELFEC representatives to decide how the previous year's investment income will be allocated. Donors can choose the current year's beneficiaries from a wide assortment of Lutheran ministries. This is a wonderful way to teach children and grandchildren the importance of charitable giving in the context of Christian stewardship.

Announcements concerning these new services will be made in the coming months. Watch the pages of *The Eastern Synod Lutheran* for more information.

Jeff Pym
Director of Lutheran Planned Giving

Report of the Atlantic Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. James Slack Jr

“If the Lord had not been on our side... then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; then over us would have gone the raging waters.” Psalm 124:1a; 4; 5

By the grace of God your brothers and sisters in the Atlantic Conference offer greetings, and provide this brief description of our life as God's people.

The clergy and lay leaders of the thirty-one congregations in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia usually gather for **conference meetings** twice each year. In the fall of 2006 *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* was introduced to about 150 of us at St. John's in Mahone Bay. In the spring of 2007 we convened at All Saints' in Newcombville and hosted conversations about Shared Ministries, the upcoming ELCIC convention, and Youth Ministry. The *In Mission for Others: Taking It Home* event was hosted by Trinity in New Germany in the fall of the past year. And elections and a presentation on copyright were the focus for us in the spring of 2008.

The local board for **Atlantic Campus Ministry** continues to address the needs of students, parents and faculty at local universities. Clement Mehlman coordinates this ministry from an office at Dalhousie University, while Justice and Action Students serve as leaders for social justice projects. Koleen Jensen served during the 2006-2007 year, and Matthew MacDonald (international film maker) and Asha Arabi (formerly of Lutheran World Service) filled this position in 2007-2008.

We keep one another informed about local events through our quarterly newsletter, the **Atlantic Conference Connector**. Jane Kristenson in Mahone Bay is our editor at the present time, and sends most copies via e-mail to our pastors and parishes.

Camp Mush-a-Mush is one of three camps in our synod. Located on the shores of Lake Mush-a-Mush the camp operates from early May to late October each year, and provides an ideal setting for children's and family camps, congregational picnics, and retreats. Our thanks are extended to the local management board and the summer staff.

The **Evangelical Lutheran Women** meet in the spring and fall, usually providing an opportunity for fellowship, study and the promotion of special projects. Guest speakers in recent years have made presentations on a healthy diet, substance abuse, and housing for teens at risk.

The **Halifax Lutheran Hospital Chaplaincy** provides pastoral care for Lutheran patients, families, and staff in several of the hospitals in Halifax. At the present time Les Skonnord (who is employed as a full-time chaplain for the Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) devotes about 20% of his time and energy to this ministry of ours, which is funded entirely by offerings from the congregations in Nova Scotia. This is a valued ministry in the conference and a fine example of Anglican-Lutheran cooperation.

Like the other conferences we also receive support from those who serve as **Conference Life Resources Persons** (CLRPs). Our thanks to Jane Kristenson (Worship), Rev. Heather Spencer (Learning), Pat Bates (Witness), Gerry Bowles (Service), Rev. Stephen Kristenson (Support) and Lisa Linscott (Youth), who are willing and eager to serve more than they are asked to do so.

We have developed a healthy relationship with the **Anglicans** in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. For about three years I have sat as a voting member of the Diocesan Council, attended a number of special events and services, and taken part in regular meetings with the local Clericus. (It is worth noting that the canons here have been revised to say that by virtue of the Waterloo Declaration, clergy in our denomination between the ages of 30 and 70 are eligible for election as diocesan or suffragan bishop.) Many of our clergy and parishes participate in shared worship and ministries.

We also enjoy our contacts with the **Anglicans** in the Diocese of New Brunswick. The Rev. Tom Smith (Anglican) serves as the interim pastor for St. Matthews in Fredericton, and cooperative ministries take place in New Denmark and Saint John. The Rev. Lidvald Haugen-Strand, who serves

the Director of Spiritual Care at the regional hospital in Moncton and his wife Marlin have also been able to worship and serve with Anglicans in the southeastern corner of the province.

Because of our distance from the heartland of our synod, the dean here is often invited to **represent** us at a variety of regional events including denominational conventions, national meetings of groups like KAIROS, and services of installation for the province's Lieutenant Governor. In many cases the Atlantic conference relates to several dioceses, conferences, conventions or presbyteries of other denominations.

As my second term as dean draws to a close I remain concerned about the **health of the congregations** in our conference. As the population in our region has shifted from towns and villages to urban centres, and as fewer of us worship or hold congregational membership the strain has become evident in tighter and tighter budgets and in a dis-ease in regards to the future. Many of our most faithful leaders are growing weary, and for a variety of reasons, younger leaders to take their places are hard to find.

Even so, as the psalmist reminds us, God saves us from the storms of life, and allows us to still find ways to worship with joy and thanksgiving, and to share some of the blessings we have received with others in Jesus' name. Signs of the Spirit's stirring in and around us are evident to those who have learned to see with eyes of faith; new life and change are in the wind.

Finally my thanks to the members of the Atlantic Conference who have permitted me to serve them, and who have been so generous these last four years with their prayers and support.

Report of the Georgian Bay Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. David Wunderlich

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." (Colossians 4:2)

As I pray, I am watchful with thanksgiving for the blessings we have experienced in the Georgian Bay Conference.

We are thankful to Trinity, Walkerton and those who organized the fall 2006 conference meeting. The theme of the fall event was on the emphasis of water. Water is not only an element in the sacrament of baptism, but is also essential for life. Our concern was that all should have free access to clean water. We hope to continue to pursue ways to educate and involve ourselves in this issue, challenging ourselves locally and globally. On October 28, 2006 at St. Matthew's, Hanover the conference was introduced to the new worship book. It was an informative day and we were very impressed with the turnout.

The Spring 2007 Conference Meeting was held in St. Paul's, Wallace Township. Dr. John Bowen enlightened the conference on the topic of "Evangelism for Normal People". The presentation was appreciated by the conference with many good insights and ideas to spark interest in witness. Joyce and Vern Spencer, our CRP's have been sharing what we have learned amongst the congregations in the GBC. For our 2007 Fall Conference Meeting, we had a Reformation event at Our Saviour in Owen Sound. Our guest preacher was Rev. Dr. David Pfrimmer. \$346.60 was raised for the ministry of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. On November 17th there was an *In Mission For Others* event at St. Matthew's Hanover, some congregations participated with others joining from outside the conference. Finally our Spring 2008 Conference event was held at Holy Cross, Midland. Andy &

Rev. Sheilah Fletch spoke about their mission trip to Ghana. A special thank you to all congregations who hosted these events and for those behind the scenes to make them achievable.

We are very thankful that God has blessed us with good resource people. We welcome Marlene Dietz as our new CRP for Worship and Joyce Spencer who is our CRP for Witness. Rev. Brad Mittleholtz our secretary has also agreed to be our Youth CRP. We include in our gratitude CRP's and conference council members, Mary Becker, Bev Strucke, Brad Leifso (Support), Paul Bruer (Service), Bev Grahlman (Treasurer) and Wayne Pfeffer (Learning).

A lot of changes have happened over the last two years in parishes and with pastors. Rev. John Polacok has been ordained and installed at St. Matthew's, Hanover. We give thanks to Rev. Barry & Alice Lang for their productive interim ministry there. Rev. Chad Honneyman has also joined us and has been ordained and installed at Trinity, Walkerton. We give thanks to Rev. Jim Dookram, Rev. Clyde Wentzell for their care in its time of vacancy. Rev. Nadine Schroeder-Kranz and Rev. David Knudson have resigned from their respective calls in the GBC area. Both have served their parishes well and were former Deans of the conference. Also Rev. Sheilah Fletch will be retiring after many years of faithful service at St. James, Williamsford and St. Peter's, Sullivan. May God bless them in their new callings. A final note, Holy Cross, Orillia has recently transferred to the Toronto Conference.

We give thanks for all things that the Lord has blessed our Conference with. I hope that we as the GBC will continue God's work in partnership together.

Report of the Hamilton/Niagara Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. Thomas P. Arth

Grace to you and peace.

The Hamilton/Niagara Conference is small in number and small in territory. We consist of 17 congregations. The longest distance between congregations would be Fort Erie to Brantford, 150 km and 1hr. 41 min. drive according to Map Quest.

During the past biennium our conference has met for our annual spring business meetings, at First, Port Colborne in May 2006 and at St. Matthew's, Welland in April 2007. I was honored to be re-elected as Conference Dean at our 2007 meeting.

In addition to our spring business meetings, we also had our fall program meetings. The fall 2006 meeting took place at Faith, Brantford and was the introductory workshop to our new worship book. The fall 2007 meeting at Grace, Oakville focused on prayer with the introduction of the "Different People, Different Prayers" program developed by the Learning CLWG. The hope is that participants would take home their experience of this workshop and help present it in their congregations.

Our current Conference Council, at the time of this writing, consists of Dean, Rev. Thomas Arth; Secretary/Treasurer, Rev. Colin Cameron; Conference ELW President, Cathy Calvin; Marla de Graaff; Don Swiston and Dianne Yungblut. Our Congregational Life Resource Persons are: Judy Lindeman (Learning), Don Swiston (Service), Rev. Dean Willich (Support), Rev. Stephen Scheidt (Worship), and Angela Ryerse (Youth).

In the past two years there have been some clergy transitions in our conference. Rev. Lori Pilatzke (St. Luke's, Ridgeway) has taken a call in the Ottawa/St. Lawrence Conference. Rev. Paul Hartig (Faith, Brantford to Redeemer, Fisherville), Rev. Julio Romero (Niagara Falls Parish to Trinity, Fort Erie) and Rev. Colin Cameron (St. John's, Hamilton to Holy Cross, Burlington) have moved within our conference. We welcomed Rev. Stephen Scheidt (Faith, Brantford) into our conference.

I hope there are no errors or omissions in this report and apologize for any that occur. I thank all who have served and all who continue to serve our conference as members of conference council, and as CRPs. I also thank God for all pastors who faithfully serve our congregations in many ways, and for everyone who ministers in ways large and small as together we serve our Lord and our neighbour in our congregations and conference. It is a privilege and an honour to serve the Hamilton/Niagara Conference as dean.

Report of the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. Hans Borch

Greetings from the pastors and congregations of the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference to the Eastern Synod in its biennial gathering! It's wonderful to be in partnership with you as we journey together to complete Christ's ministry *In Mission for Others*.

Our Conference Council has met on a regular basis during the past two years and has been faithful in planning Conference events and responding to church and society concerns around us.

Council members over the past two years have been: Jackie Nunns, who served as Secretary/Treasurer for the past two years; the Rev. Stephen Weber, who served as Conference Dean for the first half of this biennial report; and the Rev. James Koellner, who serves as Conference Vice-Dean. Those whose terms ended in 2007 include: Violet Cook, Sharon Morrice; and the Rev. Michael Hackbusch. Newly elected or re-elected to Conference Council include: Rod Kruger, the Rev. Monika Wiesner; the Rev. Anne Anderson, and the Rev. Bonnie Schelter-Brown. I would be remiss if I did not recognize their work and support for the conference, and their willingness to participate beyond normal parish duties.

Clergy of the K/W Conference gather monthly for support and discussion where the agendas and topics range from a variety of interests and concerns for pastors and the area we live in, to meetings where simple conversation and support are the most desired and genuinely practiced agenda item.

Our Conference keeps connected via our Conference Newsletter, *The Conference Connector* which is published periodically throughout the year advertising various national, synodical, conference, and congregational events. The editors have been Sharon Morrice and the Rev. James Koellner.

Over the past year our youth have also met quarterly under the direction of the Rev. Sue Nevile, our Congregational Learning and Resource Person (CLRP) for youth. Pastor Sue and her team have been providing exciting opportunities for our focusing on the themes of Reformation, Death & Resurrection and Leadership/Discipleship.

During this Biennial the Conference also donated over \$20,000 to Habitat for Humanity to help sponsor a house build in the KW area. These funds were initially collected for a Lutheran house

build in 2004. Through the generous support of the congregations within the Conference we raised \$20,000 more than was needed.

Our 2007 Spring Event, held at St. James, Elmira, included the election of a new Dean as well as providing a focus on the *Emerging Church*. The Rev. Anne Anderson spoke to the conference about her exciting work in New Hamburg using the emerging church model.

Our Fall 2007 Conference Event focused on providing a Pot-Luck of ideas to congregations by providing workshops with the various CLRPs in the conference. The Conference's Congregational Resource people were introduced: Jamie Courtney (Worship); Pat Raines (Witness); Donna Finch (Learning); Rev. Dr. Oz Cole Arnal (Service); Rev. Rick Pryce (Support); and Rev. Sue Neville (Youth). David Wilk is our conference's rep on the Synod Youth Council. This event also had a plenary session focusing on children, youth and young adults led by the Rev. Anne Anderson, Rev. Bonnie Schelter-Brown and Rev. Dr. Kristine Lund.

Mission Renewal Events began in K/W Conference in September and many congregations enthusiastically attended the event at Mount Zion, Waterloo. We look forward to the outcome of these Mission Renewal sessions.

This is an exciting time to be connected with the church and I thank God for all who are called to work in ministry together in KW Conference.

Report of the London Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. Elina Salonen

Greetings to our sisters and brothers of the Eastern Synod from the London Conference!

We, in the London Conference, wish others to know that individually and collectively we are welcoming, friendly, caring and committed to being *In Mission for Others*.

Our conference ministry, as seen in part below, reflects our interest in serving the wider church and assisting its efforts on our behalf.

In our Fall Meeting 2006 hosted by Trinity, London we explored the new worship resource, ELW, with the skillful guidance of Rev. Susan Johnson, now our National Bishop, and Rev Andre Lavergne. Thank you!

St. Ansgar, London was delighted to host the Spring Meeting 2007. Rev. Jonathan Schmidt from the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries made a presentation on short-term mission trips and their positive and negative impacts on all stakeholders.

At the Fall Meeting 2008, hosted by Zion, Stratford we turned our attention to environment with the help from Jennifer Henry, a representative from KAIROS, Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives - a national ecumenical partnership. Dianne Yungblut from the Learning Congregational Life Working Group made an inspirational presentation on prayer.

Jordan Smith, our representative on Synod Youth Council, has invited youth to participate alongside our conference meetings. They, for example, created a banner for use in our day's worship and discussed environmental issues and our response as a faith community.

We again produced an Advent devotional booklet, drawing on the insights and inspiration of both laity and clergy. This booklet continues to be well received by our congregations.

Our Spring Meeting 2008 is scheduled to take place in St. Peter's, Brodhagen. Rev. Ann Krueger, Rev. James Garey, and Rev. Jeffrey Smith will lead us in discussion on renewing our commitment to mission.

There has been some movement among us as pastors respond to call opportunities. We rejoice at the energizing effect of new persons among us, both lay and clergy, while we give thanks for faithful ministries concluded among us. If you are visiting in our area or just passing through, please come see us and, if possible, worship with us. We offer a variety of worship experiences from traditional to contemporary, all intent on sharing the good news with all!

Report of the Northern Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. Paul Roellchen-Pfohl

In Christ's service, the Northern Conference has the fewest parishes and covers the largest amount of territory in the synod. We are scattered and therefore often work alone or with local partners. In Sault Ste. Marie, Zion opens their building to use by community groups, last year they participated in the world's largest yard sale fund raiser for a community group and support Pauline's Place which offers care and support to teen mothers and their children. Zion, Massey and St. Timothy's, Copper Cliff work closely with their community ecumenical associations to deal with community situations. Trinity, Sudbury this year raised money for 3 pairs of goats, an apple and a fish net through CLWR's "Gifts from the Heart". They offer their building to groups in the community and hold food drives for the local food bank. St. Matthews, Sudbury is a local depot for the Sudbury food bank. One day a week they hold a girls club for neighbourhood girls to teach them life skills. St. Paul's, Magnetewan organizes and hosts an annual "10,000 Villages sale" each year and is a food bank collection site. For 12 years Redeemer, North Bay has organized and operates a winter coat exchange, last year providing 2500 coats for people who are unable to afford them at commercial outlets. In these and other ways individuals in our parishes are *In Mission for Others*. The stories are out there where the people of God in the North are in touch with the world and sharing God's grace *In Mission for Others*.

Report of the Ottawa/St. Lawrence Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. Annette Smith

Since the last Synod Assembly in 2006 the Ottawa/St. Lawrence Conference has been *In Mission for Others; A People Called* and alive with activity in each of its four clusters: Montreal, The Seaway, Ottawa and Upper Ottawa Valley.

Montreal continues with many fellowship, celebration and service opportunities. Lutheran activity in Montreal can be experienced in English, French, German, Mandarin, Cantonese, Estonian, Latvian, with a sprinkling of Danish and Finnish. The people of this cluster are very excited to host the 2008 National Worship Conference "Order and Chaos: Hear What the Spirit is Saying!" from June 25 – 28.

The Seaway has welcomed two new pastors: Rev. Lori Pilatzke (Brockville), Rev. Heather Spencer (Kingston). The Seaway cluster also has had a committed and meaningful involvement with KAIROS and invites our participation and prayers for initiatives of social justice.

Ottawa has been busy as the “hub” of the conference and graciously hosted several conference events including: the Introductory Workshop for Evangelical Lutheran Worship in October 2006, our Spring Conference Meetings in 2007 (Resurrection, Orleans) and 2008 (St. John’s, Ottawa), the 2007 Evangelical Lutheran Women Fall Conference (All Saints, Ottawa) and the “Taking It Home” Mission Workshop (Resurrection, Orleans). We celebrated with Brigadier-General Rev. Stanley Johnstone, Chaplain General of the Canadian Armed Forces as he was honored as the 2007 Distinguished Graduate of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Ottawa also welcomed the Youth of the Eastern Synod for the 2007 Synod Youth Gathering “GO DEEP” at the University of Ottawa.

The Upper Ottawa Valley continues its collegial ways with monthly cluster meetings, the annual Lenten Preaching Series in 2007 and 2008, and the welcoming of Rev. Jim Goos to the Rankin/Alice Parish and Rev. Mike Schroeder as Interim Pastor of the Maynooth/Raglan Parish. The Valley also hosted the Fall 2007 Conference Event “*Where Are the Lost?: An Opportunity for Raising Awareness, Thoughtful Reflection and Learning on Human Trafficking, Exploitation and Internet Luring*” (Grace, Eganville). Camp Lutherlyn has continued its outdoor ministry with Summer Programs for Children, Family Camps, The Golden Retreat, the annual Luther Seminar and picnics and programs for congregations from throughout the conference and beyond. The camp hosted the Evangelical Lutheran Women in the fall of 2006 for a “20th Anniversary of ELW Celebration”. Lutherlyn completed its incorporation process and held its first Corporation Meeting in 2007. Thank you to all the faithful and hard-working Management Board, staff, volunteers and corporation members who make Lutherlyn a valuable part of the ministry of this church.

We as a Conference wish to sincerely thank our former Dean, the Rev. Dr. Barton Beglo for his years of dedication for the Ottawa/St. Lawrence Conference, and to the members of Conference Council who have finished their terms: Ellen Vandersleen (Ottawa Valley), Rev. Silvia Zalts-Sipolins (Ottawa), Marie Barkley (Seaway) and Jutta Schirdewahn (Montreal). We also wish to thank our former ELW Conference President Lois Reinert for her powerful witness and presence in our Conference.

In Mission for Others: A People Called remains for the people of the Ottawa/St. Lawrence Conference, an acknowledgement and a celebration of the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and through us, so that we are not only *called*, we are also *sent*. Thanks be to God!

Report of the Toronto Conference

Conference Dean
Rev. David Tin

Toronto Conference has put her resources in addressing the common issues and needs that are of importance to the congregations and pastors in the conference. Events were held and sponsored by the conference to draw out the people, such as Fall Festival, Greening the Church Conference, youth rallies, worship conference, seminary courses, Sunday school teacher training, and a concert celebrating cultural diversity. An extended attempt was made to host an Interpretation and Authority of Scripture Conference.

City life has made commuting across town quite a burden to everyone. Clergy mobility has been high. With her diversity in interest, coming together was infrequent. Conference events attendance started out strong but for most of the events, attendance has dropped significantly.

Toronto Conference, in response, has been steady in pursuing the mandate of going into the congregations and among pastors for fellowship and ministry partnership. From 2006 to 2007, the conference has been into each parish physically holding events, ministerial and conference council meetings. In 2007, Rev. Karen (Bowen) Jenkins, Rev. Linda Douglas, Rev. Christian Schweter and Rev. Gigi Young have taken on leadership in ministerial taking place in rotation among the 4 quadrants of Toronto Conference. As people met, relationships were fostered, stories shared, and small group partnership opportunities developed. In the 2007 Spring Conference, the theme was on "Setting Future Directions." In groups, attendees had a discussion on what should we continue, what should we stop, and what should we start relating to Campus Ministry, Youth Ministry, Confirmation Ministry, Ethnic Ministry and Shared Activities in Toronto Conference.

As we go, the Toronto Conference has come to embrace her riches in diversity. Not only her multicultural diversity, some say 12 cultural or sub-cultural groups were among her congregations, her gifts and passion also encompasses a wide spectrum. Worship, evangelism, music, theological education, social justice, multiculturalism, ecumenicalism and interfaith partnership are some of the areas that are of great importance to the congregations and pastors in Toronto Conference.

A lot of exciting ministries have already been taking place in the communities through her congregations and pastors. A few to name were Prayer with Jazz, World Aid's Day worship, Fundraising Concert for Overseas Missions, Erecting Peace Pole, Sponsoring & Supporting Refugees, Habitat for Humanity, Hosting Choir Tour (made up of orphans due to war and HIV/AIDS from Uganda), hosting speaker series on "Re-Thinking Christianity," and becoming pillar congregations for campus ministry.

The Toronto Conference will continue to go among her congregations and pastors, reaching out to care and invite partnership for collective ministries. Her future role will require more intentional listening and sharing of local stories, as she EMPOWERS each other through affirmation and sponsorship of the passion and initiatives of her congregations and pastors.

Thank you to all the congregations, pastors and conference council making the events, ministerial, local ecumenical work, and interfaith partnership possible. Please continue to pray and support the Toronto Conference Youth Council. Last but not least, welcome Holy Cross Mission, Orillia, joining the Toronto Conference in March 2007.