



Trinity Team

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“Getting out of that darkness...”

It happened on Tuesday last week. I was about to leave the church to do some visiting when the doorbell rang. Sorin pressed the button. A young couple entered and we met at the door. I greeted a man and women, dressed in warm and neat clothing. He was tall and slim with brown eyes, looking calmly at me. The woman was much smaller; she wore a head scarf, showing several strands of blonde hair that had escaped her scarf. She didn't look at me, and anxiously gripped the hand of the man beside her. His first sentence baffled me: “We are homeless”, he said, “my wife is pregnant and we have heard about your winter shelter. Is there still room for us?” “Homeless?” I muttered, trying not to embarrass her by looking at her pregnant belly. “Yes, last night we stayed at a shelter downtown, but

it was so crowded and the staff separated us. We don't want to be separated.” Many thoughts were swirling around in my head: *Oh, I have to go, I am too late already, people are waiting for me ... but I want to be with that couple now, would like to listen to their story, shall I phone ... no, they are waiting for communion, ... you can't ... “Thank you for coming to us”, I finally responded, “of course there is a place for you at this church, but you have to go to the Neighbour Centre first to register. The Centre is two minutes away, and will open at 3:00 p.m. (it was 2:50p.m.). You can warm up there, eat and drink. At night you will be able to sleep here.” We left together and with kind of a heavy heart I watched them slowly walk to the Neighbour Centre.*

Having met this young couple, I saw again what I have seen before but often try to avoid really seeing: the dark underbelly of our society, the systemic nature of pov-

erty all of which has a tendency to surface when we least expect it.

As it is with Christmas. I am so very looking forward to that festive evening, to holy night. It will be filled with music and songs and sacred words. We will sing songs about the “little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head” and “for a bed a cattle stall” that gave shelter. We will listen to the story of a young mother giving birth to her firstborn child, and the angels will be singing and speaking to the shepherds words of comfort and peace. I'm sure, it will be beautiful and hope-filled. And I - like you - would love to continue to embrace Christmas as a feast of peace and celebration, with a Christmas tree, and eggnog and turkey and German Stollen (delicious German Christmas baking).



However, some of us know that the Christmas story will continue with scenes we would rather avoid: the flight to Egypt and slaughter of the innocents (Matthew 2, 13 – 18). God will alert Joseph in a dream through an angel: “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for King Herod is going to search for the child to kill

him.” And immediately Mary and Joseph fled with their newborn child to Egypt.

I wonder what life was like for them in Egypt before they went home again. I wonder what life was like for the Hadado family in Lebanon or for the Koroma family in Gambia or for German refugees in Germany or other places after WW2, before they immigrated to Canada. As long as refugees can find safe places to flee to and live for a time, more innocent lives will be saved...

Matthew's report seems to correspond closely to the world in which we live, ...see “darkness” - page 2

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“darkness” (Continued from page 1)

doesn't it? The desperation and terrors we are watching today are not new. Yet, the flight of Mary, Joseph and Jesus reminds us that God identifies with all who have been driven from their homes by the threat of war, all who are displaced by violence, and all who flee in fear with hopes for a better future.



Children pose for a picture as Syrian refugees go about their daily business in the Za'atari refugee camp in Za'atari, Jordan

When you think about it, the God we meet in Jesus is not freed from the fear, violence, and horror of our world. But God promises to bring us through difficult times. Even the darkest times in the life of Jesus do remind us that nothing that happens to Jesus (and to us) is beyond the Creator's will to redeem and to transform evil into something good and healing. I guess Christmas wouldn't really mean all that much if it was only about enjoying the festive, joyful moments of our lives. Yes, those moments of joy are gifts from God and it's right to completely embrace them. But if we're glad that God is with us in times of joy and happiness, we also desperately need to know that God is with us in times of grief, loss, and fear.

One example of how we can do both, celebrate hope and stand with those who are suffering, can be found in the ongoing news story of a church in The Netherlands which has been [holding an ongoing 24-hour service](https://www.euronews.com/2018/11/26/dutch-church-holds-ongoing-service-to-protect-refugee-family-from-deportation) for the last 7 weeks to protect a refugee family from deportation (https://www.euronews.com/2018/11/26/dutch-church-holds-ongoing-service-to-protect-refugee-family-from-deportation). The Bethel Church in The Hague, which is currently sheltering the refugee family, has been conducting more than 700 hours of continuous service since October 26 as authorities, [under Dutch law](#), cannot enter the church while prayers are ongoing. The Tamrazyan family fled Armenia in 2009 over fears for their safety, due to the father's political activism. For the last three years, the family have been members of the Gereformeerde Kerk (GKV – The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) in the coastal municipality of Katwijk, residing in a local centre for asylum seekers. In mid-September, the family learned of a deportation order against them, sparking an appeal for help. One of the children, 21-year-old Hayarpi Tamrazyan, posted a video to social media, pleading to several Dutch politicians. "This week I could be expelled from the Netherlands after 9 years," she said. "On behalf of my brother

and sister, I ask you for help." GKV Katwijk said the family took shelter in the halls of the church building shortly thereafter, saying they no longer felt safe in the asylum centre. "We hope the family gets a permit to stay in the Netherlands for two reasons," GKV Katwijk said in a statement to Euronews: The father of the family runs a great chance of being killed in Armenia. And the children have been living in the Netherlands for nine years and are rooted here. Despite the church providing shelter, the family were still in danger of deportation from Dutch authorities, which led to the Bethel Church in The Hague stepping in to help.

Bethel Church pastor Axel Wicke said the church welcomed the Tamrazyan family on October 26 and would conduct prayers "around the clock, day and night," while an asylum case was continuing. Throughout the weeks, supportive members of the religious community in the Netherlands have been posting their contributions and pictures of their services to social media in order to raise awareness of the family's plight. There has been a global response as well. Wicke said he was "overwhelmed" by the support sent from all over the world, adding, "lots of people have had enough with the demonization of people fleeing war and oppression." One user who visited the church shared his "beautiful" experience seeing a community "try to ease the misery of a family." "You become a better person when you step inside," he wrote.



Bethel Church - Netherlands

A Prayer: Under God's protection we abide, and by God's love are we comforted and strengthened. O Life of our life, Soul of our soul, cause Your light to shine into our hearts, and fill our spirits, minds and bodies with abiding trust in You. Let us be bearers of your light to others. (From a Reform Judaism prayer book)

Merry Christmas!

Faithfully yours,
Pastor Ingrid Cramer-Doerschel



Who Am I...?

Trinity was a welcoming home to many young German-speaking newcomers to Edmonton ever since the congregation was founded over 130 years ago. In fact, Pastor Pempeit, the missionary pastor who founded a number of congregations in and around today's Edmonton besides Trinity, was a German-speaking immigrant from Lithuania himself. Pastor Poengen, our first full time pastor starting in 1902, was a German speaker born in Holland.

After the turmoil of the Second World War, many displaced German-speaking refugees made their way to Edmonton. Born in places as far-flung as the Baltic states (including Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), today's Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland, their war-time experiences are often similar yet each story is unique. Since the 12th century, German-speaking settlers had been invited by various regents in these areas to leave Western Europe to bring their technological and agricultural know-how eastward in order to improve local farming techniques and make new lands arable. Along coastlines, in marshlands and near flooded waterways for example, Dutch and Germans with knowledge about the construction and maintenance of dikes and drainage canals were highly sought after. As a result there were many German-speaking villages situated like islands amidst peoples of other cultures. In the area west of the Polish city of Warsaw, for example, over 3000 German-speaking villages have been documented to have existed prior to WWII. Many of our German Trinity family members spent their childhoods there but when the Soviet army advanced on Berlin to defeat Hitler's armies, as German-speakers, they were also considered enemy targets. A smaller number of Trinity members hail from what was then "Germany proper", either from the Eastern provinces that went to Poland after the war (Danzig/Gdansk, Pommerania, East/West Prussia and Upper & Lower Silesia) or from war-ravaged cities within the current borders of Germany and Austria.

Sprinkled throughout this issue of the *Team*, you will find a number of brief profiles. How well do you know your fellow church members? See if you can guess who is who... You can chose from...

Fred Walter,



Eva Osterwold



Julius Schubert



Melida Kunz



Wilma Gwinner



Walter Rutsch



Hilma Hirt

"She was a Refugee Three Times and an Immigrant Twice"

I had never thought of my mom in this way until my brother, Gerhard, used these words in his eulogy at my mom's memorial service. These words and my mom's life experiences explain so much about her compassion and kindness toward those who had to flee from difficult life circumstances. Near the end of her life, mom suffered a stroke, resulting in her keen imagination at times taking the place of reality. How appropriate that in her last weeks she imagined (believed) she had four homeless women of different ages and ethnic backgrounds who stayed in her apartment at night. She put out blankets and pillows for them and even changed her sleeping location so they could have a bed.

Here is her story, one that is likely similar to many in our German congregation.



Sinaida Lange was born on New Year's Day 1927 in Wjasowitz, USSR, between Kiev and the Polish border. Joseph Stalin's collectivization of agriculture in the Ukrainian heartland at this time caused extreme economic and political hardship for Sina's ethnic German farming community. Under the guise of visiting Sina's grandparents, Sina's mother Olga fled to Siberia

with three year old Sina and her recently born sister Lolla. Sina's father David and brother Harald stayed behind to allay suspicions, planning to follow afterwards. Those plans were never realized. Not believing that Sina's father was not with them, the authorities in Siberia demanded his appearance on threat of arrest the next day. That cold winter night, the entire family arranged for a smuggler to help them cross the frozen Amur River which is the natural border between Siberia and the northern Chinese province of Manchuria.

Sina, her sister and mother made their way to the city of Harbin, while her grandparents established a farm near Mergen some 700 km to the northwest. In 1931, the Japanese army invaded and occupied Manchuria and would remain there until the end of WW II. Fortunately for Sina, the Japanese and Germans were allies, so she was spared the worst brutality of that time, although she most certainly witnessed it. Sina thrived at school, which she loved, and made dear friends many of whom she kept in touch with throughout her life.

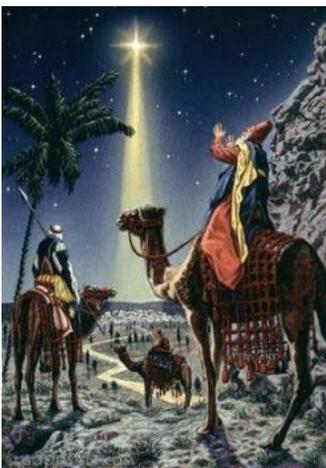
With the defeat of Germany in 1945, the Soviet Red Army invaded Manchuria in its overwhelming campaign against the Japanese army. Sina's mother and sister left in advance to live with Sina's grandfather Ludwig on the farm while Sina stayed to finish her grade eleven school year and then rejoined the family just ahead of the complete occupation. Many Russians and Germans who re-

...see **Sina** - page 8

Bishop's Message

Dear Beloved of God – “In the time of King Herod...,” that’s how the story begins.

“In the time of King Herod...” He built monumental structures including the Second Jewish Temple, the mountaintop palace at Masada and the palatial Herodium complex whose desert palace included a grand residence, a theater and large pools, baths and gardens. When his position was seemingly threatened, he did not hesitate for a second but had his wife killed and at least two of his sons.



“In the time of King Herod...” He dominates the story. Of the twelve verses of the Epiphany Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12, he controls the action in ten of them. He rules a world dominated by his authority, his power, his ruthlessness.

King Herod so rules over the world, over this story, that it would be easy to miss the good news of the birth of an infant for it is almost buried, almost hidden, almost veiled in the reality dominated by Herod.

It is no wonder then that he, and all of Jerusalem with him, are

stunned by the arrival of wise men from the East who come to Jerusalem wishing to pay tribute to a “child who has been born king of the Jews.” It frightens him, and all Jerusalem and he moves quickly to control, to assess, to dominate calling the religious leaders together and then secretly meeting the wise men.

And later we will learn that Herod had been fooled by these wise foreigners – fooled but not beaten. He fights back as cruelty does and has all the infants slaughtered.

“In the time of King Herod...”

This is not an easy, gentle story – but the gospel writer, Matthew’s witness, does not shy away from recognizing that the good news of Jesus – of the birth of the Christ-child, “the king of the Jews” is surrounded by, it is immersed in, harsh reality. And that beneath this reality as defined by Herod – almost hidden, almost veiled – is the truth.

Foreigners arrive in Jerusalem with wealth to place at the crib of a Jewish baby. And, in this act of homage, they become the first to see what God is up to in the birth of this infant. An epiphany which means something like manifestation, or unveiling, or revealing the truth. That the steadfast love of God is met in the flesh and blood of Jesus, born of Mary and that it is veiled, revealed in weakness, hidden in poverty, seen in helplessness.

The gospel writer’s witness invites us to see that the epiphany is not obvious. Rather, it is fragile, tenuous, dreamlike, as vulnerable as an unnoticed baby in a god-forsaken little village, witnessed to by foreigners, in a land ruled by Herod.

And this is where we find ourselves. For if we are to be a people who seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, “in the time of King Herod,” then we are invited to see God at work in the hidden, veiled, fragile, tenuous, vulnerable, weak, poor; in people and places and events one would hardly notice at all.

For what child is this whose epiphany is so quiet, so unob-

trusive, little more than a whisper and yet this one is known, is revealed in the sharing of a little piece of bread and a sip of wine?

For what child is this whose epiphany is so fragile, so veiled, in a village fifteen kilometers from the center of power in Jerusalem and yet this one is baptized, and we are ourselves, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, are named and claimed children of God?

For what child is this whose birth in a manger is witnessed hardly at all, and who is killed on a cross embracing the whole world. A story from start to finish surrounded by loss and grief and yet a story that ends in surprising, new life? “In the time of King Herod...” And soon this family will be running to Egypt.

God give us eyes, new eyes, to see You at work among us. And then nurtured in the water and the Word of our baptism, nourished in the communion meal, and upheld in community move us to action for the fragile, tenuous, vulnerable, weak, poor.

In Christ Jesus – Shalom,
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

Who am I #1

My family lived on a farm in Westpreussen, then one of the eastern provinces of Germany up by the Russian Corridor. My dad was not conscripted, because farmers were seen as essential service providers. But just before the end of the war, when the army was in desperate need of more soldiers, he was taken away. Then we joined the refugee trek, with my step-mother and my young step-brothers on a wagon and my grandmother and me on foot. We soon became separated from the others and made our way alone to where our uncle was living in Pommerania, another Eastern German province at that time. When we arrived, it was time to flee again as the Russian army had caught up to us. Soon, the army overtook us and took away our horses so we had no choice but to go back on foot. By the time we returned, the whole place had been burned down, but oddly, there were two cows in the root cellar. They had overeaten and died. So we had plenty of meat to eat, but not much for shelter. Shortly afterward, we needed to flee again on foot. By Christmas 1945 we had just made it over the German border and we were so grateful to the villagers who shared their rations with us. Getting two potatoes per person felt like heaven! (On the road for 7 weeks all we had to eat was a thin soup of the few potatoes and carrots we were able to scrounge out of abandoned root cellars.) My family resettled in Lübeck, in northern Germany. In the meantime, my father had been taken to a Russian labour camp, working on the railroad. He was later freed and joined us, but we needed to tell him that my two step-brothers had drowned in thin ice when they crossed a frozen river. My cousin’s family had come to Edmonton in 1949. So her father offered to sponsor us. We arrived in Edmonton in 1952 and started attending Trinity. This is where I met my husband. He was a German refugee from Wolhynia in Poland and had found work as a plumber here in the city.

The blessing of having an intern: Internship FAQ's

Andrea Wilhelm

In October, Erin Thomas started her internship at Trinity. I was asked to join the lay committee, a small group of church members that support Erin during her time at Trinity. Through that committee, I am learning lots about Trinity, God's call to ministry, and about myself. Above all, I am learning that it is a miracle and blessing for a church to have an intern. So let's delve in:

What is an intern?

An intern is a seminary student, someone who has responded to God's call and is being trained to become a pastor (or diaconal minister). Erin is in the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon.

The internship is a required part of the training for becoming a pastor, in Erin's case part of her M.Div. program. The internship is crucial because it "provides for extended and thorough involvement in the regular ministry of a congregation [...]. It enables the student to develop the attitude and skills needed for professional ministry, and to learn to integrate the theology [learned at the seminary] and practice of ministry [in a congregation]." (IM, p. 1) The internship takes place in the final 17-20 months of a student's program. Erin will be with us until January 31, 2020, and will graduate and be ready for a call in spring 2020.

What does an internship look like?

During the internship, the intern participates in every aspect of ministry in a congregation. At the beginning, this is mainly done through job shadowing the pastors, but over time she will become more and more independent, do things on her own and develop leadership. The internship is about 1.5 years long so the intern can see all aspects of a congregation's life (e.g., all church seasons) and has enough time to grow into someone who will be able to serve a congregation on their own. During the internship, Erin will also complete a number of intensive courses at the seminary, a project of her design at Trinity, and her Master's thesis. These activities will further enhance her learning and professional growth.

What is the role of the congregation?

Our role is to give the intern access. Access to ourselves and our lives, and to our life and activities as a congregation. We are the "learning site"! In interacting with us, Erin will grow. In our interactions, the Holy Spirit will move and speak. Wow, what a privilege and adventure.

Part of that access is of course welcoming the intern - and thank you for doing that! Another part is making space for the intern to lead and experiment. For example, get Erin to lead a Bible study or devotion in your group. Or respond with openness to an idea she has, a suggestion she makes. I am excited that Erin was put in charge of the Christmas Pageant, for example, what an opportunity to learn and grow. Another part is access to our hearts and spirits, in particular: What impact is the intern having on us, on our faith and lives? For example, if Erin does or says something during a visit with you that impacted you, or if a sermon of hers impacted you, please share it.

Helping Erin get access, understand Trinity, and reflect on what kind of impact she is having, are the main responsibilities of the lay committee. We may at some point approach you and ask you to share Erin's impact on you. Or please,

approach us! We are: Rosanne Thede, Rebecca Rust, Barbie Onyschuk, Manfred Jürgeleit, Andrea Wilhelm. We are interested in your honest stories about your experiences with Erin - please talk to us. We are pledged to confidentiality.

A final thing: Erin is learning. Unless she plays it 100% safe (which I hope she won't), there will be mistakes. When that happens, let's talk about it, learn from it, and move on with grace. Being a safe place for Erin to make mistakes is an important part of Trinity's role.

What is the role of the intern and the supervisors?

Erin has two supervisors: Pastor Ingrid here at Trinity, and Professor Ann Salmon at the seminary. Pastor Ingrid's role is to "share every aspect of ministry [with Erin], and to offer regular reflection and feedback" (IM, p. 7). This includes weekly meetings for formal evaluation. (It is Pastor Ingrid's role, not ours, to evaluate Erin's performance.)

Professor Ann's role was to match Erin with a "learning site" (namely, Trinity), and she oversees the internship on behalf of the seminary. She also assesses whether Erin has completed the internship successfully, and would step in if there were any issues with the learning site.

Erin's role is to learn, to try things, to stretch beyond her comfort zone, and also to apply her seminary learning and ideas at Trinity. We can expect an infusion of inspiration and energy! Her role is also to be diligent in becoming a professional.

What do we as a congregation "get out of it"?

The main thing we get out of it is that we participate in God's awesome calling and formation of someone into pastordship. We are doing a vital service not only to Erin, but to the kingdom of God. Like other congregations before us, we ensure that the church would continue to have pastors. In doing so, we are shaping one of the future leaders of the church, and thereby the church itself. In turn we will benefit from Erin's ideas and her fresh theological training. Pastor Ingrid will benefit because supervising an intern is a rewarding growth experience. And finally, in giving Erin access to us and hearing her questions, we will need to articulate our values, culture and history - a valuable exercise in self-(re)discovery.

I am so happy that the Holy Spirit brought Erin and us together, and am excited about the year ahead.

Seminary's 2018-2019 Internship Manual (IM) was used in putting together these FAQ's.

Who am I #2

I grew up in the Black Forest region in western Germany, close to the French border. We lived in a rather small place, and my older brother inherited the farm. After grade 8, my middle brother and I needed to look for apprenticeship opportunities. He learned woodworking and I took up shoemaking, since the local shoemaker needed some cheap labour. At age 21, I was ready for adventure and hopped on a ship to Canada. Here there were lots of opportunities for carpenters all around Alberta and Saskatchewan. At some point, I met my wife. She was a German refugee child from Poland. Her dad worked in construction labour camps alongside the father of Pastor George Friedrich. We married and settled in Edmonton. It took me 18 years to go back home to visit my family in the Black Forest for the first time.

We Are ALL Refugees

“No,” one might say, bemused but maybe also slightly annoyed. “I most definitely am not. My family has been here at Trinity Lutheran Church for eons. I am deeply embedded in this church’s social fabric, the city of Edmonton, and in Canadian culture. I *help* refugees, such as the Hadado family from Syria. But I am not *one* of them.”

It’s true that I don’t share this narrative in the same way that one might. I am the daughter of two people on the run. My Father, Alan, was given one week to leave South Africa, because he had been discovered to have been a part of the anti-Apartheid movement whilst he was studying engineering at Natal University. One week is not a long time to be given to overturn everything in your known life. As a result of this haste in his leaving of South Africa, I grew up with a Father who mourned deeply the loss of his beautiful home, and who always felt that he hadn’t had closure with his life there. My Mother was about 2 years old when her Mother fled alone from Russia, as a Mennonite. They got to the American zone of Berlin and waited for news about which country might take them (spoiler alert: Canada, who was a little off Germans at that time, did not want to take them). Finally, a Mennonite couple from Canada, Peter and Elfrieda Dyck, helped them get to the arid, mostly barren Chaco in Paraguay in what became known as “the Berlin escape”. To say that this shift in geography and circumstances was difficult for my Mother and the displaced Mennonites in her village would be a vast understatement.

The sudden jolt from the known to the unknown, and the feeling of insecurity that the war and the move gave them, has travelled to my generation in mysterious and incalculable ways, as my cousins and I are realizing these days. I was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and my life was pretty secure, on the face of it. But I did absorb, from an early age, listening to my parent’s generation in the family talk, a feeling that perhaps life was not as secure as it seemed to most here in Canada. I remember talking to a film director I met in Waterloo, Ontario - I told him my Mom’s family’s story, and his words were “man, that would make SUCH a great movie! ... COOL!” This man was a film director, so it is not entirely surprising that he went there with what I told him. But after hearing his response, I realized what space there can be between the realities of people. What is someone’s painful life, can be someone’s engrossing, perhaps block-buster tale.

But here is the kicker: none of us are exactly standing on *terra firma*. Anything can happen at any time. Anything. The Hadado family was a family with a homeland and security, and then, all of a sudden, they weren’t. Paradise, California, residents had a community wherein their children went to school, they shopped, they drank their lattes, etc. And now, they are adrift. Many Fort McMurray residents are, by all accounts, still re-building their lives there. Franc and I lost a baby girl. All of a sudden, a cycling accident can happen. If you think that you are untouchable from all this chaos, standing on a ledge of solidity, then you are quite mistaken. At any moment, you, too, could face the humbling and painful experience of being a refugee. You may come to a point in your life, if you haven’t already, of

needing to seek refuge. And being a refugee doesn’t always look like geographical displacement, either. It can be life just not being where you thought it was. It can be psychological insecurity, and displacement. I posit that being a refugee, or, needing to seek refuge is our shared story, and exactly none of us are exempt.

How does knowing this rather dour idea help? It helps in several ways. First of all, we can go farther than mere sympathy when we help people seeking refuge - we can have empathy. We can help others in seeking-refuge spots in their lives with humility. Empathy and humility always bring a 3-D, connective quality to charitable endeavours. It is not by accident that Mennonites are one of the huge players for refugee affairs in Edmonton, at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers - there is so much empathy there. Also, we can further explore what our real refuge is. It’s good to know, when going through something hard, what exactly is *terra firma*. Society would have us believe that security is always financial security, or housing security, good health or things of that nature. And while these kind of things are good and great to strive for, it’s when the bottom drops that we start to see what is the deeper refuge in our lives. I can’t get through singing “When Peace Like a River” without choking up, since our daughter Violetta died. “Sorrows, like sea billows” literally rolled for the author of that hymn, Horatio Spafford. He lost his son at the age of two, financially was ruined by the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, and lost his four daughters when their ship, SS Ville Du Havre, sank in the Atlantic Ocean. But since Stafford knew where his refuge lay, he was able to write the words “whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well, with my soul.”

And, conjuring up images of boatloads of people arriving at the shores of the Island of Lesbos, G.K. Chesterton’s words: “We are all in the same boat in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty.”

We are all building a home in exile.

We are all refuge-seekers. And, it is well, it is well, with our souls.

Monica Grove



The ship my Mom boarded in 1948, as a Mennonite refugee bound for South America

Learning from the Hadado Family

As a child, Jesus was forced to flee from Israel to Egypt. The Hadados, our refugee family, were also forced to flee their home country. The Hadados decided to leave Syria shortly after a chemical weapons attack. “There is no mercy here”, Jomaa thought, and they packed up and headed to Lebanon. Eventually, Trinity was matched as their sponsor and the family travelled to Edmonton, a 26 hour, 9800 kilometre marathon. Although Mary and Joseph had a very different journey to Egypt, I imagine both sets of parents had a similar look on arrival, exhausted and strained. The kids, on the other hand, possibly like Jesus, arrived smiling and wide eyed. The family was about to face their next big challenge.

Moving to a new country is not an easy thing to do and we have watched as the Hadados find their bearings. Seemingly simple tasks are complicated when you look at documents and do not know which side is up (Arabic does not use our alphabet and reads from right to left). They are dealing with culture shock and must depend on total strangers that they cannot talk to very easily (although smiles, gestures, and google translate do work pretty well). They also face disap-



From left: Abdel, Ahmed, Hala, Marwa, Nour

pointment and harsh realities. One of our helpful translators told us that many Syrians believe that gold flows in the streets in Canada and everything is easy. On arrival, they quickly discovered that this isn't the case....and it is very cold! I am sure they have wondered at times if they have

done the right thing, coming somewhere so different, where they have so much to relearn. Yes they are safer, but they now have new struggles.

And these new struggles are faced while dealing with past trauma. We are slowly learning their story, in between the seemingly endless list of tasks. Their families are large and now spread all over the world. Some are safe outside of Syria, some are abroad but living precariously, and some remain in Syria

where things are very difficult, even when bombs are not falling. Jomaa has asked if we can help bring his mother and brother here. They are in Turkey, struggling to survive each day with very little, and he has not seen his mom in many years. Some of us have seen Jomaa's abdominal scar, where he was struck by a bullet, and we know their home was destroyed by a bomb.

A lot of these struggles, both in the old country and the new, probably sound familiar to many of our members who were also forced to leave the familiarity of their birth homes. Arriving in Canada as a refugee many years ago was likely even more difficult when there were fewer supports in place and, perhaps, less tolerance of difference. One of our members shared with me that he was told not to speak German in public. I think it is a wonderful and blessed thing that the courage, resilience, and faithfulness of our Trinity refugees those many years ago is playing a part in making things a little easier for our refugees today. Christ is indeed alive and in our midst.

While many at Trinity know firsthand what the Hadados are going through, my personal experiences are very different. I have never faced real hardship. I get uncomfortable even if I can't understand the waiter on my overseas vacations. I have so much privilege I have a hard time even imagining what it must have been like to struggle to feed one's children. Yet despite all my privilege, I feel a bit miffed when I miss watching a soccer game because I have to take the Hadados to an appointment. Or I get indignant when I think they are not acting grateful enough for all my “generosity”. And then, I arrive at the Hadado's one morning and their house is full with another family recently arrived from Syria. The Hadados have crammed them into their place and are helping them find a home in Edmonton. Wow, I really am that rich guy trying to ride a camel through the eye of a needle. It is all good though, Jesus

...see *Hadados* page 8

Who am I #3

I grew up in Poland. Before he turned 50, my father was taken away by the Soviet army, never to return. Meanwhile, my other brother had been conscripted into the German army. We had a good relationship with our Polish neighbours. On the morning of Christmas Eve 1949, they told my mother that it would no longer be safe for Germans to remain in our village, so that day we left home, by foot, joining the ongoing refugee trek. I was 7 1/2 years old. We ended up in Itzehoe, in northern Germany, not far from Hamburg. Here I went to school for five years. At this point my older brother had immigrated to Canada and sponsored us. When we got to Edmonton, we lived with a family who attended Trinity. I started confirmation classes here and boy, did we ever have to memorize a lot! At the time, seating on the balcony was divided, with the single men sitting along the eastern and the single women on the western side. I started a cleaning job at the old St. Joe's Hospital, a brick building on Whyte Avenue, and later I began cleaning at the U of A Hospital. One of my colleagues and I were attending the Christmas Eve service. Afterwards, she got a ride home with her boyfriend and I was left without a ride. One of the young men I had seen on the balcony drove up and offered me a ride home. I found out that he too was a German refugee from Poland and that he was working as a carpenter. A while later, we married and started our family. Every year at Christmas, I think about these two very important Christmas milestones in my life!

Hadados - continued from page 7

loves me and has blessed me with the privilege of helping the Hadados. I don't think Jesus suggests I welcome the stranger because they have somehow earned my help and therefore deserve it. I think He suggests I do these things because it is good for my soul. It reveals to me what is truly important in this world: compassion, humility, and love.

Jesus loves me, even though I am often selfish and judgemental, and that love frees me to be a bit more humble and compassionate. What a beautiful, saving thing. I am thankful that God has blessed me with our dear family from Syria. Jesus loves them too, with all their strengths and weaknesses, and He brings us together to help each other, to love each other, and thus reveals His Kingdom. So I am happy when I hear the kids had so much fun dressing up at Halloween in costumes lent by someone in the congregation. I can't wait for them to get their leisure passes so they can forget their struggles for a moment and splash around the pool. I am amazed at how fast Hala is learning English and I smile to hear that Ahmed lives for soccer. Nour delighted me with a huge glass of chocolate milk served on a silver tray, while telling her younger siblings that the milk was just for me. Marwa, quietly and patiently followed us around as we went to the bank and smiled when her Baba (Jomaa) told her how he is learning his ABCs, just like her. Abdel greets us with kisses on the cheeks, Syrian style, and his mom, Kamar, can already reply "so so" with the correct hand gesture when we ask how she is doing. Kamar beamed as she displayed her class 7 driver's license and Jomaa grinned as he was able to give his phone number in English at the library. All small, but significant, steps, in adjusting to their new life here in Edmonton.

Thanks be to our God, who understands what it is like to be a stranger in a strange land.

Jeff Gusdal



Registering at School

Left to right: Marwa, Jomaa, Ahmed, Nour, Sylvia Becker, Hala, Kamar, Abdel, interpreter

Sina... continued from page 3

mained in Harbin were sent to Siberian labour camps.

Sina spent two years on the farm, doing chores, caring for her beloved animals, and driving her one horse cart to market to sell goods. The remoteness of the farm did not, however, keep the family from turmoil for long. In the aftermath of WW II and with the calculated withdrawal of the Soviet Army, the second Chinese civil war ignited. The Manchurian countryside was a stronghold for Mao Tse Tung's Communists in their fierce battle with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. At one point, a roving Chinese militia demanded all their money, and with Sina and her sister as witnesses, pointed their guns at Sina's mother threatening death if she did not comply. Sina's resolute mother did not tell them about the pot she had buried in the back yard which she knew they would need to once more flee. On the road back to Harbin, Sina's sister and constant companion Lolla contracted pneumonia and tragically died. They were only able to arrange a hasty burial before they needed to move on.

Sina and her mother ultimately made it back to Harbin. The Communist victory in 1949 led to the expulsion of Europeans from China. Sina and her mother made the long boat trip to Germany through the Suez Canal. They were settled in Montabaur in the grim, but at least peaceful, conditions of post-war Germany where Sina and her mother eked out a living.

In 1954, Sina's relative Ella sponsored her to come to Canada. I can't imagine what this new country, which was prosperous and not ravaged by war and strife, must have looked like to Sina, but many who are Sina's contemporaries will certainly be able to say.

Sina lived through some of the most tumultuous events of the 20th century, but she was proud of her history. Not the horrific acts and injustices that powers and principalities impose on ordinary people, but her history of resilience, of family, of friendships, of many, many acts of kindness and love. She was a refugee three times and an immigrant twice. She remembers fondly the friendships she made with ordinary Chinese, Russians, and others of many different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The grace with which she carried herself, her humility, her refusal to become embittered, and her insistence on remaining kind, caring and loving are remarkable.

Sylvia Becker

The Healing Power of Shared Memories

Hannah Noerenberg

Over the past few years, Trinity Lutheran Church and Holy Trinity Anglican Church have been putting on a small gathering on the Eve of Remembrance Day, a place to reflect on the memories of those who have experienced loss and trauma that is not usually acknowledged in the official Remembrance Day services here in Canada. Our two congregations recognize that many immigrants living in this country have experienced the receiving end of the battles that are being commemorated when we gather at cenotaphs around the nation to honour the contributions of our Canadian forces overseas. This year a member from Lendrum Mennonite Church joined in on the planning of the event, which included a film showing followed by a panel discussion on the topic of “Can memories be an antidote to hopelessness and also have a

speaking congregational members, now became aware for the first time of what their fellow church members had experienced and never talked about.

The panel that followed was moderated by Dr. Rhonda Breitzkreuz, Associate Professor of Gender, Family and Policy Studies in the Department of Human Ecology at the U of A. The first to speak was Eric Spoeth who sees in his film a testament to the resilience of children. He discussed the process of collecting memories from his mother and her siblings and how in some cases their memories of the same event differed widely and occasionally shifted over time. He noted that it was only in the conversations around this film project that the siblings jointly shared their memories and the effect the loss of their father had had on them over the years. As well, Spoeth mentioned his mother’s gratitude that it was through this film that she was finally able to come to some kind of inner closure about her missing father. As his film has shown in various cities around North America, Spoeth has been able to witness the deep emotional connection many 80 to 90 year old viewers are making when they feel they are seeing their own story reflected. This comes after decades of suppressed pain and suffering that they often have not even shared with their own children. There is an entire generation of war children for whom the sharing of their memories can help them feel more whole.

The second presenter, freelance writer Kate Rittner-Werkman agreed that sharing memories of loss and trauma has a healing effect. Only after her father passed away, was Rittner-Werkman able to see film footage taken by him as a German soldier during WWII. Seeing the war through his lens has given her a greater understanding of his values as a human being and has helped her move away from her inner Remembrance Day turmoil related to knowing that her own father was one of the “enemy soldiers” that our Canadian troops were sent to battle against. For Rittner-Werkman, talking about traumatic memories allows people to channel them into hopefulness. The tragedy within the tragedy is when people feel alone, that they have no one with whom to share these memories. She cited research showing that trauma can lead to low REM sleep, and that without this valuable



Former child refugee Harald Noerenberg and family re-enacting the trek for the movie *Waiting for Waldemar*

healing effect?”

The 2017 docudrama “Waiting for Waldemar” by Alberta filmmaker Eric Spoeth presents the story of one single family of German heritage having lived for generations in one of the many German settlements in today’s Ukraine. They were part of the mass expulsion of Germans needing to flee out of the path of the advancing Soviet onslaught. This film focuses gently on the loss of the children’s father and on their lifelong search for closure. Each of the children has had to struggle with this loss. The film makes reference to the over 12 million other refugees fleeing from the many German settlements in the Balkans, Poland, Russia and all the countries covered by the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as in all of the Eastern provinces of pre-war Germany. The film closes with scenes of modern-day refugees from Syria and the words: “Displacement, loss of homeland, loss of livelihood, separation from and loss of family members and the resulting after-effects are repeated in every major conflict around the globe, and continue to this day...” It was difficult for the audience members not to be moved by the film. For some, it brought back long buried childhood memories. For others, including a Palestinian refugee family recently arrived in Canada, the film spoke to current realities. And others, Canadians who had long worshipped alongside German-



Left to right: Dr. Ghada Ageel, Eric Spoeth, Kate Rittner-Werkman and at the microphone, Dr. Rhonda Breitzkreuz

nighttime stage which allows for the processing of memories, over time trauma could develop to the point of post traumatic stress disorder. She also touched on the sharing of memory in the literary arts and cited titles such as *On the Natural History* ...see **Memories** - page 14

Walking in the Faith

Hanna Noerenberg

“Do you love Jesus, Aunty?” Three pairs of deep white eyes and three sparkling dark faces turned to me, radiating in the evening light above three azure blue donated T-shirts, sitting on donated furniture watching a donated Jesus children’s video on a donated laptop. I answer “Yes, I do” but that seems pale in comparison as I contemplate the deep love for and trust in Jesus that the Koroma family gives witness to whenever I take the time to speak with any one of them. They began their Canadian life in April 2015 just two blocks from church, but have since moved to the Queen Alexandra neighbourhood south of Old Strathcona, when social housing accepted their application for a row house to give the family more space. Even though they can no longer easily walk to church, they have chosen to remain tied in with Trinity due to the welcome they have felt here.

I (and many others) have been touched by the strength of their Christian faith as they continue to manoeuvre through the various challenges that have faced them as they settled into life in Canada. As well, they have continually trusted in God’s guidance through political turmoil, repeated upheaval due to multiple wars, as well as the effects of two major car accidents. Mother Manbendu Newreh was orphaned at the age of nine when her home country of Liberia experienced internal political violence for the first of many times in her lifetime. Liberia is known to some as the country founded by freed slaves who returned to West Africa after



The family today: Manbendu; Imalus; George; Emalus; Isaac; Mamie

having been captured and taken to America. It is sandwiched between Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast, and is known for the bustling metropolis of Monrovia and the rain forested Sapo National Park that is teeming with chimpanzees, leopards, crocodiles, and pygmy hippopotami. Tourists come to surf on the beaches while locals eke out a living by fishing, or hammering boulders to make gravel for a slowly recovering construction industry. Once known for its exports of iron ore, Liberia underwent a brutal 14-year civil war, mostly about control of the country’s resources, including the infamous Blood Diamonds, diamonds mined and sold to finance an insurgency, or support a war lord.

Going from one military dictatorship to another, Manbendu was one of the many child victims of war, having lost both parents and growing up on the move, living at times in refugee camps, with a foster mother, and in an SOS children’s village. The literacy rate for rural Liberian women is just 26%, and so now in Canada, Manbendu has been diligently trying to make up for lost time, faithfully attending Literacy and ESL classes a few evenings a week and excited when she can begin to draw meaning from small strings of letters.

Imalus Maxwell Koroma met Manbendu in his student days in Sierra Leone in 1994. At the time, he was torn between studying Finance or Science, and she was living in yet another refugee camp. Like Liberia, Sierra Leone experienced waves for prolonged civil war, in this case from 1991 till 2002. Both Imalus and Manbendu were pushed back and forth and ended up meeting again in yet another refugee camp 600 kilometers further north, this time in Gambia, an Anglophone country, shaped like a skinny tongue piercing deep into Francophone Senegal. Here they married and their four children were born. With time, they adjusted to peacetime life, with Imalus now choosing to study finance and becoming a college instructor and Manbendu providing care for the very young and the very old.

Having come through a lifetime of war, now the family began facing various medical crises due to the extremely poor road conditions in western Africa. Manbendu’s first car accident took place when she was travelling with her second child Isaac, an infant at the time. He was unscathed but her fractured ankle continues giving her trouble today, especially in cold weather. Later, when their fourth child, Emalus, was an infant, Manbendu was again travelling with a baby on her lap. The transport industry is not very regulated in western Africa, with old vans turned into bush taxis, overflowing with people, and baggage strapped to the top. Add to that unmaintained roadways, poor signage and changing weather conditions. Seatbelts are non-existent, and speeding and accidents are common. This time, the vehicle in which Manbendu and Emalus were travelling had its drive shaft strike a rock and get cut, flinging everyone into the ditches. The driver and some of the other passengers were killed, and tiny baby Emalus sustained severe head injuries. So now Imalus and Manbendu and their infant patient were taken to Senegal, where all three were able to live for nearly half a year inside the hospital as medical doctors monitored Emalus’ progress. Meanwhile, 10-year-old Mamie and her two toddler brothers remained in Gambia where they were supposed to be in the care of someone from the community. The family was reunited once Emalus was stronger and it became clear that the other three children were suffering from neglect. The family thanks God for having sustained them through all of these trying times.

Now, the three youngest boys attend the nearby community school, eager to learn about and partake in Canadian life. Isaac is in grade 5 and loves all sorts of subjects, including spelling. Recess and basketball are his highlights. George is entering grade 4 and is also eager to learn. Em-

...see *Walking in Faith* - page 11

Walking in Faith... continued from page 10

alus bursts with energy but it takes time and a lot of hard effort for him to get the words out. His injuries have paralyzed his left arm and leg and have had an impact on his speech and cognition. A year after his arrival in Canada, his big milestone was the ability to slowly express his thoughts in entire sentences, perhaps as a result of some speech therapy the family has been able to access at the Glenrose.

The eldest of the family, Mamie, recently turned 18 and started a part time job at MacDonalds. Her main focus though is on getting her high school diploma. Even though the family speaks a version of Creole English at home, Mamie has been enrolled as an English as a Second Language student and needs to work hard to learn to use much of the academic vocabulary used in her textbooks. She is skilled with her hands, having learned to cook from an early age and also taken cosmetology courses as part of her high school programming. Currently she is considering a future career in caregiving but is open to other possibilities.

Having been close to this family for three years I have seen many of the challenges faced by immigrants new to Canada. For one thing, paperwork abounds. There is much talk of programs for children and families, but each requires application forms, timelines and a range of bureaucratic hurdles. For another, federal immigration support runs out one year from arrival. One year after they arrived, Imalus had barely completed one of the management training programs he enrolled in but needed to pick up a job as a short order cook at Wendy's in Sherwood Park to have a source of income. Transportation is another big hurdle. Imalus spent many long hours bussing to and from work. Thanks to one of the members of Trinity's refugee committee, Imalus was able to practice his driving skills to get his Alberta Drivers' License, but then it took some time to be able to borrow and later buy a vehicle.

Today, Imalus works as a Health Care Aide for a local private company that is contracted to provide services to the University Hospital. He is however at the mercy of the schedulers and often does not get booked in for full time hours. And unfortunately, pay is minimal. He is contemplating taking further coursework to combine his healthcare and financial background in the field of healthcare administration, but that would be a heavy load on top of his current job and other duties, such as regularly taking Emalus to medical appointments.

In Gambia, Manbendu would frequently visit and care for the elderly. She has magic in her fingertips, as she deftly applies her knowledge of healing arts through her massages. Manbendu generously took the time twice a week to provide my own mother with loving therapeutic touch – something my mother greatly looked forward to in the last summer of her life. I observed how my mother's tense body was able to relax under Manbendu's skilled hands and I hope that at some point, someone could help Manbendu turn those skills into an employment opportunity. She is currently hoping to find work as a private caregiver either for the elderly or the very young but lacks the needed connections to make this happen.

Isaac is very happy to be currently receiving piano lessons from one of Trinity's young adults, but all four children (and Manbendu) could benefit from more one-on-one

tutoring and help with schoolwork. Both Isaac and George would love the chance to get involved with some team sports but the family is unsure of how to access such opportunities. The family has finally managed to renew their leisure access card but without someone to actually take the boys swimming or to other activities, this card remains unused.

As part of our call to welcome the newcomer, here are some things we could consider doing:

- start or continue greeting members of the Koroma family when they come to church
- take the kids to the rec centre (and/or skating or sledding or biking or for a simple walk in the park)
- tutor family members with their reading, math or other homework
- assist Imalus with paperwork (income tax returns, program applications, etc.)
- help set up the house computer and printer and/or help the family make use of cell phone features like the answering machine service
- build a shed in the summer (or help to locate and bring one over) to help with outdoor storage (bikes, etc.)
- think of ways to help both Imalus and Manbendu increase their employment opportunities
- keep the family in your prayers!

Prayer is what holds the family strong as they deal with the uncertainty of the future and the needs of the present, as they have done time and time again in the past.

Looking at the many challenges still ahead, I imagine more congregational members experiencing the blessings of being within the Koroma's circle of caring prayer and generosity as I have been. After any visit, Manbendu never lets me leave empty handed, and generously fills a container with food she has prepared or at the very least offers to peel me an orange. After every phone call, Manbendu tells me "God bless you" and I know that she is speaking as one who has experienced God's blessings firsthand, through all the valleys her life has taken her and her family. May we all be blessed as we continue learning what it is to walk in faith.

Hannah Noerenberg

Who am I #4

I grew up in one of those German villages east of Warsaw, Poland, along the Warthe River. After the expulsion of German refugees, my family ended up on a farm in Bavaria, in southern Germany. One of our relatives had come to Canada earlier and lived on a farm near Rolleyview, outside of Leduc. He sponsored us so I came to Canada in 1949. I worked on that farm till 1950, when I moved into Edmonton to work in construction. During the 1950s, Edmonton's population increased by 100,000. In fact, one in three houses in many of the neighbourhoods around Bonnie Doon up to Strathcona was built in that decade. At that time, I attended St. John's Lutheran Church downtown. This is where I met my wife. She had also been a German refugee from Poland. We got married in Trinity in 1954 and I continue being a member here to this day.

Council Update

From the Chair's Chair

In a recent conversation about Trinity, someone said to me "Trinity is a dying church." It has been several weeks since that conversation, and yet I still think about those words; they echoed in my mind as recently as this morning, after our beautiful First of Advent service. You see, Trinity is a very special place for me. It is where I attended Sunday School and was confirmed, enjoyed an active youth-group life and made life-long friends; it is where I was married, baptized our daughter and watched her grow in her faith and her love for Jesus, and it is where, in more recent years, I said good-bye to my husband, my mom, my dad and several dear friends. Throughout all of these experiences of great joy and equally great sorrow, Jesus and the people of Trinity were by my side.

Trinity was very much ALIVE then and continues to be alive in my life and my heart as we transition through some challenging times. It is true: We are losing some of our dear members. We are being challenged to find solutions to a growing financial deficit and to ask the question, "What does it mean to be the church in 2018?"

But we are far from dying, precisely because in the midst of these challenges, there is abundant life and light and hope at Trinity. Here are some of the places I experience LIFE at Trinity:

- in the healing, life-giving ministry of our pastoral staff to our aging, ill and dying members and their families
- in the faces, voices and actions of the countless volunteers who love this place enough and believe in its healing ministry to give of their gifts and their time
- in a Sunday morning service as I watch, and know, that through word and music, people's lives are changing
- in the pews of our church, with young and old, someone new every Sunday and more young adults than I've seen in a while
- in the work of our Food Bank volunteers, who not only hand out food but provide advocacy, kindness and compassion for those who feel hopeless
- in the faces of the people who use the Winter Shelter at Trinity and the comfort of knowing they will be warm for another night
- in the sweet children who are getting ready to bring you the Christmas Pageant and in our Youth who touch us with their laughter, joy and optimism
- in the good, abundant work of our committees and in the care and concern for our beautiful church building
- in the response of our members to the Hadado family from Syria as they settle in Edmonton
- in a visit to the church on any given evening to witness the community coming together in a safe, loving space

It is a joy to work on Church Council with people who care deeply for the future of Trinity. We talk, on Council, a lot about the importance of sharing more of our stories – stories about how Trinity (really Jesus through Trinity) is changing us, challenging us, healing us. We believe that through our stories and through sharing what this ministry is doing for our lives and the lives of others, our mission will become clearer. People don't support a church for the sake of sup-

porting a church; they support a strong mission they can believe in. Can you clearly see our mission? If not, we're not doing a good enough job of telling our story.

What is your story? How is Trinity ALIVE for you? Where do you experience transformation or healing at Trinity? Why do you come here to this place? What is it that you find here?

Feel free to share with me in person or by email at smlotzbecker@gmail.com. I love to hear stories! I may even ask you if I can share your story!

Sylvia Becker

Who am I #5

I was born in a German village near the Black Sea in Bessarabien, today's Rumania. My father was a finishing carpenter. In 1940, when the Russians took over the area, we were moved to a nunnery in Austria, with 102 people sleeping in a single large room for some time. Later, when the Nazis moved into Poland and took over Lodz, renaming it Litzmannstadt, we were shipped over there and lived in various barracks in the nearby forest. I needed to walk 3 kilometers to get to school. My father, who was fighting on the Eastern Front, sent word to us to move further west, to my mom's relatives on the other side of the Weichsel River. We arrived there in December 1944. Every evening refugee wagons stopped looking for lodging. One night 10 wagons stopped in front of our place, with us trying to squeeze everyone onto the furniture and the floor. By January 1945, we too had to leave. To make a long story short, after multiple shifts in direction, even getting back down the Black Sea area, when I was 12, we were taken by the Russians as forced labourers. On Christmas Day, 1945 we were packed like standing sardines into unheated cattle cars and transported, midwinter, to Siberia, a journey that took till January 19. My mother, siblings, aunts and cousins ended up in the same camp. For 10 years, I worked as a forestry worker, spending my teenage years building rafts, floating logs downriver, sawing them, stacking lumber, all by hand and hard labour, a daily battle against hunger and the cold. We had no idea whether this would ever end. After a decade, we were freed and able to go to northern Germany, where our whole family was reunited. Incredibly, one of my childhood classmates from the Black Sea area found our family and asked to marry me. He was planning to go to Canada. I was so stunned, and agreed to go with him. But this meant leaving my family behind. In those days, it took 10 days by ship to get from Germany to Canada, and then another three by train to get from Halifax or Quebec City to Edmonton. Once here, we took on one job after another as we raised our children. I started working at the GWG Jeans factory and did housecleaning, while my husband worked for 10-month stints out of town in lumber camps. I would bus to see him on weekends and bring him fresh laundry. We had rented a room for me in the same house as the Birkoben family, who also attended Trinity. Later, my husband worked at Gainers like many other Trinity men at the time. I later took a massage course and also worked in a health food store.

Report From: The Seventeenth Biennial Convention Synod of Alberta and the Territories - ELCIC

In June, I was one of Trinity's four delegates at this year's Synod Convention held at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta, in Camrose, Alberta; along with Pastor Ingrid Cramer-Doerschel, Pastor Jason Anderson, and Emily Rae. The Convention began Thursday June 16 with an Opening Worship at 2 pm. and ran through until Saturday June 16 at 3 pm.

The theme of the convention for 2018 was "Faith, Hope and Love...the greatest of these is Love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

To start things off on Thursday afternoon Chair Wayne Street introduced Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, Secretary Marilyn Murray, Treasurer Paul Ellison (from Trinity) and welcomed delegates, guests and visitors, including special guest National Bishop Susan Johnson. The committee for registration and attendance reported the convention attendance at 233 - with 87 rostered delegates, 83 lay delegates, and 63 visitors and guests. This number varied slightly over the convention period remaining close to 233, except on Saturday when an additional 10 guests came for one day only, something I had not expected. The Convention outline distributed at the beginning was well adhered to with 5 plenary sessions interspersed over the conference. A plenary session is a session of a conference which all members attend and may include a broad range of content, from keynote speakers and panel discussions to sessions in which attendees deliberate and vote on the various motions presented.

Following the welcome reception, the first plenary session saw the introduction of the convention committees; first ballot for the election of the Bishop; greetings and report from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; greetings from Lutheran Theological Seminary and a video entitled "Spirit-Led Leadership." After watching the video, delegates discussed it in small groups. Afterwards, the results of the election were announced. Bishop Larry Kochendorfer received 81% of the votes and was declared elected on the first ballot. He then presented the Report of the Bishop.

Each day started with breakfast at 7:30 and the morning Eucharist at 8:15. Friday continued with a plenary session before and after the working/brown bag lunch, and a Festival Banquet. A second video, "Hope-Led Discipleship," in the video series on Mission Priorities, was watched and discussed. The nominating committee presented nominations for Synod Council and the Lutheran Theological Board of Directors. Rev. Anna Thede was acclaimed as Secretary for a six year term. On Friday afternoon the committee for Reference and Counsel presented two petitions for consideration.

Petition #1

1: That the Synod of Alberta and the Territories states clearly and unequivocally our commitment to the dignity and worth of all persons, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation and

2. Urge our bishop, on behalf of this Synod, to voice our opposition in name of Christ to hate related incidents and to

groups that advocate hate, through letters to public officials at the local, provincial and federal levels of government.

3. Encourage congregations to reach out to persons and groups who are targets of hate with support and solidarity. This was moved, seconded and carried.

Petition #2

That the Synod of Alberta and the Territories create and promote a fund and an endowment fund to be used to support the development and /or redevelopment of congregations and ministries or for the equipping of leaders for the redevelopment. The intention of this fund is to receive both donations and monies from the dissolution of congregations and use these monies for the above purposes. This was moved, seconded and carried.

A third video "Innovation Tradition" was watched and discussed in small groups. The Committee on Elections reported on who was elected as delegates for the National Convention.

At the banquet Friday evening, Reverend Ingrid Cramer-Doerschel was honoured with her 25th Years of Ordination along with Rev. Markus Wilhelm and others. Reverend Raymond Christenson was honoured with his 50th Year of Ordination along with Rev. Friedmut Wilhelm and others.

Saturday's plenary session included the last video called "Collaborative Partnerships" as well as another Committee on Elections report. The following delegates were elected to attend the 2019 National Convention: Andrea Wilhelm (from Trinity), Anne Zimmerman, Rev. Aaron Schnell, Rev. Erik Sorenson, Anne Harding and Garth Hein.

This convention format included 2 ½ days of an intensive yet relaxed atmosphere with worship, prayer, singing, conversation, contemplation and mingling. It was a chance for the lay delegates to rub shoulders with the academy of theologians - Reverends, Doctors, Rev. Drs. and Bishops; mostly in good fun, notwithstanding some serious theological and philosophical discussions had by some. Chair Wayne Street kept items and dockets moving along efficiently, much like the chair of a political convention.

Although the Convention was located in a sports arena, it was extremely well organized both in terms of layout and format. All attendees were able to see and learn from the speakers at the podium, similar to a university setting.

The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen. Dr. Madsen is a "freelance theologian" in Two Harbors, Minnesota. Minnesota is, of course, a Midwestern U.S. state bordering Canada and Lake Superior, so close we could almost call her Canadian, although she did mention her ethnicity is Norwegian. This is how she was introduced in the printed program: "After graduating from Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Dr. Madsen served a small South Dakota parish for three years before earning a Ph. D. in systematic theology in Regensburg,

...see Synod Convention - page 14



Synod Convention... continued from page 13

Germany. Immediately prior to her return to begin teaching as a college professor, an accident killed her husband and severely injured her young son Karl. Daughter Else was eight months old at the time.

This event shaped her theology and her life profoundly, not least of all by being a springboard to create *OMG: Center for Theological Conversation*. Here, individuals and groups, laity and clergy, come for questions, conversation and study. Through *OMG*, she also speaks, blogs and writes.”

Dr. Madsen travelled to the Synod Convention with her family from Two Harbors by specialized van since Karl has special needs. This took 25+ hours. Dr. Anna relayed that they were almost in an accident coming here which triggered visions of her husband's death years ago.

Her keynote address eloquently captured her academic and real life experiences as she spoke from her heart. It was broken into three distinct parts over the 3 days. Faith on Friday morning; Hope on Friday afternoon and Love on Saturday morning. I am sharing a number of highlights from the many notes I took during her talks. These statements really spoke to me: “Your grasp of faith might not be mine.” Changes need to be measured against something. Why do we believe them to be true? The Gospel is the Good News. We have an atonement to make. The News – Jesus is risen. Life out of death is offered to all people. Life, hope and proclamation. The proclamation – Jesus is the Christ, “The Anointed One.” We believe Jesus is not dead. He is risen. Healing, feeding and forgiving.

Jesus is risen is God's agenda. We are called to be ambassadors of the Gospel. Christ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word ‘Messiah’ meaning the Anointed One.

Theology is not static. Faith is not static. Faith is action. Have you fed, visited and clothed anyone? Faith is putting our trust in something that is less than clear. Not certain. When someone makes a promise, is that promise worthy of my faith? Promise is a word of the future. Who is making the promise? The angels said ‘He is risen! Why are you looking for the living in the place of the dead?’ And then Rev. Dr. Madsen said “Death is real but life is realer.”

Dr. Madsen went on to say God despises death. She gave the example of the woman washing Jesus' feet, she knew she couldn't save him from crucifixion but she anointed him as King. You can't do everything; you can only do what you can do. Bring Easter into this present moment. Be an ambassador for Easter.

Dr. Madsen then spoke about unconditional love (no matter what, you are loved) versus obedience (obey your parents). God is about forgiveness so that you may be revered (loved). God does get angry (wrath). God is righteously angered. Perhaps we should rage against destruction of God's earth. Therefore call it what it is because you are loved. Speak out. We are called to be ambassadors of God's love. Be the light. You are loved by God. Rediscover your heritage. Invite people into our roots.

Dr. Madsen's keynote presentation and the convention in general had a profound and lasting imprint on me. I was honoured and humbled to attend the convention.

This year's convention chaplain was Rev. Jeff Decelle from Unity Medicine Hat. His closing prayers were honest, authentic, profound, simple and moving. He said so much with so few words.

Submitted by Manfred Jürgeleit

Note: Videos of Dr. Madsen's presentation can be viewed on the Alberta Synod website here:

<http://albertasynod.ca/convention/synod-convention/rev-dr-anna-madsens-2018-presentations/>

Memories from page 9

ry of Destruction by W.G. Sebald; *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak and *The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. It is by sharing memories of the missing that we bring them back to life, at least in our consciousness, which can be a first step to healing.

The final speaker was Dr. Ghada Ageel, Visiting Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. Involved in forced migration studies both professionally and personally (she herself is a third generation Palestinian refugee), she referred to the tens of thousands of stories that show that the sharing of memories is an antidote to hopelessness. She discussed the example of her own grandmother, who was expelled from her village in Palestine during the Nakba in 1948 when 750,000 people (80% of the population of Palestine at the time) were forcibly removed from their homeland. Dr. Ageel's grandmother lived as a refugee for over 68 years, till her death in 2016. She was one of 1.3 million refugees who have been living for 4 generations in 8 refugee camps. Dr. Ageel explained that over time, historic Palestine has been occupied and depopulated and much of it has become present day Israel. The two areas that are still referred to as Palestine today (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) are only 6000 km² in combined size and also subject to Israeli occupation. The roughly five million Palestinians living there have experienced bombardments, economic sanctions, and other measures. Dr. Ageel went on to share how her grandmother often told her children and grandchildren about her life in her home village. She was never able to go back to even take a look in all these years, even though the village was just a few kilometres north of the refugee camp where she was “temporarily” living. As she aged, she increasingly became aware that there would be no return in her lifetime, but she found some peace in knowing that her stories and memories had been firmly planted within the hearts and minds of her descendants. Dr. Ageel concluded that it is in the passing on of memories to the next generations that one can create hope, and in return receive legitimacy for one's experiences.

The afternoon closed off with a reading of the prayer known as the Prayer of St. Francis – *Lord make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope*. As well, participants could take home a button with the words “To remember is to work for peace” along with saplings of white pine, to be planted to symbolize new hope growing from the soil of the past.

The annual pre-Remembrance Day events started through conversations between Dr. Chris Pappas of Holy Trinity Anglican church and our Pastor Ingrid. For 2019, they plan to hold an event bringing together the grandparent and grandchild generations along with their stories, experiences and perspectives.

Republished with small changes from Mill Wood's Mosaic December 15, 2018

Feeding 100 - Tips for planning Light Meals in our Luther Centre

For decades, the various service groups of our church have been feeding hundreds of people here at Trinity.

Here are some tips shared by the Trinetten for planning a light luncheon consisting of German style open-faced sandwiches which they serve at funerals. The menu is slightly different when the English speaking ladies put on events in the Luther Centre, but the quantities shown below might serve as a starting point for anyone wishing to plan for a lot of guests!

1. You will need to **pre-order** cake and cold cuts. We support local businesses and turn to Empress Bakery and K & K. It is important to give them a few days' notice, so they can have the order on hand for you to pick up early on the morning the food is needed.

For 100 people we order:

From Empress Bakery:

- 5 loaves of rye bread
- 5 dozen Kaiser Buns
- 3 "half slabs" of cake (apple, cherry, cheesecake, poppyseed, Bienenstich are the most popular; ask for the cake to be cut into small pieces)

from K & K:

- 5 pounds cold cuts (Jagdwurst, ham, salami, turkey breast)
- 3 pounds cheese (Gouda, Havarti) 1 ½ pounds each

2. One of us goes **shopping** in a local grocery store. For 100 people we typically get:

- 1 large and one small tub of margarine
- 1 large or two small tins of coffee for coffee urns, usually there are a lot of teabags in the kitchen, so we don't always buy a new box
- 4 litres milk (for coffee cream)
- 4 jars pickles, eg. Bread and Butter pickles (already sliced, not as sour as other types)
- 2 to 3 cans of frozen juice to mix with water (4 cans if there are LOTS of kids present)

3. One of us phones a few **volunteers**. Typically, to set up for 100 people, we have 6 people in the kitchen, starting 1 ½ to 2 hours ahead of the event.

Here are the various tasks we do in the kitchen.

- Set up an open-faced sandwich making assembly line with one person slicing buns, one putting on the margarine, two putting on the cold cuts and one cutting and arranging the sandwiches on plates.
- Have one person to set up the coffee urn two hours ahead of when needed. Six cups of coffee for 100 cups of water (You will see a sign by the coffee urns giving detailed instructions.)
- When the sandwiches are done, have someone put the pickles into the little bowls, saving the liquid so that left overs can then be returned to the jars
- Someone then stirs up pitchers of juice
- Others arrange rows of cake on the white trays, so that each tray contains a few rows of each kind of cake

All the prepared food needs to be wrapped and refrigerated until the event starts and it is all put out on the long table.

4. Sometimes the family provides cut flowers so we fill up the vases, and put out the tablecloths and the vases. If no flowers are supplied, we have some artificial ones on hand to set out to give the room a more festive feel.

5. We put out the medium sized **plates**, as well as the cutlery, napkins, etc. on the long table and all the beverages + cups, saucers and glasses on the small tables by the kitchen. We count the plates that we put out so that after the event we can tell by the number of unused plates, how many people were in attendance.

6. As people eat we take turns among ourselves, allowing some of us to sit and eat while others replenish the serving plates and pitchers.

7. The **dishwasher** needs to be turned on to warm up 30 minutes before the first dishes are to be washed. It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** that all the instructions that are posted near the dishwasher are followed so that we do not have any mishaps and costly damage as has previously been the case.

The water pressure in the rinse hose needs to be released. The washer needs to be shut off before the water can be let out and sieve taken out and cleaned.

8. We divvy up the **tablecloths**, with 4 or 5 of us taking 5 home for washing to be returned at our earliest convenience (or the next day if it is clear that lots of events are coming up.)

So just as Jesus took the 5 loaves and with God's blessing, provided enough to feed 5000, with God's blessing and the work of many volunteers, we take all of the resources in our Luther Centre Kitchen and serve meals to those who gather within our walls whether they are coming together to mourn or to celebrate. As our long-time "Marthas in the Kitchen" are getting older, we appreciate having more and more younger volunteers coming forward to take on the task of feeding the masses!

Information provide by Talita Klingbeil and Helga Roth
Compilation by Hannah Noerenberg

Who am I #6

I was born near Danzig (Gdansk) in Poland. This was a key German harbour city at the mouth of the Weichsel River. As a child, I enjoyed swimming, watching the sunrises and sunsets as well as the freighters come and go. My brother was older than me and was conscripted into military service early on. My father had been wounded in battle in WWI and because he was in charge of the electrical lighting system in the harbour, he was not conscripted. Many nights we could hear the bombing of Danzig by both British and Soviet planes. I had started my apprenticeship as a surveyor but did not get to finish this, since in March 1945 my mother and my sister and I were evacuated shortly before the predicted advance of the Soviet troops. We got on the last ship to leave Danzig and arrived in Lübeck. It is interesting that there were German government officials who made this evacuation of women and children possible, arranging lodging with families in nearby small towns. Within a few months, the population of Barmstedt by Hamburg, for example, doubled with incoming refugees. My father managed to leave Danzig in a tugboat along with a few harbour workers just in the nick of time. Any others who survived the brutal battles in the area were taken into Russian captivity. When schools finally re-opened and railways were fixed up, I resumed my training in the field of surveying, but this meant spending 2 ½ hours on the train to get to Hamburg in time for class, and then another 2 ½ to get back home, often in freight cars as there was a shortage of passenger cars. With most of Hamburg's apartment blocks destroyed, it was not possible to find lodging right in the city. Upon graduation, I could not find work, so I retrained as a secretary, and continued the 5 hour commute to go to work. Slowly, buildings were rebuilt, but when my husband and I left Hamburg in 1954, there were still many gaps where buildings had been bombed out. It took many many more years to rebuild everything. I met my husband in school. He was eight years older than me and grew up in Madgeburg. His two years of obligatory military service turned into many more years as the war broke out. His service both on the Eastern Front and in the Afrika Korps, as well as his time as a POW in Canada have been documented in the film by Eva Colmers called "The Enemy Within." We came to Edmonton in 1954 and rented rooms in the same house as the family of Johanna and Karl Ritter. At the time, 63rd avenue (Argyll Road) marked Edmonton's southern border. Our children were baptized in St. Paul (Mill Creek) but then attended German Saturday School in Trinity around the time when Pastor Hohnsbein served here.

Financial Update

As our congregation ages our worship attendance and our membership continues to decline. At the same time, the importance of our ministry increases, especially as our older members find it increasingly difficult to come to church regularly.

The gifts from our members to the regular operation of the church, the income we traditionally refer to as Current income has remained at 2017 levels throughout most of this year; our operating expenses on the other hand continue to inch upward slightly year over year. Fortunately, we have seen a significant increase in our rental income in 2018.

I estimate that we will end the year with about a \$25,000 operating deficit for the year if our giving in December follows the pattern from past years. We started the year with a \$39,000 operating deficit from last year, so our total operating deficit will likely be around \$65,000 at year end.

In addition to the operating deficit, we also have a property deficit; comprised of large expenses we've incurred recently because our facilities are aging and in need of renewal. Members of our congregation have invested \$100,000 in debentures to cover the capital project costs; a loan amount that we will start to repay with designated gifts in 2019.

Early in December we provided a financial update to all members. If you did not receive a letter explaining Trinity's financial position, please call the office and let Sorin know. We also sent letters to anyone who supported Trinity in 2017 or 2018, encouraging them to consider Trinity as they planned their Christmas giving.

Along with the letters, we included special offering envelopes. We are very happy to see some of these in use already.

Church council is committed to bringing our 2019 operating expenses into line with a realistic estimate of our revenues; we will propose a balanced budget for 2019.

As you celebrate Christmas, and make plans for the New Year, please consider what your Christmas gift will be towards the ministry that is Trinity Lutheran Church. If we all work together we can eliminate the operating deficit for 2018 and maybe even the total operating deficit.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the ministry here at Trinity.

Frank Thede
Treasurer

PAR Challenge

The more of us that commit to a regular giving plan, the easier the money management at Trinity becomes, because income is more predictable and reliable. Church council would like to encourage you to sign up for monthly pre-authorized giving, called Pre-Authorized Remittance (PAR). It is a very convenient way for you to provide regular support to Trinity.

There are currently 49 households on PAR and they account for almost 1/3 of our total offering revenue. We'd really like to see that increase to 50% of our total revenue.

An anonymous donor has offered to donate \$1000 if 5 or more new households sign up for PAR before March 31 2019, and \$2000 if 10 or more sign up. So we invite you to include signing up for PAR as you make your plans for the New Year.

How do I sign up?

Decide on the amount of your monthly contribution; fill in a PAR authorization form (available on the table in the atrium or from the office), fill in your banking information or simply attach a voided cheque, and drop it into the offering plate or give it to the church office. The amount indicated by you will be withdrawn from your account around the 20th of every month. It is an automatic withdrawal, just like you might use for your utility bills or municipal taxes.

Where can I find my full bank account information?

If you have cheques, the information can be found in the line at the bottom:



If you use online banking, the information is typically available if you look at your account details and finally, you could check with your bank.

Can I change my PAR amount?

Yes, you can change your amount any time. Simply contact the church office or place a signed note in the offering plate.

My monthly income fluctuates. I'm not sure how PAR would work for me.

You could commit to a "base amount" for which you use PAR. In those months where you can afford to give more, use an offering envelope or online giving (available on our website: <http://www.trinity-lutheran.ab.ca/donate/>) for the extra amount.

Why can't I set up an automatic payment from my own bank account?

We use PAR because it is cost effective and because it was the only option available when it was set up (10-15 years ago). If you use online banking you are likely aware of e-transfers and the ability to set up recurring e-transfer payments. We are working to make this possible for donations to Trinity - watch your bulletin for more information in the new year.

Other questions? Please talk to me or our staff or any council member.

Frank Thede
Treasurer

Who am I #7

I grew up in Leipzig, the home of many German cultural icons like Goethe, Schiller and Bach. My father was an engineer and so he could afford to send his children to the Gymnasium (an academic high school) where we were also taught English. We needed to flee and found refuge in Cologne, in Western Germany. Here I later married my wife Erika who was born in that city. We came to Canada together in 1955. With my English and higher schooling, I had an easier start here than many of the others.

Comings, Goings and Celebrations

November 26, 2017 to November 25, 2018

Baptisms

December 3, 2017
 December 24, 2017
 March 18, 2018
 July 22, 2018
 September 9, 2018
 September 9, 2018

Confirmation, Nov 4, 2018

Weddings

Carleigh Miller and Todd Bergen-Henengouwen,
 March 10, 2018
Michelle Marusiak and Cory Williams, May 19, 2018
Shamelle Pless and Aaron Rusterholz, July 14, 2018
Vanessa Herbert and Patrick Biglow, July 22, 2018
Jayde Gobeil and Korey Reid, August 11, 2018
Emily Trites and Aaron Bootsma, August 18, 2018
Hannah Dai and Jing Shang, August 18, 2018
Esther Yang and Chris Kim, August 25, 2018
Tristin Maximik and Daniel Theroux, September 1,
 2018

Deaths

Klaus Edelmann, December 2, 2017
Kurt Schaepmeyer, December 12, 2017
Eric Neitsch, December 13, 2017
Katharina Petzold, December 27, 2017
Louise Elsie Sommers, January 30, 2018
Peter Thede, February 16, 2018
Erna Drachenberg, March 6, 2018



Stephen Derrall Wildfang, March 15, 2018
Anny Brokop, April 21, 2018
Rosalie Mitchke-Harris, June 15, 2018
Doreen Vincent, June 16, 2018
Gertrud Pohl, June 20, 2018
Edith Hildegard Thielmann, July 13, 2018
Margaret Wright, July 24, 2018
William Zittlau, July 31, 2018
Arthur Kruger, August 2, 2018
Esther Eleonora Kozun, September 18, 2018
Ruth Keller, September 24, 2018
Guenter Richard Watzenberg, November 20, 2018

Looking Ahead

Monday, December 24: Worship services:
 4:00 PM Family Christmas Eve celebration
 6:00 PM German Candlelight Service
 8:00 PM English Candlelight Service with musical
 guest Jessica Heine
Tuesday, December 25 Worship Services:
 9:30 AM German Christmas Service - Holy Communion
 11:00 AM Christmas - Holy Communion
Sunday, December 30 Worship Services:
 9:30 German service of Christmas Hymns and Lessons
 11:00 English Service with Christmas Hymns followed
 by a New Year's Eve reception in the Atrium
Monday, December 31, New Year's Eve:
 4:00 PM - German New Year's Eve service
Tuesday, January 1, New Year's Day:
 11:00 AM - New Year's Day service
Sunday, January 27, 12:30 lunch and an opportunity to
 talk with Intern Pastor Erin
February: Winterfest, specific date and details to be an-

nounced later
Wednesday, March 6 7PM
 Ash Wednesday Service
Thursday, April 18 Seder
 Meal
Friday, April 19 Good Friday
Sunday, April 21 Easter

Who Am I? (solution)

#1 - Melida Kunz
 #2 - Walter Rutsch
 #3 - Hilma Hirt
 #4 - Julius Schubert
 #5 - Wilma Gwinner
 #6 - Eva Osterwoldt
 #7 - Fred Walter

The Trinity Team is a publication of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Edmonton, Alberta. The Team is published 3-4 times a year - in August, in December, in February, and in May under the auspices of the Communications Committee.

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The Team is intended to serve the members of Trinity Lutheran Church as a comprehensive communications tool. The editors welcome your comments or questions. Please submit all Team articles, information, comments or questions to: Trinity Office (office@trinity-lutheran.ab.ca) or drop them off at the church office - Attn: Trinity Team

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