



Trinity Team

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
10014 81 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6E 1W8
Phone: (780) 433 1604
Email: office@trinity-lutheran.ab.ca
Website: www.trinity-lutheran.ab.ca

April 2019

Always the Same = Always Changing

by Pastor Jason

I wish the person who said: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow” would have just read the New Testament – but as you probably know, he or she wrote the New Testament.

Hebrews 13:8 is so easily and frequently used as a proof-text to oppose change. People cling to this verse with the false expectation that theology is static, the church is static, and God’s Word is static rather than eternal.

Ironically, the author of Hebrews has an agenda and appetite for change, which is one reason the proof-texting of 13:8 seems so misguided. The New Testament, or new covenant in Christ is the same (or better) than it was back in Moses’ day when Leviticus was ordering the practice of the temple sacrifice. Hebrews makes this blessed argument that

we no longer need to sacrifice animals according to the Law and the old covenant with God, which Israel failed to honour again and again throughout the writings of the Hebrew Bible. What was



flawed in the atonement economy of the old testament/covenant, is now made perfect through our new covenant in Christ. Jesus is the one who is pure and perfect, simultaneously the high priest and sacrificial lamb. Thus, insofar as Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Leviticus atonement, he is indeed the same yesterday today and tomorrow.

In clear contrast to this, all four gospels describe the dynamic nature of Jesus’ person and ministry. Most obvious are the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection. Less obvious though wonderfully profound would be:

Jesus baptism (Matthew 3, Mark 1, Luke 3) changes his life and begins his leadership in ministry, similarly and on

the heels of Jesus baptism is the wilderness temptation of Christ by the devil.

The transfiguration also marks a significant change in Jesus’ ministry. This event seems to steer Jesus’ ministry to Jerusalem, which carries with it the weight of the Law and messianic prophecies fulfilled. (Mathew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9)

Other world altering events for Jesus occur when he meets some women. One of my favorite examples is the poignant conversation between Jesus and a nameless woman at Jacob’s Well. This Samaritan changes Jesus’ message; it’s not just about Jesus fulfilling the scriptures as promised to the Jews but it’s about the riches of God’s blessings which includes all people, not just the chosen children of Israel.

One thing that is the same, is the changing nature of the church on earth, which is the dynamic body of Christ that gathers to open the living Word of God. So why all this change? Because we are alive! Change is often met with aversion because it can be

scary. It is frightening to move from that which is known and familiar to that which is unknown. But instead of seeking security in stability and consistence, we do well to seek security in the living Word made flesh, Jesus who commissions us into the unknown and promises to be with us every step of the way.

I had the profound privilege to welcome a couple home from their winter away in Arizona. Some dear friends left a gift in their mail box containing old photos of Trinity memories. I saw a photo of an old brass band. I thought (with wonder) about a time when churches were so vibrant. Then I thought about our Easter service, I thought about the brass that plays year after year; I thought

about our own brass ensemble, our youth band and all of the gifted musicians at Trinity. I thought about the many times I have had to hold back tears at the beauty of our worship. I think about the uncompromising excellence of our theology and the overwhelming compassion, which directs our mission in communities beyond our doors.

My life and call to mission will change dramatically in the next six months, and some of these changes in my life will imply changes to yours as well. I will no longer be your pastor, but I will always be your friend. This is nothing to fear, I am excited to call you my friends. Another saving grace is the presence of Christ. Wherever we are called, Jesus comes with us. Though the church is always changing, Jesus’ new covenant with us doesn’t change. Jesus Christ is the same: changing lives for new life, now and always. To God alone be the Glory.



Inside this issue:

• Always the Same = Always Changing	1
• Nothing Permanent but Change	2
• Treasurer’s Update	2
• Worship Opportunities	3
• I Stand at the Door and Knock	3
• Change and the Brain	4
• Narrative Budget	5
• From the Chair’s Chair	9
• Greetings from Karen	9
• Bishop’s Message	10
• Interview with Intern Erin	11

There is Nothing Permanent but Change

By Erika Elektra Ewen

Easter occurs during Spring and is all about change. The people who loved Christ suddenly wanted him crucified as he was called the King of the Jews, something he never called himself or saw himself as being. Another change foretold by Christ was that one of his disciples would betray him for money. Unfortunately, this really did happen. A significant change was the Last Supper as Christ knew he was going to be crucified and die. He wanted his disciples and all Christians to have a tangible way to remember him. Christ was born a Jew. His objective was to reform the Jewish religion. Instead, his Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection and Ascent to sit in the right hand side of God brought about very significant changes. Christ who was Jewish was the major reason for the formation of a new religion, Christianity, which has only one God. Christ was crucified and died for our sins. This is amazing, but it doesn't allow us to commit sins with no fear of repercussions and consequences.

Spring is in the air! It's a great time to do spring cleaning and also to think of making changes. There is so much change happening in nature that one can't help but feel motivated to make personal changes.

Change can be large or small and can impact many people or just one person.

I believe it's important to always strive to make changes instead of doing nothing. Change will improve one person's life and may have the ripple effect of changing other people's lives.

There are many tips and suggestions on how to change one's life so one can live a better life. Some tips and suggestions are definitely not useful. Others such as ones that I read about in the online "Daily Tip for Improving your Personality" are definitely worth considering.

When I hear of something worth trying to bring about positive change, I examine the pros and cons of making the desired change. For me, the reasons for wanting to make changes need to meet the following specific criteria;

(1) I'm willing and motivated to make the change and I understand that, realistically, a change (like developing a new habit such as wearing pressure stockings every day starting 19Mar19 OR stopping a long-term daily habit such as quitting smoking in late April 2019 after "only" smoking for 38 YEARS -- where HAS the time gone?) require a lot of time, energy and hard work.

(2) I've determined which strategy or strategies are best-suited to my specific personal need(s) and reason(s) for wanting to make the change; my personality; my current skill set acquired via my formal postsecondary education, additional shorter-term focused education on a variety of topics of personal interest for example, learning how to draw and produce multimedia art and learning the basics of the new Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations

(3) I can develop a realistic plan to achieve the change that has well-defined, achievable and measurable goals and a realistic overall timeline and more detailed and goal-specific mini-timelines.

My overall objective now is to complete 5 quite quickly accomplished mini-goals before the end of each day.

Peace to all!

Treasurer's Update

Par Challenge: I am very pleased to report that 10 new families have joined our PAR giving program. Knowing that we have a predictable base donation income every month helps us manage our budget more effectively. For regular giving, PAR is our preferred tool because it keeps our administrative expenses very low. This means we also have \$2000 given to current by the members who sponsored the PAR challenge.

January and February had some very cold Sundays which was certainly reflected in our Sunday attendance and also in our regular giving. Donations in January and February were lower than in any year previously. Thankfully, our church attendance improved significantly in March and our donations almost made up for the shortfall from the first two months of this year, but still leaves our donations to the end of March marginally behind where we were in 2018. Fortunately our expenses this year have also tracked below our budget and our deficit at the end of March is roughly what we forecast it should be. Easter falls in the middle of April this year and we are counting on our April revenues to exceed our April revenues from 2018.

With the warm weather the need for the winter shelter is no longer there and the Mustard Seed has let us know they will be shutting down early - April 18 will be their last night using our facilities. This will make it more difficult for us to meet our rental revenue forecast for 2019.

We're taking a number of steps to help us increase our revenues in 2019:

1. Jeff Gusdal and several other members of council have been working on a Narrative Budget, a story that describes how the donations to Trinity are used to support the various parts of the ministry of the congregation. The first issue of this story is found as the centrefold of this issue of the Team. We hope this will help our supporters better understand all the things their donations do for Trinity and its ministries.
2. Putting cheques or money in an envelope to make a Sunday donation is not how many of the younger generation in the congregation manages their finances. We are currently working on improved alternatives for contributing to Trinity. We still have some bugs to work out, but will be providing more information in the next few weeks - watch your bulletin.
3. We realise that we need to increase donations and support from beyond our direct membership. In late March we posted for a financial manager, a position responsible for our regular bookkeeping and for seeking new ways to generate income (e.g. from grants or sponsorships, from fund raising events, from more proactive investing when we have surplus funds, from seeking efficiencies in how we operate and how we purchase materials for the church, etc.). We have had 38 people apply for the position and are currently shortlisting the applicants so we can interview the most promising candidates. We hope to have someone in place to take on these responsibilities by the end of April. More news to come.

In summary, while our revenues are slightly lower than our budget, our expenses have been as well. We are currently on track to meet our financial plan for 2019 and we are taking steps to ensure we continue to do so.

Thank you all for your support.

Frank Thede
Treasurer

Called into Worship

Come, praise the Lord - Psalm 134:1-2

Upcoming Worship Opportunities

- Maundy Thursday, April 18: 7pm Prayer Service
with stripping of the altar
- Good Friday, April 19:
10am Communion Service in German
3pm Service "The Cry of the Whole Congregation"
- Good Saturday, April 20: 7-9pm: Youth inspired and led Easter Vigil with Holy Communion
- Easter Sunday, April 21:
7am Sunrise Service (youth inspired and led)
8am Easter Breakfast
9:30am Easter Service with Holy Communion, in German
10am Easter Breakfast
11am Easter Service with Holy Communion
- Sunday, April 28, Kinderkirche (German Sunday School)
- Sunday, May 26: Kinderkirche (German Sunday School)
- Sunday, June 9: Day of Pentecost.
Afternoon: Cemetery Service
- Sunday, June 16: Trinity Sunday, joint service with Holy Trinity Anglican, starting at 10:30am here; followed by Block Party
- Sunday, September 8: Welcome Sunday

All are Welcome!

Other Dates to Remember

- Tuesday, April 30: Order deadline for spring flower fundraiser
- May 3-5: Trinity Youth will be at the Synod Gathering at Hastings Lake
- Sunday, May 12: Mother's Day, Spring Flower Fundraiser Pickup Day, with some additional flowers and vegetables for sale.
- Sunday, June 2: Church Picnic at St. Paul's Lutheran Church (Millcreek)
- Thursday, June 27: 10am - 4pm, Mulhurst Pioneer Days

I (Jesus) Stand at the Door and Knock (Revelations 3)

Today I heard about the death of a friend and long-time neighbour. It is a solemn time. I remember him inviting me to sit with him at a church service, and squishing together in the side pew. I was sad because it was a milestone anniversary of WWII and I had memories. Now he has made the great transition to new life. People I know talk about death as a transition – like getting off a bus. I think it is more. It is one of the great transitions in our Christian faith - it is the putting on of new and eternal life. *"Death is destroyed; victory is complete! Where death, where is your victory? Where death, is your power to hurt?" I Corinthians 15: 54-55 Good News Bible.* Jesus came to overcome death through resurrection. We celebrate the great resurrection of Easter.

When a friend dies, I can pause and reflect on changes I may want to make before my own time on earth is finished. In my transitions and changes, my oh my, I am not very good at them. There is even a CD I want to purchase called *Healing Transitions*. I resist with almost all my might, and there is a little part of me that does embrace change. I want to be changed. I want to be transformed. And there is only one way to go about it, to receive from God the resources I need to change, especially the work of the Holy Spirit in me.



There is a particular issue that I have been thinking about for years and I haven't really changed. I replaced changing with thinking about change. I recently read a book that helps me clarify the change I need to make. I prayed twice

with two pastoral leaders, and they both prayed that God would direct my change. I would go about it in a Christian way. I was sort of offended. I wanted *an answer*. And I like to orchestrate things. I went to a retreat centre this weekend and afterwards I felt some dormant faith rise up in me: God and I can and will go forward on this.

With grace I can admit what Jesus said to the church in Laodicea: that I am more than lacking. I am naked. I am vulnerable. I am bare. I don't have all I need. I can't change me - I'm living proof. I invite God in, with the promise of an intimate dinner and the hope of victory (Revelations 3:14-22).

Teresa Brook

Stuck in Ruts or Transformed by Risks? What Triggers Change for a Finer Place?

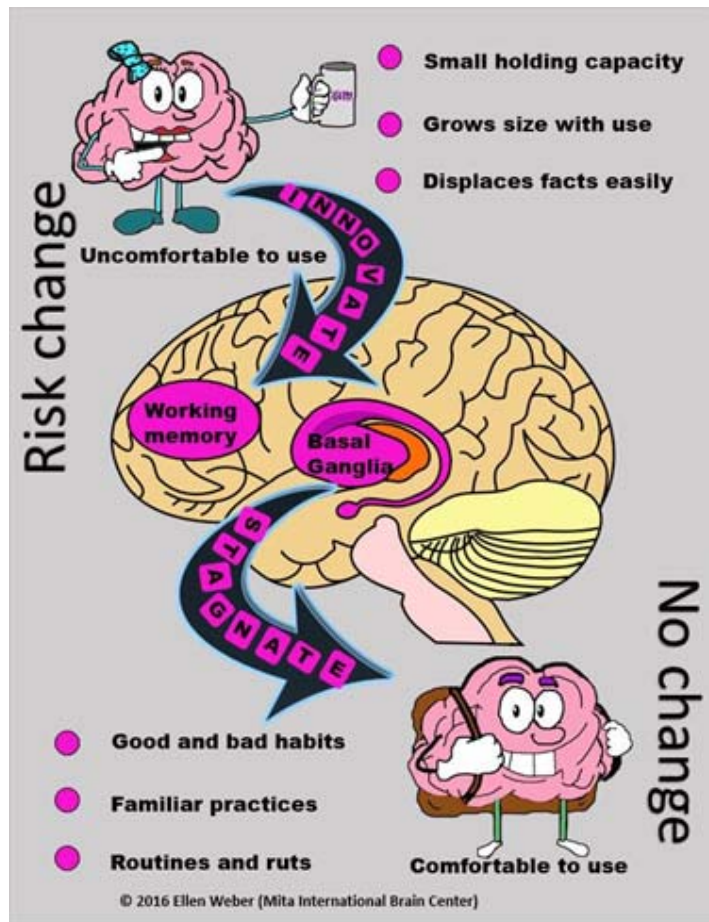
14 For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Hebrews 13:14

This passage means more to me lately for personal reasons. Not because I've peeled my eyes on a finer heavenly home so much as the fact I still miss my beloved New York home. I still see its towering trees; hear its bubbling creek, lean against its cedar fence that flanked fragrant lilacs and blueberry bushes. And I miss longtime neighbors and friends who sipped wine on my deck as we watched the evening sun slip lazily behind a favorite rock garden.

Don't get me wrong, I'm enormously grateful for God's promise of a divinely-built future dream home. I do look forward to a forever dwelling place packed with agape love and animated with family-brand favor that drew me to Alberta in the first place. Have you found like me though, that change rarely comes easily, even adjustments that carry us closer to a cherished family?

Whenever unkempt changes creep in to disrupt our day we can blame our brain for the discomfort that comes with the intrusion. That's because our brain is equipped with *basal ganglia* storage warehouses that stockpile stuffy habits like pack-rats squirrel away nuts. We are programmed to feel comfortable sticking to our old habits and ideas; it takes effort to consider new ways of understanding the world and our *basal ganglia* keeps reminding us that these new ideas just don't fit with our life experience. Old habits and attitudes dominate our thought process and our decision making much like bullies dominate in a schoolyard. It doesn't have to stay this way though.

Luckily, God's amazing grace has equipped our brains with a fantastic ability to change and adapt; an ability for the brain to re-invent its thought processes, an ability that is called *plasticity*. *Working memory* allows us to confront the bully of old habits and old thinking and to create new neuron pathways until we begin to soar



again over daily potholes that perhaps bored, frustrated, angered or stressed us in past. To simply risk one new adventure becomes a brain's way to engage its *plasticity* or its ability to change itself, regenerate contentment and create a new normal for ourselves..

Meanwhile, here in in our earth bound make-shift homes, it's a bit like a tug-of-war where the *basal ganglia* tugs for tired traditions, while *working memory* pushes for lively transformations.

In surprisingly straightforward ways, we risk-take our way back into mental fitness. Our *working memory* acts like a mental scratch pad to apply new facts, try new approaches, or do something different as a way to fuel change in ways that rolls innovation forward. How so?

One of my graduate students calls it *revving up our gene pool*. I call it *awakening grace to reboot our brain* to a finer place. Perhaps I'll even awaken a new appreciation for my Alberta move as another grace-filled step toward contentment while I await with patience that perfect promised place in future. A designer home forever given in God's extravagant love to each of us.

Ellen Weber

Reboot Your Brain and Awaken Grace

Ladies Retreat
Mulhurst Camp April 26-28, 2019




Fore more information and to register go to:
<https://www.mulhurstcamp.ca/camp-options/events/>

Our Church Family

How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live together like brothers and sisters - Psalm 133:1

From the Chair's Chair

Greetings from your new Church Council! Well, O.K., maybe not so new. At our Annual Meeting on February 24, we were hoping to add some new members to our Council but are very happy that all of our existing Council members returned to make up this year's Trinity Church Council. Our executive has also remained as it was last year: Sylvia Becker (Chair, Worship and Music, Social Justice), Manfred Jurgeleit (Vice Chair, Property, Personnel); Peggy Boss (Secretary, Worship and Music) and Frank Thede (Treasurer, Finance). Other Council members are as follows: Jeff Gusdal (Social Ministry), Marion Lamb, Barbie Onyschuk (Finance), Andrea Wilhelm (Communications), and of course our pastoral staff: Pastors Ingrid and Jason, Karen Goldstone and Intern Pastor Erin, with whom it has been a joy to work. Since our annual meeting, Emily Rae has resigned her position due to school and work demands. We are so thankful for her contributions to Council and our congregation over the years and wish her all the best in her studies! We are looking for someone who would be willing to take over Emily's position. This is a perfect opportunity to give council a try for 10 months and decide after that if this type of service is for you. Please talk to anyone on the executive if you are interested.

At our annual meeting, Frank Thede, with the support of the Finance Committee, presented a thoughtful budget, one that is being viewed as a *Transitional Budget* as we take some time to reflect on our vision, mission, priorities, and then our staffing needs. Not only is the theme of this *TEAM* edition transitions and changes, it is also the theme of our church and the subject of many Council discussions. I have written about change in several of my past *TEAM* articles and spoken of it at congregational meetings. Council is ever aware of a changing society, a changing National Church, a changing Trinity, a changing community, a changing people (needs, desires, hurts, strengths). Only our God remains our constant, consistent, unchanging, grace-giving one who is with us in the transitions, the joys and the brokenness of our lives. How does our God want us to respond to his gifts of love, grace, forgiveness and mercy in this ever changing world? If we stop asking this question and resist responding to it in new and creative ways, we will become a church that is no longer relevant, that is not living out our mission of bringing love and healing to ourselves and the world.

And so one of the necessary changes you will see in this *TEAM* is a start to telling our story alongside our budget – to frame our budget as a narrative. Please take a careful look at where our money is currently going and what difference it is making in our lives and the lives of others. This is a work in progress and will evolve as our mission becomes more clearly defined. We look forward to this

visioning work on Council this year; if you would like to be a part of this work (clearly understanding, embedding and communicating our mission and priorities), please speak with me – we would love to have you join us!

Lastly, at our annual meeting I asked attendees to answer a couple of questions and write their responses on pieces of paper. *How have you been blessed through Trinity? or What gifts has Trinity given you?* The responses inspired me, brought me hope and joy and gave me a clearer idea about what Trinity members value. Stop by the atrium in the next few weeks before or after the services to watch a presentation that compiles all of our members' responses. This church, its staff, its members (both official and unofficial), and the community are all so important in my life. It is wonderful to hear why Trinity is important to you. Let's keep talking!

Sylvia Becker

Greetings from Karen

[Editor's note: Karen Goldstone-Friedrich has been the Faith-Life Coordinator at Trinity for seven years. She is currently on a medical leave, but drops in when she can.]

Gratitude seems to be an important element of any successful transition. I have so much to be thankful for in this huge transition in lifestyle and future plans that has been occurring since I received my pancreatic cancer diagnosis. I am thankful that I'm in the 10% with the best outcome because I was able to have successful surgery to remove the tumour. I'm thankful to live in Edmonton where I receive free treatment, and have a marvellous oncologist who makes me laugh, what a gift!

I am thankful for the changes and deepening I have seen in my relationships. I think every single relationship is being transformed into something richer and more meaningful. This includes my relationship with God.

I believe in a three-pronged approach to healing. Leading the way is God, my Creator and Redeemer. Then there is the chemotherapy, and finally my body's own ability to fight the cancer cells. I had a lovely image of the blood of Jesus taking the chemo molecules and my TCells and showing them where the cancer is!

I am also so grateful for all of you! The prayers and support you have offered have lifted me up and made me feel so loved and cared about.

Karen

Bishop's Message

April 2019 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

One of the joys and life-giving gifts for me as a Synod Bishop is our Synod's relationship with The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO).

I have been privileged to journey to Colombia several times facilitating delegation visits for youth, youth and adults, and adults who have sought to begin to experience, embrace and engage the contexts and ministries of IELCO; to build relationships with our siblings in Christ; to explore stronger ties between partner congregations in our Synod and IELCO; and to seek an expanding global understanding of faithful discipleship through the Lutheran Colombian context. I have also been privileged to host on two occasions delegations from Colombia to our Synod.

Our ELCIC global mission accompaniment model is one of walking together in solidarity, side by side, practicing interdependence and mutuality, in service to God's mission. The values of the accompaniment model are interconnected, and include mutuality, inclusivity, sustainability, vulnerability and empowerment. The core purpose of these relationships, this accompaniment, is God's mission.

Relationships and accompaniment are at the heart of our approach to global ministry. We seek to actively listen to our partners and companions, share in their joys and sorrows, and support them in their mission – as they support us in ours.

Recently we have had an opportunity as a Synod to accompany our Global Companion Partner in Colombia in prayer. A car bombing occurred January 17, 2019 in Bogotá, Colombia in an area very familiar for our Synod delegation participants. Upon learning of this violence, I wrote to Bishop Atahualpa Hernandez expressing concern, solidarity and prayer support for Colombia and our Global Companion Partner, IELCO. Bishop Atahualpa sent the following correspondence which I share with his permission:

"The work of righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever."
Isaiah 32:17

*To our dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia – IELCO, advocates for the joy of human rights and peace in our country and rejects any act of violence which sows fear and threatens the dignity of people.*

We are united in solidarity and commitment with the families of the victims of the car bomb on January 17 in "La Escuela de Policía General Santander", which left 21 people dead and 68 injured in Bogotá, among whom were young cadets. We also reject the violent actions that have taken place during recent months towards social leaders and human rights defenders, especially in the most forgotten regions of our country.

We call for truth and justice in the face of the serious upsurge of violence, in the regression of the negotiated solution to the armed conflict, and in the proven facts of corruption that permeate the State. Before the militariza-

tion of the territory, the restriction of democratic liberties and the escalation of the war, we pray that the negotiations between the national government and the ELN guerrilla will be resumed. We pray for peace, insisting that it is a constitutional right for all and should correspond to everyone. We especially pray for the government to ensure that this peace can become a reality in our country.

*Your Brother in Christ,
Atahualpa Hernandez
Bishop-President of the IELCO*

As we walk together in solidarity, side by side, will you join me in prayer for Colombia and IELCO as sharing in their joys and sorrows, and supporting them in their mission – just as they support us in ours?

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen (from Time of conflict, crisis and disaster, EvLW p. 76)

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)



Holy Week and Easter

Palm Sunday - April 14
Wave Palms, Sing Praises
9:30 am Service in German
11 am Communion Service - Palm Procession from Atrium

Maundy Thursday - April 18
Lay Bare
7 pm Prayer Service - Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday - April 19
The Cry
10 am Communion Service in German
3 pm Service - "The Cry of the Whole Congregation"

Easter Saturday Vigil - April 20
Be Moved
7 to 9 pm Communion Service Youth Inspired & Led

Easter Sunday - April 21
Rise with Joy
7 am Sunrise Service Youth Inspired and Led
8 am join us for Easter Breakfast

Sound the Brass, Christ has Risen
9:30 am Communion Easter Service in German
10 am join us for Easter Breakfast
11 am Communion Easter Service

Interview with Intern Erin

Andrea Wilhelm

On a sunny afternoon in early April, our intern Erin Thomas and I sat down together in a café to chat about her internship and herself. My questions are in italics, and Erin's answers appear underneath.

Where are you at in your internship right now?

I have been on internship at Trinity since October 1, so that's six months...

Wow, time flies!

No kidding, it's been six months already, and I will be here until January 31, 2020, so another ten months. The first few weeks of the internship I spent shadowing, Pastor Ingrid mostly, but now I'm doing more and more things on my own and am coming into my own space.

What's your favourite thing so far about being an intern?

I am so appreciative of having a really great learning site overall, Trinity, with a fantastic supervisor [Pastor Ingrid]. And also getting to know the youth here and having some really good conversations at youth events and confirmation classes, it's just a really great bunch of young people and I really enjoy getting to know them.

What's the most surprising thing so far about being an intern?

I don't know if it was so much surprising as having to learn to adjust: to a pastor's schedule. It's not like an 8:30 to 5:00 job. In jobs I had before I was used to things being busy, but once 5pm hit then I was able to go home, and that evening time was my own, for school, for volunteer stuff and so on. But a pastor's schedule is different. It took some getting used to.

What were some other jobs that you had before?

The first job I had out of college was as a childcare facilitator at an organization in Calgary that was helping women out of prostitution and addiction. Most of my jobs have been in that area of non-profit, supporting people that have been in marginalized or difficult situations. I've worked as a student mentor for adult students returning for high school upgrading, but most of my career was at the Friendship Centre in Lac La Biche where I was working in the area of family supports.

How did you realize that you wanted to be a pastor, or how did you hear God's call, how did you discern that?

I think I've had a calling to ministry since I was about 14 or 15 years old. I always knew that I wanted to serve God in a more formal capacity. But in the traditions I was raised in, women couldn't be pastors... And at the time, I was pretty convinced that all pastors did was sit in a really stuffy study all day with old books and really didn't actually make an impact on the world [laughs]. So who wanted to be a pastor anyway? I was determined that whatever kind of ministry I was engaged in, it was going to be something for social justice. My parents are avid social justice people, so I came by it honestly.

When I graduated Bible college in 2000, I had the possibility of going to seminary, but there was no guarantee I was ever going to get ordained, so I didn't bother at the time. I took the job in Calgary and thought, "I'm going to learn a lot more from these women in Calgary than I am in semi-

nary." The rest I just left up to God. Things got a little murky when I realized I had stopped believing a lot of the core tenets of conservative theology. What did that mean in terms of "Does God actually call me? What if there is no God, what's actually pulling me towards these lines of work?" I had to be really honest with myself, and when I finally started giving myself the benefit of the doubt and let myself breathe a little bit, that's when I began to participate in the Lutheran church in Lac La Biche.

The pastor up there eventually approached me and said, "You know I think you really have a call in your life." But at the time, I didn't know what that meant. I thought we all have calls from God. He said, "No, no, I mean to seminary!" I had also just finished a Master's degree program; there was no way I would go for another Master's, with student loans and everything. At the same time, as a volunteer I had been designing an arts-based spiritual daycamp for marginalized women and girls in Lac La Biche and I had received a grant to run it. The pastor said, "I really think you should go to seminary, because then you could do this kind of thing full-time, and not have to worry about working full-time to pay the bills and then do all of this on the side." So I decided, "What the heck, if they're paying the tuition, the least I can do is take a few courses and then decide for myself." So I did, and things just started falling into place, and now I'm here.

Pastors tend to move around, and it looks like you're already used to that. What are some of the places where you have lived?

I lived in Calgary for four and a half years after I graduated, then in BC for a bit. After that I lived in Romania for a semester and a half, and when I came back to Canada I moved to Lac La Biche to be closer to parents. But before all that, as a child and growing up I lived with my parents in Toronto, Peace River, Grand Cache, Fort Saskatchewan, Edmonton. So I've lived in big cities, small towns, and overseas. *Here's a bit of a fun question, what is a place or time you would really like to go or live in?*

For a place, I really have to get back to Wales at some point. I have fallen in love with the country. I've loved the mythology, the spirituality ever since I was a little child reading books, I've just always been in love with Wales. Our last name is Thomas, we're a Welsh family, and so learning about that history and that culture has always been important to me.

As for time, it might be fun to go back to 1920's Harlem, have some flapper dresses and some clubs and music...

Another question to get to know you better, what do you like to do in your free time?

I keep up a blog, so I like creative writing, fiction, nonfiction, hopefully one day writing will come to something [chuckles], maybe not. I like to do it because it's what I like to do. I like kayaking! The Friendship Centre in Lac La Biche is located across the road from the lake. So I'd park by the lake every day, go to work, and I have this little pump-up portable kayak that I kept in the trunk, and after a really long

see Intern Erin page 12

Intern Erin from page 11

day at work I would just pump it up and put out on the lake. It was really an excellent stress relief – me, God, sun, waves. It was nice!

Do you have any favourite places or activities in Edmonton?

I have a special affection for Block 1912 Café, only because I've been going there since I was about 13 years old. I did homework there, sometimes our youth group would go there just to hang out... And the river valley, being there hiking, walking, it's always a special place.

The theme of this newsletter is transitions and change. Do you have a story of change that you experienced or were involved in?

Well, I think a good personal example would be transitioning from evangelical to mainline faith. Sometimes we use a lot of the same terminology, for example "grace" or "salvation," but the meanings behind the terminology can be very different. It wasn't until I went to Lutheran Theological Seminary and began to stumble and fall over that terminology that I began to understand, "ok there are nuances here that I didn't realize existed." It's like learning a whole new language. Once I began to understand that, communication got a lot better.

An example of community change is when I was doing the Food Bank at the Friendship Centre in Lac La Biche, we began to conduct a series of community education programs, especially in elementary schools. We helped kids identify what were good foods to donate and what ones you should maybe stay away from. We would go down the aisle at the food store, look at a bag of pasta and at a bag of rice, and ask: "Which one's going to last longer?" And everyone would go, "rice!" Then we could say, "So if your parents ever ask you, should we get spaghetti or should we get rice [for the food bank], choose the rice." We also helped the kids understand best-by dates, because at the food bank we were getting a lot of stuff that was really out of date. We would help them understand that if you give throwaway food, you're telling people "you're a throwaway person." So how can you change those messages to help people that are coming in to not just have food but to know that they are also loved and valuable? The kids were able to go home and tell their parents, and then different grades started having contests with each other. I think there were three years in a row that the kindergarteners beat everybody else! It was actually really good to see the community starting to come around in terms of trying to offer food with a little more nutrition than just high-sugar, high-fat and high-sodium stuff.

Did you notice a difference in the food bank donations?

Yes, the foods on our shelves began to change, we began to get completely new stuff direct from the grocery store, and there wasn't as much damaged stuff, like dented or crusted, and we got a lot more oatmeal, a lot more clean beans rather than the beans in sauce, more vegetables, more rice, and even natural peanut butter instead of peanut butter with all the sugar in it.

So it really had an impact!

Yeah. It also shows me that people want to support kids and their initiatives. Kids have a good voice in the community.

As we're approaching Easter, what is an Easter tradition in your home or family?

I really appreciated my parents not focusing on candy and chocolate. When I was growing up there wasn't a lot of money to go around, so it's not like we had huge Easter baskets,

but my parents were also really passionate about social justice and the environmental impact our junk food has around the world, the amount of slave labour to harvest sugar and cocoa and things like that. A lot of our holidays have been co-opted by a consumer mindset, and I just find it invaluable that during this season of new life my parents were really deliberate on focusing why Easter exists, and not chocolate bunnies and chocolate chickens. I'm not saying that the consumption of chocolate or candy is wrong, but I appreciate my parents instilling that value and that awareness in me.

Another tradition is my mom's hot cross buns: She makes the best bread in the whole world, and she makes the hot cross buns without the dried peel, which I know for some people is sacrilegious, but I can't stand dried peel [laughs], so she makes it just with the raisins and the cinnamon, and just the smell of it when it fills the house, it's the best.

Any final thoughts?

I appreciated my internship so much thus far. People have made me feel really welcome, and I definitely enjoyed trying everybody's baking. I'm very much looking forward to the next ten months, they're going to be really good.



Kayaking on Lac la Biche



Wales - South Stack Lighthouse

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, and in April under the auspices of the Communications Committee.

Next publication date: September 2019.

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

© Trinity Lutheran Church, 2019

Source should be acknowledged if material reproduce in whole or in part.