

The CALC Connector

June 2016

An official publication of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (CALC)

2016 CALC National Convention

When: October 21, 22, & 23, 2016

Where: All Saints Lutheran Church
1061 Pinecrest Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K2B 6B7

Theme: We are Ambassadors! 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

Friday October 21st Learning Event 9:30 AM to Noon

Keynote Speaker Rev. Douglas Morten

Topic: "Dealing with Communication and Conflict."



Reverend Morten is the Dean of Educational Ministry of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT), of Brookings, South Dakota. He is member of the permanent faculty of ILT's Certificate Programs. He currently teaches Historical and Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology at ILT. At one time he served as a Circuit Counselor in the Iowa District East of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (LCMS). He is currently rostered with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). In 1999 he received training in the Conciliator Training Program through the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a Division of Peacemaker Ministries. His presentation to the convention will focus on communication and dealing with misunderstanding and conflicts in congregations and among individuals. His presentation will draw on his experience as a Conciliator and 37 years in the pastoral ministry. Reverend

Morten earned a B.A. from Wartburg College in 1974 and an M.Div. from Concordia Seminary in 1979.

Friday October 21st and Saturday October 22nd

Preacher and Keynote Speaker

Pastor Olaf Latzel



Pastor Olaf Latzel will preach at our opening worship service on Friday evening and be our keynote speaker on Saturday afternoon. Pastor Latzel is a Lutheran Pastor from Bremen Germany. Pastor Latzel contends that the birthplace of the Reformation, and once a base for world Christian missions, is now a place where true followers of Jesus Christ are under fire in the media, by their own government and even denounced by fellow Christians. "Traditional Christian teaching is increasingly viewed by a growing majority as bigoted, hateful, and even "un-Christian." "I'm only preaching the Gospel in a clear way," Latzel told Charisma News. "I think it is my duty to do this preaching in this way for our Lord." Pastor Latzel laments a growing spirit of compromise that "seems to have swallowed Germany and the German state church." He has been quoted as saying:

"If you speak out loud and clearly about the truth of the Bible, that there's only one way to heaven and this way is Jesus Christ, there is only one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and there is no other god beside Him, then you have a problem."

Full Convention Registration Fee: \$105.00 per delegate/guest.

Make Cheques Payable to "All Saints Lutheran Church"

Other Costs: CALC congregations are responsible for paying the cost of transportation of their delegates to and from our convention and accommodations during the convention.



Convention Accommodations:

Best Western Plus - 1876 Robertson Road, Ottawa, ON, K2H 5B8

Phone: 613-828-2741



Nightly rate: \$112-114 (Plus applicable taxes)

This hotel is less than 5 kilometers from the All Saints Lutheran Church. Amenities include fitness center; pool; pets allowed; high speed internet restaurant onsite; hot tub; and room service. Breakfast is available for an extra charge.

A block of 50 rooms has been set aside at this special rate under the name: "**All Saints Lutheran Church.**"

You must book rooms by **September 5th, 2016**. Rooms can be booked from between October 18th to 23rd.

Book online at: <http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/groupSearch.do?groupId=Z12R16B9>.

A link to the hotel will be posted on CALC's online convention registration form on CALC's website.

2016 Annual CALC Pastors' Study Retreat

When: October 19 & 20, 2016

Where: St. Paul University
223 Main Street, Ottawa, ON, K1S 1C4

Topic: The Proper Distinction of Law and Gospel

Speaker: Timothy Rynearson

Retreat Registration Fee: \$150.00 per pastor.

Make Cheque Payable to: "Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations"

Other Costs: Congregations are responsible for paying the cost of transportation of their pastor to and from the retreat and convention.

The Venue: St. Paul University is a small Roman Catholic University and Conference center located in downtown Ottawa. It is located between the Rideau River and the historic Rideau Canal. It is located 2.8 kilometers (37 minute walk from Parliament Hill. And 4.6 kilometers (58 minute walk) from the Canadian War Museum.



Topic: *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel.* During 2017 we will celebrate the Quincentennial or 500th Anniversary of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation. In preparation for this auspicious event our pastors will go back to one of the foundations of our Reformation, the Law-Gospel dialectic. The relationship between Law and Gospel—God's Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ—is a major topic in Lutheran theology. The distinction between the doctrines of Law, which demands obedience to God's ethical will, and Gospel, which promises the forgiveness of sins in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ, is critical. It is used as a fundamental principle of biblical interpretation and a guiding principle in preaching and pastoral care. We will be using CFW Walther's "*The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*" (1929). This work is in public domain and the full text can be accessed online at: <http://lutherantheology.com/uploads/works/walther/LG/>.



Presenter: Reverend Timothy Ryneerson, is our presenter. Pastor Ryneerson is on the faculty of the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) of Brookings, South Dakota, specifically, permanent faculty – Graduate Program - Biblical Theology. He has served as the Pastor of Peace Lutheran Church of Brookings, South Dakota, since 1996. He also serves as the Principal of Peace Lutheran’s Early Childhood Center. He also teaches ethics at South Dakota State University. He earned a BA at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI (1981), a Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary (1985) and an S.T.M. from Concordia Seminary (1995).

Agenda: The retreat takes place Wednesday the 19th and Thursday the 20th of October. Pastors fly/drive in on Tuesday October 18th. We check in at the University residence on Tuesday and check out Friday morning. A draft agenda is provided below.

Time	Wednesday October 19 th	Thursday October 20 th
8:00 – 9:00 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00 to 10:00 AM	Rev. Timothy Ryneerson – Session 1	Rev. Timothy Ryneerson – Session 4
10:00 to 10:30 AM	Refreshment break	Refreshment break
10:30 AM to 12:00 PM	Rev. Timothy Ryneerson – Session 2	Rev. Timothy Ryneerson – Session 5
12:00 to 5:30 PM	Lunch & Free time	Lunch & Free time
5:30 to 7:00 PM	Dinner	Dinner
7:00 to 8:00 PM	Rev. Timothy Ryneerson – Session 3	Worship & Sharing

Pastors-in-Training Installed in Lea Park, AB

On Sunday April 17th Ed Parke and Kevin Nelson were installed as “Pastors-in-Training” of Bethel Lutheran Church of Lea Park, Alberta, by our President. Lea Park is located 265 km east and slightly north of the city of Edmonton, Alberta, and 63 km north and west of the city of Lloydminster, AB/SK. Bethel Lutheran congregation celebrated their Centennial during the summer of 2015.



Both Ed and Kevin are part of CALC’s Shepherd’s Pathway to Ministry and are studying with the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT) an online seminary headquartered in Brookings, South Dakota. They have taken a specific pathway to pastoral ministry. They are studying for ILT’s *Pastoral Ministry Certificate* (PMC).

The academic component of the PMC consists of twelve courses. The twelve courses are divided up as follows: (a) Three **foundational courses**: 1) Principles of Biblical Interpretation; 2) Luther and His Catechisms; and 3) Proclaiming God’s Word; and, (b) Nine **core courses**: 1) Lutheran Reformers and The Book of Concord; 2) Old Testament Theology and History; 3) New Testament Theology and History; 4) The History of the Christian Church to 1500; 5) The History of the Christian Church 1500 to Present; 6) Systematic Theology; 7) Christian Apologetics; 8) Lutheran Worship; and 9) Pastoral Theology and Counseling.

The program may be described as an apprenticeship program. The candidate takes online classes with ILT and serves in the host congregation. Candidates typically begin preaching and teaching after they have completed the three foundational courses. Thereafter, they preach and teach under the supervision of a mentor pastor. The candidates continue taking classes, typically one each fall and one each winter, until all twelve courses are completed. The candidate typically takes on greater responsibility in the parish as more core courses are taken. The candidate is installed as a pastor-in-training and is licensed to preach, teach, baptize, commune, marry and bury within the host

congregation. Upon the completion of the PMC's twelve courses, the candidate may receive a traditional open-ended call and be ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.



Left to right: Pastor Ron Hobden, Kevin Nelson, Ed Parke and Pastor Ed Skutshek.

Kevin Nelson and Ed Parke have been members of Bethel Lutheran for many years. Kevin grew up on the family homestead not far from the church. He was baptized, confirmed and married there. The congregation was a part of the ELCIC. The congregation had been served by part-time interim pastors for at least eight years. Kevin and Ed and other lay members of the congregation stepped up preached and led services on the Sundays that the part-time interim pastor was not scheduled to lead services. The fall of 2013, Bethel Lutheran began a dialogue with CALC. The congregation felt a call to leave the ELCIC. At the

same time Ed and Kevin began to experience God moving in their lives and a call to pastoral ministry. The fall of 2013, they enrolled in ILT's PMC program. They took and passed the three Foundational Courses over the next eighteen months. The congregation joined CALC in May of 2014. Ed and Kevin were mentored by Pastor Ron Hobden as they studied the Foundational Courses. Pastor Ron and his wife Elaine serve Sharon Lutheran, Irma, AB and Peace Lutheran in Wainwright, AB. Pastor Ron has certified that these men were capable of serving Bethel Lutheran, as Pastors-in-Training. Kevin Nelson has completed two Core Courses and will soon complete another Core Course. He will soon be half way through his course of studies.

Each pastor-in-training has been called by the congregation to a quarter-time call (about 10-12 hours per week). Each will preach and administer Holy Communion on a designated Sunday each month. They will also visit parishioners, lead Bible Studies and provide Pastoral care. Their call as pastors-in-training is a term call, year to year. The call letter provides that they must continue their studies with ILT and must complete the PMC program. Their letters of call recognize and reflect that each of them has another career and must therefore maintain a balance between pastoral duties, their secular career and family life.

Pastor-in-Training Kevin Nelson is married to Barb. They live on the Nelson Homestead in Lea Park near the church. They have three grown children and three grandchildren. Kevin is trained as a welder. He has worked as a welder in the oil-patch around Marwayne area for many years. Pastor-in-Training Ed Parke is married to Mary. They have adult children and grandchildren. Ed and Mary live in the Tulliby Lake area. His is a rancher. He also has the distinction of being the Councilor and Deputy Reeve for Division 6 of Vermillion River County, Alberta. His term as councilor will end soon and he looks forward to continuing his studies in the PMC program.

Please keep pastors-in-training Ed and Kevin and the Bethel Lutheran congregations in your prayers. Let's pray that God will bless their ministry with continued growth in faith and in numbers.

Pastor Installed in Preeceville, SK

Sunday February 14th of 2016, Pastor Hendrikus (Hein) Aris Abraham Bertram was installed as the fulltime pastor of St. John North Prairie Lutheran Church, Preeceville, Saskatchewan.



Pastor Hein was born in Pretoria, South Africa, the son of Dutch immigrants George and Albertina Bertram, both from Amsterdam. He was baptized in the Anglican cathedral in Pretoria in 1962, and confirmed in 1976 at St. Frances' Church in Simonstown (where he grew up). His parents instilled a love for church music in him and led in faith by example in the faith and fear of the Lord. After graduation from High School, Pastor Hein served in



the South African Navy until 1985.

He was active in the Anglican Church in South Africa. Active church service permitted him to see what was happening in the denomination. He soon came to an unmistakable conclusion: "The Anglican Church, like many other mainline churches, had been steadily moving, both liturgically and doctrinally, in the direction of Rome and made no secret about its allegiance to the South African and World Councils of Churches, as well as the South African Communist Party and its associates." In response, in April of 1985, he transferred his membership to the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa.

Hein served as an elder in two Dutch Reformed congregations, Suiderhof congregation of Windhoek, Namibia (a country located north of South Africa) and Meersig parish of Walvis Bay, Namibia. He served as choir director and organist in the Suiderhof congregation for a time. He met and married his wife Gloudina while he served in Windhoek. They have been married for more than 26 years. They have two adult children and are raising two grandchildren. Prior to entering seminary he served as a radio officer for Walvis Bay Radio in Namibia and a buyer and IT manager for a seafood company. Pastor Hein earned a BA degree with Hebrew and Greek as majors in 2005, a Master of Divinity Degree in 2007 and Master of Theology in 2012.

Upon completion of my M.Div. studies, Pastor Hein received a call to a Dutch Reformed congregation in Francistown, Botswana (a country located north of South Africa). It was a term call for one year. The call was renewed once, but could not be renewed a second time because the majority of his parishioners were repatriated to South Africa. At Francistown he started a confirmation class and a choir, and repaired the electronic church organ which had been out of order. He also got involved in the Botswana Bible Society's Kalanga translation project and started a "CD mission" – distributing MP3 New Testament CDs in the Tswana, Shona and Ndebele language to long distance taxi drivers, and in Mandarin to the local Chinese businessmen.

The family moved to South Africa and was asked to help out at the Vryheid West congregation from the 19th of December, 2010 until the 9th of January 2011. He was then asked to stay on until the end of February, after which he was offered a 2-year pastorate contract. While at Vryheid, his senior colleague, Rev. Hennie van Schalkwyk, introduced him to the pastors of the Free Lutheran Church who, together with other ministers, met quarterly for theological discussions. He received a call to Koffie-fontein at the end of September 2013.

Koffie-fontein is a small town located in a rural area. Mining and agriculture dominated the economy. The congregation was small. The rural areas of South Africa are depopulating at a steady rate and Koffie-fontein was no exception. Also, the median age in the church and the town was steadily moving upwards, and the numbers were dwindling. With the mining sector in a decline, a large number of Koffie-fontein's parishioners has left town to seek employment elsewhere.

Pastor Hein became painfully aware of liberalism at the seminary and the Synod level in the Dutch Reformed church. One of his professors labeled him a "Biblicist" and "fundamentalist" because Pastor Hein believed in "the One God who is perfectly almighty enough to create in six days; that his Savior was born from a virgin, physically died for his sins and physically rose again for his justification." He saw the writing on the wall. He witnessed the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church march forward to more liberal interpretations of Scripture, which will eventually lead to marriage and ordination of GLTB people.

Pastor Hein began to search the Internet for denominations in which Christ is preached, and Him crucified – where He is not crucified anew by those who deny His Divinity or the authority of His Word. Upon perusal of the CALC website, he was immediately attracted to the refreshingly pure stance with regard to our Lord and His Word. He wanted to serve God, spread His Word and administer the two Sacraments instituted by Him. St John Lutheran in Preeceville interviewed Pastor Hein and invited him to Canada as a candidate in 2015. They issued a call which he accepted. Pastor Hein came to Canada in January of this year. His wife and grandchildren will join him soon as some formalities are completed in South Africa.

His interests include, ham radio, being a certified first responder, cycling, music, singing and playing a variety of musical instruments. His wife and grandchildren will join him in Canada very soon. Please pray for Pastor Hein's ministry at St. John Preeceville. Pray that he is reunited with his wife and grandchildren very soon.

Cluster Meetings in BC and AB

British Columbia Cluster: Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church of Vancouver (CALC) hosted two cluster meetings: one on December 5, 2015, and the other on April 2, of 2016. The following CALC churches from the greater Vancouver area sent representatives to the cluster: Vancouver Chinese Lutheran Church of Burnaby and Basel-Hakka Lutheran Church of Vancouver. Representatives from New Life Chinese Lutheran Church, an independent congregation, also joined in the cluster meeting. Representatives sent by each congregation included pastors and congregational leaders. The meetings were facilitated by our President, Pastor Ed Skutshek.



The cluster meetings allowed the leaders of the congregations to get to know one another and to share the joys and successes as well as the challenges faced by their ministries. God has made these congregations multi-cultural and multi-lingual congregations. Martin Luther is a bilingual congregation with services in English and German. The three Chinese congregations worship in English, Cantonese and Mandarin. Basel Hakka congregation also worships in the Hakka language. All four have an English service.

Representatives looked for concrete ways the cluster congregations could work together. As a result of the cluster meetings, their pastors are meeting monthly. Martin Luther hosted a musical celebration the afternoon of Sunday April 3rd. The congregation assembled heard musical pieces performed by three choirs: from Martin Luther, Vancouver Chinese Lutheran and Basel Hakka Lutheran, together with a solo piece by Deni Skutshek, and a devotion by our President Pastor Ed Skutshek. All were treated to a delightful lunch following the concert hosted by the people at Martin Luther. The English speaking congregations of the four churches in the cluster will worship together on May 15, for a joint Pentecost Sunday service hosted by Martin Luther congregation. The cluster will meet again on Saturday July 16th.

Alberta Cluster: On Saturday April 16th, representatives from the following congregations, including pastors and congregational leaders, gathered together for a cluster meeting: Golden Valley Lutheran, Viking; Bardo Lutheran, Toefield; Sharon Lutheran, Irma; Peace Lutheran, Wainwright; Trondhjem Lutheran, Round Hill; Salem Lutheran, Kingman, and Bethel Lutheran, Lea Park. Golden Valley hosted the meeting. It was facilitated by our President, Pastor Ed Skutshek.



Our president invited the congregations to consider some long range planning, that is, to work on a ten-year strategic plan. The plan must address pastoral leadership, discipleship, worship and mission. The congregations identified some shared challenges. Their pastors are nearing or have attained retirement age; accordingly, the congregations must address transitions in leadership. The cluster congregations could look at a shared ministry in the future. Those attending the cluster were introduced to several men in the area who have completed or are completing seminary training. Those present saw the advantage of finding ways to support each other through

pulpit exchange, social events, hosting of special events, most especially joint youth activities.

One option discussed was a cluster wide youth event at nearby Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camp (HLLBC) some time in August. The event would gather youth from the participating congregations for fellowship, devotions and worship, specifically, to motivate youth to be involved in praise worship. Andrew Carlson, HLLBC's camp manager was in attendance and agreed to help organize the event, specifically to organize some music jam sessions for the

youth. The meeting ended with the pastors of the cluster agreeing to meet periodically and the congregational representatives motivated to meet again at some time in the future.

Canadian Rockies Theological Conference 2016

Our President attended the 2016 Canadian Rockies Theological Conference from April 5-8 at the Coast Canmore Hotel and Conference Centre, Canmore Alberta (CRTC). The conference theme was: **Relevant or Remnant? - A call to faith on and from the fringes**. Please accept the following summary of the conference.

The conference addressed some very important issues. The thesis put forward by the conference organizers was that for many years western Christians (in North America and Europe) have looked for ways to make our churches relevant to the people around us. In order to gain relevancy, many in the church have changed liturgies, music, sermons, doctrines, and in some cases even the interpretation of very Gospel of Jesus Christ. They pointed out that, despite the attempts to be relevant, the church in the western world has been in steady decline. Conference organizers conceded that while some can point at local examples of growth in church bodies and congregations, and isolated success stories, we cannot deny the fact that the church in North American and Western Europe has, in all of its expressions, been steadily pushed away from the center of society to the fringes. This shift has been a sources of anxiety and concern in the church.

We still hear the call within and outside the church to be relevant. Within the church many believe all we need is new pastors and new church leaders empowered by the latest new program and we can turn this thing around. Conference organizers asked: "But what if this does not happen? What if we do not experience (at least in our lifetimes) a great revival? What if it is our lot that we do not get to live out the 2nd Chapter of Acts, but instead find ourselves under the broom tree with Elijah?" Presenters Peter J. Leithart and Rod Dreher addressed the conference on the question of whether the church is called to be relevant or God's remnant in the world.



Rod Dreher (born 1967) is an American journalist, writer and editor. He serves as the senior editor of The American Conservative. He was previously an editorial writer and columnist for The Dallas Morning News, but he departed that newspaper in late 2009 to affiliate with the John Templeton Foundation. He has contributed to National Review. He wrote a blog previously called "Crunchy Con" at beliefnet.com, then simply called "Rod Dreher" with an emphasis on cultural rather than political topics. (Source Wikipedia)

Dreher's Challenge: Rod Dreher's presentations painted a stark picture of the decline of the church and its drift from the center of society in Western Europe and then North America.

He pointed to the Middle Ages as a time when God and church were central in society and daily life. It was during this time that the great Cathedrals were built in Europe. Thomas Aquinas so beautifully conveyed the world view of the Middle Ages. Aquinas had a sacramental understanding of the world. The world in its grandeur, intricate organizational structure and harmony revealed and pointed to God. God shone out of all that He created. God was also seen as the source and author of the organization, unity and harmony of their society and their lives. God worked and spoke through the church, therefore the church took center stage in their culture and organized daily life. This view of God and daily life was challenged by the end of the Middle ages. Theologian John Duns Scotus paved the way. Scotus' theology saw God as creator of all things; however, God and creation were separate. Creation and God were no longer tied together; therefore creation could be contemplated separately from God. Like Scotus, theologian William Ockham did not believe that God shone out of creation, he was separate from creation. God established a means of salvation which was not subject to reason. However, man could thus use reasons and science to discover the properties of God's creation.

The Middle Ages gave way to the Renaissance. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin and Erasmus lived during this period. The Renaissance was a period of intense creativity in art and science. Sir Francis Bacon, Galileo and Kepler were leading figures in science. They took Scotus' and Ockham's theories further. The focus of science, art and philosophy shifted from God to the world and to man. Greek philosophy and the Greek classics were widely studied. Science was seen as separate from theology and could be studied on its own. The Renaissance gave way to the Enlightenment. During the Enlightenment God was portrayed as a celestial watchmaker. The stars and the planets were created like the

wheels and sprockets of a great celestial clock. God wound that clock up and sits back and watches as the clock ticks on. Philosopher Locke argued that God endowed human beings with reason to make decisions and take courses of action and shape the future. He argued that human beings are moral agents capable of establishing a moral order using reason and logic apart from religion. The enlightenment gave birth to secular humanism and secular moralism.

The Enlightenment gave rise to the romantic or modern period. Artists and intellectuals challenged all to live out of their passions and not the morality found in the Bible. TS Elliot declared that “mankind’s sole purpose or end was to “love” (as defined by each person). Science provided the model for ordering society. The brutality and chaos of World War I brought this school of thought to an end.

The romantic or modern period gave rise to the period of the “psychological man.” The psychological man was not made to be saved by God, rather, the chief end or purpose of the psychological man was to live large and free and experience as much pleasure as is possible. The Freudian psychiatric movement arose during this period. Religion was branded as a repressive illusion, and for that reason had to be repressed. In order to achieve true pleasure, societal barriers and taboos that impeded sexual and social expression have to be removed. We have seen this over the last century. As social and sexual boundaries were removed we watched abortion and divorce rates skyrocket.

The latest movement is called Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. We are taught to reach out to the god within and feeling good and fulfilled. Dreher cited surveys completed in the US in 2007 that found 78% of those surveyed stated they were Christians. By 2014 surveys revealed the number of those who would identify themselves as Christians sank to 58%.

Dreher’s Hope: Christians must abandon hope in the political process to defend and propagate the Christian faith. Our legal and political systems are used today to enlarge the rights of citizens which are directly opposed to the Christian faith. We must abandon hope in society’s picturing Christians as a loving bunch that forms the foundation of our society. We are increasingly seen as narrow-minded bigots who are agents of hate and repression. We like the First Century Churches have to live in communities that are different from the society among us. The different lifestyles of the early Christians attracted converts. In the modern context, Dreher believes that we Christians have to establish Classical Christian Schools. The emphasis of the school is the formation of faith.

Dreher also proposed we take the Benedictine option. The Benedictine option is to mirror the life of the Benedictine monks in Italy. The Benedictine order has eight rules they live by:

1. **Order.** They live by strict rules. Community rules provide boundaries their members are free to live within.
2. **Prayer:** The Benedictine’s pray without ceasing.
3. **Work:** The brothers work hard every day at a vocation. They see work as a gift from God. They see work as an expression of charity and love.
4. **Stability:** The brothers believe that we must be bound to a church and to a community in order to remain faithful to God.
5. **Asceticism:** The brothers practice fasting and other forms of self denial. They believe fasting and self denial help one achieve discipline in other areas of life.
6. **Community:** The brothers believe that only in the community of an Abbey or a congregation can one truly come to love God and neighbor.
7. **Balance:** Subjecting oneself to the order of a community can lead to a cold legalism. There must be a balance between work, prayer and the other aspects of life.
8. **Hospitality:** The brothers of the Abbey must be open to receiving and offering hospitality to strangers, to treat them like Jesus. The guests are expected not to interfere with the prayer, work and life of the Abbey.

Dreher spoke of a group of families in Italy that formed a kind of Benedictine community. Each family in this community are members of a local Roman Catholic congregation. The families meet regularly for meals, Bible study and worship as a group in addition to attending Mass in their home congregation. They get involved in one another’s lives, helping one another. They hold one another accountable as disciples of Jesus Christ. Their community reaches out to others and often integrates them into their community. Dreher definitely sees the church as a righteous remnant living at the fringes of society. The church is lived out in closely knit communities of disciples who covenant to live, work, pray and worship together. Dreher’s concluding thought: “To be relevant the church has to be a remnant.”



Reverend Peter J. Leithart (born 1959) is an American author, minister, theologian and president of Theopolis Institute for Biblical, Liturgical, & Cultural Studies in Birmingham, Alabama. He blogs at Peter J. Leithart, which is hosted by the journal *First Things*. He previously served as Senior Fellow of Theology and Literature as well as Dean of Graduate Studies at New Saint Andrews College. He was selected by the Association of Reformed Institutions of Higher Education to be one of the organization's 2010-2012 Lecturers. He is the author of commentaries on the Book of Kings and the Book of Samuel, a survey of the Old Testament and most recently a commentary on the Book of Revelation. Other works include books on topics such as Dante's *Inferno*, Shakespeare, and Jane Austen. He is also the author of a book of children's bedtime stories titled *Wise Words* based on the Book of Proverbs. (Source Wikipedia)

Rev. Leithart's presentation drew primarily on the Book of Revelation in answering the question whether the church is called to be relevant or a remnant. His thesis was that the Book of Revelation is particularly useful for contemporary Christians as there are many parallels to the situation of the church today. The Book of Revelation was written at a time when the world was very unstable politically and economically. The Roman Empire was in deeper trouble economically and politically than anyone believed or was willing to admit. There was a naïve belief held by its citizens that the political and military leaders of the Roman Empire could fix all the problems facing them. However, great anxiety existed among citizens as they waited for Rome to act. Our world is equally unstable both politically and economically and our situation is more dire than we believe or are willing to admit. A naïve belief exists, especially in the US, that if the right choices are made for political leaders in the next election or two and the right Supreme Court justices are appointed, the world situation can be turned around. In the meantime great anxiety exists as we wait for the ideal leaders to emerge and to act.

Pastor Leithart contended that through the Book of Revelation, Jesus called his church living at the fringe of the pagan Roman Empire not to be anxious. He called them to believe he was with them, even to the end of the age. He called his church to believe that they were equipped with armor and weapons that were sufficient to deal with the threats that faced. They had the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation; the belt of truth; the breastplate of righteousness; the readiness that comes from the Gospel of Jesus; and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Jesus admonished his remnant to face of the threats and physical persecution of the Roman Empire through witness and worship. He calls contemporary Christians to do the same.

He further contended that the Book of Revelation teaches us that God's people have been and will be on the fringe, and will be persecuted by Satan and his agents until Jesus' second coming. We see this in Chapter 12 of Revelation. John saw a woman in the heavens clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head. He also saw a great red dragon in the heavens with 7 heads, 10 horns and 7 crowns. The woman was in the travail of childbirth. The woman is God's covenant community; the righteous remnant of Israel and then the Holy Christian Church established by the Apostles. The dragon crouched by the woman. He was intent on devouring the woman's child. The child was called: "a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter." The child was born and snatched up to heaven. The child points to Jesus, who was born, suffered and died for our sins, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven. The woman fled to the desert, where God sheltered and protected her. God gave the woman wings and she was able to flee to a special hiding place, where God will keep her safe for a time, times and half a time (3.5 years). The Dragon spewed water at the woman in order to overtake her and kill her. The earth opened up and absorbed the water, thereby saving the woman. The Dragon flew off to persecute the woman's followers, the church. Jesus' message: the church will be persecuted, but God will protect.

Chapters 13 and 14 of Revelation reveal the sources of even more persecution. Satan called forth a beast from the sea and beast from the earth. The beast from the sea is combination of the four beasts found in the Book of Daniel (Chapter 6). The first beast looked like a lion, the second a bear and the third a leopard. The fourth beast could be seen only dimly. The beast from the sea in revelation was Daniel's fourth beast fully revealed. The beast from the sea represents political systems and governments that arise and will persecute the church; at John's time the Roman Empire persecuted the church. The beast from the earth represented the Jews who joined together with Rome to persecute the church.

Satan called forth a third persecutor, the Harlot Babylon, that rode on the beast from the sea. Pastor Leithart described the harlot as a counterfeit priest. First he described the attributes of priests serving God. God's priests

were surrounded by the scarlet or purple color. The cloths used in the construction of the Tabernacle were scarlet or purple in color. The curtain that separated the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple was also scarlet. Aaron's priestly robes were scarlet and purple. He wore a breastplate studded with 12 jewels representing the 12 tribes of Israel. Aaronic priests were responsible for offering sacrifices and worked with basins that caught the blood of a sacrifice. Priests were called by God to teach the people God's word and exhort them to obedience. Like a priest, the harlot Babylon was dressed in scarlet. Like the high priest she is decked out in Jewels. She carried a gold goblet full of blood. She sacrificed the martyrs. She caught the blood of the martyrs in her goblet. There are some stark contrasts to a priest in the Temple and the Tabernacle. The priest in the Temple and the Tabernacle did not sit. The priest always stood at attention or moved and was sober. The Harlot Babylon reclined, she sat and got quite drunk. She did not teach people about God and exhort them to live godly lives. She enticed people away from God with wealth, wine and luxury and then held them in bondage to wealth, luxury and pleasure driven living. Pastor Leithart saw contemporary evidence of the existence of a conflict between true priestly teaching and counterfeit priestly teaching in the debate around marriage and the expression of human sexuality.

The Bible teaches that marriage is the union, by God, of one man and one woman, in a lifelong monogamous and loving relationship and is the only and proper relationship for the expression of human sexuality. The Bible teaches that the family is the building block for all societies. Marriage and family ensure that another generation comes into being and children are loved, cared for and nurtured. Marriage points us the Messiah, the bridegroom, who came to marry the church, that is, in order to bring God's people into communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In marriage God reconciles opposites, male and female.

Same gender marriage represents an institutional rejection of the Christian conception of marriage and the adoption of a counterfeit understanding of marriage. Gay marriage does not unite and reconcile opposite sexes for propagation. Gay marriage therefore changes the fundamental purpose of human sexuality. Gay marriage laws are founded on the principle that marriage is a contractual relationship that is defined and brokered by the state. It is the state, not God, that establishes this union and ensures its continuance. Same gender marriage laws see personal sexual gratification as a central part of marriage, not the procreation and the protection of children. Gay marriage laws create new classes of people (Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgendered people). The church has been persecuted for not embracing Gay marriage. By reason of their stance against same gender marriage and refusal to consider same gender couples for adoption of children, Roman Catholic adoption agencies in the United Kingdom have had to close down. The United Nations has increasingly been linking the receipt of aid with a poor nation's positive stance on same gender marriage and adoption by gay couples. There is great pressure on Christians to conform to changing societal norms. The Book of Revelation exhorts contemporary Christians not to conform to this counterfeit teaching on marriage and family.

The Book of Revelation calls God's people to be faithful witnesses. Jesus is described in the Book of Revelation as the "true faithful witness" and calls his disciples to be faithful witnesses and empowers them in this regard. The Greek word for witness is *martyr*. Jesus calls his witnesses to speak the truth even if it means the death of the witness. Revelation Chapter 5 reveals Jesus' faithful witnesses whose blood was spilled. They stand under a great altar, were the blood of the sacrifice is spilled. They feel the Lord is not acknowledging their sacrifice. They pray to God for vindication. God assures them that He hears their prayers. He declares that there will be other martyrs (the 144,000) and when the full number comes in, this world will be destroyed and eternity will begin. Jesus calls his people not to shrink back and conform to societal norms. He calls us to preach the Gospel publically. He calls us to worship.

Pastor Leithart contends that the overall sequence of the Book of Revelation points to worship. The Book of Revelation described true worship that is in direct opposition to the religions of Rome. The empire sanctioned daily worship and the daily offer of sacrifices by their own priestly class. This constant worship supposedly assured the Roman gods would be placated and peace and prosperity would abound. The Roman understanding of worship and sacrifice, for the purpose of gaining and preserving economic prosperity and peace, was a counterfeit system of worship. When Christians refused to worship the Roman gods, this put the empire and Roman peace and prosperity at risk. Christians were pressured into offering sacrifices to the Roman gods. Christians refused to worship in a counterfeit religious system. Many Christians were martyred for refusing to offer these sacrifices.


Pastor Leithart believes that the Book of Revelation shapes so much of our contemporary worship. Jesus appeared to John and gave him this great revelation on a Sunday. Sunday has become the primary day for worship for

Christians. John's first vision is that of the glorified Jesus who is to be worshiped and glorified. Revelation 4 describes God and the Lamb enthroned and their perpetual worship by the heavenly hosts. Chapter 5 reveals the heart of worship; it begins with the word of God, represented by the scroll. The breaking of the seals on the scroll represents the call to study of the word of God. The words of revelation announce the fulfillment of the words of the scroll. The book ends with Jesus' return and newness. The Book reveals the existence of a contest or struggle between two communities - God's people and the followers of Satan and the Beast - and that God will overcome the followers of Satan.

Pastor Leithart declared that our journey of faith begins in worship, in the rite of Baptism. When we are baptized we are joined to the death and the resurrection of Jesus and are transformed. Your life is now in Christ. In worship we learn a common way of speaking about God, one God in three persons. God's word created faith. Habits and memories are ingrained in us. We form a community through regular participation in the Eucharist. Pastor Leithart contends that, in singing, hymns, psalms and spiritual songs, we learn to expend our breath on the praise and worship of God, and this act can pave the way to expending our lives in Christ's service. Worship changes the unsaved into martyrs or witnesses of Jesus Christ. Pastor Leithart echoed Rod Dreher's concluding thought: "To be relevant the church has to be a remnant."

The **Canadian Rockies Theological Conference (CRTC)** is an annual pan-Lutheran conference organized by Pastors Phil Gagnon and Karl Johnsen, who are on the roster of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) - Canada Mission District.

Congregational Anniversaries Celebrated

 <p style="text-align: center;">Trinity Lutheran of Leader Saskatchewan celebrated their 40th Anniversary the weekend of April 24th.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Vancouver Chinese Lutheran Church of Burnaby, BC, celebrated their 25th Anniversary the weekend of May 29th.</p>
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Watch for articles on these celebrations in the next issue of the Connector

Up-Coming Congregational Anniversaries

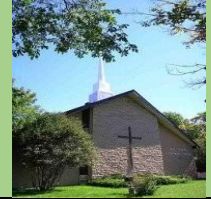
	<h3 style="margin: 0;">Mount Calvary Lutheran Church</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">is celebrating its 60th Anniversary</p> <p style="margin: 0;">July 30th – 31st 2016</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Celebrating 60 years of God's Blessings</i></p>
<p>Activities Saturday July 30: 2:00 to 5:00 PM Open House - Displays – Refreshments 6:00 PM Celebration Banquet with Pastor Karl Keller Tickets: Adults: \$25.00; Children 6-15: \$10.00; Children 0-5 Free</p>	<p>Activities Sunday July 31: 10:00 AM Praise & Worship with Pastor Herald Rust 12:00 PM Sandwich Luncheon (no charge)</p>
<p>Address: 32420 - 7th Avenue Mission, British Columbia, V2V 7P8</p> <p>For information on the weekend celebration and/or banquet tickets call (604) 826-8587 or email mtclcl@telus.net</p>	

Congregations Seeking a Pastor:

ONTARIO:

All Saints Lutheran Church

Fulltime Pastor
 1061 Pinecrest Rd, Ottawa, ON, K2B 6B7
 (613) 828-9284
Contact: Laurie Storsater - lkstors@me.com



Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

Part-time Pastor
 1630 Lawrence Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario, M6L 1C5
 (416) 249-8851
Contact: Dennis Persaud - persaud7544@rogers.com



Faith Lutheran Church

Part-time Pastor
 96 Hucknall Road, North York, Ontario, M3J 1V8
 (416) 249-8851
Contact: Sherland Chhangur - schhangur@hotmail.com



ALBERTA

Faith Lutheran Church

Fulltime Pastor
 1903 19 Ave. NW, Calgary, AB, T2M 1B8
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Contact: John Hein - John.Hein@albertahealthservices.ca



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

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