



THORNHILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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CHRIST IS RISEN !

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CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED !!

GEMEINDEBRIEF – OSTERN 2022

NEWSLETTER – EASTER 2022

VICTORIA DAY LONG WEEKEND

THORNHILL LUTHERAN & SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN TOGETHER

Celebrating Creation

*(IN THE GARDEN, WEATHER PERMITTING;
please bring a lawn chair and picnic lunch)*



Sunday, May 22,
2022 – 10:30 a.m.

St. Paul Lutheran
Church

10131 Bayview Av
Richmond Hill

EIN ZEICHEN DER ZEIT? von Pastor Peter Lisinski

Am Sonntag, dem 24. April 2022, feierte die Christ the King Lutheran Church, Whitby – deren Gründungsmitglieder meine Eltern Eduard und Ruth waren – ihren letzten Gottesdienst, nachdem sie auf ihrer Jahresversammlung für die Schließung und Auflösung gestimmt hatte.

Heutzutage schwinden die meisten christlichen Kirchen in ganz Nordamerika – insbesondere diejenigen, die ihren Ursprung in der „protestantischen“ Reformbewegung des 16. Jahrhunderts in Europa haben, die von unserem konfessionellen Namensvetter Martin Luther entfacht wurde – an Zahl und Bedeutung. Die Zahl der Gottesdienstbesucher ist in Kanada stetig zurückgegangen, seit sie Mitte der 19. Jahrhunderts nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg ihren Höhepunkt erreicht hatten. Und mit sinkenden Geburtenraten und einer Verschiebung der Einwanderungsmuster von Europa nach Asien ist die Bevölkerung der westlichen Zivilisation zunehmend älter und nichtchristlich geworden. Dies hat unvermeidliche geistliche, missionarische und finanzielle Herausforderungen für alle christlichen Gemeinden, einschließlich unserer eigenen, mit sich gebracht. Und die globale Coronavirus-Pandemie hat nicht geholfen – oder doch?

Ich bin fest davon überzeugt, dass die demografischen Veränderungen und finanziellen Herausforderungen der christlichen Kirche eindeutige Zeichen dafür sind, dass Gottes Heiliger Geist Christen dringend zu einer umfassenderen Gemeinschaft ruft und führt, die über unsere gegenwärtigen konfessionellen Identitäten, traditionellen Ausdrucksformen und persönlichen Zögern hinausgeht. Die Zeit wird es zeigen – und früher als später! Aber wie auch immer die Zukunft aussehen mag, die Erneuerung im Glauben und in der Mission der Kirche – einschließlich der unserer Gemeinde – bleibt die Verheißung und Mission des Heiligen Geistes Gottes. Die Gegenwart, Macht und Bestimmung des Heiligen Geistes bleibt unter uns, um uns herum, mit uns und in uns – sogar ohne uns – aktiv, um die heilige Gemeinschaft von Gottes neuer Schöpfung, die durch den Tod und die Auferstehung Jesu Christi begründet wurde, zur vollen Offenbarung zu bringen („Apokalypse“, auf Griechisch) Das ist die Verheißung von Ostern und die Hoffnung des Pfingsten.

In der Zwischenzeit bleibt unsere einzige Berufung als Nachfolger Jesu Christi dieselbe wie am Anfang: Gottes Liebe in der Anbetung zu empfangen und Gottes Liebe in der Welt widerzuspiegeln. Durch alle Veränderungen und Herausforderungen unserer Geschichte hindurch hat und wird das Evangelium von Gottes bedingungsloser, unbegrenzter und universeller Liebe in Jesus Christus die Kirche im Glauben lebendig erhalten – und den Glauben in der Kirche lebendig – bis zur endgültigen Erfüllung des Glaubens Gottes versprochene Zukunft in einer ganzen und heiligen neuen Schöpfung.

Komm Heiliger Geist!

Pastor Peter

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A SIGN OF THE TIMES?

My Dear Christian Family,

On Sunday, April 24, 2022, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Whitby – of which my parents, Eduard and Ruth, were charter members – celebrated their final worship service, having voted at their annual meeting to close and disband.

Mainline Christian churches across North America today – particularly those that trace their origins to the “protestant” reform movement of sixteenth-century Europe, ignited by our denominational namesake, Martin Luther – are dwindling in numbers, as well as relevance. Worship attendance has steadily decreased in Canada since reaching its peak following World War II in the mid-1940s. And with declining birth rates, and a shift in immigration patterns from Europe to Asia, the population of western civilization has become increasingly elderly and non-Christian. This has produced inevitable ministry, mission and financial challenges for all Christian congregations, including our own. And the global Coronavirus pandemic has not helped – or has it?

I firmly believe that the Christian church's demographic changes and financial challenges are definite signs that God's Holy Spirit is urgently calling and guiding Christians to a fuller communion beyond our current denominational identities, traditional expressions and personal hesitations. Time will tell – and sooner than later! But whatever the future may hold, the church's renewal in faith and mission – including our congregation's – remains the promise and mission of God's Holy Spirit. The Spirit's presence, power and purpose remain active among us, around us, with us and within us – even without us – to bring the holy communion of God's new creation, established in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to full revelation (“apocalypse”, in Greek). That is the promise of Easter and the hope of Pentecost.

In the meantime, our only calling as followers of Jesus Christ remains the same as it was in the beginning: to receive God's love in worship and reflect God's love in the world. Through all the changes and challenges of our history, the gospel of God's unconditional, unlimited and universal love in Jesus Christ, has kept, and will keep, the church alive in faith – and faith alive in the church – until the final fulfillment of God's promised future in a whole, and holy, new creation.

Come, Holy Spirit!

Pastor Peter

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ECHOS FROM OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Thornhill Lutheran Church held our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 1. Led by our current Council Chairperson, **Nancy Moulson**, we shared the joy of receiving new member **Monika Bos** into our congregation! Welcome, dear Sister in Christ!

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The occasion of our AGM also gave us our first opportunity to formally acknowledge and express our deep gratitude for the magnanimous bequest of \$100,000 left to us by our late companion in faith, **Brigitta Urbschat**, who died on August 4, A.D. 2021. Her generosity in death affirms the commitment to God she reflected throughout her long and faithful life, which we were blessed to share with her for many fruitful years of Christian ministry and mission. Our thanks are also due to Gitta's longtime companion, **David Dunn**, for expediting the wishes expressed in her will, and for helping us keep her memory alive within and among us. God bless you and keep you both!

Other AGM Highlights

1. Also during our Annual Meeting, **Doris Lottermoser, Edith Schiller** and our new member **Monika Bos** were elected to serve on Church Council, along with our returning roster of **Denise Wanschura-Jack, Edith Schulbeck, Erin Tobin, Nancy Moulson**. Our newly formed council will be installed during our worship service on Sunday, May 15. Please plan to be present to offer your support and prayers for these faithful stewards among God's people.



2. A brief conversation about the meaning and propriety of the word 'obedience' was inspired by a motion to revise our congregation's Mission Statement, adopted in 2012. The subsequent vote produced an equal number either in support or opposed to the proposed revision. However, all present agreed that a more thorough review of our mission should be undertaken by a "Task Force" of interested and concerned members. If you are prepared to engage in this serving this worthy project, please attend our first meeting after worship on Sunday, June

In the meantime, hear the “Echo” from our Lenten series of Daily Devotions based on Pastor Peter’s revision of Francis de Sales’ commentary on obedience from his 16th century classic *Renewal in Christian Devotion*:

“Obedience implies submission to legitimate authority, either out of external obligation, imposed and enforced by the rule of law or out of internal volition, freely chosen for reasons of spiritual discipline, moral conscience or ethical conviction, etc. Both forms of obedience, however, subsist in obedience to the will of God, whose divine law of love establishes and sustains the health and wellbeing of human beings, individually and communally – popularly referred to as “the common good” or “social contract” – which it is the divinely ordained vocation of any and all government institutions and structures of social order, as well as our individual responsibility as citizens, to seek, serve and support. Therefore, when public statutes of “common law” violate the inherent human rights of social justice, civic peace, personal freedom and economic prosperity, the public, non-violent protest of conscientious objection and civil disobedience are justified, in accord with Jesus’ distinction, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21), and affirmed by apostolic teaching: “We must obey God rather than human authority” (Acts 5:29).

WORSHIP CALENDAR REVISED FOR PASTORAL VACATION EXCHANGE

Our AGM quorum also agreed that on three of Pastor Peter’s vacation Sundays (**July 31, August 7 & 14**) TLC would worship **@ St. Paul’s** 10:30 a.m. service; and that on three of **Pastor Annette Smith’s** vacation Sundays (June 26, July 3 and 24) our sisters and brothers from Richmond Hill would join us for worship **@ Thornhill Lutheran**. Accordingly, our **monthly German worship services** in June and July have been rescheduled for **June 19** and **July 17**. Dates for Pastor Peter’s remaining vacation Sundays have yet to be presented to the council. As always, he will be on call to serve should any needs for pastoral ministry arise.

THESE ARE THE HANDS by Michael Rosen

(A tribute to the women and men serving
Great Britain's National Health Service)

These are the hands that touch us first
 feel your head
 find a pulse and
 make your bed

These are the hands that tap your back
 test the skin
 hold your arm
 wheel the bin
 change the bulb
 fix the drip
 pour the jug
 replace your hip

These are the hands that fill the bath
 mop the floor
 flick the switch
 soothe the sore
 burn the swabs
 give us a jab
 design the lab

These are the hands that stop the leaks
 empty the pan
 wipe the pipes
 carry the can
 clamp the veins
 make the cast
 log the dose

And these are the hands that touch us last

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