



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

116 Bond Street

Toronto ON M5B 1X8

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AGENDA

1. Call to Order
 - a. Establishment of Quorum
2. Opening Prayer
3. Acceptance of the Agenda
4. Approval of the Minutes from the Annual General Meeting March 19th 2017
 - a. Business arising from the Minutes
5. Approval of the Minutes from the Congregational Meeting September 24th 2017
 - a. Business arising from the Minutes
6. Approval of the Minutes from the Congregational Meeting January 21st 2018
 - a. Business arising from the Minutes
7. Acceptance of Reports (non-Treasurer)
 - a. Business arising from the Reports
8. Acceptance of the Financial Statements
 - a. Acceptance of the Treasurer's report
 - i. Business arising from the Treasurer's report
 - b. Acceptance of the Auditor's report
 - i. Business arising from the Auditor's report
9. New Business
 - a. Election of Council members
 - b. Appointment of new Treasurer
 - c.
 - d.
10. Q & A, Comments
11. Dismissal & Departure

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 19TH 2017

Meeting Called to order 12:45pm with General Reports, Treasurer's Report and previous minutes handed out to all in attendance

Quorum confirmed by secretary with 18 voting congregational members in attendance (list attached)

1. The meeting opened with a prayer by Adrienne Findley-Jones.
2. The agenda was approved as was the minutes from the 2016 Annual Meeting. Motion to Approve the Minutes from 2016 Annual Meeting: moved Adrienne Findley-Jones, seconded by Friedrich Brunzema, and approved by all.
3. David Berg reviewed the term of office for the members of Council:
 - a. As per our constitution:
 - i. the minimum number of council members is 6 and the maximum is 15
 - ii. a council member can serve on Council for a 3 year term, after which they can either come off Council, or be elected for a second 3 year term
 - iii. after serving 2 consecutive 3 year terms they must come off Council; they are eligible to be elected to Council after being off Council for a minimum of 1 year
 - iv. a membership term period starts at the time of being elected at an Annual Meeting
 - v. if someone joins council after the Annual Meeting, the period from when the person joins Council to the following Annual Meeting is considered as interim and is not considered as part of a three year term
 - b. Adrienne Findley-Jones, Rita Wagner, and Roy Wick have completed their first 3 year term and are eligible to be elected for a second 3 year term.
 - c. David Berg, Dennis Miles, and Waldemar Fischer have completed the first year of their second 3 year term. They can remain as members of Council until the Annual Meeting of 2019.
 - d. Christine Mehling joined Council after the 2016 Annual Meeting, and therefore the time on Council up to this Annual Meeting is considered interim.
4. As there are 12 positions available on Council and a minimum of 3 positions are required to be filled, the floor was open for nominations.

5. Adrienne Findley-Jones, Rita Wagner, Roy Wick and Christine Mehling agreed to stand for election. There being no other nominations Adrienne Findley-Jones, Rita Wagner, Roy Wick and Christine Mehling were acclaimed as members of Council. Adrienne Findley-Jones, Rita Wagner, and Roy Wick will start the first year of their second 3 year term and can remain on Council until the Annual Meeting of 2020. Christine Mehling will start the first year of her first 3 year term and can remain on Council until the Annual Meeting of 2020; she will be eligible to be elected for a second 3 year term.
6. Since 8 positions on Council are still available, the congregation was encouraged to consider joining Council. Members of the congregation are invited to attend Council Meetings.
7. The following published Reports were tabled: Council Chair, Pastor, Bible Study, Seniors, Property & Building, and Treasurer. Motion to Accept the Reports: moved Rolf Kolassa, seconded by Gordon Chu, and approved by all.
8. A review of plate offerings over the past 5 years shows a steady decline and ties to a decline in our membership. Council is reviewing the membership list, to establish an accurate number. This is important to establish quorum for meetings and to know the number needed votes on major decisions.
9. The financial statement was reviewed:
 - a. the difference between budget numbers those in the financial statement
 - b. the amounts and conditions for the Restricted Funds
 - c. Friedrich Brunzema asked if we should consider transferring our investments managed by ELFAC's to ScotiaMcLeod since ScotiaMcLeod had better performance.
10. David thanked Marilyn Kneller for her hard work as Treasurer and Bookkeeper.
11. Motion to Accept the 2016 Financial Statements as prepared by RSSM Accountants: Moved by Marilyn Kneller, seconded by Adrienne Findley-Jones, with all in favor
12. The next topic of discussion was that of Transformation@first. David Berg reviewed highlights of the following:
 - a. retreat meeting held in November 2016 and monthly team meetings
 - b. the \$5,000 grant from the Eastern Synod to focused on research to explore our current situation: coaching leaders in church transformation; deepening our understanding of intercultural ministry; field trips (at absolute minimal costs such as St Lydia's New York or St Albans Ottawa) to research how others have done transformation; and hosting public events including.
 - c. Pastor Dawn added that in addition to Council the transformation team includes Friederich Brunzema and Katja Brittain. If any one has any ideas or

would like also join they are welcomed. The team is focussing on Creative Worship, Social Responsibilities, Creative Financing, and Pastoral Activities. Pastor Dawn asked all to pray for those in this endeavor.

- d. The presentation continued with a highlight of some of the exciting things that have happened in the course of the last year:
- e. Pastor Dawn meeting with Ryerson President Mohamed Lachemi and the senior administrative team. Of importance was that Ryerson is not focused on wanting to buy First but rather to talk about a student ministry support. We have tried for years to initiate this; it is a new turn to openness to address student spiritual needs;
- f. discussions with the Ryerson Student Union aimed at improving student mental health, and the recognition that spiritual development is a part of that. First has been invited to be the Protestant Chaplain to work with chaplains for Roman Catholics, Jews and Muslims;
- g. Hosting the HotDocs premier of Africville Black and White which provided us a form of networking and developing arts and music

13. The meeting was open for questions or comments.

- a. Friedrich Brunzema ask about Council looking at our investments. Marilyn Kneller explaining that to gain access to our restricted funds we need all the original documents and agreements that created the funds and that these would need to be assessed by legal experts to determine if the terms of the funds could be altered by the courts:
- b. Friederich ask if Council could look at what can be done with this along with what can be done to rent the West Hall to a full time tenant.
- c. Rita Wagner suggested that for the summer months the second, third and fourth Sundays of the month be a combined service starting at 10am. Majority of congregation members present approved of idea.
- d. Pastor Dawn closed the meeting with motion of thanks to our dedicated council members and finally with a closing prayer of thanks.

Members in attendance:

1. Dennis Miles
2. Roy Wick
3. David Berg
4. Kurt Walter
5. Waldemar Fisher
6. Christine Mehling
7. Gordon Chu
8. Adrienne Findley-Jones

9. Rolf Kollasa
10. Friedrich Brunzema
11. Eva Wick
12. Wolfgang Hock
13. Marilyn Kneller
14. Cathie Ferguson
15. Karin Berg
16. Rita Wagner
17. Alice Buttke
18. Irmgard Kollasa

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 24 2017

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 12:30 pm after having established that we had met the required quorum of 11 members, 13 members attended.
- Pastor Leger opened the meeting with a prayer.

Synod Ministry Grant Proposal

- David Berg gave a presentation on the congregation's plan for renewal, including:
- Reaching out to our neighbourhood community
- Exploring possible new forms of worship
- With Pastor Leger being the new protestant chaplain at Ryerson, increasing our involvement and raising our profile with the Ryerson community
- Engaging in performance/arts based events
- The plan will involve engaging new resources, specifically:
- Scott Weidler, who will work on our Musical Direction
- Elizabeth Keith, who will be responsible for Social Media Promotion
- Others to help with Event Coordination and Event Operation
- David also presented a three year budget to support these plans and made a proposal that we apply for a long term partnership grant from the Synod.

Motion

- A motion was made by Cathie Ferguson, seconded by Friedrich Brunzema that "The congregation of First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Toronto has reviewed and approves the application for the Eastern Synod Long Term Support 2018-2020"
- The motion passed unanimously

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm after a closing prayer.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JANUARY 21 2018

Meeting called to order at 12:30pm

Scott opened meeting with a song he felt appropriate to a budget meeting which was Hymn 476 "We are all one in mission"

Roy verified we have a quorum with 15 voting members present

1. David handed out and reviewed minutes from previous budget meeting in September. Motion by Friederich and 2nd by Cathy to approve minutes of previous meeting was approved by congregation members in attendance
2. David reviewed slide re proposal to Synod for 2018. We had requested \$ 32,000 with roughly 16K for music director, 28K for Communications, 15K for advertising, 5K for equipment and 1.25K for The Table. We were approved for a total grant of \$20,000
3. David presented a spreadsheet presentation broken down to 5 areas of focus with Goals, Objectives and key points. Highlights for these follow:
 - a. Renew Our Services by enriching our regular worship. Key to this is to increase individual participation and exploring new musical setting and ourselves
 - b. Start New Community involvement in our neighborhood by removing barriers both physical and psychological via examples such as The Table Services and other less formal or traditional activities
 - c. Working with Ryerson to make connections via modes such as participating in orientation week, having the church open during week, student care packages, assisting Good Food group, and Multifaith services. Pastor Dawn has already spent much time over there but these goals take time to build trust and relationships.
 - d. Exploring Worship through Arts Based forums with a goal of our ministry as a tool. Part of this is to normalize entry to the church for all, becoming known in the community, having informal singing sessions with professional leadership, concerts, and at the same time providing us with a potential income source.
 - e. Spiritual Renewal, although this was not explicit in our grant documents it has become clear that we need to engage in spiritual renewal by providing care for our congregation, as well as others, through visitation to those who can not make it in to the church, thematic study/discussion and discipleship. We have started this with a membership mail project already well underway

4. The next section reviewed budget numbers. All received a copy of the budget.
5. In the first series of slides we looked at expenses in terms of:
 1. actual numbers distribution
 2. where does it go
 3. care and outreach
6. The 2018 Projected Expenses are \$182,000, 2018 Projected Incomes is \$92,000 leading to a 2018 Projected Deficit of \$90,000
7. We then looked at how to pay for these as best we can. Highlights included
 1. \$252K is available in Unrestricted Funds (approx. \$108K in Restricted Funds)
 2. Although we withdrew approx. \$90K from our Unrestricted Funds in 2017, the fund value was only approx. \$41K less the 2016 due to the strength of investment earnings of our Unrestricted Funds in 2017.
8. Reviewing the spreadsheet:
 1. last years budget estimates were very close to end of year results
 2. Pastor Dawn mentioned that we need to try to encourage all to have a serious look at charitable donations if they are able to increase donations where possible by 10%. Of course if not possible that too is O.K since this is a spiritual issue as much as a financial issue
 3. an increase of 7% in Rental income is projected
 4. we need to increase media and advertising this year
 5. the 2018 Synod convention is not in the budget but would like to review this later on
 6. office expenses have increased since we are doing our own printing verses sending to printers
 7. organ maintenance is not listed as budget item since can be funded by Organ Fund which is a restricted fund.
 8. church maintenance is up as building ages
 9. contract services should be reduced both due to no longer having a German speaking Supply Pastor, and fewer occasions when Pastor Dawn is away
 10. David reviewed Music Director expense of \$20K, and musicians for The Table of \$5.7K, and Communications Coordinator of \$ 3.6K
 11. We have church memberships in Eastern Synod and Central Toronto Ministry. Here too would like to project increases since we are part of us and they part of them but funds are limited
 12. we plan to spend \$32,000 more than last year on ministry items
9. Meeting was then opened to the floor for questions:

1. Irmgard Kolossa asked why meeting held in the Nave. David responded that it was at his request since the Nave is where we experience the church and he was willing to discuss after the meeting with any one but he would like to see more participation in the Nave. It may also become necessary in future if we can rent the West Hall and create major funds from the rental
2. No other questions were presented

10. Motion by Adrienne, 2nd by Kurt that the congregation of First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Toronto has reviewed and approved the Proposed Budget for 2018.

. Discussion offered but no questions or issues presented

1. Vote was unanimous in favor.

11. Pastor Dawn suggested another motion. Motion by Friederich, 2nd by Rolf to thank Marilyn, David and the Council for their work leading up to this meeting.

. All were in favor

12. Meeting closed in prayer

Members In attendance

1. Waldemar Fischer
2. David Berg
3. Friedrich Brunzema
4. Irmgard Kolossa
5. Rolf Kolossa
6. Karin Berg
7. Wolfgang Hock
8. Adrienne Findley-Jones
9. Cathie Ferguson
10. Irene Fischer
11. Rita Wagner
12. Eva Wick
13. Kurt Walter
14. Dennis Miles
15. Roy Wick
16. Pastor Dawn Leger

REPORTS

Pastor's Report

Greetings in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I have now completed one full year at First Lutheran-and then some. We have marked all of the major annual events together and come to know one another more deeply. I end 2017 with a deeper commitment to this adventure we have launched together, and more convinced than ever of God's providence and guidance.

2017 saw the completion of our year-long project, **transformation@first**. This group, made up of council members, members of First, and even one or two from the community, worked together having all kinds of amazing, faithful conversations which, in the end, distilled down to 5 expressions of ministry. These 5 expressions have become the core of everything we do at First and how we will proceed. There is no first or last. Instead, we see the Holy Spirit active in all of these areas and each area uses a combination of staff and building resources.

A good friend always reminds me of this: We are planting asparagus, not wildflowers. Wildflowers you throw the seeds, they grow, they die, we plant more seeds next year. The Church is not wildflowers. The Church is asparagus. First, we plant crowns, which are heads of asparagus that are a full year old. We plant those deep, 6-12 inches. We take care of soil for a whole year. In the next year, we see sprouts and we get excited, but that is not the harvest. We keep clearing, keep mulching. The next year, we keep taking care of the soil and, at the end of the third year, we may see asparagus ready for harvest. If we waited to see proof that we would have a harvest of asparagus to do the hard work, we would have nothing. Instead, we do the hard work, and we have the promise of the Holy Spirit that we will see a harvest. The difference is it may not be asparagus. As a colleague told me a few months ago, "If God gives you lemons, make lemonade, even if you think you are a microbrewery."

So, here we go. A full year indeed. At the end of each section I ask you to take a moment to pray, offer a thanksgiving for the work God has done in our midst, and a petition for the work to come.

1. Ryerson Student Ministry

For years we have watched Ryerson grow around us, students walk by us, and wondered how to connect with them. In 2016 and 2017, we received an answer to our prayers as the right time and the right people converged to begin to offer students spiritual care through the Ryerson Student Union (RSU). While delays kept the RSU Wellness Centre from opening and offering full chaplaincy services, I was still invited to serve as the **Protestant Chaplain to Ryerson** in order to provide individual spiritual care as well as programs to Ryerson students.

Along with Ryerson Catholics, Hillel Ryerson, and Muslim Chaplaincy at Ryerson, we formed the **Multi-Faith Association at Ryerson (MFAAR)**. Each of us have different services, resources, and interactions with students, but we were unified on one thing. Our goal was to work with Ryerson Student Union and Ryerson University to create one space and organisation under the umbrella of Ryerson University to provide spiritual care to students. Over the Christmas break, Ryerson students worked to get the **RSU Wellness Centre** open and, in the spring of 2018, official Ryerson Student Union chaplaincy services and programming will be available to students. Through the Wellness Centre, we can now promote our own events and ministries to over 30,000 students who are members of the Ryerson Student Union, as well as hosting ministries in the Wellness Centre at 55 Gould St.

At the end of 2017 we began conversations with the **Good Food Centre** at Ryerson Student Union. The Good Food Centre provides free food to over 200 students a month. In 2018 we will partner with the Good Food Centre providing kitchen space for their Wednesday Break-Feasts as well as collecting donations for their food bank. These kinds of partnerships are very exciting and provide us the opportunity to meet and serve students who would not necessarily join us for our regular worship and programs.

Thanks be to God for:

Bringing together the space, the people, and the resources to begin a student ministry through the RSU Wellness Centre

We pray for:

New relationships to provide students with opportunities to support them in this time of their lives

2. The Table: A New Community

One of the fruits of the transformation@first team is **The Table**. Studying the culture of our neighbourhood and the rhythm of life of Ryerson students, we learned that a different kind of Sunday morning that connected with young adults and urban dwellers was not what was needed. In one way, this was good news. Our Sunday morning worship is important to the core members of First, and immediate and drastic changes to it, even if it would draw in younger people, would put stress on the lives of faith that are sustaining our community.

Following in the footsteps of our friends at St. Alban's, Ottawa, we held a series of "**Pub Nights**" at the Imperial Pub with the invitation, "Still haven't found the faith community you are looking for? Come help us build it." We attracted a **small core of people, mostly professionals, 25-45, living in or near downtown**. Quickly, some priorities for building a new community emerged. Weeknights are better for establishing a routine. A meal is important so people can come directly from work or class. Being open and direct about inclusion of lesbian, gay, and transgender people was another priority. We had to be outspoken, not just ask people to come in and

guess. The teaching would be interactive, offering all present the opportunity to offer insight and ask questions.

After three months of Pub Nights, **we launched The Table on Wednesday, November 1, 2017**. Karin and David Berg have been in charge of our delicious, healthy meals. At the end of November, we welcomed **Rachel Colman** as our musician. Attendance has been steady at 10-15 each week. The service focusses around one Scripture reading-the gospel for the following Sunday, interactive prayers and communion. We always end with ritual washing of dishes, and, occasionally, continue the conversation at the pub around the corner.

One of the keys to getting the word out about The Table has been the hiring of **Elizabeth Keith as our Media Administrator**. Elizabeth's tasks have been mainly focussed on building our presence on social media. Again, this is not an instant result, but requires consistent and diligent work to build that presence. Elizabeth also manages our website and publishes our quarterly newsletter @firstglance.

Thanks be to God for:

Inviting us into relationship with new people, building a new expression of worship to the glory of God

We pray for:

A deepening of these new relationships to build a community solid on the rock that is Jesus Christ.

3. Spiritual Renewal

Whatever we feel called to be in this neighbourhood, we are, first, called to look to the Holy Spirit, to worship God and deepen our prayer life and relationship with Christ. This is a daily task for each one of us. Sunday morning, however, is our primary time for worship and teaching. It is no surprise, then, that almost half of our resources are to build up our worship of God.

As we grow and **welcome new people** with new gifts and different needs, our worship has seen some small shifts. As our German membership declines, bilingual worship is becoming more difficult for everyone to participate in and enjoy. **Friedrich Brunzema has grown in his role as our Predikant**. Trained by the Evangelische-Kirche in Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany, of which Lutherans are members), Friedrich has been leading German Services of the Word and preaching in German. Friedrich's ministry among us has made it possible to continue our legacy of German life here at First, and I am very grateful for his dedication.

Two major additions to our worship has been the hiring of our **Director of Music, Scott Weidler**, and our **Pastoral Intern, Jordan Smith**, a Lutheran student at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Wycliffe College. Scott's wide breadth of experience has been a great asset to us. Our goal this year was to help the assembly sing together

with greater confidence and joy. He has trained 4 of us as **Cantors (singing leaders)**- Gordon Chu, Adrienne Findley-Jones, Jordan Smith and me.

Our newly formed **Worship Committee** includes Karin Berg, Gordon Chu, Warner Fehn, Adrienne Findley-Jones, Jordan Smith, Rita Wagner, and Scott Weidler. Together we are working through the music, readings, and liturgies of each season, reflecting on feedback we receive as we continue to evolve into a church that serves the downtown core. To add greater flexibility, we **removed the front two pews and the screens** from the front of the nave. This has allowed us to gather in various ways in our sacred space, hosting a Christmas Tree Carol Sing, for example, and celebrating the Lord's Supper in the oldest of ways, around a table in the common space.

Thanks be to God for:
the leadership of Friedrich, Jordan, and Scott, as well as our new cantors and our organist, Warner Fehn

We pray for:
An opening to more expressions of worship to reflect the diversity of our neighbourhood and honour our traditions.

4. Arts Based Exploration

Every time I leave the doors of the church open for people to freely enter, I hear two different first reactions.
-Wow! This is beautiful!
-I had no idea this was here.

Part of hiring Scott as our Director of Music was to use our building as an **invitation to artists and performers** to share their art with the wider community. We were thrilled to be a **venue for the Hot Docs Festival** this year, with the production of *Africville in Black and White*. We are also receiving more requests for film and television.

Having an historic building has shown us we are limited in the kinds of events we can host. Our **lack of wheelchair accessibility** continues to be a significant limitation. Each Sunday we say, "All are Welcome". And, yet, there is a significant population who can not enter our building. As we welcome more events into our space, I hope we will find the funds to improve our access.

Thanks be to God for:
The legacy of those who gave us our beautiful, historic building, a blessing to our neighbourhood.

We pray for:
Guidance of the Holy Spirit towards ways to make our events truly welcome to all.

5. Care and Outreach

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."-John 13:34-35

On the night that Jesus died, we were given this new commandment, to love each other. The church in Acts, from the very beginning, formed its life around this commandment, particularly in taking care of the most vulnerable in our community.

As a pastor, I am given the incredible privilege of being present for some of the most important moments in a person's life. It is a difficult privilege, by times, but one I cherish. I am thankful to everyone who has invited me into their lives, for the cheers and the tears.

Our church takes care of one another. This is one of our gifts. Early in my ministry, I would resent being among the last to know if something had happened to someone. Now, I see it as a sign of a loving community that we all take care of each other.

Along with ministering to our own members, ministering to our neighbours is incredibly important. As an Anglican, I was formed to see my neighbourhood as my parish. I am charged with the "**care of souls in the parish**". That means I am not only responsible to care for those who are members of First Lutheran, but to all who live in and around our church. Bishop Michael Pryse has affirmed this approach as faithful to pastoral care in a Lutheran context.

An opioid crisis and shelter crisis coming together in Toronto have left a lot of our neighbours extremely vulnerable. Being a small church, we are limited in what we can offer in volunteers and funds. However, every little bit helps. I continue to seek out partnerships to work within.

Thanks be to God for:

The love and friendship we experience in the power of the Holy Spirit

We pray for:

The capacity to take care of all who we encounter.

Farewells

In 2017 we saw the departures of four significant people in our community.

Pastors Herbert Harms and Peter Mikelic offered us meaningful worship in the German language once a month. Their experience, humour, and deep faith were a gift to our German community. They both remain in my prayers as they move into new phases of their lives.

Ute Zander resigned this year as our Secretary. Ute was a great help in keeping the German and English cultures together. She is very active in youth ministry at her church and continues to do great work there.

After decades on the organ bench and behind the scenes of our German worship, and as Treasurer, Marilyn Kneller stepped down. Marilyn's faithfulness to the elders of our community is an example to us all. I remain grateful to Marilyn for her dedication. She will remain in our memories for a long time.

Gratitudes

As I come to the end of writing this report for 2017, I realise that there are very few churches our size that could accomplish all we have in one year. This is a testament to the dedication and faith of our members, as I could never take credit for all of this alone. Please indulge me these final expressions of thanks.

To David Berg, our Council Chair-for your courage, energy, faith and encouragement. You have lead us through a challenging and full year, and I am grateful for all we do together.

To our Council and our Transformation team-your faith and openness continue to inspire me.

To Scott, Jordan, and Liz-for joining this unlikely adventure. You each bring gifts that will be part of the foundation of this place for years to come.

To Werner and Rachel-our musicians along with Scott, for your unique and beautiful music to draw us into the beauty of God's love.

To Kurt Walter and Dennis Miles-for your care of our building, and helping to create a space that is hospitable to all the new people we are welcoming.

To all who offer hospitality-our coffee volunteers, our ushers, Karin and David Berg who prepare so many meals.

To our Guild, Cathie Ferguson, Adrienne Findley-Jones, Rita Wagner, and Irmgard Kolossa, for setting up communion and so many preparations for our worship.

Finally, at the end of what has been a difficult year for me personally, with the death of my mother, my most heartfelt thanks to all who stepped up on short notice to offer leadership, particularly David, Adrienne, and Friedrich. Thank you to everyone who offered prayers, sent cards, and offered me grace and patience in my grief. Marc and I are so fortunate to have found a home among such a family.

Blessings,
Pastor Dawn

Council Chair's Report

Thanks to each of you for your continuing support and sustained interest in our congregation and the larger church as we walk with Jesus in our neighbourhood. Much has been accomplished since our Annual Meeting last March.

- our discussions at the Transformation meetings have actually borne fruit in the 5 expressions of ministry that we have decided to pursue:
 - Ryerson Student Ministry
 - The Table: A New Community
 - Spiritual Renewal
 - Arts-Based Exploration
 - Care and Outreach
- We have participated in the leadership of the Central Toronto Ministry Area of our Synod and were instrumental to the success of the Reformation 500 commemoration this past October
- We are being followed and supported by many friends who are truly interested in our journey: sisters and brothers in the Anglican Church of Canada; Lutheran congregations in the Central Toronto Ministry Area; Bishop Michael Pryse and the staff and committees of the Eastern Synod; Imam Yasin Dwyer; and Glen Allan, our Mint Music tenant
- We have attracted some spectacular talent in our Music Director, Scott Weidler and our musician for the Table, Rachel Colman
- And I sense an overall improvement in the energy of our services

Of course, we face significant challenges ahead, perhaps most pressing is our long term funding which remains complicated and uncertain. However, we have been called to serve this neighbourhood and we will continue to do so with anticipation and gratitude.

This is a good opportunity to acknowledge some individuals in the congregation, both on behalf of the congregation, and personally, because I rely on these people so I can do my work as Council Chairperson;

- Marilyn Kneller for her many years of dedication and service to this congregation; she has generously contributing her time and talent. Marilyn is resigning as our Treasurer and one of our Organists.
- Kurt Walter for the continuing care he takes in maintaining the building, well beyond his paid duties.
- Friedrich Brunzema for his generosity and talent in our German language services and his continuing care for our wellbeing as a congregation
- Gordon Chu for taking on the duties of Recording Secretary and issuing our donation receipts.
- Jordan Smith, our Intern; I think he likes us! Jordan is giving us a lot of his time and talent.
- Pastor Dawn, my main collaborator. She is talented, energetic, positive, and dedicated to the life of our congregation.

- And to my fellow council members: Adrienne Findley-Jones, Christine Melhing, Dennis Miles, Rita Wagner, Roy Wick, and Waldemar Fischer. I am happy to report that we work very well together. We trust and care about each other, and they willingly give their time. You are fortunate to have such a good council.

Respectfully,

David Berg
Chairperson

Music

Submitted by Scott Weidler, Music Director

Since our beginnings as a movement within the Christian Church, Lutherans have followed the lead of Martin Luther by regarding music highly among the arts and understanding the act of singing in worship as a potential means for proclaiming the word of God.

I was privileged to be welcomed onto the First Lutheran staff in October of 2017 to assist in expanding and strengthening the music life of this worshiping community. We have intentionally decided to take small steps on this journey and work within the existing liturgical life of this congregation and continue singing under the leadership of organist Warner Fehn.

To strengthen our singing, we are integrating singing without accompaniment in addition to that which is organ-led. A core team of cantors lead several sung parts of the liturgy each Sunday without accompaniment. My experience has shown that congregations who are challenged to sing without accompaniment become stronger singers. This is a slow process, but well worth the effort.

At least once a month, I am present to lead singing myself. On those days, we often expand our repertoire by singing with piano accompaniment also. This provides the opportunity to sing hymns and songs from traditions that don't always work as well with the organ, such as gospel, spirituals and songs from Latin America or Africa.

If you are interested in singing or playing an instrument or have other ideas to offer, please free to be in touch. We are just beginning this exploration to enhance the musical life at First. You can contact me at music@firstelc.ca.

We are also looking to foster a broader use of our church facilities, especially with musical events. In December, COME SING @ FIRST was inaugurated by opening our church to members and neighbours early on a Thursday evening, to join us simply to sing – not particularly church music, but all kinds of tunes – just to relax, unwind, have fun, and build a community. This has the added benefit of getting more folks into our doors to know that we, as a congregation, care about our neighbourhood. It would

be wonderful if more First Lutheran members would come to sing with us and to be hospitable to our guests.

Additional collaboration with Ryerson University and other individuals or organizations is an ongoing endeavor. Again, if you have ideas about what our church might offer or of others who may need a space for their rehearsals, classes, performances, and so forth, please let me know. It is a privilege to be working with a congregation that is open to transformation in a changing community and world. Music is one integral way to work toward this goal.

Pastoral Intern's Report

Submitted by Jordan Smith

It has been a wonderful learning opportunity to come and work with you at First Lutheran this year. Back in September I developed goals for the year with Pastor Dawn which included helping lead an adult education class, working with worship leaders, connecting with people and agencies both inside and outside of the congregation, and being a part of worship planning. I have been able to work in all of these areas over the past seven months and I thank you for allowing me to learn while being a part of your community.

Highlights of my placement include: the privilege of preaching on five Sundays, assisting with the Reformation Service at St. James Cathedral, having an energetic group attend the Luther Course during Lent, and being welcomed into the homes of members who Pastor Dawn and I have visited.

Theological education of seminary students is a never-ending task and the willingness for congregations to take in students and help with their formation is appreciated by the students themselves, the seminaries, and the congregations the students eventually go on to serve. Thank you for being a part of the formation and training I have received this year and for being a part of the ministry of the wider church.

Transformation

Submitted by Roy Wick

Transformation at FIRST.

A glimpse during our March 2018 Congregational Meeting

Annual meetings are always a good opportunity to take a moment of pause and look back at the previous years activities and accomplishments. If one were to ask what has been transformed some might look around and say nothing. The building is still generally the same and the faces who remain with us are indeed mostly the same with hopefully some new faces added, at least at first glance. Yet there is so much more happening.

FIRST is in process of five new key areas of focus and dedication in our role as a ministry of faith in Christ which we refer to as Transformation. One might worry about the word transform yet the perception above is a good thing. It says that as we look outward to our community and forward in time we still remain dedicated to what has been so important to those who went before us leaving such as wondrous gift of faith. Meanwhile we have been looking at ways to improve our services and commitment to faith, to share our faith outward to the community rather than waiting inwardly focussed hoping the community will come in to us. We have worked with Eastern Synod help providing a grant last year to help us explore ways to look forward and plan. That was followed by a second grant which indicates support of five key areas developed as areas of focus to move forward. The key areas of Transformation are below

Care & outreach

In setting our five main priorities one indeed is to engage in spiritual renewal by providing care and nurturing for our traditional congregation as well as others. This can be done through visitation to those who can not make it in to the church, thematic study/discussion, discipleship and stewardship. Council started this with a membership mail project to renew contacts with discussions for follow up actions. We have done our best to meet traditional services such as our Sunday Services even with limited and challenged resources.

Renewed Sundays

The second key element is to renew our Services by enriching our regular worship. We have already begun this in small but noticeable ways is to increase individual participation and exploring new musical settings and our own faith. We have looked at and tried out different services to increase participation and engagement at all our services.

New Community such as The Table

The third is to start new community involvement in our neighbourhood by removing barriers be they physical, psychological or even traditional limitations via examples such as The Table Services and other less formal or traditional activities. The Table has a committed group of around ten participants and will hopefully grow as an alternative addition to traditional Sunday morning services

Ryerson Outreach

The fourth is working with Ryerson to make connections via modes such as participating in orientation week, having the church open during week, student care packages, assisting Good Food group, and Multifaith services. Pastor Dawn has already spent much time over there but these goals take time to build trust and relationships. Our linkage with the Good Food Group is already happening weekly and so many have come into our open church with many stating they walked by for years but never even came in.

Arts Based Services

The fifth is exploring Worship through arts based forums with a goal of our ministry as a tool. Part of this is to normalize entry to the church for all, becoming known in the community, having informal singing sessions with professional leadership, concerts, and at the same time providing us with a potential income source. This is yet another item already happening with a small start with our Thursday evening Sing Along sessions again with several attending regularly. In fact it not only reflects the goal of Art's based services but is also an active demonstration of new community above

So in looking at above perhaps we might look at it as being transformed not away from our faith and traditions but rather in support of those in new and realistic ways.

Property

Submitted by Dennis Miles

Building Notes from the year 2017

- All of the visible and available cracks in the outside foundation have been sealed to the best of our abilities.
- Ongoing vermin issue but under control with the help from Orkin. We plan to try and seal the south wall of the hall at the base as deep as possible when the ground thaws.
- Main furnace issue with air and heating still a problem as the job was never completed and the contractor seems to be avoiding us. He has not been paid.
- Five pews and the 2 book panels were relocated to the back hall.
- Pastor's office was arranged a little differently.
- Ongoing carpet cleaning goes on.
- Things fail things get fixed - when we hear about it.

Thank you for your patience. Some of our repair people.

David Berg, Waldemar Fischer, Oswald Holder, Kurt Walter, Dennis Miles and others.