



THE LFL-C BOARD. Here to serve:

President-Pastor Richard Juritsch

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Editor-Judy Obelnycki

Pastoral Advisor: Rev Ken Maher

Lutherans for Life-Canada Annual General Meeting with EDLYA Fall Retreat

Our 2020 Annual General Meeting was on Saturday, November 2, 2019 at Grace Lutheran Church in St. Catharines, Ontario. We did something new this year, holding it in conjunction with the Fall Retreat of the East District Lutheran Young Adults (EDLYA), which was held from Friday, November 1 to Sunday, November 3 at Grace. We provided for them a speaker for their retreat, Dr. Leah Koetting-Block, paying for her flight and lodging, while they provided us with the lunch for our AGM.

The EDLYA members joined us for a Matins service, at which our Pastoral Advisor, Rev. Ken Maher, preached. Following a brief break, we then a shared session with Dr. Leah Koetting-Block as our guest speaker. Dr. Block provided a presentation on the Christian response to physician assisted suicide and euthanasia, entitled “Misguided Mercy.” She gave us an overview of the current status of federal and provincial laws on end-of-life issues before Dr. Block delved into the Scripture’s witness on the sanctity of life. What was made very clear is that with only very rare exceptions, Medical Aid In Dying (MAID) as the federal government entitles it is not assisted suicide as overwhelmingly (in excess of 99%) the recorded cases of MAID involve a doctor or other medical personnel (not the patient) administering the does of medication intended to kill the patient. Thus what has become legal in Canada is full-blown euthanasia. What also became clear through the presentation is that people are receiving MAID not because of unbearable pain but because they do not like to lost their autonomy. Dr. Block concluded her talk with the importance of Christians providing love and care for the disabled and dying so that they are not tempted by MAID and can receive proper palliative and hospice care that seek to ensure that people die in comfort and surrounded by compassionate care, rather than killing them for the convenience of pride, family and the health system.

Following a share lunch with EDLYA, the members of LFLC held our business meeting, while Dr. Block met with the EDLYA participants for small group study of various scenarios and case studies involving the temptation for euthanasia and how Christians could be of help to those suffering or dying. The next day, Dr. Block led the group as well as members of Grace in looking at Bible passages to aid us as we care for the disabled and dying.

Our business meeting heard reports from different officers of LFLC. The President, Rev. Richard Juritsch, informed us of the work of providing displays through which we distributed educational materials at the National Youth Gathering of Lutheran Church Canada, as well as at three district conventions of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League Canada. He also informed us of the Board's ongoing work of seeking new ways to educate Lutherans and others about life issues. Secretary Glenn Kahle reported on his work and presented the minutes for the 2018 AGM, which were approved by the membership. Treasurer Alan Schmitt presented the financial report and the members appointed an auditor to review the 2019 books. By God's grace, LFLC's expenditures have kept up with the donations received. Linda Welke, the LMC Co-ordinator, reported that we continue to seek more LMCs (Life Ministry Coordinators) and some of the challenges that have faced us in respect to this. Elections were held and re-elected to the Board of Directors were Linda Welke of Good Shepherd, London, and Rev. Juritsch, Grace, St. Catharines. Newly elected to the Board was Mr. John Krim of Our Saviour, Etobicoke. For the remainder of the meeting, the membership discussed different possibilities of carrying out LFLC's mandate to educate Lutherans on life issues. The meeting concluded with Pastor Maher installing the newly elected Board members and conducting a closing devotion.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S LAPTOP
Winter, 2020

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Hebrews 12:9

Our society does not boast of weakness. We do not elect leaders whom we perceive as weak, but whom we perceive as strong, having authority and confidence. Nor in Canada do we do so much protect the weak, but the outspoken.

Hence the need for voices that speak out. We thank God for voices such as that of Dr. Leah Koetting-Block, who spoke at our Annual General Meeting and at the East District Lutheran Young Adults retreat that met at the same time and locale. We thank God that she has also spoken out at LWMLC conventions as a guest speaker. Yet she is not the only one in her family who is not hesitant to communicate regarding life issues. Her husband, Mathew Block, as editor of the Canadian Lutheran has been a proponent of speaking the truth about life.

But not everyone has those strengths. And so, we provide literature and take other opportunities to help our fellow Lutherans, not only on how to speak out, but also how to help those who, in a moment of weakness, are tempted to abort or to euthanise or to commit suicide. Can we do more? Yes, we can always do more.

Will we ever do enough? No. And hence we give thanks to God that in addition to proclaiming the sure and certain word of the law that we should not murder any human being – in the womb, the disabled, the ill or the dying, we have something more. God has given us the great Gospel of forgiveness. Jesus, God the Son, set aside His strength and became weak human being, tempted in every way in which we are tempted yet never sinned. And then He went further – He took all the sin resulting from our weakness, all our failures to speak out and yes even the sin of taking a human life, whether baby or senior or anyone in between, and paid for it. And so we support Word of Hope who through the phone lines brings counselling to those struggling with the hurt and sin of an abortion

taking place. We care for those who in the face of the loss of autonomy that comes with various illnesses and disabilities, with God's forgiveness for their despair and lack of trust, and yes, also for the doctors and nurses who misguidedly have offered and assisted with euthanasia.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I pray that what God has guided our various contributors to write will strengthen you, when you are weak and in turn, enable you to share with others the same comfort you have first received from our dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

May God bless you in this season of celebrating God becoming flesh for us.

Yours in Christ, Rev. Richard Juritsch

FROM THE PASTORAL ADVISOR'S PEN

The diagnosis was bone cancer. A terrible fate that would strike fear into the hearts of the bravest souls. Yet she took it in stride. And our church family strode with her to the very end. Care and compassion through the months of failing health. Visits and conversation and singing whether she was in or out of the hospital at the time. And when she was admitted for the final time, the women of the church took it upon themselves to be a round-the-clock support for her. For two weeks straight there was not a moment when this woman was not dignified by the love and companionship of her beloved church family. Years later I still hear from the nurses at the hospital who were so powerfully moved by the love they witnessed in that hospital room over those days.

At the end I was also blessed by God to witness His love for her as she drew her last laboured breath and was taken from this veil of tears to the blessings of her promised rest. In the days leading up to the end we had plenty of time to struggle with what it all meant, this dear saint and me. But both of us in that room at the end knew something that the world around us can't see without help. Such endings are truly only the beginning, and every human life is dignified not just by what it once was, but also by what will one day be ... in Christ's love.

When I left her too quiet hospital room that day I wrote the following ... for her ... for me ... and maybe also for you ...

For Dorothy

"I can't believe it!" the nurse says as she walks into the room. "I was here on Sunday and thought then that she was done. But here we are three days later!"

Yes, here we are. In that same small room. Waiting ... Waiting for another dose, another bolus, another turn, another in a long line of little adjustments meant to bring some measure of comfort in a time of terrible suffering.

But there is little comfort, even for all this care. Not for those gathered around, anyway. For as surely as the caring hand will not leave her weakened shoulder, the hand of death will not be stayed forever. With each diminishing breath we can see that it is coming. 'But why will it not come?' the heart silently cries out. 'Where is the relief?'

"I can't believe it!" the man says as he walks down the road. "We had thought He was the Messiah ... but then He died. A horrible death. An agony of humiliation and stolen breath. And now it is the third day."

"The words of comfort, the way He brought healing and relief in the midst of suffering, the joy and the hope ... it is all gone now." "Why did it happen?" his heart silently cries out. "Why did it come to an end so soon – too soon?"

But the stranger only gives a knowing smile in answer. And there is silence as they walk together for the span of a few paces. Then placing a nail-scarred hand upon the bent and grieving shoulder, the man draws in a long, sweet, breath and begins to tell the travellers of the mysteries of death and of life, grief and joy, and of all that is still down the road ... still waiting when we finally get home ...

As we seek to uphold the sanctity of life in a world dying from sin one thing we need is hope. Hope restores our joy. Hope strengthens us for the task at hand. Hope feeds the love in our hearts. And hope will keep us secure in the darkest of times. And from where does our hope come? Why the Lord of all hopefulness! Join us over the course of four devotions as we trace our cause for hope throughout our days and our life, firmly given and blessed in Jesus Christ our Hope!

Rev Ken Maher

All Hopefulness .. Devotion

Read Psalm 121

²My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. ³He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

As the fires of youth turn into the glowing embers of middle age something magnificent and unexpected happens. The heat doesn't go away, but it is transformed into something arguably even more powerful. The passion that once sought to change the world is itself changed into something even more powerful ... a growing sense of compassion that seeks to heal individual people hurt by this world.

As a person grows older they begin to find, much to their amazement, that the more people are drawn into their lives and families, the broader their communities become, the greater and the deeper the love that grows in their hearts. Maybe it is because we've been there ourselves. Maybe it is because when we needed help someone was moved to be gracious to us. Maybe we simply begin to treasure the warmth of home and family and the friends we have been blessed with. Very few of us will ever be able to change the world, but we all change the lives of those around us, and sometimes all it takes is a warm welcome, a loving embrace, words of forgiveness and a safe place of shelter from the troubles of this turbulent life.

We can open our hearts and our homes in the hope of changing other's lives because God has given us hope when we needed it most. Time and again we have seen first-hand that love and compassion for us in Jesus. Time and again He has sent others into our lives with warmth and welcome, wisdom and forgiveness to see us through our troubles. And ever hopeful in that heavenly embrace, in our heavenly family ... we can now spread that reassuring warmth of love to those who are struggling in a

harsh and unloving world. We can bring that compassion to those struggling with the cold dread of a shattered and lonely life. We can watch out for those who do not know how to look out for themselves.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What are some of the ways in which God has shown His love and care for you in the past? How might things have turned out differently if God had not been protecting you?
2. Think of all the people for whom you serve as a keeper. Who do you watch over? Who do you pray for, care for, uplift and support? Who else could you gather into this group?
3. How does having a sure and certain hope in a God who loves and cares for us no matter where and no matter when, help us, in turn, to open our hearts and homes in kindness to others?

Prayer:

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace, Your hands swift to welcome, Your arms to embrace: Be there at our homing, and give us we pray, Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
[Lutheran Service Book #738:3]

Rev. Ken Maher

**COMING SOON: MARCH FOR LIFE ON MAY 14, 2020
PARLIAMENT HILL, OTTAWA. Details to follow.
as soon as they become available.**

THE DATE OF THE NEXT LFL-C ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IS TENTATIVELY SET FOR NOVEMBER 7TH, 2020. Details to be confirmed as soon as they become available.

Please consider supporting Lutherans for Life-Canada through your prayers and making a financial contribution, or becoming a member. You are then placed on our mailing list and will receive our newsletters.

If for some reason you would rather not receive a newsletter or you would prefer to receive this letter via email rather than Canada Post please indicate this to the treasurer when you submit your contribution.

(The following originated from the Facebook page of Lutherans For Life in the U.S.)

Our Almighty Maker paints a bigger picture than one moment can behold.

The God who gives you Jesus Christ plans further than you can perceive.

Every life has an important place, from fertilization to final breath.

The sorrows belong to Him as much as the celebrations.

He creates each human being in His image, at every age and every stage.

He redeems the whole race by His incarnation, whatever our appearances or abilities.

He calls us that all might endure forever as His own precious treasures in everlasting family, no matter our origins, experiences, or durations.

His gracious reigning even incorporates surprise pregnancies and terminal diagnoses.

Our Savior's coming in human nature proclaims and performs the sanctity of human life.

We have the privilege to courageously declare and compassionately demonstrate the same: Life Is Never a Sentence. Life Is Always a Whole Story!



For those who have had an abortion- there is a **Word of Hope** for broken hearts. Call 888.217.8679 or go to www.word-ofhope.org. **Word of Hope** is confidential and caring.

Word of Hope is a ministry of Lutherans for Life-Canada.

LFL-C WEBSITE. Please check it out at: www.lutheransforlife-canada.ca.

LFL-C has a Facebook page. Just type in Lutherans for Life-Canada on your Fb search bar or Google it.

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE-CANADA, IS A MINISTRY AND A LISTED SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF LUTHERAN CHURCH CANADA.

Please continue to keep this ministry of Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life, in your prayers.



Lutheran Foundation Canada

REFLECTING GOD'S GRACE

Have you considered leaving a planned gift within your estate to support the work of Lutherans for Life - Canada? Are you passionate about the work they do? Have you considered how even a small percentage of your estate would allow this vital work to continue? Lutheran Foundation Canada, an organization of LCC, assists individuals who are considering a planned gift, but are unsure of how best to create the gift. Coupled with other gifts you might leave to your home congregation or others, these combined gifts can generate significant tax savings. Call Lutheran Foundation Canada to find out how, at 877-711-4438 or visit our web site at www.lutheranfoundation.ca. Plan. Make a difference, for your loved ones, and the ministries you value.

WE GIVE THANKS FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND GIFTS

Memberships, Membership Renewals and/or Donors to LFLC from September 1, 2019 to November 30, 2019

Rev. Robert and Berte Bruer
Rev. Ken Maher
Rev. Robert Clifford
Herta Lightfoot
Rev Mark and Helga Danielson
Richard Lockstadt
Rev. Ted Derer
LWML - C, Assiniboine Zone
Rev. Richard and Rosanne Frey
Tony Marchand
James and Donna Gash
Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Toronto, ON
Rev. Richard Juritsch

Fran Porteous
Glenn and Lesley Kahle
Donna Prusha
Robert Klages
Rev. Les and Maxine Prusha
Tracey Klages
Cliff and Nicole Pyle
Roger and Maureen Kleebaum
Rev. Kevin Walrath
John Krim
Patricia and Terry Wirth
Margaret Bylund-Mairs
Don Wolfe

Memorials and/or In Honour to LFLC from September 1, 2019 to November 30, 2019
Jane Ryan

Lutherans For Life - Canada



Yes, I would like to make a gift offering to **Lutherans for Life - Canada** to assist with the witness to the sanctity of all human life through education based on the Word of God.

MEMBERSHIP \$

DONATION \$

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: *(Please complete)*

Please make cheque Payable to Lutherans for Life - Canada, 75 Blackthorne Cres., London, ON N6J 4B3

Membership: \$15/Person per Year _____ \$30/Family per Year _____ \$50/Group per Year _____

Please send this form with cheque to:
Lutherans for Life-Canada
C/o Mr. Alan Schmitt, Treasurer
75 Blackthorne Crescent
London ON N6J 4B3

Eight Objectives of the LFL-C are:

1. To provide an organization through which Lutheran Christians can unite to share dialogue and give common witness within the Church and society to their concern for the value and dignity of all human life;
2. To strengthen the existing common bond of concern by bringing Lutherans of like mind into contact with one another;
3. To gather and share pertinent information with its membership and develop strategies for witness and response;
4. To develop and distribute educational materials based upon the Word of God;
5. To identify resource people who can write and speak on behalf of the organization;
6. To monitor public and private action in order to enhance the right to life;
7. To respond to and co-operate with other groups in society who share similar concerns; and
8. To examine and correct popular but misleading stereotypes regarding pro-life advocacy.

To contact LFL-C please email us at:
info@lutheransforlife-canada.ca

To order Prolife materials;
Concordia Publishing House – www.cph.org