



NEWSLETTER – SUMMER/FALL EDITION 2017

THE LFL-C BOARD. as of AGMeeting Nov. 21st, 2016, Here to serve

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LMC Coordinator-Linda Welke

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Pastoral Advisor: Pastor Basil Christi

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN (Actually, His Laptop)

We have been blessed over the life of Lutherans For Life Canada, to have had presidents with a passion for all life issues: abortion, stem cell research, chastity, euthanasia and more. Rev. Dr. Glen Schaeffer, Rev. Ron Mohr, and Mr. Cliff Pyle, continue in varied ways to support and speak up for life from the womb to the tomb. I pray that God would grant me the gifts to follow in their footsteps.

And I pray that God would grant each of you the opportunities to share the message of life with our fellow Lutherans here in Canada, and, frankly, with anyone who will stop to listen and learn. I encourage each of our members to keep their eyes open as see their siblings in Christ Sunday morning for those whom they can encourage regarding life issues. Our youth and young adults are often the most passionate supporters of life issues and the most willing to learn, so that they can share the truth about the sanctity of life, from its very beginnings at conception, to the very last breath that is taken in the atmosphere of this old earth.

We are always looking for Life Ministry Co-ordinators (LMCs). What is an LMC? It is someone who wants to pass on information. Some do so, by speaking to individuals in the congregation. Others offer to speak to groups. Many simply do that important work of making sure tracts and booklets about life issues are available in the narthex or the congregational library for people to take home and read on their own and thus better informed and prepared to work for the preservation and respect due all human life, from the baby in the womb to those with various physical and mental challenges to those who are in the last days of life. I encourage everyone who reads this to prayerfully consider whether they could be an LMC, or someone they know in the congregation, and send an email to our LMC co-ordinator, Linda Welke, at linda.welke@gmail.com, or, if computers aren't your thing, call me at (905)359-4109 and I'll get you in contact with her.

God's richest blessings to you as you enjoy His wonderful gift of life.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Richard Juritsch
President, Lutherans For Life Canada

A TRIBUTE TO MARIAN OBEDA

In the 2017 Winter Edition newsletter, mention was made of the retirement of Marian Obeda, from the LFL-C Board. The Board made the decision, at a subsequent meeting, to recognize the great contribution and service for the ten years Marian gave to Lutherans for Life-Canada. Alan Schmitt, on behalf of the LFL-C Board, had the honour of thanking Marian for her dedicated service.

Pastor Juritsch, president, forwarded a letter for the occasion. He wrote; "Whether marching in the March for Life in Ottawa in front of the parliament buildings, holding a sign for the Life Chain or speaking with people at a convention as you looked after the Lutherans for Life - Canada booth, God gave evidence of this passion for life through you. Your commitment to life has also been borne out in your service on the Board of Directors of Lutherans for Life - Canada since it's founding. God has richly blessed us through you, and I pray, that he has blessed you as much through your fellow members of Lutherans for Life - Canada".

In recognition of Marian's contribution to the Lutheran pro-life movement a donation has been made in her name to the Jean Garton Memorial Fund for Lutherans for Life USA, our mother organization. Dr. Garton was one of the founders of the pro-life movement among Lutherans. Marian was also presented with a beautiful plaque titled, "Here We Stand" which recognizes the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation Martin Luther started and which we are celebrating this year. Each of the eleven sentences on this plaque begins with 'Here We Stand'. These three were highlighted: 'Here We Stand to declare and defend the precious value of every human being; Here We Stand with you and for you wherever you are, wherever you've been, wherever your going; Here We Stand for anyone vulnerable or a victim of violence against life --as Gospel motivated voices for Life'.

As Alan stated at the presentation and all would agree with; "Marian, it can be truly said that you are a faithful, willing, outstanding servant of God and for that we all give thanks to you and to our Lord. Thank you, thank you and many more blessings from God to you".

Delivered and presented on Sunday after service at Faith Lutheran Church, London, ON by Linda Welke, Adrian Rhodes and Alan Schmitt.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARCH FOR LIFE, MAY 2017, Parliament Hill, Ottawa

Around 25 Lutherans were involved at the March for Life on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, May 11, including around 8 youth, one from Kitchener, 4 from London, one from Montreal and two from Pembroke. Pastors attending were Revs. Juritsch, Hart, Detlefsen, Alles, St. Onge, Williams, Lockstadt, Stanfel, Koehler and Pollex. There were also ladies from B.C. (they flew in), as well as other laymen and women from Toronto, Poltimore and London. So we had representation from B.C. to Montreal and places in between.

St. Luke Lutheran, Ottawa, provided overnight accommodation on Wednesday, and Anne Taylor had breakfast ready on Thursday and the materials for sack lunches, all of which were provided by an anonymous member who wanted no reimbursement.

Pastor Juritsch led a preparatory devotion at the church before we walked to Parliament Hill, eating our sack lunches in the park along the way. We networked with a number of people, including Alex Schadenburg, director of Euthanasia Prevention Coalition who was doing a count of the attendees, as well as a director of 40 days for Life, and an Eastern Orthodox young adult who was interested in our Lutheran theological positions on life issues. Many people took pictures of our Lutherans for Life sign. (Check out the Campaign Life Coalition Official Site with the heading "Photos from 2017 March for Life," for our sign in photos 3,4 and 24)

The March was a good witness for the sanctity of life, and the reality that the issue of abortion is not settled in our nation as the politicians would like to have us believe. This March is the largest annual demonstration on Parliament Hill, gathering around 20,000 every

year. With the difficulty that our youth have getting off school and work or traveling to Ottawa and seeing the pastors and other adults who encouraged them, we were pleased with the turnout, and praise God for the continued concern for life from conception to natural death of Lutheran's across our nation.

Pastor Paul Pollex, Advisor, East District Youth Committee

THREE GOOD DEATHS

With physician assisted suicide, or as the government has mislabelled and sugar-coated it, "medical assistance in dying," the euthanasia debate is back in the public forum. Euthanasia comes from the Greek for "good death." But what is a good death? The secular world debates about quality of life as compared to quantity of life. For the Christian, it is not a question of quantity or quality of life, but of faith, faith in God our Father who made us, God the Son who redeemed us, and God the Holy Spirit who brings us to faith. In Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, we are taught concerning the final petition of the Lord's Prayer, "but deliver us from evil": "What does this mean? We pray in this petition in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputations, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end and graciously take us from this valley of sorrows to Himself in heaven." I share with you three good deaths, where our heavenly Father granted a blessed end to my father, Frank, my mother, Lydia, and my wife, Lois.

St. Matthew 10:32 [ESV]

*So everyone who acknowledges me before men,
I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven.*

About Easter of 1994, I received a phone call from my mother, letting me know that my father had collapsed at home. My father was rushed to the hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery to remove about ninety percent of his stomach, which had been consumed by a cancer that had ruptured. After chemotherapy proved too much for him, radiation therapy helped keep his cancer in check, so that he was able to remain at home for the last year and a bit of his life. It was not an easy time for him. He was on a morphine pump for the last months of his life and went from being a hale and hearty 6' tall cabinetmaker, who always maintained a healthy weight of 180 lbs, give or take two pounds, to a man who at 61 years of age, looked more like a very sick man in his eighties and may have weighed a hundred pounds. One of the last pictures we have of dad, is him standing beside mom, and, such was the toll of his cancer, that his bent over figure was shorter than her 5' 3" frame.

My father was not one to speak much about his faith. He faithfully served many years on church council at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kitchener. As long as he was able, he attended services every Sunday. At one of my last visits, he, mom and I were blessed to receive Christ's body and blood under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. William Mundt, their pastor. But, as I said, dad was not one to speak much about his faith. He had left the Roman Catholic Church when he started dating mom, when most of their dates were at outings of the Bethel youth group – a rather broadly defined group of recent German immigrants in their teens and twenties. Behind mom's back, he went to Pastor Pruefer and received instruction and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith before they were married. As he put it: what he heard in the Lutheran church was what he believed, not what had been drilled into him by the priests in Austria.

On one of the last occasions that my father was strong enough to go out of the house, we visited close friends two houses down from their home. As we went, dad turned to me and said: "Rick, I know you are concerned about my faith. Don't worry. If I can live longer in this world, I would like to. But if the good Lord wants me to die, I am fine with that. Jesus has looked after me all my life and He will keep looking after me after I die." When my father died a few weeks later, and in

the twenty years since then, those words come back as a wonderful balm to my soul, as I miss him. Through Jesus, we will see each other again. Faith confessed shows a good death.

Proverbs 22:6 [ESV]

Train up a child in the way he should go even when he is old he will not depart from it.

My mother also died at the age of 61 of cancer. In her case it was kidney cancer. When we went to the oncologist after she was diagnosed to discuss treatment, he said that, if a person has to get a cancer, kidney cancer is one of the “best” ones to get, because, in ninety percent of the cases, once the kidney is removed, no further treatment is necessary. The person does just fine on one kidney, with cancer in the other kidney being a rather infrequent occurrence. Of course, my mom, had to be one of the ten percent. She often was the exception.

It is the rare mother, who as she is driving to choir with her sixteen year old son, asks: “So, what do you know about masturbation and Christians?” After I picked my jaw up off the floor, we talked about sex and faith on the way to choir and back home again. Thankfully, I had a break during choir, since she sat with the sopranos and I with the basses. For mom, her faith had always been a part of her life. Dad, had experienced a seven year break with any church attendance, when he first came to Canada, until he started dating mom. Mom had grown up in a family where church and home were simply interwoven. Her father directed the brass choirs in Poland and then Germany and finally at Bethel in Kitchener before he died. At home, mom, her parents and her sister and brothers regularly sang hymns in four part harmony as part of their family life. Mom’s dating life was largely in the context of the youth group. She positively glowed when she told me how dad surprised her by becoming a Lutheran, and so her family life interwoven with church could continue.

To be honest, I can’t remember a particular conversation with mom about faith, after her cancer metastasised to her aorta, pretty much a guaranteed death sentence. Our conversations continued with that mix of faith and daily life, as, despite her reduced energy, she tried to continue her life at home and church. Thankfully, unlike dad, she experienced no pain until the discomfort that came with the shutting down of her organs in her last few days of life. We didn’t know how quickly her cancer had spread until a Friday afternoon, when she went to the hospital for a weekend stay, to provide my youngest brother who was still at home a bit of a caregiver respite suggested by their family doctor. That evening, my wife called me at a youth retreat east of Toronto to inform me the cancer had spread throughout her body. Lois and our one year old daughter visited Oma Saturday, so mom enjoyed the company of her granddaughter. Leaving late Saturday from the retreat, I went home to Mississauga, and after concluding the service Sunday morning, we headed to Kitchener. By then, mom had lapsed into a coma. My brothers had been with mom through the night and so I spent the afternoon with her, while my wife took our daughter to stay with her parents.

Growing up, each of her three boys took turns doing dishes with mom. When I washed dishes with mom, when she wasn’t making me do mental arithmetic, we were singing. I would teach her songs I had learned in music class or glee club or Sunday School, and she in turn taught me the songs from when she grew up in Poland, Germany and finally Canada. On more than one occasion she remarked that she wished that we would sing Easter hymns as much as we sing Christmas carols. As much as she loved the Christmas carols, the Easter hymns, the hymns of the resurrection, were her favourites. So that afternoon, as she lay in a coma, I read Scripture passages to her and sang every Easter hymn I could out of Lutheran Worship. I was also kicking myself that I had not brought along the old Missouri Synod German hymnal, with which I had grown up. That night, shortly after my middle brother, Martin, stayed to spend the night with mom, so Frank, the youngest, and I could get some sleep, mom died. For her committal service, Rev. Dr. Mundt, chose several verses of “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” to be sung at the graveside. Holding my daughter in my arms, as we sang

those wonderful verses of promise, joy filled my being and hope and peace flooded my heart. Mom's death was a good death, surrounded by Christ's victory over death and the grave.

Philippians 2:3-5 [ESV]

*Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.*

On her birthday, Easter Sunday, my wife, Lois, noticed a lump in her breast. Easter Monday she told me, and with a history of breast cancer in her family, Tuesday morning we called our family doctor. He saw her that morning, had her getting tests that afternoon and an appointment with a surgeon with a few days. A lumpectomy removed the tumour and cancer was discovered in several nearby lymph nodes. A year of chemotherapy and radiation therapy followed. Physically it was hard, with regular hospitalizations because both her white and red blood cells would plummet, often resulting in infections her body was hard pressed to battle. Thankfully, due to our less than auspicious bank account, a special fund of a pharmaceutical company made it possible to get special injections that, even with worker benefits, would have cost us out of pocket \$2000 every few weeks. Without the injections it would have been unsafe, even impossible for her to undergo the treatments, but OHIP would not cover it. And yet, Lois, while we were in the waiting room would ache for those people whom we heard nurses tell that they couldn't have treatment that day because their blood counts were too low. As she sat in the chemo chair, she would look at others and she – who barely had the energy to get from the car to the oncology suite, much less the energy to care for her seven year old daughter, the way she wanted – would ache from them in their pain.

The treatments, along with ongoing oral medication, put the cancer in abeyance for five years. Then increasing pains in her back that we were worried might have been symptoms of a heart attack, actually revealed that her cancer had metastasised to her spinal cord and liver in locations that made surgery out of the question. Our oncologist, having treated Lois five years earlier, and aware of Lois' preference to hear the truth, made it clear that palliative rather than curative treatment would be pursued. Only after Lois pressed for it, explaining that she wanted to prepare things for her husband and daughter before she died, did the oncologist say that the median life expectancy in Lois' circumstances, with treatment, was ten to fourteen months. Without treatment it was much shorter.

Fifteen months later, two days after her forty-fifth birthday, the Lord took Lois into His arms to await the resurrection of the dead. Several times during that time, I asked her if she was afraid. Each time, she said no. She thought she would be, but death itself did not frighten her. She was more worried about how I and Katie would manage without her common sense, something she regularly accused us of having in short supply. Over those months she organized our files and acquainted me (a Luddite by nature) with her computerized system of dealing with banking, bills and taxes. She talked with our daughter and talked with friends in our congregation asking them to keep an eye on their pastor and his daughter after she passed. At her birthday party that we celebrated a week early, with her parents and our siblings and families, she spent a bit of time with each one of them in private conversation. Tears were shed and laughter was shared. After the party, she acknowledged that this was one of those rare times when my stubborn insistence on the get together had been the right thing to do.

Although Lois was prepared for death, she was not rushing towards it. During several hospitalizations, she found herself upset with medical staff who were really pushing for a "do not resuscitate" notice on her file, which she did not want. Only as she grew weaker and made the decision that she wanted to die in hospice and not at home, did she, less than a week before her death, give permission for a DNR note on her file. Why did she want to die in the hospice facility,

rather than at home? She wanted our fourteen year old daughter Katie to have her home as a refuge from her mom's dying and a place of peace. It was the day before her intake interview and anticipated entry into hospice, that she rapidly deteriorated and left this life. Pastor Gary Kuenzel of Christ Lutheran Church in St. Catharines, who lived nearby, provided pastoral care.

At her funeral, Pastor David Hamp, our circuit counsellor at the time, chose as the closing hymn, Lois' favourite, "Lift High the Cross." Katie and I smiled and leaned against each other, and, as had been my custom when Katie was a toddler and we sang this hymn in family devotions, I traced the sign of the cross on her forehead as we sang verse three: "All newborn soldiers of the Crucified bear on their brows the seal of Him who died." I rejoiced that Lois had received a good death, proclaiming the love of Christ as she placed her love for others above herself.

Romans 14:8 [ESV]

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.

So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Contrary to the world's thinking a good death is not a death free from pain or even free from fear. To claim the right to determine the time and manner of our death is the pinnacle of hubris, and more than a transgression against the fifth commandment, it is a breaking of the first commandment as we put ourselves in the place of God. Our Lord suffered an agonizing death on the cross to pay for your sins and mine and to open the gates to a life of eternal joy in the new heaven and the new earth. A good death is a death died in faith in Christ. All other deaths lead to hell.

Pastor Richard Juritsch

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Word of Hope is a ministry of Lutherans For Life



PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US AT THE NEXT LFL-C AGM

WHEN: Saturday Nov. 4th, 2017

**WHERE: Grace Lutheran, 213 Linwell Rd,
St. Catharines, ON**

GUEST PREACHER: Rev. Dr. John Stephenson

**PRESENTERS: Rev. Parry and Tara Hart on the
Blessings and Challenges of a Special Needs Child**

REGISTRATION: 9:00 A.M. WITH \$15.00 FEE (includes lunch)

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.

Your financial support is greatly appreciated.
Please continue to keep this ministry of Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life, in your prayers.

WE GIVE THANKS for your gifts

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Lutheran Church Canada, East District

Historic St. Paul's Ladies Guild

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 please indicate this to the treasurer when you submit your contribution.

Membership and Donation Form
(Please print)

Name: _____

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*Annual Membership: \$15.00/year
Further donations gratefully accepted.*

Amount enclosed: _____

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 Pro-life materials;
Concordia Publishing House - www.cph.org