Messiah Lutheran Church, Prince Albert

CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT

2025

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Bishop's Letter to Congregations, Lay and Rostered Leaders of the Saskatchewan Synod gathered at Annual General Meetings

December 1, 2025

Dear sisters, brothers, siblings in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As you prepare for your Annual General Meetings, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to every congregation, every pastor and deacon, every council chair, and all members of our Saskatchewan Synod family. Thank you for your dedication, your commitment, and the deep faith and faithfulness you continue to show in these challenging and ever-changing times. Your ministry in your communities, your care for one another, and your steadfast witness to the Gospel are gifts to the whole church.

As we look ahead to a new year of ministry, I encourage each congregation to make intentional room in your budget for strong synodical benevolence. Your benevolence contributions support the mission we share together across the province and beyond. Benevolence contributions by each congregation are part of our expectations of each other, that we would support the work of the church at the synodical level. They strengthen our capacity to equip leaders, accompany congregations, resource ministries, and participate in the work of our wider church. Your generosity truly makes a difference.

I am also pleased to share that starting January 1, 2026 we will be launching a new synod-wide strategy for children's ministry, youth ministry, and young adult ministry. This initiative has been shaped by the many conversations and longings expressed across our synod. Its purpose is simple: to support you, as you nurture the faith of young people, create spaces of belonging, and form the next generation of disciples. Resources, training opportunities, and ongoing accompaniment will be made available to congregations throughout the year.

As we step into this season with hope, I encourage each congregation to continue growing in a life of worship, prayer, discipleship, and stewardship. Rooted in prayer, we listen for God's leading. Through discipleship, we deepen our walk with Christ. Through stewardship, we respond with gratitude, giving generously so that ministry may flourish in the congregation and in every corner of our synod.
Thank you for the many ways you embody the Gospel. Thank you for your partnership, your leadership, and your trust. May the Holy Spirit strengthen you for the work ahead and fill your congregation with renewed vision and joy.

Abundant blessings in Christ,

Rev. Dr. Ali Tote
Bishop, Saskatchewan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

SASKATCHEWAN SYNOD ELCIC
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Messiah Lutheran Church
Annual General Meeting
Agenda
June 21, 2026

Mission

Through the hearing and sharing of God's Word, we, as a worshiping community, encourage a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In faith we reach out with Christ-like caring for the community and the world in which we live.

1 Call to Order and Introductory Remarks

2 Adoption of Agenda

3 Approval of Minutes - 2024 AGM of March 9, 2025
- Congregational Meeting of February 1, 2026

4 Business Arising

5 Reports
- 5.1 Council
- 5.2 Pastor
- 5.3 Financial
  - 5.3.1 2025 Financial Statement
  - 5.3.2 2025 Internal Financial Review Report
  - 5.3.3 Envelope Secretary
  - 5.3.4 2026 Internal Review Recommendation
- 5.4 Worship Ministry Team
  - 5.4.1 Altar Guild
- 5.5 Caring Ministry & Community Service Ministry Team
- 5.6 Education Ministry Team
- 5.7 Property Maintenance Ministry Team
- 5.8 Messiah Fellowship Group

6 Elections
- 6.1 Messiah Council
- 6.2 Nominating Committee

7 New Business

8 Adjournment & Closing Devotions

Messiah Lutheran Church
Annual General Meeting
Minutes
March 9, 2025

Messiah's Mission
Through the hearing and sharing of God's Word, we, as a worshiping community, encourage a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In faith we reach out with Christ-like caring for the community and the world in which we live.

1 Call to Order and Introductory Remarks

Chairperson Cheryl Bauer Hyde called the AGM to order at 12:30pm. A total of 23 members and 5 guests signed the attendance sheet. Cheryl introduced the members of Council; Pastor John Mayer Dut; administrative assistant Lisa Haight; financial officers Garry Reinhardt and Harvey Jacobsen; LutherCare Communities representative, Gabe Lafond, Richard Lungal, and Dennis Serfas.

2 Opening Devotions

The land acknowledgment was led by Cheryl. Pastor John read the prayer followed by the opening reading from 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Colleen Bowen led the singing of hymn 650 followed by Cheryl reading litany of prayers.

3 Adoption of Agenda

Motion: Moved by Jean Meyers, seconded by Wayne Hyde, to adopt the agenda as presented. **Carried.**

4 Approval of AGM Minutes – April 28, 2024

Motion: Moved by Colleen Bowen, seconded by Hazel Schultz, to accept the minutes as circulated. **Carried.**

4.1 Business Arising: None

5 Reports

5.1 Council

Cheryl reviewed the Council Report, highlighting discussions regarding partnership opportunities which have taken place over the past few months specifically as it relates to LutherCare Communities Saskatoon. These discussions were prompted by Bishop Ali, and have involved LutherCare Staff and Board. With recent support from the LutherCare Board for discussions to proceed, the Messiah Council is presenting the information to our membership.

Gabe Lafond, LutherCare CEO, provided an overview of LutherCare Communities, which was established in 1955. The organization provides housing for independent living, personal and long-term care, and group homes. LutherCare partners with government, the ELCIC Sask Synod, and congregations, and sees value in a potential arrangement with Messiah Lutheran.

Dennis Serfas spoke on behalf of the LutherCare Board, and the concept of developing housing in conjunction with the Messiah building if the congregation supports Council to continue discussions with LutherCare. Gabe, Richard and Dennis left the meeting.

There was discussion regarding the process which have occurred between Council and LutherCare representatives. This opportunity provides the potential for continued Messiah ministry.

Motion: Moved by Harvey Jacobsen, seconded by Lois Manchur, that Council be authorized to continue discussions regarding a possible partnership with LutherCare Communities Saskatoon. **Carried.**

5.2 Pastor
Pastor John reviewed his report and ministry at Messiah. Although the way forward may be difficult and need hard work, it is also an exciting time and we can do it! He thanked and expressed appreciation to the Messiah Community for sharing the God of grace.
There was a question about what church leaders are doing to communicate concerns about the US political situation, and the impact on Ukraine and world issues. The worldwide church has been virtually silent in the face of recent developments. We will communicate these concerns to Bishop Ali at the Sask Synod.

5.3 Financial

5.3.1 2024 Financial Statements – presented by Garry Reinhart
Motion: Moved by Wayne Manchur, seconded by Wayne Hyde, to approve the 2024 Financial Statements as presented. **Carried.**

5.3.2 2024 Internal Financial Review Report – presented by Garry Reinhart
Motion: Moved by Bryon Bender, seconded by Joy Weinberger, to accept the report as presented. **Carried**

5.3.3 Envelope Secretary report – accepted as circulated.

5.3.4 2024 Budget – presented by Garry Reinhart
Motion: Moved by Lois Manchur, seconded by Byron Bender, to accept the budget as presented. **Carried.**

5.3 5 2025 Internal Review Recommendation – presented by Cheryl.
Motion: Moved by Colleen Bowen, seconded by Jean Meyers, that Messiah Lutheran Church dispenses with the appointment of an auditor pursuant to the provisions of s. 151 of the Non-Profit Corporations Act of the province of Saskatchewan for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2025. **Carried.**

5.4 Worship Ministry Team – circulated in the annual report**.**

5.4.1 Altar Guild – included in the ministry team report**.**

5.5 Caring Ministry & Community Service Ministry Team
This report includes the Stephen ministry report. We will be circulating the 'Share Your Gifts' form which includes planning initiatives from 2024.

5.6 Education Ministry Team – is included in Pastor John's report.

5.7 Property Maintenance Ministry Team – included in report.

5.8 Messiah Lutheran Women (MLW) – included in report.

5.9 Men's Breakfast Group – included in report.

Motion: Moved by Wayne Hyde, seconded by Linda Moriarty, that the reports be accepted as circulated**. Carried**

6 Elections

6.1 Messiah Council

The list of current council members includes Cheryl Bauer Hyde and Merv Bender whose terms expire in 2025; Corrine Amyotte, Joy Weinberger and David Bragg, whose terms expire in 2026; and Byron Bender whose terms expires in 2027.
David Bragg called for nominations three times – nominated are Cheryl Bauer Hyde, Merv Bender, and Wayne Manchur.
Motion: Moved by Jean Meyers, seconded by Colleen Bowen, that nominations cease. **Carried**.
Cheryl Bauer Hyde, Merv Bender, and Wayne Manchur were declared elected by acclamation for three year terms.

6.2 Nominating Committee

There were no nominations. Council will be responsible for Nominations for the 2025 AGM in 2026.

8 New Business – there was further discussion and questions regarding the LutherCare Communities opportunity. It was clarified that the congregation has agreed that Messiah Council should continue discussions with LutherCare.

9 Closing Devotions – led by Pastor John (singing by Colleen) at 2:40pm.

List of members attending the 2024 AGM

Cheryl Bauer Hyde	Arlene Wagner	Harvey Jacobsen
David Bragg	Byron Bender	Audrey Johnson
Corrine Amyotte	Craig Finnestad	Dennis Serfas
Hazel Schultz	Janice Dubray	Lisa Haight
Joy Weinberger	Olga Routley	Linda Moriarty
John Mayer Dut	Colleen Bowen	Jean Meyers
Wayne Hyde	Lois Manchur	Wayne Manchur
Garry Reinhardt	Louise Fornal	

Guests: Karen Routley, Dennis Nowoselsky, May Janzen, Gabe Lafond, Richard Lungal

Messiah Lutheran Church
Congregational Meeting
Minutes
February 1, 2026

Messiah's Mission
Through the hearing and sharing of God's Word, we, as a worshiping community, encourage a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In faith we reach out with Christ-like caring for the community and the world in which we live.

1 Call to Order – 11:30am

Chairperson Cheryl Bauer Hyde called the meeting to order and presented a brief summary of the motion. A copy of the information document dated January 26, 2026, is attached and forms part of these minutes. Several questions about the possible lease were raised. Harvey spoke to Messiah's current financial situation.

2 LutherCare Communities Agreement Of Purchase and Sale;

Moved: May Jansen; Seconded: Betty Haugen: That, as recommended by the Messiah Council, the Messiah congregation approve the offer of purchase from Lutheran Sunset Home of Saskatoon in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000.00), and further that Cheryl Bauer Hyde and Mervin Bender be authorized to sign the agreement of purchase and sale. Carried unanimously!!!

The meeting closed with the Lord's prayer (11:50am)

Members recorded in attendance:

Keith Amyotte
Cheryl Bauer Hyde
Byron Bender
Merv Bender
Colleen Bowen
David Bragg
Janice Dubray
Rev. John Mayer Dut
Craig Finnestad
Louise Fornal
Gordon Fossen
Helen Fossen
Joy Gjesdal
Lisa Haight
Betty Haugen
Ken Haugen
Wayne Hyde
Harvey Jacobsen
May Jansen
Iris Jones
Jack Jones
Audrey Johnson
Wayne Manchur
Lois Manchur
Imani Mara
Linda Moriarty
Olga Routley
Hazel Schultz
Beverly Skotheim

Attachment to the Messiah Congregation Meeting – February 1, 2026

January 25, 2026

Messiah Members:

A congregational meeting will be held on February 1, 2026, to consider and approve signing the **Agreement Of Purchase and Sale;**

Among: Lutheran Sunset Home of Saskatoon (The "**Purchaser**" **known as LutherCare Communities) And: Messiah Lutheran Church** (The "**Vendor**")

The Purchaser offers to purchase from the Vendor and the Vendor agrees to sell to the Purchaser, the land and buildings at the property located at 1796 15 Avenue East,
Prince Albert.

Purchase Price
In consideration the Purchaser shall pay to the Vendor a purchase price of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000.00).

Recommended Motion
That, as recommended by the Messiah Council, the Messiah congregation approve the offer of purchase from Lutheran Sunset Home of Saskatoon in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000.00), and further that Cheryl Bauer Hyde and Mervin Bender be authorized to sign the agreement of purchase and sale.

Lease Agreement
The sale of Messiah land and buildings is contingent upon a lease agreement with LutherCare Communities.

That agreement as with the Agreement of Purchase and Sale has been reviewed by Messiah Legal Counsel. The agreement costs are currently being finalized, after which they will be reviewed by Messiah Council, and brought forward to the Messiah congregation for review and discussion prior to final approval.

The initial agreement would be for 5 years, renewal for a second 5-year term, with operation of the building and costs remaining with Messiah in addition to Rent and other costs incurred by LutherCare Communities. It is anticipated that the purchase funds would be invested and the principal / investment income would provide a source of income to support the lease costs.

Messiah Council

Corrine Amyotte, Cheryl Bauer Hyde, Byron Bender, Merv Bender, David Bragg, Wayne Manchur, Joy Weinberger, and Pastor John Mayer Dut

Report of the Internal Financial Reviewers for the Year Ending 2025

To the Members of Messiah Lutheran Church
Prince Albert, SK.

The financial statements of the 2025 annual report summarize accurately the General Ledger and General Journals as prepared by Messiah Lutheran Church.

After carefully checking the invoices, cheques, monthly bank statements and final balances for each month, we the appointed internal financial reviewers, confirm to the best of our abilities that this is a true and accurate statement of the financial transactions for Messiah Lutheran Church, Prince Albert, for the 2025 year.

Dated in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, this 9th day of May 2026.

Denise Taylor

Wayne Hyde

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DECEMBER 31, 2025

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2025

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Bank	$11,976	$66,975
Petty cash	50	50
GST and accounts receivable	361	253
Term deposit	2,829	2,711
Conexus membership share / redeemable member	12	12
equity	$15,228	$72,000
Capital Assets (note 2)	428,053	462,053
	$443,281	$534,053
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Key deposits	$410	$410
Accounts payable	0	7,065
Designated funds	15,076	13,183
Capital Reserves	5,076	5,014
	20,562	25,672
EQUITY		
Equity	422,719	508,381
	$443,281	$534,053

(See accompanying notes)

Cheryl Bauer Hyde

APPROVED _____
Chairperson

_____
Secretary

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COMBINED STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

	2025 Actual	2024 Actual
Revenue		
Offerings	$110,195	$142,153
Offerings – loose	2,156	2,674
Missions	3,288	3,310
Interest Earned and other revenue	60	113
Gifts & Memorials	12,435	140
Transfer from (to) reserves	1,226	0
Other Income (note 5)	7,530	7,530
Total revenue	136,890	156,454
Expenditures		
Missions		
ELCIC	1,150	1,810
Lutheran World Relief	1,650	1,500
SK Synod special contribution	0	0
Other	0	0
	2,800	3,310
Ministries		
Education:		
Confirmation supplies	102	0
Parish education – general	227	1,182
Parish education – Sunday School	0	0
Caring Ministry & Community Service	0	0
Stewardship program	0	0
	330	1,182
Youth:		
Campership	467	0
Program costs	0	0
	467	0
Music and share faith renewal	0	0

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COMBINED STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

	2025 Actual	2024 Actual
Ministries (continued)		
Worship:		
Sanctuary supplies	903	27
Kinasao	0	100
Sunday service broadcasting	558	593
Sundry	0	219
	1,462	939
Conferences and conventions:		
Pastor/lay leadership conferences	214	531
National / Synodical convention	1,764	1,697
	1,998	2,228
Building		
Insurance	9,687	9,233
Repairs and maintenance	1,557	2,411
Janitorial	6,996	6,812
Supplies – janitorial	420	278
Utilities - power	3,475	3,756
- energy	4,224	4,649
- water	1,068	1,068
Snow removal	2,700	3,864
Spruce Home cemetery	400	400
	30,527	32,471
Office		
Advertising/website	150	150
Bank charges, interest and fees	230	88
Office supplies	496	626
Photocopier maintenance agreement	602	887
Postage	124	130
Transportation subsidy	3,017	1,638
Christmas supplies and other	280	229
Telephone	4,703	3,869
	9,602	7,617

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COMBINED STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

	2025 Actual	2024 Actual
Salaries and benefits		
Pastor's salary	82,692	78,642
Pastor's mileage	624	988
Supply Pastor's and additional staff	323	200
Administrative assistant	26,158	25,522
Organists	0	0
Treasurer honorarium	300	600
Employee benefits-CPP\EI	7,095	7,293
ELCIC pension	7,212	8,309
ELCIC Benefits	0	4,674
Health and dental	15,634	10,800
WCB	503	0
Continuing education	700	600
Book allowance	125	0
	141,366	137,628
Amortization	34,000	34,968
Total expenditures	222,552	220,343
Net income(loss) from operations	(85,662)	(63,889)
Equity, beginning of year	508,381	572,271
Equity, end of year	$422,719	$508,381

(See accompanying notes)

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
COMBINED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Cash provided by (used for) operations:		
Net income (loss)	$ (86,616)	$ (63,888)
Items not affecting cash		
Amortization	34,954	34,968
	(51,662)	(28,920)
Change in non-cash working capital balances related to operations:		
GST and accounts receivable	(361)	(60)
Key deposits	0	0
Term loan	0	0
Term deposit	(118)	(96)
Accounts payable	0	2,158
Deferred revenue and capital reserves	0	(0)
Designated funds	(2,829)	(2,374)
	(54,970)	(29,292)
Cash provided by (used for) investment activities:		
Purchase of capital assets	0	0
Increase in cash from operations	(54,970)	(29,292)
Cash, beginning of year	69,033	98,325
Cash, end of year	$14,063	$ 69,033

(See accompanying notes)

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Capital assets: Current year purchases of capital assets are capitalized at cost, along with the assets acquired in 1993 and prior to the construction of the church building are being amortized on a straight-line basis as follows:

Building additions 1997 and prior	35 years
Building additions beginning 1998	40 years
Furniture and equipment 1997 and prior	5 years
Furniture and equipment beginning 1998	10 years
Parking lot	5 years
Shed	10 years

2. CAPITAL ASSETS

	2025			2024
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Land	$ 167,586	$ 0	$167,586	$167,586
Building	1,020,159	767,977	252,182	282,767
Furnishings & Equipment	242,856	235,525	8,285	11,700
Parking lot	3,980	3,980	0	0
	$1,007,482	========	$428,053	$462,053
	$1,434,581		=======	=======
	========			

3. BANK INDEBTNESS

At December 31, 2024, Messiah had a line of credit totaling $30,000 (2023 - $30,000), with interest at prime plus 9.45%, none of which was drawn. The line of credit is secured by a general security agreement.

4. OTHER INCOME

	2025	2024
Other income includes the following:		
Operating fund		
Premises usage	$7,530	$7,485
Miscellaneous	0	579
	$7,530	$8,064

Envelope Secretary Report
For the year ending 31 December 2025

This year we issued 102 tax receipts for a total of $135,281. Last year, donations totaled $148,593, a decrease of $13,312. Loose offerings totaled $2,135, a slight increase of $105.

Included, is a table giving a brief distribution analysis of donations, which allows for some idea of the proportion of amounts as it relates to number of donors. As you can see, much of our funding comes from a relatively small number of households. That has always been the case. But it demonstrates that a lot can change when death or illness or admission to senior care facilities occurs, or when people move, or economic conditions change. Most of our funding comes from retired folk. Circumstances can change quickly and they have.

Donations have dropped off over the past number of years. The number of donors have fallen as well. The pandemic had been at least partly responsible for decreases in earlier years. Thankfully, we notice several of our donors continuing to be faithful and often is reflected by a number of significant donations coming at the end of the year.

	% Donors 2025	% Donations	% Donors 2024	% Donations
Over $5000	7%	43.2%	8%	42.4%
Over $3000	14%	65%	17%	64.3%
Over $2000	18%	72.1%	25%	75.6%
Over $1000	35%	89.6%.	41%	89.5%
Under $1000	65%	10.4%	59%	10.5%

At our annual meeting five years ago a decision was made to discontinue our usual practice of ordering numbered sets of offering envelopes. We continue to do so. This was done because a significant amount of our envelopes were going unused. This was both expensive and wasteful. Many donors have chosen to donate by way of E-transfers or by automated debits and continue to do so, while others continue their practice of placing their offerings in the plate. I have noticed a gradual increase in automated or E-transfer methods. We will continue to accommodate whatever method suits individual preferences.

For those interested in arranging automatic debits, please contact the office. For those who prefer the traditional offering envelope method, you may use any unused envelopes from previous years. The only relevant information on the envelopes is your identifying information (your name and/or account number). The date is irrelevant. You may pick up a supply of offering envelopes that may have had the number blanked out or has a number other than your own. Simply replace the blanked out number with your own personal number. If you are not sure of your donation number, you may contact the office, or me, or check the list available in the narthex. In addition to your number, you may wish to write your name on the envelope. The more information provided on your envelope will better prevent mistakes in recording your donation correctly for tax purposes.

Harvey Jacobsen Envelope Secretary

Messiah Council's Report
For the Year ending December 31, 2025

Hebrews 13:8 reminds us: *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* In seasons when the future feels uncertain, this truth anchors us. We may not know what the coming year—or even the coming month—will bring, but we do know the One who holds our future. The same God who has carried us through every storm continues to guide us with unwavering faithfulness.

As shared at last year's annual meeting and again at the February 1, 2026 special congregational meeting, work has continued on the sale of our building to LutherCare Communities. Environmental and engineering assessments identified the need for repairs to the flat roof sections and further review of the furnace's combustible air requirements. These steps have moved the anticipated closing date to August 14.
We are grateful for the leadership of LutherCare Communities and continue to pray for God's guidance throughout this transition.

Our ministry remains active and vibrant.

- Worship continues both in person and through recorded services.
- Fellowship thrives through coffee times, potlucks, and gatherings.
- Pastor John, Jean, May, and Linda lead monthly services at four senior residences.
- Community outreach continues through the work outlined in the Caring Ministry report.

As shared over the past two years, finances remain a concern for Messiah's long-term viability. While the proceeds from the building sale will provide relief for several years, the ongoing ministry of Messiah depends not only on pastoral leadership but on the active involvement, stewardship, and commitment of our congregation.

We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes to the life and ministry of Messiah:

- Pastor John and Administrative Assistant Lisa
- Council members: Corrine Amyotte, Byron Bender, Merv Bender, David Bragg, Wayne Manchur, Joy Weinberger, Cheryl Bauer Hyde
- Financial team: Harvey Jacobsen and David Bragg
- Weekly musician: Colleen Bowen and supporting musicians: Susan Slind, Jack Jones, Linda Moriarty, Gord Hein, Lisa Haight
- Property and building maintenance: Wayne Hyde
- All who serve through ministry teams, committees, and countless acts of support

Your dedication, prayers, and service are signs of God's work among us. As we move forward, we do so with gratitude, hope, and confidence in the One who never changes.

Cheryl

On behalf of Messiah Council

Pastor John Mayer Dut
2025 Report

Ezekiel 37:7-10, 14: *7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded, and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." 10 I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. 14 I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord."*

Messiah Lutheran Annual Meeting – June 21, 2026

I was blessed to be called as Pastor to Messiah Lutheran Church, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Synod (ELCIC), on June 1, 2023, a community that is a place of worship and ministry to all people of God. A home of blessings that cares for others, a home of blessings to families in need. The family of Messiah kicks off their gatherings on Sunday morning, with coffee time under the leadership of Bill Baerwald, and George Cramer. A time to sharing our personal news from the week, also news of our social contacts, with the main topics being weather and sports. Harvey and Wayne like to tease me for wearing my toque all the time during the Winter.

In service, we share Confession and Forgiveness. God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, song. the Great Thanksgiving, Lord's Supper, and the Blessings. For fellowship, we share in monthly potlucks, where eat together and visit one another, sharing news and jokes. We are blessed with beautiful children in church, and participating in Sunday School

I have been here at Messiah for three years, plus a few days. By God's grace, I am supported by the members of Messiah, and Church Council. You support me doing ministry to God's People of Messiah and the Neighbors. You are there as Team and Committee members, and to support Messiah's Mission to the People of God, and our communities through Caring Ministry/ Community services: Prince Albert Senior Home monthly services from September to June, Points West Living, Good Shepherd, Mont St. Joseph, Pineview Terrace, and around the world through Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR).

Messiah is involved in so many activities to support Prince Albert at large such as: collecting for the Prince Albert Food Bank, volunteering at the Salvation Army Centre, the YWCA, Prince Albert Grant Council (Relatives' Lodge). On occasion, people in search of shelter and coffee on Sunday morning drop in.

Messiah becomes a home, and refuge to newcomers as God's calling making disciples from all nations. So, we are grateful, and Almighty God help us carried out the following services and activities with joy.

1. Worship: Ministry of the Word and Sacraments

The Ministry Team (Cheryl Bauer Hyde, Colleen Bowen, Susan Slind, Jack Jones, and Linda Moriarty) plan the worship according to Sundays and Seasons order of service, to achieve our spiritual goals. For many around us, Messiah is a place of hope in Jesus Christ and what 2026 will bring - resolutions that promise health of our community, prosperity, or treatments for our declining attendance. We all pray and firmly place our hope in Jesus Christ, our Lord, looking forward to partnering with LutherCare to share the space and we pray that LutherCare will carry out a new development in mission to our community.

Making our service unique involves volunteers prior to, during, and after the service. Ushers, Readers, Communion and Altar assistants. Thanks to May Janzen and Colleen Bowen for their leadership of a small choir during Advent/Christmas and Easter. On celebrations such as the Christmas Season, Messiah displays joyfulness to welcome Jesus Christ - Emmanuel God is with us in Flesh (Epiphany). The Messiah community prepared for suffering during the Lenten season; Jesus Christ led to Golgotha – Death on the Cross for our salvation on Easter Sunday when we renewed and darkness is no more.

We always invite our members, friends and everyone to our worship in person in the Sanctuary and online each Sunday. The Service is broadcast on the Messiah Lutheran Church Prince Albert on our YouTube Channel to all who are unable to attend the Sunday Service.

Just looking back for a moment, and the wonderful works put together by Messiah's members and Pastor John Mayer Dut causes our gratitude to rise to God; God equips us as team of worship. God chose you to be daughters, sons, apostles, and to witness God's grace to the world! God chose you!

Consider what God has done for us in 2025? How did God protect us? In what ways have you grown spiritually? *In Ephesians 6: 10-19, "*Paul reminds the church that their struggle is not merely a physical one against other people. Instead, it is a spiritual battle against unseen forces of darkness. To stand firm in times of trouble, he urges believers to put on protective armor."

The Belt of Truth represents integrity and truthfulness, holding all other pieces together. The Breastplate of Righteousness protects the heart and signifies living a life of moral integrity and uprightness. The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace represents being grounded, prepared, and ready to share the message of peace. The Shield of Faith is used to block and extinguish the "fiery darts" or doubts and attacks of the enemy. The Helmet of Salvation protects the mind, representing the assurance of deliverance and eternal life.

In 2025, we had 56 services at Messiah plus 40 special services at Seniors Homes usually monthly: Mont St. Joseph, Points West Living, Good Shepherd, and Pineview Terrace.

Messiah's Mission Statement is applied through hearing and sharing God's Word, we are a worshiping community in Prince Albert and the surrounding area, inviting all into Christ's Kingdom, faithfully reaching out to serve and caring for our neighbors and world around us. The next chapter might be difficult, but we will go through it with the Armor of God. We will need to work hard demanding from each one of us the high level of cooperation and solidarity as the Messiah community to keep ministry going to our neighbors that bring new and wonderful opportunities to glorify God. I am excited and I hope you are as well.

God is good. God is faithful. God is able to take us to the next level. I KNOW that as we remain faithful in proclaiming and living out the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as we lived last year 2025, and being faithful managers of all that God entrusts into our care. God' kingdom will prosper and advance in and through us to our neighbors; those that are close and those far away, all need support and prayers.

2. Theologically:
FLAG (Fall Lutheran Anglican Gathering] Saskatchewan Synod rostered leaders gathered in Moose Jaw at Temple Gardens, on September 23 - 25 2025, under the theme: Interconnected Leading with/ for an Ever-Changing Church. Our guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein-Guerrero, Grace Professor of Leadership and Director of Contextual Formation at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatchewan.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada National Convention took place July 10-13, 2025, at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, MB. We give thanks to Wayne Hyde, Cheryl Bauer Hyde and Pastor. Rev. John Mayer Dut who attended as Saskatchewan Synod delegates. The Convention included election for National Bishop, Vice Chair, Secretary, National Church Council, and Court of Appeal. We represented our synod and region at this important and historic gathering of our church. At the Sixth Ballot, Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer was elected as National Bishop.

PARLEZ!
(People Addressing Relevant Lutheran Inquiries on Zoom)!
has become a wonderful forum, where Lay and Pastors meet with our Bishop, Ali Tote, on the first Tuesday of the month. Addressing our Lutheran concerns and experiences from our leaders, and leaders from other denominations for the benefit of the Church, Saskatchewan Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC).

Kinasao Lutheran Bible Camp, our partner in mission, serving the Lutheran community and others with wonderful activities for youth, families and pastors, inviting us always to share God's love. Messiah lead worship on Sunday, July 6, 2025, and shared in the Holy Baptism of Lena Catherine Tomtene.

I keep encouraging my parishioners with phone calls to hear what has made prefect, and what is lacking especially at Service. And what we can do to make it RIGHT! I know UP, IN AND OUT summarised what we need to do. Can we do it?

3. Pastoral Activities:
- Mondays are always days off.
- Tuesday, work at Messiah office, pastoral duties and making phone calls,
- Wednesday, work at Messiah office, service planning and pastoral duties.
- Thursday, work at Messiah office, pastoral duties and making phone calls.
- Fridays, work at Messiah office, according to the need of parishioners.
- Saturdays are devotions days for me and reflections for Sunday, also according to need and schedule, whether there are occasions or situations needing my pastoral attention.
- Holy Sunday - day of celebration.

4. Visiting and the Phone calls:
Recorded – May: 31 June: 23; July: 28; August: 36; September: 47; October: 36; November: 43; December 40, 2024; January: 66; February: 28; March: 63; April: 33 visits in 2025. A total of 674 visits and calls over 12 months.

5. **Holy Baptism:** as listed under 2025 Congregational Statistics – Pastoral acts.

6. **Youth Ministry & Confirmation:** Youth Confirmation Classes (2025-2026) between the ages 12-15 years old. We started on Sunday, September 21, 2025 - May 24, 2026, meeting the First and Third Sundays of the month, except Holidays. Confirmed in 2026 are Baron Amyotte and Athiei Dut on May 24, Pentecost Sunday. Confirmation classes will continue for: Sunday Kaman Guwir, Nyachock Kaman Guwir, and Lucus Malual Arop.

7. **Education:** Bible Studies:
   - Lectionary Bible Study in the Peace Chapel and on Zoom, every Wednesday (weekly readings).
   - Monthly Bible Study 2025-2026 in the Peace Chapel and on Zoom, on the third Tuesday. Since September 2025, we have completed the Books of Ruth and Jonah, and now we are studying the Book of Genesis.
   - Messiah Coffee And Conversation first and third Thursday every month.
   - Messiah Men's Breakfast group last met in 2025. The Men and Women's groups have become the Fellowship Group. The group assists with congregational potlucks and special gatherings under the leadership of Merv, Byron, Wayne, and Cheryl.

8. Children's Ministry:

A Children's Message is shared during the worship service, and families are encouraged to bring their children to Sunday School. Thanks be to God, we are blessed with beautiful children in church, filling our Sunday School with laughter, joy, playing in the nursery, and running around everywhere with a lot of energy. Thanks to our teachers and volunteers; lead by May Janzen, Beverly Skotheim, Joy Weinberger, Linda Moriarty, and Cheryl Bauer Hyde for making these children smile and experience God's Love.

9. Caring Ministry / Community Service:

Care Ministry Team: Jean Meyers, Linda Moriarty, May Janzen, Cheryl Bauer Hyde, and Pastor John. Senior Home worship services are scheduled from September – June. The services included Holy Communion. Pastor John provides on call Chaplain rotation as scheduled by Corinne Loch, Spiritual Care Volunteer Coordinator, Saskatchewan Health Authority, and at home serves Holy Communion to people whose health issues make it difficult to attend worship services in person.

10. Saskatchewan Synod:

Northern Cluster Meetings continue lead by Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Sheldon Gettinger. Messiah serves as the center for most meetings, plus Kinasao Lutheran Bible Camp. On Tuesday, March3, 2026, National Bishop Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer presided in the installation of Assistants to the Bishop:

- Rev. Sheldon Gettinger, Northern Ministry Area
- Deacon Gretchen, Saskatoon Ministry Area
- Rev. Karen Stepko, Eastern Ministry Area
- Rev. Dr. Dennis Hendricksen, Regina Ministry Area
- Rev. Dr. Greg Kiel, Southern Ministry Area

11. Ministerial/Ecumenical:

- SK Synod Northern Ministry Area rostered leaders meet monthly.
- Lenten Season marked the high point for Ministerial / Ecumenical shared ministry in Prince Albert when clergy and church communities came together under the leadership of Pastor Nora and

Calvary United. From February 26 – April 2, there were six weeks of fellowship (soup and sandwich lunch) and worship. Messiah congregation / Pastor Dut provided the lunch and the Homily on April 2.

12. Continuing Education

Beside Pastor studies, I still participate in a book club on Zoom, but not as active as last year because of the ministry schedule. Beside Bible Studies, I read from my library at home and in the Messiah office.

Finally, thank you Messiah: Thanks, and appreciation, to worshiping People of Messiah, as we gather on Sunday mornings and at other times. We share God's Grace and Love of God as the community of Messiah. God of grace, we share as Messiah, our neighbors, and larger community of Prince Albert and surrounding areas.. Let me appreciate you with gratitude and love to any members who step up volunteering to use your time, energy and talent to lead people of God, **TO THE LIGHT** in the liturgy to serve your brothers and sisters in the ministry we share, a Mission of God to the people of God.

The work you deliver in and outside Church for your people is blessed by God Almighty. Amen. From the work of Church Council and the Executive Officers which is significant and appreciated, the Ministry Teams, Lisa in the office, to musicians, readers, ushers, camera and power point operators, and those who clear snow, those who call and care for others, who maintain the building, who give of their time for altar care.

To those who donate and collect items for the food bank, those who assist with teaching Sunday school, leading the Fellowship Group, set up coffee time before service, George for cookies and goodies, Thursday mornings Coffee and Conversation, and more. God is working through you. We are the body of Jesus Christ, and our work together, builds one another up. Thank you to each of you for all everything you did to support ministry at Messiah Year 2025 and the blessings continue Year 2026! Amen.

Parochial Report 2025

Marriages: 1 (Wedding August 9, 2025)	Adok Monyrew Awan & Juma James De-Madhol Mamur
Baptisms: 4	Kayson Nik Kugler – January 26, 2025 Joyce Okuya – March 16, 2025 Lena Catherine Tomtene – July 6, 2025 Benjamin Brian Grosskleg – July 6, 2025
Confirmations: 2	Anna Walters - June 8, 2025 Maya Walters - June 8, 2025
Transfers: OUT – 2	Dennis Serfas – July 16, 2025 Elaine Serfas – July 16, 2025
IN + 1	May Janzen – April 23/25

Member Deaths: -14

Myrtle Bauer – January 9, 2025	Sarah Neudorf – January 23,2025
Agnes Brown – February 21, 2025	Betty Babcock – March 31, 2025
Peter Jensen – April 17,2025	Morris Anderson – May 10, 2025
Margaret Reinhardt – May 16, 2025	Mervin Laycock – May 24, 2025
Stirling Hopkins – June 6, 2025	Eleanor Fenske – June 12, 2025
Garry Reinhardt – June 22,2025	Wayne Tash – August 29, 2025

Bernice Fjeld – November 19, 2025 Raymond McCallum – December 9/2025

Messiah's Attendance for 2025: Attended 2,353/56 (Average in person attendance 42)
Online 1,100/52 (Average online attendance 21)

For Dut family: Alieza lives in Saskatoon with Mabor and Athiei. Nynkuer, her husband Kon Tong, her son Tong, and daughter born on April 13, 2026, live in Saskatoon. Drek is at the University of BC, and Adong is at the University Of Regina.

Thank you.

Pastor John Mayer Dut
Messiah Lutheran Church
Saskatchewan Synod (ELCIC)

Worship Ministry Team

Included in Pastor John's Report.

Altar Guild Ministry Team
The Altar Guild continues to serve the needs of the Messiah congregation by looking after the preparation and clean up for each Holy Communion occasion, as well as the acquisition and management of Communion supplies. Paraments and banners are changed as necessary throughout the Church year.

The Altar Guild participates in the monthly senior home services delivered at Points West Living, Good Shepherd Villas, Mont St. Joseph, and Pineview Lodge, where Holy Communion is served. Approximately 10-25 residents, sometimes with family members and caregivers, attend each of these services.

Submitted by: Audrey Johnson and Jean Meyers

Caring Ministry and Community Service 2025 Report

Messiah supports Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) and ELCIC National humanitarian efforts through ongoing programs, emergency appeals and prayer support.

Humanitarian response
When communities are devastated by disaster, drought or conflict, your gifts provide life-saving support as families get through crisis *and* begin to recover. Ongoing and current responses are being provided to the Sudan conflict, Syria earthquake, and Ukraine crisis.

Food security and livelihoods Together with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CLWR is giving families the food they need today plus the skills and supplies to grow their own food tomorrow.	
	Education and skills In regions facing extreme poverty and unemployment, we're providing education and skill-training for people who face unjust barriers in accessing education and work.
Refugee resettlement Through the Government of Canada, CLWR helps churches in Canada participate in refugee resettlement, providing a new start in Canada for families in urgent need.	

Advent activities included: Christmas hampers for the public school system and Messiah members, assisting with the Salvation Army Kettle, and Food Bank donations. Thank you to those who donated food items and made monetary contributions to assist with the Christmas food hampers.

Throughout the year, Food Bank donations are collected each Sunday and delivered to the Prince Albert facility. In response to the need for help and support of the homeless in our community, the congregation supports the YWCA, Relatives' Lodge, and the Salvation Army. Thanks to all who contributed personal items and financially, and to May Janzen who makes beautiful quilts which carry our blessings for comfort and warmth.

We continue with potluck lunches following worship services generally on a monthly basis, coffee before service, pancake and hot dog events, and senior home services. Thanks to Pastor John, Jean Meyers, Linda Moriarty, and May Janzen for their ministry.

Thanks to all who make Messiah a welcoming and caring community.

Education Ministry Team

Included in Pastor John's report.

Property Management Ministry
2025 Annual Report

The Property Management Ministry Team is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the building, ground and three cemeteries. Currently, a formal property team does not exist and no major projects were undertaken on the building or property.

Items addressed in 2025:

- Annual inspections on fire alarms and extinguishers.
- Irrigation system repaired, beds against building cleared of weeds and debris.
- Parking lot sprayed for weeds and roof downspouts cleaned out multiple times
- Peace Chapel fireplace serviced.
- AED batteries changed along with the office alarm system batteries.
- All washroom soap and paper towel dispensers converted to a manual operation, wall repairs made as required.
- East door locking mechanism replaced.

The grass cutting and snow shoveling continued to be very capably handled by SHARE. Our custodian, Kari Waldner, also continued to provide excellent bi-weekly cleaning services. Thank You is also extended to Pastor John Dut for taking out and retrieving the recycling and garbage bins as required.

With the impending sale of the property and building to LutherCare considerable time has been spent dealing with representatives from LutherCare, engineering companies for inspections, as well as with roofing contractors and HVAC suppliers.

Projects proposed for 2026:

- Fill the excavation area on the south side of the building where water line repairs occurred
- Painting the washrooms as wall repairs have taken place.
- Cemetery inspection and maintenance on all three sites as required
- Resetting of loose floor tiles as required
- Roof drain cleaning and cleanup of lot, including removal of old railroad ties.

A proactive and preventative maintenance approach will continue to be the focus to ensure the Messiah building and the property is properly maintained. Congregational members are asked to alert Wayne or the office about any building or property issues and if anyone would like to or can assist in any way, please contact Wayne at 306-960-1074.

Property Management Ministry
Wayne Hyde

Messiah Fellowship Group
Annual Report for 2025

Men's Breakfast Group Report
In 2025 we met monthly, other than the summer months, usually the last Saturday of the month, meeting at 9:00 am for a continental breakfast followed by some business, Bible study and lots of fellowship and fun!

Bible study continued with the use of the study Bible **"Master Builders Bible for Men"** as well as a book entitled **52 Men of the Bible**. This book provided us with some in-depth description of some of the most prominent men in the Bible.

In September of this year, a difficult decision was made to end our men's group meetings due in part to very low attendance and a need to develop a fellowship group including women of the congregation.

Thanks to all the men who have attended so faithfully in the life of Messiah. You are a blessing to this congregation and its members.

Yours in Christ, Merv Bender

Messiah Lutheran Women (MLW)
We hosted one Lenton lunch for the Christian Community at Calvary United. Twice a month on Thursday mornings at 10:00am, we hosted a "coffee and conversation" group open to all.

Messiah Fellowship Group
Messiah Lutheran Women has merged with the Men's Breakfast Group into a congregational Fellowship Group. The Group hosts coffee before worship services, hotdog lunches, the Easter Sunday pancake breakfast, and leads set up and clean up of the potluck lunches. All are welcome to participate and offer suggestions and ideas for group activities and events.

Nominating Report
Church Council

Terms Expiring – 2026	Corrine Amyotte, David Bragg, Joy Weinberger
Term Expiring – 2027	Byron Bender
Terms Expiring – 2028	Cheryl Bauer Hyde, Merv Bender, Wayne Manchur

Council positions open for election: three – three-year terms; two – one year terms

Nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual General Meeting.

OPENING WORSHIP

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

You are encouraged to acknowledge Indigenous lands in a way appropriate to your context at the beginning of your annual meeting. The following words are provided as an example.

We acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional and unceded territory of the *[Name of Indigenous Peoples for where your community is located]*. We recognize and respect their enduring presence on this land and express our gratitude for the opportunity to live, work and learn on their territory.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the history of this land and to consider our roles in working towards reconciliation and understanding.

PRAYER

Leader: Gracious God, thank you for this opportunity to gather as your people. As we meet, may we be mindful of the mission and ministry to which you have called each of us. To share your love and grace with everyone we encounter.

All: Amen.

READING

Hebrews 10:23–25

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

HYMN – All Are Welcome, *EvLW* 641

LITANY

Leader: God's grace and unconditional love calls us to be a diverse, inclusive community.

All: We celebrate all and uphold life-giving relationships.

Leader: As we join together for this time of meeting, for the business of this congregation,

All: May we not only be mindful of this congregation, but remember the needs of the community beyond these walls.

Leader: Provoke in us your spirit of compassion, kindness and goodness.

All: So we might be your hands and feet in the world, to bring your love to everyone.

Leader: Be with us always. Remind us of your generosity,

All: So we may be signs of that generosity out in the world.

Leader: God of hope and love,

All: Amen.

CLOSING WORSHIP

Leader: Faithful God, as you have journeyed with your people throughout the ages, continue to journey with your people here and now. Thank you for our time together, to reflect on the mission and ministry of this place. May our hearts be renewed to be your signs of grace and love in our community.

All: Amen.

HYMN – God is Here Today, *ACS* 993

BENEDICTION

Leader: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord!

All: ***Thanks be to God!***

- Opening and closing worship prepared by Deacon Gretchen Peterson. -

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

© 2025 ELCIC

A NEW NATIONAL BISHOP

This past summer, delegates at the 2025 ELCIC National Convention elected Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer to serve as National Bishop.

"Dear friends, hope, faith and love, these are the tools of our calling," Kochendorfer said following the election. "We don't know the future, but we have what we need. Jesus is feeding us; we have bread, we have wine, we have the scriptures, we have each other. We know that we will not get to where we're going without going together and with others."

Kochendorfer is the ELCIC's fifth National Bishop, joining Donald Sjoberg (1986–1993), Telmor Sartison (1993–2001), Raymond Schultz (2001–2007) and Susan Johnson (2007–2025).

Kochendorfer most recently served as interim pastor at Our Redeemer, Penticton, B.C., as well as assistant to the bishop in the British Columbia (BC) Synod. He most notably served as Bishop of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories from 2012–24, and previously worked in congregations in Dickson, Lethbridge and Edmonton, Alberta.

Having served the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) as a council member from 2017–23, Kochendorfer is currently chair of the LWF's Mutual Responsibility Task Force and was recently co-chair of the Lutheran portion of the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission.

The ELCIC gathered on September 27 in worship and celebration for Bishop Kochendorfer's installation in an ecumenical gathering filled with the beauty of prayer, worship and song. Scripture readings from Isaiah 43, Psalm 46 and Ephesians 4 were shared, with former ELCA Archbishop Linda Nicholls preaching the sermon. Lutheran and interfaith pastors and bishops in attendance robed in red vestments and processed in and out of the sanctuary.

Kochendorfer has been married to his wife Cathy for 42 years, and the two have raised four children together. •

KOALABEAR PHOTOGRAPHY

Bishop Larry Kochendorfer (centre) at his installation service.

CARTER BROOKS

FACING TODAY – DREAMING FOR THE FUTURE

Facing Today – Dreaming for the Future is a three-year church engagement project that officially began in July of 2025 and is aimed at guiding positive transformation within the ELCIC's national and synodical structures.

The initiative will consider current financial realities and the evolving landscapes of congregations across the country, while creating space for meaningful conversations about what it means to be church in the years ahead.

A steering committee of 12 members, including two representatives from each of the five synods (one lay, one rostered), National Church Council representatives, and a five-member consulting group have been formally engaged in the process.

At convention, delegates engaged in table discussions, prompting key themes of resilience after crisis, youth involvement, experimentation in worship, lay-led initiatives and leadership shortages.

"We want to hear from everyone," said steering committee member Rev. Katrina Vigen of Redeemer, Vancouver on the committee's call to action. "What are we facing today and what can we dream of together for our future? We have started a journey, and we don't know where God is guiding us, but we know and we trust that God is leading us, that the Holy Spirit is ahead of us." •

OUR FRIENDS IN THE ELCJHL

ELCIC members are asked to continue praying for peace for the people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), as heightened conflict continues.

The past two-and-a-half years have been extremely challenging for the people of the ELCJHL. The growing conflict and tension continues to take a toll on many church members – our global mission partners in the East.

In early-April, National Bishop Susan Johnson travelled to Jerusalem alongside Bishop Elizabeth Eaton of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for a solidarity visit to ELCJHL Bishop Sani-Ibrahim Azar. The visit served as a reminder to the people of the ELCJHL that they are not alone.

"For me, the hardest thing to witness was the increased lack of hope," Johnson shared. "That the war will end. Hope that there will be a place for Palestinians within the Holy Land. A huge concern is that the presence of the indigenous Christian church will be lost. More and more Christians are giving up and leaving. Will there be a Christian presence other than that of tourists in the future?"

In July 2025, the ELCIC National Office and the Eastern Synod announced the launch of the ELCJHL Appeal to support the ministries overseas with a goal of raising $50,000.00.

"Your support is meaningful for us, it will help us continue to minister, to be with the people, to continue opening our schools and giving severance to our teachers," said ELCJHL Bishop-elect Imad Haddad. "But at the same time, it will help us help families who are in very bad situations because of the current political circumstances that we are going through in the Holy Land." •

ELCJHL Bishop-elect Imad Haddad.

CLAY 2025: ROOTED AND RISING

Youth gathered to deepen their faith at CLAY 2025.

The theme of the 2025 Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering was *Rooted and Rising*. The national gathering of the ELCIC and Anglican Church of Canada takes place every two years. This past summer in Saskatoon, SK., over 360 youth, young adults, leaders, volunteers and bishops from across Canada gathered for four days in the prairies with a focus on deepening faith, digging deeper roots and enjoying time participating in group activities with fellow like-minded youth. Rev. Jordan Cantwell, former moderator of The United Church (2015–18), served as the keynote speaker for the five large group gatherings.

Additionally, in conjunction with the 2023–25 National Youth Project, *More Precious*, which stems from Isaiah 43:4, participants at CLAY learned more about the trauma and tragedy surrounding human trafficking. The National Youth Project is introduced biennially, seeking to encourage youth participation on a current social justice issue.

At the conclusion of the event, it was revealed that the next CLAY will take place in 2027 in Nanaimo, BC. Learn more about the next event at ClayGathering.ca. •