

CONTINUING CARING CONVERSATIONS CC 5: AFFIRMATION OF WELCOME

A clergy and laity event hosted by the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference

Grace and peace to you.

A **Caring Conversations 5** event is being offered in response to actions taken at the 2004 Eastern Synod Assembly. It will take place on **Saturday, October 23, 2004**, at St. Matthews Lutheran Church, Kitchener. At CC 5 we will explore the ***Affirmation of Welcome*** motion which was passed by the 2004 Synod Assembly.

Specifically we will be looking at ways in which our congregations and communities might respond to the Eastern Synod's *Affirmation of Welcome* by devising Affirmations of Welcome of their own; by initiating Caring Conversations; and by considering various opportunities and challenges arising from the Eastern Synod motion. A number of thoughtful papers will be made available at CC5.

Sponsored by the K/W Conference, CC 5 will be helpful to pastors, congregational council members, witness and evangelism committee members, congregational mission committee members, hospitality groups and leaders. This invitation is being extended to clergy and lay people of the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference and four neighbouring conferences —Toronto, Hamilton/Niagara, London and Georgian Bay.

CARING CONVERSATIONS 1- 4

In the spring of 2002, Pastors Mark Harris and André Lavergne were invited to speak at the regular monthly gathering of Kitchener-Waterloo clergy on their experience initiating and leading "Caring Conversations" in their parishes. "Caring Conversation" is a model overwhelmingly affirmed by the 1999 Regina convention, wherein "members of the ELCIC ... are able to listen to the experiences of gay and lesbian people and their families." Their experience with Caring Conversations, in their own communities, had been very, very positive.

Out of the spring 2002 meeting, there came several requests that a fuller day be offered to encourage and to help parish pastors to initiate the Caring Conversations process in their own congregations. As a result, Caring Conversations 1, a clergy in-service day, sponsored by the Kitchener/Waterloo Conference, was held in October, 2002.

In the course of this clergy gathering, there emerged a consensus that a second day-long event be offered, this one to include both clergy *and lay people*. Caring Conversations 2 was held in February, 2003. With the encouragement of people who attended Caring Conversations 1 & 2, we put together a Caring Conversations 3 event which took place in October, 2003. At that event, we modeled a *Caring Conversation* proper.

At Caring Conversations 4, which took place in March, 2004, we began to look at a Synodical *Affirmation of Welcome* and what it might mean.

CC 5 + AGENDA

9:00 - 9:30 am	Arrival. Registration. <i>Coffee is on!</i>
9:30 - 10:00 am	Gathering Worship — Pastor David Malina presides and Pastor Shirley Ruller preaches at a gathering Service of Holy Communion.
10:00 - 10:15 am	Welcome. Introductions. Housekeeping.
10:15 - 11:15 am	Plenary Session: What did we do at the recent Synod Assembly? Phil Heinze ~ Welcoming Motion: A Clear Direction Oz Cole-Arnal ~ Welcoming Motion: A Confessional Motion: Law, Gospel and the Three Solas Pat Lovell ~ Welcoming Motion: A “Reaching Out” Motion
11:15 - 11:45 am	Questions, Answers and Conversation
11:45 am - 12:30 nn	Brown-Bag Lunch
12:30 nn - 1:20 pm	Workshop 1 (six alternatives) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Val Hennig ~ The Eastern Synod’s Affirmation of Welcome and the theology of mission ~ We look to the Lutheran Confessions and the Bible for a theological basis for the Eastern Synod’s welcoming motion.2. Nancy Vernon Kelly ~ Welcoming as a gift. We look to the Christian Gospel to consider why we do what we do.3. Walter Rothenburger and Eliseo & Elba Martell ~ Stories of Welcome. The witness of people who have experienced a sense of welcome in communities of the Eastern Synod.4. André Lavergne ~ How to develop an <i>affirmation of welcome</i>. We look at the creation of an Affirmation of Welcome as a response to the Eastern Synod’s welcoming motion and as an expression of congregational mission.5. Mark Harris and Frank Haggarty ~ How to do a Caring Conversation. We look at a congregation’s holding a Caring Conversations series as a response to our Synod’s welcoming motion.6. Claudine Carlson ~ Many members... yet one body. How do we live together as followers of Christ with people with whom we disagree?
1:20 - 1:30 pm	Break
1:30 - 2:20 pm	Workshop 2 (a repeat of the six workshops offered earlier)
2:20 - 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Whole-group Conversation
3:00 pm	Closing Prayer. Godspeed.

CC 5 + LEADERSHIP TEAM

Claudine Carlson has served as pastor of Holy Cross Church, Burlington, for almost 6 years. She formerly served in team ministry with Pastor Mark Harris at Mt. Zion, Waterloo. In her service to the wider church, Claudine has chaired the Eastern Synod Committee for Church and Society, been a member of the the ELCIC Committee for Faith and Society, served on the Board at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, and as chaplain or keynote speaker for a number of clergy and lay retreats. Claudine teaches a course in Spiritual Formation at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and recently served as chaplain to the Eastern Synod Assembly in St. Catharines.

Oz Cole-Arnal is entering his thirtieth year of teaching Church History at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. A former American, he is father of two grown boys and stepfather of three grown girls. He is married to Bonnie, a United Church minister, and is active currently in Christ Lutheran Church, Waterloo, where he is a member, and in social justice issues in the wider church.

Pastor **Frank Haggarty** has been senior pastor of St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kitchener for six years. He formerly served at St. Peter's, Warton and St. Matthew's, Conestogo. He currently serves in a multiple-staff ministry with Pastor Cindy Jacobsen.

Pastor **Mark Harris** serves with Pastor Tanya Varner in a team ministry at Mount Zion Lutheran Church, Waterloo. Mount Zion undertook a Caring Conversation process in 2000 and is beginning work on an *affirmation of welcome*. On secondment to the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship, Mark represents the ELCIC on the Consultation on Common Texts. He is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree (liturgical studies) at the University of Toronto.

In his sixth year as Assistant to the Bishop, Eastern Synod, **Phil Heinze** works in the areas of convention management, communication, specialized ministries and service (justice and compassion) ministries. A member of Reformation Lutheran Church, Kitchener, he is married to Carolin. They have three children and an empty nest.

Val Hennig is presently the interim pastor at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Kitchener. He has served the church in many ways over 49 years since ordination. Val has served in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia, as well as in England, typically as a parish pastor. He has been the resident Schmieder Scholar at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon and served as chaplain to the universities in Waterloo. Val is currently a student at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary though he has an M.Div.

Nancy Vernon Kelly serves in team ministry with Pastor Liz Kuglin-Alyea and the people of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Kitchener. She has many years of experience encouraging congregations to welcome refugees and people struggling with addictions and mental health challenges. She has published articles about the sparks that often fly when the doors to the church open wider.

In a team ministry with Pastor Nadine Nicholds, Pastor **André Lavergne** serves as a pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, New Hamburg. Trinity began a Caring Conversations process in 1999 and is in the final stages of adopting an *affirmation of welcome* < www.telc.ca >. On

secondment to the ELCIC's Program Committee for Worship, André works on various national worship projects including the current Renewing Worship endeavour and the ELCIC's worship website, Lift Up Your Hearts < www.worship.ca >.

Pat Lovell was raised in Chicago, Illinois. During the civil rights movement years, she attended a predominantly white high school where blacks were excluded from most activities except sports. During this time, Pat also sought a new Lutheran Church on the south side of Chicago where she then lived. After attending one church a couple of times, it was apparent that she wasn't welcome. Pat immigrated to Toronto shortly thereafter and experienced a similar situation as she searched for a new Lutheran Church home. She finally found a welcoming congregation at St. Philip's (Etobicoke) and, now, at Holy Cross (Newmarket). Pat's experiences of exclusion have had a profound effect upon her strong belief in *inclusion*: "It's about *welcoming all people* into the House of God no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc."

Pastor **David Malina** serves at St. Matthews Lutheran Church (our host congregation), Kitchener, in a team ministry with Pastor Shirley Ruller. Pastor Malina also serves on the Board of Governors of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary.

Eliseo & Elba Martell and their four children arrived in Kitchener-Waterloo in 1990 as refugees from El Salvador where Eliseo practiced medicine and Elba worked as a nutritionist. They are members of St. Mark's Lutheran Church (Kitchener) which, along with St. Mark's (Wellesley), St. James (North Easthope) and St. Peter's (Gadshill), served as their sponsor. Eliseo is employed as the Youth Health Program Manager of the Public Health Department, Region of Waterloo. Elba received her MA in Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University and is employed as a Public Health Planner, Region of Waterloo. They recently celebrated the birth and baptism of their first grandchild, Oscar Fitch.

Pastor **Rick Pryce** serves at St. Philip Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

A member of St. Mark's, Kitchener, Dr. **Harold Remus** is Professor Emeritus, Religion & Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University, retired Adjunct Professor, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Past President of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies. An ordained Lutheran pastor, he was the Founding Managing Editor of *Religious Studies Review* and is the author of many books and articles related to New Testament studies.

Born in the farming community of Radisson, Saskatchewan in 1940, **Walter Rothenburger** was raised a Lutheran. He worked as a laboratory technologist for over 30 years. In 1993 he took up studies at the Ontario College of Art and Design. He graduated in 1997. Now semi-retired, Walter does free-lance work as a fibre artist. In March of 2000, he came out as a gay person as part of the Caring Conversation process at Advent Lutheran Church, Toronto, where he has been a member for nearly 30 years.

Pastor **Shirley Ruller** serves with Pastor David Malina in a team ministry at St. Matthews Lutheran Church, Kitchener. She also serves on the K/W Conference Council.

CC 5 + REGISTRATION AND NOTES

1. Please confirm your interest by Friday, October 15, to Pastor Rick Pryce (St. Philip, Kitchener). Pastor Weber may be reached by e-mail at stphilip@nonline.net or by phone at (519) 896-1357.
2. Please provide the name of your congregation together with the names of participants.
3. By Monday, October 18, we should have a list together of participants. Should you wish to car-pool, drop us a line and we will help to identify others attending from your area. In the interest of good stewardship, we invite you to car-pool wherever possible.
4. The event will take place at St. Matthews Lutheran Church, 54 Benton Street (1 block West of King Street at the corner of Charles), in downtown Kitchener. For specific directions please call (519) 742-0462 or visit < www.stmatthewskitchener.ca >.
5. There is no cost for the day. The K/W Conference will supply coffee, tea & juice. Please remember to bring a brown-bag lunch.
6. Please convey this invitation to any in your congregation or community who might be interested and to people in your conference who may not have access to e-mail.

CC 5 + WELCOME!

We hope that you can join us on Saturday, October 23, at St. Matthews, Kitchener. Please register early to assist us in planning.

Further information is available from the undersigned. Simply drop one of us a note.

We look forward to greeting you on October 23 and wish you and your congregation well in your late-summer and early-autumn journey.

All blessings.

Mark Harris ~ mharris@mzlc.ca

André Lavergne ~ lavergne@telc.ca

Harold Remus ~ hremus@wlu.ca

CONTINUING CARING CONVERSATIONS + WEBSITE

PS In connection with these Caring Conversations events, a web page has been created called *Continuing Caring Conversations*. Go to the website of Trinity Lutheran Church, New Hamburg < www.telc.ca > and click on "Caring Conversations." You will find nine sections offering many helpful resources (including a sample *affirmation of welcome*) and links...