



Courier December – February 2024



Newsletter of Martin Luther
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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

We are in Königsberg, East Prussia, in the year 1624. It is the city of Immanuel Kant, Käthe Kollwitz, E. T. A. Hoffmann and Hannah Arendt. But this story is not about them.

This story tells of a change of heart and the creation of a world-famous Advent song.

In front of us stands the recently built Altgrossgärter church, which is more of a small chapel than a church. Funds become scarce during times of war. Georg Weissel, the new pastor of the parish, is visible in front of the church. He is familiar with the city and its people, having grown up nearby and attended school in Königsberg. After leaving to study, he finally returned. During the plague year of 1620, he was in Königsberg.

A year ago, in December 1623, he took up his pastorate here, in this new Church.

Now, a year later, again in December, the congregation was at odds. Last winter, everyone was glad, especially the residents of the nearby poorhouse and infirmary because they could also visit the new small church with no problems. The way to Königsberg Cathedral had been far too long and arduous for them. But now they could go across the field and were in church. The trail was easy to walk and only took a few minutes. Even the most frail among them made it this way.

What has changed?

Sturgis, a grain merchant, had bought the house and land next to the new church. It was the land through which the people from the poorhouse and infirmary made their way to church on Sundays. These people annoyed Sturgis. He had a hard and closed heart. He didn't want to see poverty and sickness, and certainly not on Sunday, the Lord's Day.

To remedy his anger, he turned the field into a beautiful park and built a high fence around it. Toward the poorhouse, he built a big gate, which he locked and barricaded so that he did not have to see the misery. On the other side, which led to the city and the church, he built a small gate so that he himself could quickly get into the city and the church.

The poorhouse residents couldn't pass through the field anymore, and the detour to the church and town was too far for most of them to walk. So, the inhabitants of the poorhouse and infirmary complained to their Pastor Weissel about their suffering and asked him for advice and help.

Weissel thought about it for a long time and finally he had an idea.

There was a tradition in Königsberg during Advent: the Kurrendesingen. The church choir went around the neighbourhood and sang Advent and Christmas carols in the houses of the congregation.

This year, the choir of the Altroßgärt church had decided that they wanted to cancel the Advent singing in Sturgis' house in protest. But Pastor Weissel had a different plan. "What was he up to?" the singers wondered. Reluctantly, they met at the poorhouse and infirmary and moved from there to the gate in front of Sturgis' wall.

Sturgis was already waiting for the choir. He liked the hymns, especially the Advent hymns. But what did he see? The old and sick people were also there. They stood in front of his beautiful gate. They were bent over on sticks and crutches. Sturgis was sure that he had never

seen these people in choir before. They were far too sick to sing. Pastor Weissel was also among them.

What did he do now? He pulled papers out of his pocket and handed them out.

Were those notes? Did they want to sing from there? Outdoor? Didn't they want to come into his house today and give him their Christmas wishes, as they should? Perhaps, it was better if they stayed outside and didn't make his house dirty, he thought. Sturgis left his house and came outside to the garden gate where they were standing.

As he unlocked the big door, the pastor gave a speech. He spoke of great gates and doors, and that many people barred the gates of their hearts to the King of kings, the child in the manger, so that he could not enter them. And he became very specific: "Today, dear Mr. Sturgis, he stands before your locked gate. I advise you, I beseech you by your soul's blessedness, open to him not only this visible door, but also the door of your heart, and humbly admit him with joy before it is too late."

After this heartfelt speech, the choir sang. It was a song with words from the 24th Psalm. Pastor Weissel had written it for the church dedication last December, but now it fits just as well. It meant not only the gates and doors of a church but also the gates and doors of Sturgi's wall, and perhaps most importantly, the gates and doors of the heart. All these doors should open in Advent in order to truly receive Jesus Christ.

1 Fling wide the door, unbar the gate; The King of glory comes in state;
The Lord of lords and King of kings The Savior of the world who brings
His great salvation to the earth. So raise a shout of holy mirth
And praise our God and Lord, Creator, Spirit, Word.

2 He is the rock of our belief, The heart of mercy's gentle self.
His kingly crown is holiness; His scepter is his loveliness;
He brings our sorrows to an end. Now gladly praise our king and friend,
And worship him with song For saving us from wrong.

3 Oh, happy towns and blessed lands That live by their true king's commands.
And blessed be the hearts he rules, The humble places where he dwells.
He is the rightful Son of bliss Who fills our lives and makes us his,
Creator of the world, Our only strength for good.

4 Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ; Our hearts are open wide in trust.
Oh, show us now your lovely grace, Upon our sorrows shine your face,
And let your Holy Spirit guide Our journey in your grace so wide.
We praise your holy name, From age to age the same!

This song touched Sturgi's heart, and he realized how mean and wrong he had been. After the choir had finished, he unlocked the heavy wooden door in the wall. Inviting everyone inside, he generously served them food and didn't care if the house got dirty.

The great gate to his garden remained forever open and all people could walk the path across its property.

From then on, the people of Königsberg called the small path through the garden of Sturgis the "Advent Trail".



President's report

Dear Parishioners

The first snow is here and it is time to prepare for Christmas.

We had a successful retreat at my cottage in October and are now planning various activities for the future. Among others there will be:

- A St Martins lantern procession and potpourri dinner
- Christmas bazar where we sell decorations and cakes,
- - a joint music concert in April with the Mennonite church which uses our premises on Sunday afternoons

- - and a contemporary worship service with modern music and liturgy.

We expect a visit from Oberkirchenrat Garras end of November. He will inspect the general health of our congregation and assess how Pastor Judith is doing at the midpoint of her stationing in Ottawa. He will also meet with the council after the service to discuss our concerns.

As for the church, we have signed contracts for snow services over the winter and a garden maintenance agreement for next spring and summer.

There seems to be an infestation of mice in our church, with the mice showing a particular preference for the room beside the altar. We have engaged a pest control outfit that is setting traps in the church and outside at the logical entry points. Given the age of the building, there are multiple entry points and it would be too expensive to have them all plugged. Instead, the exterminator will examine the traps every two weeks to bring the issue under control.

We have also bought a new commercial dishwasher for the kitchen. The old one was unrepairable and the council insisted we need a new commercial one. These machines are quite expensive. However, Ted Pendlebury kindly agreed to contribute \$1000 to the cost, whereupon council was swayed to buy this expensive item. Thank you Ted!

The machine has arrived and will be installed shortly, definitely in time for Christmas.

The rear portion of the parking lot in front of the elevator entrance has been redone and is now grading away from the elevator entrance. Any water pumped out by the sump pump under the elevator will now flow away from the building instead of icing in front of the entrance.

In addition, Lutz Wendorf has installed new outlet piping for the sump pump, with constant flow. Hopefully, this outlet, thanks to Lutz's ingenuity, will not freeze up in winter. Thanks Lutz

Olaf Kierschke has repainted the elevator entrance in the same red that was used to paint the entrance doors. It looks great and will last for many years. Thank you Olaf.

That is all have to report to you. I wish you all a splendid Christmas season.

Konrad von Finckenstein

The Tree Branch on the Country Road,

Gunther Bauer tells from his life

In June 1976 the Bauer family spent their first year in Brazil. The University of Paraiba's Faculty of Engineering invited Professor Bauer from Carleton University to teach and supervise graduate students in Civil Engineering at their Campina Grande campus. The University provided a furnished house and the use of a car. The travel expenses and a daily living allowance was paid by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Three months prior to the departure from Canada, the family had taken intensive Portuguese lessons, since Gunther had to be teaching in that language in Brazil. The Bauers made friends quickly in Campina Grande, especially the three girls, who at that time were six, nine and twelve years of age. The city of 350,000 people is located six degrees south of the equator and has a sunny climate all year. After a few weeks, our new Brazilian friends invited us to join them for a weekend to a place called "Brejos das Freiras", literally translated as "nuns in the swamp", a former monastery for nuns, but now a four star hotel with natural hot springs. The hotel was located only two hours by car from Campina Grande. There were hot water swimming pools indoors and also outdoors, as well as playgrounds for young and old. The three days passed too quickly. On Sunday at 5:30 pm, we were sad about having to drive home. The hotel manager told us we could now use the new motorway almost to Campina Grande. It seems we were the only car on the new motorway. Since it was dark, I used the high beams of the car light. Our three daughters were tired from playing and swimming all day. They were sound asleep on the back seat. We were about ten kilometres from Campina Grande when I had suddenly to stop the car. There was something blocking the road. I got out of the car and there was a tree branch lying on the pavement. Irmgard also got out of the car and meant I could have driven easily around the branch. Let us see first what the problem is, was my answer. I left the light of the car on and we walked about thirty meters and we were standing at the end of the road on a bridge abutment, but there was no bridge. We were looking down at a river that looked actually romantic in the moonlight. We did not say a word as we walked slowly back to the car. Brigitte had gotten out of the car and was asking us, why we had stopped the car. I told her we have to make a slight detour and she should go back into the car, but not to wake Monica and Melanie. I backed up the car and followed the tire marks from previous cars down the shallow embankment. We stopped at a one-lane wooden bridge across the ten meter wide river. As I drove slowly across the bridge, we did not dare to look into the water. After a few hundred yards, we reached the paved road and saw the road sign "Campina Grande 8 km". Irmgard seemed to be now relaxed and said that we have to thank God that I stopped the car when I saw the tree branch lying on the road. I had thought for a moment and and replied that we must thank the dear Lord that I stopped the car, but I did not see the branch lying on the pavement. What I did see was the branch in a vertical position, like a big outstretched hand, I had no other choice but to stop the car.

The Mount Calvary Hall (a first idea)

Dear MLC Congregation,

As we approach the new year, we are excited to share a vision that we believe will enhance our church community and provide us with a more functional, inviting, and homey space to gather and hold events. The proposal revolves around the renovation of our downstairs fellowship hall, Mount Calvary Hall, to create a space that truly reflects the warmth and togetherness of our congregation and will help to make the space more attractive and accessible for other groups as well.

Please note it is just a first proposal, nothing is settled yet! Carmen Gruska and Barbar Zabel put much effort and time into this. Thank you so much, so far!

The proposed new 'Mount Calvary Hall' design:



One of the key aspects of the renovation involves unique wall partitions. We plan to adorn the walls with spaced wood beams, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, creating a distinctive “wall booth” design. These booths will not only match the overall architecture of the building but give the room character and serve as practical storage spaces for chairs, tables, and portable partitions.



Two of the wall booths near the entrance will feature built-in coat checks.

One of the wall booths will be used by our little ones and will serve as kids sitting/ play area. We are thinking to integrate a floor to ceiling cork wall strip to be used as pin board.

We will install a set of two new removable steps leading up to the stage on each side. New stage curtains will complement the room's color scheme.

We plan to exchange the existing light fixtures for ones that can be used with dimmers, allowing us to create the perfect ambiance for various events.



This renovation project aims not only to beautify our space but also to create a welcoming environment where our congregation and other groups can come together.

There will be more information as well a presentation on the design proposal including costs in the next year. At that time will invite each one of you to contribute your ideas and question you might have.

We need you all to make this vision a reality, your spiritual and financial support, but most of all your prayers.

With warmest regards,

Carmen Gruska, Barbara Zabel and your Church Council

That was the fall of 2023

Do you remember our Erntedankfest at the German embassy? During the warm summer weather, we enjoyed a butterfly alphabet lesson, listened to the Quodlibet Choir perform, and had coffee and cake in the ambassador's garden.



Also in October we had our little Oktoberfest with Bratwurst and Sauerkraut. Many thanks to all the helpers, especially Sheri and the whole Pendlebury family as well as Christina and Lutz, Heather and Heather, Carmen and Martin Damus for his tireless accordion playing and the Bratwurst grillers Frank and Olaf!



Like in February we had another Bible group together with St. Aidans and studied the sermon texts for the following Sunday. We want to offer this Bible group together with St. Aidans again next year (the dates will be announced). It's fun to reflect on the sermon text together and learn a little more about our neighbouring church. Perhaps you would like to take part once - or even several times - in the coming year!



The Church Council met once again this autumn at Konrad's Cottage and reflected together. The image from the Gospel of John in which Jesus says: "I am the vine, you are the branches" served as a model for the day.

In the morning we talked about our roots, because these are important for the whole vine to bear fruit. We inspected our creed as a root. We all say it every Sunday in church, but do we listen carefully to the individual words and fully agree with their meaning? Or do we just say it by heart? What do the words "Almighty God", "resurrection of the dead", "to judge the living and the dead", "forgiveness of sins" mean and why did Jesus have to suffer so terribly, couldn't it have been done differently?

We had some good and deep conversations here.

In the afternoon, we looked at the fruit on our vine, i.e. in our church. First, we looked at the fruit we have seen over the last three years. What do you still remember? There were various events such as church services, concerts, dinners, nativity plays, walks, excursions, Bible studies, and more.

In a final step for this day, we considered what fruit we would like to have on our vine in 2024 and we drew up an annual plan.

In doing so, we also realized that we are becoming fewer as the congregation gets older and no longer have as much capacity as perhaps 20 years ago. Nevertheless, we have some great ideas that we want to realize together with you in 2024.



A Sunday morning hike took us to the Jack Pine Trail this autumn. We met there for a service with Faith Ottawa Church and Pastor Malina. After a short devotion we hiked, unfortunately, the weather was very wet and cold. Nevertheless, surprisingly many people made the journey. We are also planning our next short hike together with Faith Ottawa Church in February.



We have confirmands this year - 8 from our church and 6 from St Peter's church. We are doing many parts of the lessons together with St Peter's church.

Just before Halloween and Reformation Day, we tried to carve the Luther rose into pumpkins - it wasn't that easy.



Guess how old our oldest congregation member has become?

Christa Jachan turned 104 years old in October! Heather Bent planned a wonderful surprise party and Irmgard Bauer baked a delicious cake. We met with 15 people on her birthday in her home and sang and ate cake!



Thankfully, we had a lot of help with this year's Fall Clean up in the garden!

Many thanks to those who helped with the raking.

ST. MARTIN

On November 10th we celebrated St Martin's Day with lots of young children and lanterns in our church. This is a very common tradition in Germany. We watched a shadow theatre play about St. Martin (thanks to Ute Davis and Heidi Rausch), then walked around the neighborhood with lanterns and songs, and ended back in the church with children's punch and small buns. Many thanks to Carmen and Frank Gruska, who accompanied us musically with their horn and trombone.

A wonderful St Martin's Day celebration!



Looking forward - what's going on in our church over the next 3 months?

During Advent, we offer HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER together with Faith Ottawa Church. They will take place on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. (5. – 12. and 19. December) alternating between Faith Ottawa Church and us.

In these short musical devotions, we sing the Holden Evening Prayer, as we did during Passiontide and last Advent. It is very beautiful and atmospheric and if you haven't been there yet, just come and join us.

The beginning of the year 2024

In council we decided to offer a service on three Sundays next year with slightly newer music, with newer songs to perhaps also invite younger people.

Of course, everyone of you is always invited come.

As a congregation we have to find ideas how we can appeal to other people and this is an experiment.

We will celebrate the first of these "other" services on 11 February at 10 am in our church.

Soup and talk

Have you ever been to our church on Tuesdays at lunchtime? Once a month we eat together and chat. We are happy to welcome anyone who would like to join us. Heather Ladouceur makes delicious soups and there is also cake and coffee afterwards. So just come along and bring an appetite.

You can always find the dates at the end of the newsletter (5.12 - 09.01 - 13.02)



Holden Evening Prayer during lent

together with the other Lutheran congregations

Not only during Advent, but also during Lent we (all Lutheran churches together this time) offer devotions. They take place on Thursday evenings at 6 pm in person and also via Zoom. Each week we will be in a different one of our churches (Martin Luther Church, St Peters Church and Faith Church). Please check the calendar at the end of the church bulletin or online on our homepage (www.glco.org) to find out where the devotions will take place during Lent. We start our Lenten journey together on Ash Wednesday at 7pm with an Ash Wednesday service together in St. Peters Church.

ADVENT CALENDAR

Do you remember our Advent campaign last year?

We did an advent calendar with collecting non-perishable food, and in January I took all the donated tins and jars to the Carlington Community Chaplaincy.

So many of you donated last year and it was so well received and such a wonderful help, we will do it again this year. I have reprinted the Reverse Advent Calendar for you as an idea, but you can also vary it a little. However, it is important that it is not fresh food, but well packaged and has a longer shelf life! At the beginning of January, I will bring the donated gifts back to the Carlington Community Chaplaincy.



Dates Martin Luther Church December 2023 – February 2024

Dates	English	German
Saturday 02.12.	2pm Christmas Singing and Advent Market afterwards	Adventslieder singen und anschließend Kleiner Weihnachtsmarkt
03. 12. 1. Advent 10am	10 Joint Service Advent Coffe afterwards	10 Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst Anschließend Adventskaffee
04.12. Montag		Deutsche Buchclub lädt ein zur Adventsfeier 4pm
05.12.	12 pm Soup and Talk	12 pm Soup and Talk
Tuesday 7.12. 7pm	Holden Evening Prayer In Faith Ottawa Church	Adress:43 Meadowlands Drive W – K2G2R5 Ottawa
10.12. 2. Advent	9.30 English Service	11 am Deutscher Gottesdienst
Tuesday 12.12. 7pm	Holden Evening Prayer In Martin Luther Church	Martin Luther Church
17.12. 3. Advent	9.30 English Service	11 am Deutscher Gottesdienst
17.12. 2pm	Advent Concert with Choirs in St Albertus Churches 416 Parkdale Ave	Adventskonzert der Chöre in St Albertus Churches 416 Parkdale Ave
Tuesday 20.12. 7pm	Holden Evening Prayer In Faith Ottawa Church	Adress:43 Meadowlands Drive W – K2G2R5 Ottawa
24.12.		3 pm Deutscher Gottesdienst mit Krippenspiel
24.12.	4.30 pm English Service	
24.12.		6 pm Deutscher Weihnachtsgottesdienst
25.12.	10 am Joint Service in English	10 am Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst in English
Sunday 31.12.	10 am Joint English Service	10 am Joint English Service
Monday 01.12. 2pm	Joint Service with German Sermon (English one printed out) and New Years welcome afterwards	Neujahrsgottesdienst mit deutscher Predigt und anschließendem Neujahrsempfang
Sunday 7.01.		
Tuesday 09.01	12 pm Soup and Talk	12 pm Soup and Talk
14.01.	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
27.01.	Confirmation Class	Confirmation Class
21.01.	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst

28.01.	9.30 English Service1	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst mit Abendmahl
04.02.	9.30am Service of the word	11 am Lektorengottesdienst
Samstag, 10.02. 6pm		Deutscher Fasching in der katholischen St. Albertus Kirche
11.02.	10 Am Joint Service with worship Music and Coffee afterward	10 am Joint Service mit anderer Musik und anschließend Kirchenkaffee
13.02	12 pm Soup and Talk	12 pm Soup and Talk

14.02.	7 pm Ash Wednesday Joint Service in St. Peters Adress: 400 Sparks Street	7 pm Gottesdienst zum Aschermittwoch in St. Peters Church
18.02.	9.30 am English Service	11 am Deutscher Gottesdienst
Thursday, 22.02. 6pm	Holden Evening Prayer at Martin Luther Church	
25.02. No service in Church	Church on the road Faith Ottawa Church Meeting point 10 am Holocaust Monument 1918 CHaudiere Crossing Afterwards Coffee	Church on the road Faith Ottawa Church Meeting point 10 am Holocaust Monument 1918 CHaudiere Crossing Afterwards Coffee
Thursday, 29.02. 6pm	Holden Evening Prayer at Faith Ottawa Church	Adress: 43 Meadowlands Drive W

We are here for you

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www.glco.org

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