



Courier March – May 2026



Martin Luther Church Ottawa

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Devotion Motto of the year 2026**“See, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:5)**

God speaks these words not at the beginning of the Bible, but almost at its very end. They do not stand over an untouched new beginning, but over a story full of breaks, farewells, and hopes.

“See, I am making all things new” — God says this to people who know change, who have experienced loss, and who nevertheless are learning to hope.

This is how we hear the motto of the year for the year 2026 in a year that is also marked by change for our congregation. In the summer we will say farewell. After six years of ministry in Ottawa I will return to Germany. We look back on a shared journey: on worship services and conversations, on joy shared and sorrow carried together, on faith that was able to grow — sometimes quietly, sometimes powerfully.

Farewell hurts because relationships have been formed. And precisely in that there is something holy. In the Bible, farewells are never played down. They belong to God’s way with people. Abraham leaves his land, Moses leads the people to the border but is not allowed to go on with them himself, Paul takes leave of the congregations in tears. God does not work in spite of these transitions, but through them.

And yet God does not stop at farewell. He opens spaces for something new. A pastoral couple will come to you and continue the journey with you. We do not yet know how this new path will feel. But we may trust this: God is already there. He does not wait until everything is settled. He goes ahead of us. “I am making all things new,” says God — and means more than change on the surface. God’s renewal goes deeper. It touches hearts, trust, and hope. It happens where people entrust themselves to him, where they learn to let go and to receive. So we are invited to live this year spiritually: to shape the farewell consciously, to remember with gratitude, and at the same time to remain open to what God wants to give anew. Not by our own strength, but carried by his promise. For the one who says, “See, I am making all things new,” is the same God who was with us yesterday, who is with us today, and who is already waiting for us tomorrow.

Greetings from the German FASCHING in St. Albertus with the Quodlibet Choir



Report of the President

Dear Congregation, winter is here in all its severity. Let's hope it does not last too long.

Selection of new Pastor

It was appropriate that we had such weather when the candidates send by the EKD saw Ottawa in this weather.

As you know on January 9 Pastor K. with wife and 2 year old child was here and gave a bilingual service. Then on January 16 , the pastoral couple of Pastors Philipp Ross and Pastor Anne Ross did the same.

Both candidates where available for questions after the service and later in the afternoon at Pastor Kierschke's home. The council also interviewed all candidates in depth after the service. All candidates were fluently bilingual, had an impressive CV and answered all of our questions satisfactorily. In terms of the Ross couple, I made it clear to them that only one of them could be called and would get a salary from our church. The called pastor would get a special Work permit from Immigration Canada restricting him to work as a pastor. The other could apply and would get a general visa and could work anywhere. They decided that Philipp would apply as pastor, while Anne would use the time to finish her doctoral dissertation before looking for other work.

The council found both Pastors K. and Ross eminently suitable and decided not to make a recommendation to the church, but let the congregation decide.

Then on February 1, 2026 we had a special meeting of the congregation to select the future Pastor. There were 53 members of the church who voted either by proxy or in person. Of the 53 votes Pastor Ross got 39 and Pastor K. 14. According to our constitution the successful candidate needs to get a two thirds majority of all voters. In this case this meant 35 votes. As Pastor Ross got 42 he was declared the successful candidate.

Subsequent to the vote I spoke to both candidates and gave them the result.

Preparations for pastoral change over

Both the EKD and the ELCIC have been informed about our selection.

Now the EKD will send the ELCIC a letter that Pastor Ross meets the requirements of a pastor of the ELCIC. The ELCIC will then issue a letter of call to Pastor Ross to which we attach an employment contract between MLK and Pastor Ross.

On the basis of these documents Pastor Ross will then get a visa and work permit to work as



On Christ the King Sunday, Wesley Jack Way was baptized in our church.



Our confirmation students and their families once again helped with the “Out of the Cold” program this year (in November and January). It takes place at Knox Presbyterian Church, where people experiencing homelessness can enjoy a warm space, fellowship, and a delicious meal.



And as in previous years, we once again had a very beautiful nativity play in the German Christmas service, involving many members of the congregation



Do you still remember our first service of this year with the Three Wise Men, the reception afterward, and the challenge of who could paint the Three Kings best? I think they all turned out really well.



At the beginning of January, I took the donations you brought to church in December to the Carlington Community Chaplaincy. They are always received with great appreciation there and put to good use. Thank you very much!

The new Pastors for the Martin Luther Congregation, starting in summer 2026

January was quite an exciting time in our church. On two Sundays, potential new Pastors introduced themselves, and on February 1 everyone was invited to vote.

After the services, there was also an opportunity to get to know the candidates on a more personal level at the parsonage (pictured: the Ross couple).



Read a short introduction by Family Ross

We are Anne and Philipp (both 39), together with our three children Kolja (12), Adele (9), and Pina (6). We are excited about the time ahead of us!

Our time in Ottawa in January has been so lovely. We are looking forward to the congregation, the city, the country, and the culture. We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to broaden our horizons by living in Canada for an extended period. It is such a gift that our kids (but ourselves also!) get to experience different ways of doing things by living abroad. School can be different, church can be shaped in various ways, a society sets different rules. This openness to new perspectives is something that matters to us as a family.

We currently live south of Munich, at Lake Starnberg, where we have served as Pastors for the past five years. Both of us have been involved in a lot of youth work. Anne has also been engaged in the prevention of sexual violence and began writing her doctoral dissertation in Systematic Theology two years ago – she will complete it in Canada over the coming years. Alongside classic parish ministry, Philipp has experience with “being church differently”; by going out to meet people where they are – with a Coffee Ape, on skis, and in hiking boots. Job-sharing is not new to us. We have lived abroad as a family before, spending two years in Edinburgh, where we worked for the Church of Scotland.

Most of all, we look forward to getting to know you and shaping the rich life of the Martin Luther congregation together with you.

Family Ross



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

By Gunther Bauer

Christianity testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the event in which Jesus, the Son of God, rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion and appeared not only to his disciples but also to many others in the same form in which he had been before his crucifixion. The New Testament does not describe the process of Jesus' resurrection, but assumes it as the sole act of God, unseen and uninfluenced by any human (Mark 16:6).

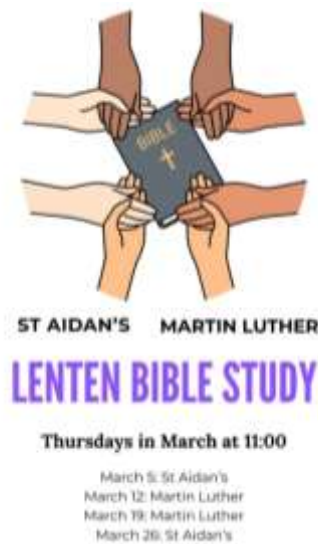
The Bible bears witness to this event because the disciples and others not only spoke with Jesus but also walked with him. This testimony is the foundation (1 Cor 15:5-8) of early Christian faith and of the belief that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. All the writings of the Bible originate from early Christians who were convinced of Jesus' bodily resurrection and made it the central content of their faith. Seventeen of the twenty-seven books of the Bible recount Jesus' resurrection. The remaining writings and sources, such as the Gospel of Thomas, presuppose the resurrection of Jesus. Those who saw the risen Jesus, spoke with him, or walked with him were named. Therefore, the early Christians could not present Jesus' resurrection in a detached manner but could only acknowledge it as a miraculous gift from God, confess it, and continue to share it.

Longer Easter narratives in the Bible are found at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. These are considered later narratives based on the original beliefs. Their content and sequence were traced back to the first Passion account of the early church. It is assumed that the author of this report was Mark, who wrote his Gospel around the year 70. He adopted and expanded the original account. Later evangelists further supplemented the expanded narrative.

In Paul's letters, there are inserted phrases with Greek words for "resurrection," "raising up," and "awakening." God restored Jesus' lifeless body to the living body he had before the crucifixion. Paul mentions Jesus' burial but does not mention an empty tomb (1 Cor 15:4). Faith in Jesus' resurrection could exist even without the discovery of the empty tomb. The empty tomb was found after the third day following the crucifixion. The statement "Jesus Christ rose again on the third day" is, biblically and in Paul's writing, total proof that the resurrection was complete and that Jesus appeared to his disciples.

Outlook: March to May 2026

In March, **Lenten Bible Studies** will take place, together with our neighboring congregation, St. Aidan's. We will meet weekly (Thursdays at 11 a.m.) either at St. Aidan's or with us, to look at the sermon text for the upcoming Sunday. All are warmly invited. March 5, 12, 19, and 26.



Easter Egg Painting

Since it was so much fun last year, we are once again inviting you to paint Easter eggs this year. We will meet on **March 21 at 3 p.m.** downstairs in the Martin Luther Church, and we kindly ask for a small contribution of \$5 per person.



Annual General Meeting (April 26)

After a joint worship service (starting at 10 a.m.), we will hold our Annual General Meeting again. Please attend in large numbers; otherwise, we cannot vote, and you will miss important matters of the congregation. All documents for the AGM will be available in the church beforehand. We are also very happy to welcome congregation members who want to participate in the Church Council. Please speak to Pastor Kierschke if you would like to join — we urgently need help here.

Confirmation (May 17) and Pentecost (May 24)

On May 17, we will celebrate Confirmation. This year we have three confirmands. We will have a joint confirmation service, as there are both German- and English-speaking confirmands, and they would like to celebrate the service together.

A week later, we will celebrate Pentecost, and as in previous years, we hope for good weather and will hold the Pentecost service in the church garden (please bring chairs and sun protection). Afterwards, ice cream and drinks, of course, will not be missing.

Dates March - May 2026

1. March	9.30 English Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
5. March 11 am	11 Lenten Bible Study (St Aidans)	
8. March	10 am Joint Service with Coffee	10 Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst mit Kaffee
10. March	12 Soup and Talk	12 Soup and Talk
12, March 11 am	11 Lenten Bible Study (Martin Luther)	
15. March	9.30 englisch service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
19. March 11 am	Lenten Bible Study (Martin Luther)	
Saturday, 21st March	3pm Easter Egg painting	3pm Ostereier anmalen
22. March	9.30 English service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
26. March 11 am	Lenten Bible Study St. Aidans	
29. March	9.30 Englische service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
3, April	Good Friday Service 10 am	Karfreitagsgottesdienst 3 pm
5. April	9.30 Easter Sunday with Easter Egg Hunt	Ostersonntag 11 am mit Ostereiersuche
6. April		Ökum. Ostermontagsgottesdienst in der Katholischen St. Albertuskirche mit Quodlibetchor
12. April	10am Joint Service with Coffee	10 Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst mit Kaffee
14. April	12 Soup & Talk	12 Soup & Talk
19. April	9.30 englisch service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
26. April With AGM	10 am Joint Service with AGM afterwards	10 am Gemeinsamer GD mit AGM im Anschluss
3. May	9.30 english Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
10. May	9.30 englisch Service	11 Deutscher Gottesdienst
12. May	Soup & Talk	12 Soup & Talk
17. May 10 am	Joint Confirmation Service	Gemeinsamer Konfirmationsgottesdienst

24. May	Joint Pentecost Service/ Outdoor in our Church Garden 10 am	Joint Service im Kirchgarten Pfingsten 10 am
31. May	9.30 Englisch Service	11 Joint Service

We are here for you

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