

Montreal Lutheran Council Annual Report
Report to the Annual Meeting-May 13, 2015
Submitted by Carol Meindl, council secretary

As this is the first annual report of the activities of the Montreal Lutheran Council, I thought I might start the this overview of MLC activities with 2013 when the MLC responded to Bill 60, the Quebec Charter of Values.

Response to Bill 60-In October of 2013 discussion ensued on the topic of the proposed Charter of Values in Quebec. *What is MLC doing? What should be our response?* Lutherans have a diverse ethnic background. We have a perspective of our own. It was decided to call a special meeting of the Montreal Lutheran Community to discuss Martin Luther' understanding of the separation of church and state and what do we, as Lutherans, mean about secularism?

It was moved that the Montreal Lutheran Council should hold a special meeting to discuss the Charter of Quebec Values. After some consideration, it was decided that the venue would be St John's Lutheran at 7:00pm and the date would be November 28th. Three guest speakers addressed the issue from a different perspective: Dr. John Faithful Hamer, Dr. Rev. David Pfrimmer and Dr. Jarrett Carty. La Presse did pick up the story and print it. A team consisting of Rev. Eric Dyck, and Rev. Jim Slack drafted an English response in December 2013 and submitted a draft to the Council for commentary. A French response (translation thanks to David Schulze) was produced in January 2014, with a cover letter, and sent to the National Assembly. The Gazette took the statement and published it as a letter to the editor. It was posted on the St. John's website as well as the MLC website. Our videos from the Charter Debate in February 2014 is still up on the website and can be seen.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity held a special prayer service on January 19, 2014 at Christ Church Cathedral with a small reception afterwards. Each denomination brought a special gift and the Lutheran contribution was "sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia".

Conference- Beyond Dream Catcher, an event sponsored by the Dept of Theological Studies, Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability, Concordia's First Nations Studies, The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal. January 31- February 1, 2014. The National Lutheran Church was big on promoting partnerships with aboriginal communities. This would be an excellent opportunity for MLC to be involved. MLC sponsored a Saturday morning coffee break at the event.

Easter Vigil – Another time honoured tradition. On April 19, 2014, the Annual Easter Vigil was held at St John's Lutheran Church. MLC contributed \$300 toward the refreshment expenses. Many of the Pastors participated along with members of several congregations. The service usual features some special music offering and a party afterwards, with dancing and a chocolate fountain. This year the service was

on April 5, 2015, and again, saw participation from several of the Lutheran Congregations as well as some of our Anglican brothers and sisters.

Congregational Leader's Workshop -Synod provided a meeting with Riitta Hepomaki to discuss congregational cooperation. The meeting was held at St Ansgar's, in NDG. A Congregational Leader's Workshop was held on May 31 from 9:00am - 3:30pm at Christ the Redeemer. Synod requested a minimum of five leaders per congregation to attend the event. Riitta Hepomaki and Jeff Pym facilitated the session. A Treasurer's Workshop was held the same day 9:00 - 3:30 also at Christ the Redeemer.

Keith Myra was available to facilitate the workshop for Treasurers and Financial Secretaries. Rev. Eric Dyck reminded Keith Myra of the efforts David Schulze had made to clarify the unique situation Lutheran congregation experience in the province of Quebec and to bring that information to the Quebec Treasurers. Members from many of the Lutheran Congregations took advantage of the opportunity and participated.

Synod June 26-29, 2014 Montreal Night- The idea of a Montreal reception or refreshment break (wine, bagels, cheese) at the Eastern Synod Assembly was broached. This was an activity from the MLC much appreciated by the assembly delegates in the past but was dropped for lack of volunteers. They were very excited to have our bagels and cream cheese back again because there would be an open bar available but no hors d'oeuvres. The Convention manager was contacted and a time has been allotted to us at the Opening reception. Once we had permission, it was agreed that there would be sufficient volunteers to make the necessary preparations. Charlotte and Jim Slack, (CTR) Peter Schleicher, Eric Dyck (St John's). Elizabeth, and Gerard and Ingeborg Randall Cooke (St Paul's) indicated their availability.

The turnout was good despite less than the 300 delegates attended as they were split between the opening reception and the VIP reception for retired clergy. 500 bagels and 40 Kg of cream cheese were served!

August Congregational Picnic- The annual picnic date is another time tested event set for Late summer every year and owes much of its success to the division of labour that makes the event easy to prepare for and to run. Carol Meindl contacts the Slovenians and reserves the date. Rev. Dyck makes the request for renewed effort for more members of the Lutheran Congregations to participate as this is an excellent inter congregational event. The tasks for the event are divided amongst the various congregations.

- Service Booklet- Eric Dyck ,St John's
- Children's Message- pastors rotate doing the children's message
- Sermon-duty: rotates between the pastors

- Children's games- St John's Lutheran
- Adult Games- St John's Estonian/Christ the Redeemer
- Raffles- Christ the Redeemer will set up a table- all congregations contribute prizes. Money collected goes to CLWR
- Loose offering goes to expenses/ envelopes are divided up between the congregations appropriately.
- Bean bag games money goes to expenses
- Drinks- Coffee- St John's Estonian (there is a bowl for contributions)
Cold Drinks- St. Ansgar's
- Clean- up- Everyone pitches in

Whether the weather is fine or foul (and we have picnicked through hurricanes) everyone has a great time.

Gospel Call: An ecumenical (Christian Unity) Renewal Mission Event-This was an event supported by the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism and the Archdiocese of Montreal. Speakers were Father Tom Ryan and Rev. John Armstrong. Christ the Redeemer Lutheran hosted a meal and session for leaders (lay and Ordained) on Tuesday October 28, from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. Jim Slack sent posters that list all the venues to put on the MLC website.

Sweater Drive in November for CLWR- In addition to the contributions of St John's Lutheran and St Ansgar's Lutheran dropping sweaters off at Hogg's hardware in Westmount, there were also efforts made from the other congregations. St Paul's sent Sweaters to Home Hardware in Cornwall, the German Choir sent 3 big boxes of sweaters to our Lady of Fatima, Good Shepherd gave a significant financial donation to the cause and St John's Estonian also donated sweaters. CLWR was overwhelmed by the overall success of the drive.

Right Relations with Aboriginal Peoples- There has been a directive from the National Church to engage with our First nation neighbours. There will be some practical activities planned with the Kahnawake people but it is important to contact the right people and negotiations are on going.

Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal (CJDM) - Carol Meindl had her first meeting with the Christian/Jewish Dialogue in Montreal. She expressed great enthusiasm for the group and reported on a book that was discussed "The Sacred Encounter: Sexuality and Judaism" She felt any one of the 15 or so essays in the collection would make for some good discussion group topic. She will inform the council when the book is available. Carol indicated a keen interest in continuing to be part of this dialogue on behalf of the MLC and motion was made to appoint her the official representative of the MLC on the CJDM. Carol's involvement with the CJDM led to the proposal that MLC host the 2015 Christian Commemoration of the Shoah. She continues to bring the Lutheran perspective to this ecumenical table.

Christian Commemoration of the Shoah Planning Committee -April 12 at St Ansgar's

(CJDM) Carol Meindl (sub-committee Chair), Victor Goldbloom (CJDM Chair), Jean Duhaime, Marsha Levy, Rabbi Ellen Greenspan, and Rona Nadler (Cantor)

(St Ansgar's) Rev. Samuel King Kabu, Roger Kenner, and Loren Carle (Music Director)

The Commemoration Rite was set within the regular Sunday service of the host congregation and called for seven (7) Candle lighters, to light each of seven memorial candles in memory of the 6 million Jews who were murdered during the Second World Wars as well as the others who also fell victim to the Nazis. The Rite also included testimony from a Holocaust Survivor, this year, from Judith Black. The following representatives lit the seven memorial candles: 1) Judith Black, survivor; 2) Kathleen Weil, MNA for Notre Dame de Grace; 3) Ziv Nevo Kulman, Consul General for Israel; 4) Sheryl Beller Kenner, Chabad Monkland/NDG; 5) Ilona Weinstein, Baha'i; 6) Thérèse Klein, CJDM; 7) Loren Carle, St. Ansgar's Church. Although the service is primarily in English, some prayers and songs were sung in the Hebrew language.

Approximately 75 people attended the service, both from the congregation of St Ansgar's and from the larger community. Special guests, such as David Birnbaum MNA for D'Arcy McGee, and Russel Copeman, Councillor for City of Montreal were in attendance.

Refreshments for the reception afterwards were provided by Quality Kosher Bakery and the cost was covered by the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal. MLC helped cover the cost of the printing of the service booklets.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief Visits in January 2015 – Tom Brook and Bob Granke attended a wine and cheese reception at Christ the Redeemer the Saturday night, Jan 10th, 2015 . On Sunday, Jan 11, Tom Brook was at Good Shepherd, St Lamberts in the morning and then joined Bob Granke at St John's to give a presentation on Augustana Hospital in Jerusalem. Both men were satisfied with their reception and the thoughtful questions they received.

Annual Meeting: At a Montreal Lutheran Council meeting the idea of an annual meeting for the Lutheran congregations in Montreal was explored. The Program would include installation of the Montreal Lutheran Ministry Area Leadership Team followed by a showing of a pilgrimage film by Matthew Anderson. A date of Wednesday, May 13 was suggested.

This report gives you an idea of the regular programming of the Montreal Lutheran Council as well as the various opportunities to participate in special events that emerge throughout the year. The activities of the Montreal Lutheran Council

provide opportunities for Lutherans in Montreal to come together with one another as well as with other denominations and faiths.