



All Saints, Guelph
St. James, Manheim
St. Luke's, Kitchener
St. Matthews, Kitchener
St. Paul's (Bridgeport), Kitchener
St. Pauls, Cambridge
St. Peter's, Cambridge
St. Peter's, Kitchener
St. Stephen, Kitchener

Gather at the River

Grand River Ministry Area
April 2020 Newsletter

Courageous Conversations

My congregation recently held a series of interfaith learning sessions after worship. For each session we invited a non-Lutheran presenter to talk with us, starting with these three questions: What would you like people outside your faith community to know about your faith? What are some symbols of your faith, and what do they mean? What are some challenges faced by members of your faith community?

Part of the power of such a presentation is that in asking questions of others, we are prompted to consider how we would answer them about our own faith. As we build relationships both within and beyond our faith community, it can be helpful to explore the ground on which we ourselves are standing. Surprisingly, it can be difficult to discuss these ideas with members of our own faith community, as we sometimes have different answers.

What is most important in your beliefs? When do you feel awe? How do you talk with God? I have attached a brochure filled with questions to act as starting points. As you consider questions, ask them of others, and share your answers as well. In this time of Lent and of physical distancing, we have time to ponder, and then to find ways to share with others.

- Jan Hansen, Member of St. Stephen and of the Ministry Area's Leadership Team

Area Picnic

On Sunday June 7, the back yard at St. Luke's will fill with Lutherans for our fourth annual area-wide picnic. Worship will begin at 10:30 and will be followed by a lunch and time to connect with friends from your own and other congregations. Rev. Brice Balmer, who is a Mennonite pastor who recently retired from Martin Luther University College, will be preaching. As in former years, The Rocks will lead the music.

Bring your own lawn chair and a hat for the sun that we are hoping to have. We will be collecting a free-will offering to cover the cost of the meal and the bouncy castle.

Area Leadership Team Update

Our Grand River Area Ministry Leadership Team met in March. We will decide closer to the picnic about accommodations we need to make regarding current health concerns. We also discussed gathering members of various congregations on a Sunday afternoon in October for what we hope will become an annual learning event. Two potential topics that we are considering are MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) and Poverty. Please let us know what you think about these as possible topics, and send any additional ideas for possible discussion topics to GrandRiverLutherans@gmail.com

This newsletter is sent to Rostered Leaders, church offices and any who are interested. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please send a request to GrandRiverLutherans@gmail.com.

Summer Lutheran Youth Camp

Imagine a week of intentional Christian community in a beautiful outdoor setting for your congregation's confirmation and high school youth.

When Edgewood closed, the group that used to be called Contract Confirmation Camp found a new location – Camp Kintail, a beautiful Presbyterian camp on the shores of Lake Huron, 30 km south of Kincardine. There we found wonderfully well-maintained facilities that have greatly expanded the opportunities we are able to provide campers. We have been able to grow our camp beyond its “confirmation camp” origins to become a Lutheran Youth Camp, and are looking to expand our camp beyond the twelve congregations it currently serves.

Camp takes place during the last full week (Sunday to Friday) before Labour Day. If you are a leader or pastor who thinks this might be a ministry for your youth, contact pastor Brian Wilker at pastor@faithlutheranbrantford.com.

Vacation Bible School

Bridges VBS is a fun filled week! With a full day program for kids ages 5 through 11, and volunteer opportunities for youth and adults.

Our day runs 9am to 4pm (July 6 to 10) with lunch and snack included. Kids aged 5 to 11 will grow faith through worship, crafts, games, music, Bible stories, science experiments and visitors doing great work in our community.

The \$100 cost per child, includes lunches, snacks, and a t-shirt in your team colour! This fee only covers our costs to bring you this program. Our VBS is run entirely by volunteers like you! (Contact us if you would like to help.)

To register, or for more information, contact Heidi at bridgesvbs@gmail.com or check out <https://bridgesvbs.weebly.com>.

Sharing What We Do

We again hope to publicize activities of the area's congregations by putting up posters at the picnic with two or three activities from each congregation. Last year's posters are attached as examples. If we do not hear back from a congregation, we will look at your web site, or we will use the same activities as last year.

Please send information on activities to GrandRiverLutherans@gmail.com.

Online Connections to Faith

Please take care of yourselves and, if you are able, reach out to those who might feel isolation more keenly. As we maintain physical distance, resources are being developed to support our faith and maintain community. For example:

Bishop Susan is tweeting a daily hymn and prayer. Her **twitter** feed is @National Bishop.

Two Rivers Ministry Area (which is Waterloo and areas north of us) has a web site: <https://trmalutherans.ca> with a tab for **livestream worship**. Karen Kuhnert, pastor at St. James in St. Jacobs, is the presider. You can participate live or watch recordings.

TRMA also has a **TV ministry** tab (or check www.stpeterskw.ca for info). St. Peter's now broadcasts live from the empty church. We invite prayer requests (i.e. first name and location) to pastormark@stpeterskw.ca. We will include as many as possible. Worship airs at 10AM EDT on April 5 and April 26 via CTV.

St. Matthew's is continuing our Golden Hour **radio** service on Sundays at 11:00 on Faith FM 93.7 or on Rogers 926

There is a new **youtube channel** called “Young Canadian Lutherans”. You can find them at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS4LsVeICVsQdmpPiUrgr8A>

Contact us at GrandRiverLutherans@gmail.com with info about events to which you would like to invite the rest of the area. The deadline for the next issue is June 15.