



Faith Country
Shared Ministry

Faith Country Chronicle

October 2018



October 2018 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

Cathy and I were privileged to travel with our Synod youth and home team leaders on the ABT Synod bus trip to and from the CLAY (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth gathering) 2018 in Thunder Bay. Soon you will read some of my thoughts regarding the CLAY gatherings in the October-November edition of the Canada Lutheran. Here is the full article:

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020, the joint youth gathering between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church in Canada, which will take place in Calgary, AB., on the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT).

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020 because I'm a youth gathering fanatic. I've been to several, well thirteen gatherings, and only missed two since being ordained a Pastor because I was facilitating a youth journey to the Lutheran Centre in Mexico City, and because I had just received a call to serve as Assistant to the Bishop.

I'm counting the days. Let me tell you why:

The bus trip. There is nothing better than travelling for several days on a packed bus handing out snacks, teasing, laughing, watching movies, singing, worshipping together, sharing the Eucharist, packing and unpacking. Some of my fondest and most vivid memories of Gatherings are of the bus trip. It is true, that it is all about the journey not the destination.

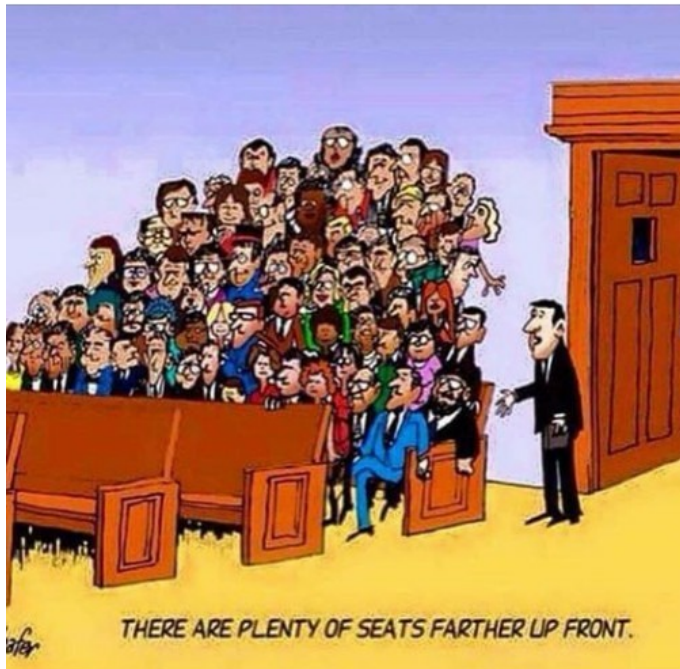
Forming community. There is nothing better than conversation, opportunity for prayer, listening, learning, building relationships with youth and leaders...and knowing that we are not alone.

Leadership development. There is nothing better than encouraging and affirming gifts for leadership in youth. Gathering after gathering, whether national or synodical, youth are given opportunities to share in and develop their leadership skills. Reading scripture at worship, being in charge of loading a bus, leading in prayer each morning as the bus doors close and the journey continues, gathering in small groups. Walking with a youth who begins as a gathering participant, becomes a home team leader and then storyteller at CLAY 2018.

Hearing stories from and learning from the youth. There is nothing better than hearing and learning from the youth. Gathering at CLAY 2018 under the theme, "Threads," there was much time spent on story-telling, story-tending, and what it truly means to listen. Five Large Group Gatherings (LGG) tended to the following themes/questions, including: How to listen to the stories of others, How to trust God in our unravelling, Where God fits within our stories, Good news stories from God, and Where do we go from here as unfinished but beloved children of God? Throughout CLAY 2018, there were opportunities for all to share our own stories and practice tending to the stories of others, with Home Team members, strangers, and new friends, and even Bishops!

Working together. There is nothing better than working together toward a common goal. At CLAY 2018, for example, with different home teams and CLAY volunteers, the youth continued to fulfil their commitment to address issues such as homelessness and unaffordable housing through the National Youth Project. By first learning of the issues contributing to poverty and homelessness, and then acting and advocating in supporting the local networks and agencies through partner programs, the youth visited a mock homeless shelter, gathered/donated socks, and sent postcards to the Federal Government and local Members of Parliament, in hopes of raising awareness

and advocating for a greater responsibility and



accountability in addressing the underlying causes of homelessness.

Learning together. There is nothing better than a common learning experience. While at CLAY 2018, for example, participants took part in the second-largest KAIROS blanket exercise in the world, and the largest ever by youth. This learning experience helped

participants gain a better understanding of colonization and the process of displacement endured by Indigenous Peoples here in Canada. De-briefing in home teams which followed, was facilitated by Indigenous Elders and Leaders who were also present to provide support during the exercise.

Worshipping together. There is nothing better than singing, praying, laughing, crying, dancing, receiving, giving, Eucharist together.

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020.

I'm already counting the days to CLAY 2020 because I'm a youth gathering fanatic. I'm looking forward to my fourteenth gathering.

Oh, and I'm counting the days to the Synod of Alberta and the Territories 2019 Youth Gathering, June 3-5! Watch for further information coming soon.

In Christ Jesus –

Shalom,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

“How Can Christian Parents Deal with Empty-Nest Syndrome?”

Answer: Anyone who has observed birds with their fledglings can attest to the matter-of-fact parenting techniques the birds instinctively ascribe to: encourage or push baby out of the nest; show the chick how to stretch and flap its wings; and teach it to fly, to land, and how to avoid prowling cats and other things that might harm it. In the bird world, it's all pretty cut and dried. No sentimentality. Fledglings are nudged out of the warm nest into the cold world. Never once has a nature photographer captured an image of a mother bird wringing her wings as she contemplates what possible purpose she serves in this world now that her nest is empty.

Birds may not suffer from empty-nest syndrome, but people do. An empty nester is a parent whose children have grown and moved away from home.

Empty-nest syndrome is the emotional letdown felt by parents at that stage of life when they say “good-bye” to their children and watch them walk out the door as adults. Empty-nest syndrome is the anticlimactic feeling of disappointment that often invades the hearts of parents who must adjust to a new stage of life, allow for changing relationships with their children, find new activities for themselves, and struggle with thoughts of whether they did enough to prepare their children for an adult world.

Christian parents have done much to prepare their children for the time when they leave home. Beyond imparting basic survival techniques, Christians have taught their children to love God, to love their neighbors, and to know and treasure the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:6–9; Matthew 22:35–40; 2 Timothy 3:15). Christian parents have modeled God's love and provision for their children (Matthew 7:10–12), and they've disciplined their children so

that they enter the world with self-control and respect for authority (Psalm 103:13; Hebrews 12:10). At the end of the day, after all the preparation, many Christian parents still face empty-nest syndrome.

What does the Bible suggest for parents who are facing empty-nest syndrome, and is there any way to avoid the almost universal feeling of regret when the children fly the coop?

First, it should be noted that human parents, unlike bird parents, never outgrow their connection with their children. Christian parents can do several things that will continue to greatly bless and instruct their children in the empty-nest years:

1. Understand that God's perfect parenting serves as a safety net. Empty-nest syndrome is exacerbated by regrets over mistakes we may have made in rearing our children. Undoubtedly, all parents make mistakes. Impatience, quick tempers, ill-advised words, etc., have created less-than-picture-perfect moments. Divorce, untimely death, addictions, or other traumas may have left scars on the family. But God's great plans for our children are not thwarted by imperfect parenting—otherwise, we would all be doomed. God does not waste any experience in the lives of His children. Instead, He uses both the good and the bad happenings to mold and grow our children into the men and women He designed them to be.

2. Pray for them. The effects of empty-nest syndrome can be mitigated through prayer for our children. Part of treasuring our children is to turn their growing and changing over to their Creator. Our children will face challenges, obstacles, struggles, triumphs, failures, and doubts as they transition into adulthood. Ask God to protect them, strengthen them, and give them wisdom, maturity, and opportunities to grow in their faith. And then ask God to help you let go.

3. Provide a refuge for them. Empty nesters have not said "good-bye" to their children forever. Children made weary from continuous days of difficult "adulthood" will return home from time to time. During these times, welcome them back into your nest, encourage them, advise them when they ask for advice, and enjoy their company.

4. Provide a safe place to fail. When our children blow it, as sometimes happens, we should provide a home that welcomes them without judgment and gives them a soft place to land while they lick their wounds. We should not enable sin, but we can and should extend mercy. The father of the prodigal son met his wayward child with celebration and an embrace (Luke 15:11–27). There is no verse in the Bible that advises us to say, "I told you so."

5. Provide sage advice when asked. It's amazing how, in the eyes of our young adult children, we suddenly become smarter and more insightful as empty nesters. When our adult children reach out to us for counsel, we need to be ready to give prayerful, biblical advice.

6. Embrace this new stage of relationship. Part of what makes empty-nest syndrome such a melancholy experience is the remembrance of the past stages of our relationship with our children. We remember the baby stage and how we wished they would remain that way. And the toddler stage, the school years, the high school adventures—at many stages in our relationship with our children, we may have thought it was the best stage, only to find that each stage is profoundly meaningful, fraught with challenges, and extremely valuable. This next stage—the empty-nest stage—is just as meaningful and valuable. Our role as parents does not end; it simply evolves as it has from day one.

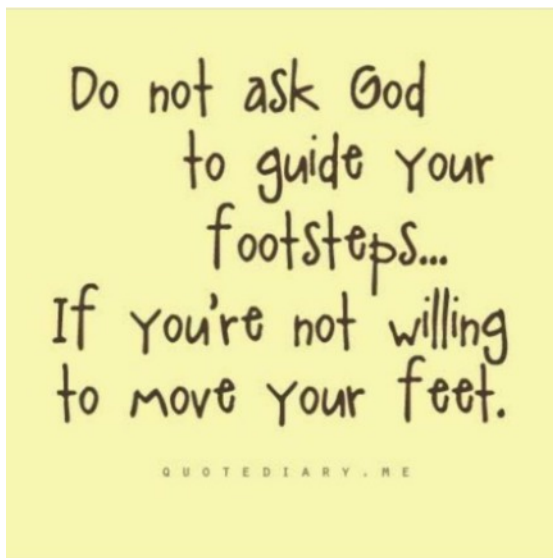
7. Seek God for what might be next in your own development. We aren't put out to pasture when our youngest child heads out into the world. The empty-nest years can be a time to do things we had no time for in the active parenting years: host a Bible study, take a class, pursue a ministry, pick up a hobby, etc. Empty nesters face a new season, and we all continue to grow in our faith—parenting was not our only gig. What opportunities are open to us now? What promptings of the Spirit do we sense? It's time to explore.

God has made for empty nesters our own kind of nest, a time and place where we can grow in new ways. In the end, the best course Christian parents can take in dealing with empty-nest syndrome is to remain steadfast in their love for each other, be committed to teaching and demonstrating biblical principles, and fill in the gaps with prayer, trusting God to lead their children in the way they should go (Isaiah 48:17). Christian parents can trust that

the God who has provided for their own needs and used trials and experiences to grow their own faith will also do the same for their children. Jesus taught, "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow

or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you [and your children] not much more valuable than they?" (Matthew 6:26). With God's promise of provision, it's good and right to encourage our fledglings from the nest.

The empty-nest years, like every stage of life, are to be lived in faith. Our Heavenly Father desires for us to trust in Him, come what may. As our children stretch their wings and take their first wobbly flights, we can be comforted by our and their Father, the One who gave them wings, the One ready to guide them, the One able to catch them should they falter.



Don't forget to begin collecting items for your reverse Advent calendar.

We'll begin collecting the food at the churches in November.



FAITH COUNTRY SHARED MINISTRY

~ October 2018 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 World Vegetarian Day	2	3	4	5	6
7 10:30 Trinity Communion Service	8 Thanksgiving	9	10 1:30 Acts 29 (Hope)	11	12	13
14 9:15 Eucharist Service - St. John's 11:15 Communion Service Hope	15	16	17	18	19	20 East Central Conference - Zion, Bashaw
21 10:30 Trinity Song Service 12:00 Trinity Worship Committee meets at Randi's	22 National Nut Day	23	24 United Nations Day	25	26	27
28 9:15 Morning Prayer - St. John's 11:15 Communion Service - Hope	29	30	31 Halloween	Notes:		



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~ November 2018 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:30 FCSSM Council Meets at St. John's	2	3
4 10:30 Trinity Communion Service	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Remembrance Day No Service at St. John's today due to Remembrance Day services. 5:30 Remembrance Day supper & service at Hope	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 10:30 Trinity Song Service	19	20	21 RBC Sports Day in Canada 1:30 Hope Worship Committee	22	23	24
25 9:15 Morning Prayer - St. John's 11:15 Communion Service - Hope 1:00 Hope Council Meeting	26	27	28	29	30	Notes: