



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of **Edmonton**

**Office of
Ecumenical and
Interreligious Relations**

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2015 - 16

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Background

Since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the Archdiocese of Edmonton has maintained, in some form or other, an ecumenical and interreligious ministry.

Throughout the 1970's, an “**ecumenical commission**” of priests, religious and lay people offered workshops in parishes to introduce the ecumenical vision of the Council into the life of the Archdiocese. Those “early years” generated a great deal of ecumenical excitement and fervour:

There were week-long sessions, many weekends, many one-day sessions, as well as evenings and ecumenical retreats all dedicated to study and dialogue. Facilitators, with doctorates in ecumenism and theology, came from various parts of Canada and the United States. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese with the Anglican and Lutheran dioceses, as well as the United Church Presbytery gave a face to dialogue in Edmonton and area. The archdiocese has a history of dialogue with these three denominations.

(Sr. Rosaleen Zdunich, “Letter to the Editor,” *Western Catholic Reporter*, April 30, 2012)

In 1980, **Sr. Rosaleen Zdunich** became a volunteer member of the Archdiocese’s Commission for Ecumenism; by 1983 she had been named the Chair by Archbishop MacNeil. One of her many early endeavors in this role included coordinating a 1986 interfaith prayer service/dialogue at an Edmonton synagogue. Sister Rosaleen also served as a member of the team that planned Edmonton’s first ecumenical prayer service to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an event that has flourished and grown every year since. She also initiated through Newman Theological College the first Summer Ecumenical Institute, a project that continued in Edmonton for some years before being taken over by the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism in Saskatoon. Through institutions like the Edmonton & District Council of Churches, the Archdiocese maintained a very active and vibrant ecumenical ministry throughout the 1980’s.

Sr. Rosaleen was succeeded in the ecumenical ministry of the Archdiocese by **Ms. Cathy Harvey** and a part-time office assistant: both hired part-time by the Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission in the mid-1990’s. An excellent events coordinator, Ms. Harvey oversaw Catholic participation in several large interchurch events and activities held in Edmonton, including the Jubilee 2000 Christian festival and an international conference of the Association of Interchurch Families in 2001. The Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission continued to meet monthly during this time under the chairing of various people – lay, religious and ordained.

In 2002, **Mr. Julien Hammond** was hired by Archbishop Collins as full-time “Ecumenical Officer” of the Archdiocese. He continued to work with the part-time ecumenical office assistant and the responsibility of chairing the Commission was turned over to the Ecumenical Officer. The Commission continued to meet monthly during this time as Julien began representing the Archdiocese on boards and committees of many well-established ecumenical and interfaith structures at work in the Edmonton area: the Edmonton & District Council of Churches, the

Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action, the Phoenix Multi-faith Society for Harmony, Faith in Action, and several others. At the same time, as one formally trained in ecumenical and interfaith ministry, Julien was also called upon to serve the Catholic community (parishes, schools, prisons, hospitals, social services) as an advisor and teacher on ecumenical and interreligious matters. Much of this work and these associations continue to the present.

In 2004, as part of a larger re-structuring process in the Archdiocese, the office assistant position was discontinued, the Ecumenical Commission was disbanded and replaced by an “Ecumenical Office.” The Office continued to be staffed on a quarter-time basis by Julien Hammond, who was at the same time named as Director of Pastoral Services for the Archdiocese. The addition of supervisory and administrative duties effectively restricted the type and scope of initiatives that could be undertaken in the name of ecumenical and interreligious relations in the Archdiocese.

In 2008, in the midst of a second re-structuring led by Archbishop Smith, Julien Hammond was re-assigned as Director of Evangelization & Catechesis, all the while maintaining the quarter-time ecumenical/interreligious portfolio. In this new capacity, Julien continued to emphasize teaching and formation as the key functions of the Office.

In 2013, Archbishop Smith initiated an operational review of all the ministries serving out of the pastoral and administrative offices of the Archdiocese. As a result of this review, a new pastoral plan for ecumenical and interreligious relations was drawn up, and Julien Hammond was reappointed in January 2014 as full-time “Ecumenical Officer.”



Mission Statement:

The Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations exists to promote unity and reconciliation between Catholics and members of other Churches and ecclesial communities within the Archdiocese; it also fosters relations of respect and understanding between Christians and members of other faith communities present in the Archdiocese. The Office provides support and training for activities related to ecumenical and interreligious prayer, education, dialogue and various social action initiatives.

Coordinator's Report - Julien Hammond



2015-2016 was a very busy year in the E&I Office of the Archdiocese. Week by week, month by month, we made significant progress on the pastoral plan approved for the office in January 2014. I am pleased to report that we were able to complete many of the goals that we set out for the year; others were advanced and will carry over into the year ahead. **I would like to thank Archbishop Smith, my supervisor Teresa, my assistant Barbara, members of the Advisory Committees serving the office, and my many colleagues in the Department of Parish and Pastoral Services and throughout the Archdiocese for their moral and prayer support.** Without their assistance and advice at times, I certainly would not have been as effective in advancing the mission of the office this past year.

Much of what I have to report is contained in the pages that follow. I hope you will take time to peruse this report to see everything that we accomplished together in the last year in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I am proud of all that we were able to accomplish and I recognize in all of it the working of the Holy Spirit. I hope that you will agree with this assessment.

Some highlights of the year for me include:

- **Interreligious “Picnic in the Park” in honour of the Year of Consecrated Life.** In August 2015, we invited Buddhist monastics, Muslim Sufis and practitioners of Jainism to gather with Catholic Religious Women and Men for an interreligious picnic celebrating consecrated life in all its many manifestations in the world. The event took place on the grounds and in the three main buildings of our Catholic Campus in Edmonton. Archbishop Smith welcomed participants to St. Joseph’s Seminary, where attendees participated in an interreligious prayer service in the Seminary’s community room. The group then moved to Newman Theological College where a vegetarian picnic was served on the patio and in the student lounge area. Participants then moved to the Auditorium of the PAO building to watch a screening of Edmonton film-maker Beth Wishart Mackenzie’s *Brothers in the Buddha*. This film was shot on location at Edmonton’s Truc Lam Monastery and we were honoured to have two of the brothers featured in the film join us for a discussion afterward. The event was a fun and creative way to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life. **Thank you to the many hands and creative minds, and the dozens of members of Catholic religious orders, who came together to make the day a reality.**



- Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Church’s Relations to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate).** The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops produced two beautiful print resources to mark the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* throughout the country. Copies of all these materials were shared with every parish, school and institution in the Archdiocese, using our weekly diocesan news e-bulletin, *Quid Novum*. Additionally, at the end of November 2015 we were honoured to welcome back to the Archdiocese, Fr. Lawrence Frizzell, a CAEDM priest and professor who has spent most of his ministry in the service of Jewish-Christian Relations at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, USA. Fr. Frizzell offered a faculty seminar on “Jesus & Jewish Prayer” at Newman Theological College on Nov. 26, 2015. On Nov. 29, he participated in a *Nostra Aetate* 50th anniversary event at Beth Israel Synagogue, along with Auxiliary Bishop Gregory Bittman, Rabbis Daniel Friedman and Klie Rose, and well over two hundred Catholic and Jewish attendees. The event was reported in two articles in the Dec. 7, 2015 edition of the Western Catholic Reporter. **What a privilege it was to be a part of these events and to mark this important anniversary in this way!**



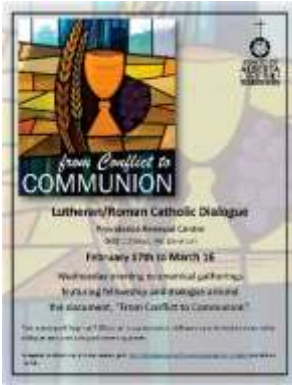
- Historic Meeting between Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill.** On February 12, for the first time in history, a Roman Catholic pope met face to face with the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church. Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill concluded their meeting in Cuba by signing a joint declaration that covers persecution, religious freedom, poverty, the family, and much more.



At the Pastoral and Administration Offices, Bishop Gregory Bittman, Chancellor Fr. Adam Lech and Father Danylo Kuc, Ecumenical Officer of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, were honoured to host Father Sergei Kipriyanovich, Rector of St. Barbara Russian Orthodox Cathedral (centre), (right) to watch live coverage of the meeting along with members of the PAO staff.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this activity and/or made it possible for us to mark this historic occasion.

- **Lenten Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue Series.** On five Wednesday evenings during Lent



2016, Roman Catholics and Evangelical Lutherans gathered at the Providence Renewal Centre in Edmonton to consider how our two churches might prepare to mark together the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. This activity was co-sponsored by the Synod of Alberta & the Territories (ELCIC) and the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton. Each evening featured a new theme based on the document ["From Conflict to Communion"](#) and followed a unique format. The 2016 Lenten dialogue series advanced our local churches toward “the

purification and healing of memories, and the restoration of Christian unity in accordance with the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (*From Conflict to Communion*, Foreword). **We were encouraged to press on with plans for other activities that will prepare our churches to mark Reformation 500 anniversary together and we trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide our way into closer fellowship and obedience within the Body of Christ.**

- **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)-Roman Catholic International Dialogue Meeting.**

The Fourth Session of the Fifth Phase of the Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue took place in Calgary, June 17-22, 2016. The meeting in Calgary provided the Commission with the opportunity to make various different local contacts. The Ecumenical Officer of the Diocese of Calgary, Deacon Adrian Martens, and I co-hosted a meeting with the parishioners of St. Mary’s Cathedral after the Sunday Mass presided by the Most Rev. David Ricken and attended by all the members of the Commission. Likewise, on Monday 21 June, after a Celebration of the Lord’s Supper by the Disciples that included the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Garbin, Regional Minister of the Disciples of Christ Canada, members of the Campbell-Stone United Church of Calgary heard some information about the dialogue itself and had the opportunity to interact with the members of the dialogue. The Commission was greeted



by the Most Rev. Frederick Henry, Catholic Bishop of Calgary at a meeting which included the staff of St. Mary's University and Alberta Bible College (founded in the Disciples tradition).

Thank you to the Faithful Companions of Jesus for their support and hospitality during these meetings, and to our many ecumenical partners in Calgary who came together to make this activity a wonderful success.

Aside from these many events and projects, perhaps the most satisfying aspect of the past year has been the witness of people from all over the Archdiocese coming together to serve Christ through ecumenical and interreligious ministries. I am grateful to be able to be a part of it all, even if only in a supporting role.

Thank you to our pastors and many lay leaders who support the work of the office with their prayers and tangible supports in various ways. Words cannot convey how grateful I am to serve a community of such ecumenical openness and collaborative spirit.

I give thanks for the year past and pray to the Lord for guidance and strength for the year ahead.

With gratitude for the support of many prayers, in Christ,
Julien

PROGRAM AREA REPORTS

A. Ecumenical and Interreligious Formation

One of the key purposes of the E&I Office of the Archdiocese is to provide resourcing and support for ecumenical and interreligious formation both within the Archdiocese and with partners in the community. Such formation occurs in a variety of settings and through various means:

➤ **Presentations/Publications:**

- August 31, 2015: “Welcoming, Loving, Forgiving, Encouraging: Being Agents of Hope and Mercy among all Believers” for Faith Development Day of Evergreen Catholic School Division (Spruce Grove, AB)
- September 8, 2015: “Reflections on Study Tour to Turkey.” Board meeting of IDI-Edmonton (Nebula Academy, Edmonton)
- October 16, 2015: “Introduction to Ecumenical/Interreligious Ministry” Archdiocesan Hospitality Workshop (PAO)
- November 2, 2015: “Introduction to Ecumenism” Introduction to Theology course (Newman Theological College, Edmonton)
- November 16, 2015: “Introduction to Interreligious Relations” Introduction to Theology course (Newman Theological College, Edmonton)
- November 16, 2015: “Preparing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016.” Lay Formation Program (Newman Theological College, Edmonton)
- November 16, 2015: Guest Lecture for FTH 402/FND 230 Christianity and the World’s Religions (Newman Theological College, Edmonton)
- November 26, 2015: “Jesus & Jewish Prayer” Joint NTC-SJC-SJS Faculty Seminar, featuring Rev. Dr. Lawrence Frizzell and Rabbi Kliel Rose (Newman Theological College, Edmonton)
- Advent 2015: “Be Strong” for On Eagles Wings Advent booklet
- December 9, 2015: “Introduction to Ecumenical/Interreligious Ministry” Archdiocesan Meeting of Lay Associations (PAO)
- January 12, 2016: “Preparing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016.” Presentation to Administrators of the Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic School District (GSACRD Board Office, St. Albert)
- January 25, 2016: Ecumenical Panel on the theme of “Mercy” for the 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Our Lady of Good Help Maronite Parish)
- February 24, 2016: “Reformation 500: Contemporary Contexts” part of the *From Conflict to Communion* Series, with Dr. Faith Nostbakken, Ecumenical Officer-ELCIC (Providence Renewal Centre)
- March 21, 2016: Edmonton Islamic Academy; spoke to Gr. 8 students about Easter and being a Christian (Edmonton Islamic Academy)



- April 5, 2016: “Introduction to Ecumenical/Interreligious Ministry” Archdiocesan Volunteer Coordinators’ meeting (PAO)
- April 17, 2016: “Greetings from the Archdiocese and Introduction to Ecumenical/Interreligious Ministry” Forward in Faith Ministries International (Zimbabwean Assemblies of God). (FIFMI Church, Edmonton)
- May 2016: Prepared chapters on ecumenical and interreligious relations in the Archdiocese for Archbishop Smith’s 2016 Ad Limina Report.



➤ **Partner Organizations:**

➤ **Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life (U of A)**

- November 19, 2015: David Goa. “An Open Conversation on the Papal Encyclical *Laudato Si’*” (St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Camrose)
- January 22, 2016: Ali Asani. “God is Beautiful and Loves Beauty: Fostering Religious Literacy Through the Arts” (The King’s University, Edmonton)
- February 4, 2016: David Goa and Ishak Yorganci. “*Sola Fide/Gratia*, In the Footsteps of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking” (St. Joseph’s College)
- March 9, 2016: Michael Higgins: “A Many Mottled Beast: Religion, Media, and the Public Square” (St. Joseph’s College)



➤ **Edmonton & District Council of Churches** – presentations from:

- September 15, 2015: Ryan Anderson (Greater Edmonton Alliance)
- November 17, 2015: Bill Calder (Ecumenical Mission of Strathcona County)
- January 19, 2016: Scott Key (Edmonton Ecumenical Peace Network)
- March 22, 2016: Mike Van Boom (Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative)
- May 24, 2016: Gail Millard (Refugee Sponsorship)



➤ **Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace:**

- October 2, 2015: Annual Interfaith Banquet (Radisson Hotel, Edmonton)
- January 30, 2015: Gandhi Memorial Event, part of the U of A’s Festival of Ideas (U of A, North Campus, Edmonton)



➤ **Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education & Action:**

Edmonton
Interfaith Centre
for Education & Action

- *Interfaith Explorations* series of visits to various houses of worship
 - October 2, 2015: St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church
 - December 20, 2015: 20th Anniversary Open House @ Garneau United Church
 - February 3, 2016: Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church
 - June 1, 2016: Beth Shalom Synagogue

- *Celebrating Our Faiths* series of faith displays at Edmonton City Hall
 - January 2016: Celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
 - February 2016: Celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week
 - March 2016: Celebrating International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
 - April 2016: Celebrating Vaisakhi in the Sikh Tradition

- *Lunch & Learn* series of presentations on faith topics
 - October 6, 2015: David Fekete "The poetry of William Blake and the Theology of Emanuel Swedenborg"
 - November 9, 2015: Paul Bergen, "Spiritual Care in a Trauma-Centred Hospital"
 - December 15, 2015: Lori Reiter "Kids Kottage"
 - January 11, 2016: Pauline Paulson, "Healing Our Spirits Worldwide"
 - February 8, 2016: Suzanne Gross, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
 - March 14, 2016: Roxanne Maguire, Elizabeth House
 - April 11, 2016: Gita Das, "Religions in India and Hindu Devotion"
 - May 10, 2016: Bedri Mohammed and DJ Berenda "Oromo (Ethiopian) Culture and History"
 - July 11, 2016: Kae Neufeld and Emmanuel Gatera, "Reconciliation in Rwanda"
 - August 8, 2016: Rebecca Wright, "Positive portrayals of religious and spiritual ideas in modern visual media"

- September 19, 2015: Festival of Faiths (Edmonton City Hall)
- January 31, 2016: *Building Bridges Interfaith Concert* (Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton)
- June 2016: *Photo Exhibit: Impressions of Japan* by Rabbi David A. Kunin

➤ **Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI)-Edmonton:**

- June 28, 2016: Community Iftar Dinner (Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton)



➤ **Crossroads Christian Communication/YES-TV:**

- November 19, 2015: “10,000 Reasons” Pastors’ luncheon in honour of the 10,000th episode of 100 Huntley Street (West Edmonton Alliance Church, Edmonton)



➤ **Canadian Race Relations Foundation:**

- September 9, 2015: “Our Canada: Exploring Canadian Values through Culture, Faith and Identity.” Training Workshop put on by Canadian Race Relations Foundation (Lister Centre, U of A)



➤ **Other Formational Items:**

The CCCB produced four documents under the rubric *A Church in Dialogue* to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the *Decree on Ecumenism* and the *Declaration on the Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions*. These documents are all available on the CCCB website as downloadable PDFs which can be printed and distributed without charge. They were distributed to all parishes through the Archdiocese's Quid Novum e-newsletter:

Ecumenical:



"A Church in Dialogue: Catholic Ecumenical Commitment". This resource provides introductory information about the Catholic Church's commitment to and involvement in ecumenism since the Second Vatican Council. The resource defines key terms and definitions to assist those exploring ecumenism for the first time.



"A Church in Dialogue: Towards the Restoration of Unity among Christians". This publication provides an in-depth presentation of the Church's commitment to ecumenical dialogue and is intended for those already involved in, and familiar with, ecumenical work. This new resource is

Interreligious:



"A Church in Dialogue: Catholics and Muslims in Canada: Believers and Citizens in Society". The first part presents the origins of Islam, its main currents today, and its similarities with and differences from Christianity. The second part provides an overview of the history and present state of interreligious dialogue between Catholics and Muslims, both at the national and international levels, concluding with some suggestions on how everyone can contribute to such dialogues.



"A Church in Dialogue: The Catholic Church and Interreligious Dialogue". This resource presents the origins of *Nostra Aetate* and its impact on interreligious dialogue, both in Canada and abroad over the past 50 years, and most notably the renewed relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people.

B. Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogues

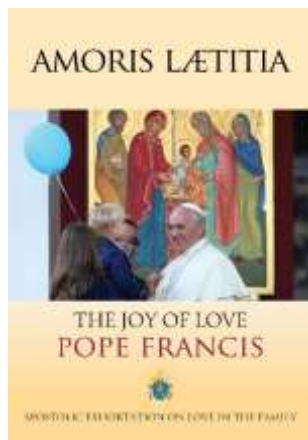
➤ **Edmonton Anglican – Roman Catholic (EARC)**

The Office maintained active contact with members of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton. A 10-member dialogue group (5 RC, 5 Anglican) met twice in the year to consider local happenings and ways that our two dioceses might collaborate on projects:

- In January 2016, our dialogue group gathered with members of both of our diocesan churches to pray **Anglican Evensong** during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This activity took place in the St. Francis de Sales Chapel at the Pastoral and Administrative Offices of the Archdiocese and was organized by the Newman Theological College Students' Association.



- At our Spring meeting (April 2016), our group considered the theme of **marriage and family life** in the Christian Tradition. Specifically, we looked at two texts issued recently



by our respective churches and having direct bearing on family life in Anglican and Catholic circles. The two statements are: **“This Holy Estate’: The Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon of the Anglican Church of Canada”** and **“The Joy of Love [Amoris Laetitia]: Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family.”**



➤ **Edmonton Mennonite – Roman Catholic (EMRC)**

The Office maintained active contact with local members of Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches. A 12-member dialogue group (6 RC, 6 Mennonites) met bimonthly to consider local happenings and ways that our two churches might collaborate on projects.

- This year our group read together Pope Francis' encyclical letter, **Laudato Si'**, and engaged a dialogue around the theme of **“Care for Creation.”** Dr. Bob McKeon guided our study of the text and members found much common ground in the Pope's specific

approach to environmental and ecological concerns. We concluded the year in June 2016 with a “Laudato Si’ Prayer Walk” along the south bank of the North Saskatchewan River and an informal BBQ held at Newman Theological College.



- On February 5, 2016, we held our **5th annual Mennonite-Catholic dialogue presentation** at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church, sharing with a larger gathering of Catholics and Mennonites our previous year’s study on the themes of “Islam, Christians in the Middle East and Music in our Churches.” **Specific invitation was extended to the parishioners in neighbouring St. Agnes Catholic Church.** This was a time of accountability to our respective communities and also an opportunity to invite new participants to the dialogue group. **Thank you to Reverend Joby Augustin CFIC, Pastor at St. Agnes for permission to invite the parish to this event, and to Rev. Carol Penner and the staff at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church for their warm hospitality.**

➤ **Edmonton Lutheran – Roman Catholic (ELRC):**

➤ **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC):**

The Archdiocese partnered with the ELCIC Synod of Alberta and the Territories to offer a five-part Lenten dialogue series at Providence Renewal Centre on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. Following the themes of the preparatory document "[From Conflict to Communion](#)", the series advanced our local churches toward the goal of purifying and healing memories, and restoring the unity of the Church. This was the first activity organized with the ELCIC in many years and many follow-up activities are being planned with the ELCIC in 2016-2017 to help our churches mark the Reformation 500 anniversary together.



The Western Catholic Reporter featured two stories on the series:

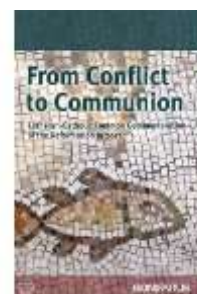
- **Week of March 7, 2016:** [Clear communication might have prevented Reformation](#)
- **Week of April 4, 2016:** [Time is right for Christian unity dialogue](#)

Thank you to ELCIC Ecumenical Officer Faith Nostbakken, ELCIC Pastor Ron Flamand and Dr. Bob McKeon for their collaboration on the planning committee for this event. Thank you to Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, Archbishop Richard Smith, Bishop Gregory Bittman, and Rev. Richard Reimer (ELCIC Campus Ministry) for leading our evenings of prayer. Finally thanks to Providence Renewal Centre for providing us with the perfect space for this dialogue and prayer to unfold.

➤ **Lutheran Church-Canada (LCC):**

The Office maintained active contact with local members of the Lutheran Church-Canada. An 8-member dialogue group (4 RC, 4 LCC) met three times last year to consider local happenings and ways that our two churches might collaborate on projects:

- Our **three sessions** took place at Concordia University of Edmonton (October 2015 and May 2016) and Newman Theological College (March 2016). Rev. Michael Keith (LCC) led us through a discussion of the third chapter of [From Conflict to Communion](#) – a document published by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity to encourage Catholics and Lutherans to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation together in 2017.



The third chapter is entitled: **“A Historical Sketch of the Lutheran Reformation and the Catholic Response.”**

- Dialogue members also began to plan activities that our two churches might undertake together to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

➤ **Orthodox – Catholic Relations**

Two specific activities took place with respect to our contacts with Orthodox churches:

- As reported above, on the occasion of **Pope Francis’ historic meeting with Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church (February 12)**, the Office organized a viewing opportunity and occasion for fellowship with Father Sergei Kipriyanovich, Rector of St.

Barbara Russian Orthodox Cathedral.



This was a great and historic event, and we were honoured that Fr. Sergei was able to join us on this occasion. We hope and pray for improved relations and continued dialogue between our sister churches in the years to come.

- A second event that touched upon Catholic/Orthodox relations but which was not organized by the Office, was the inaugural concert of the new Festival of Sacred Music at St. Joseph’s Basilica on April 2, 2016. The theme for the concert “**Resurrectional Music from the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Traditions**” presented a special All-Male chorus of over 50 singers, Orthodox and Catholic, from Ukraine and Canada. The Basilica was packed with Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Christians, as well as a general audience from a variety of other traditions.

➤ Catholic-Jewish Relations

The main events in Catholic-Jewish Relations this year centered around **the 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Church’s Relations to Non-Christian Religions (Nostra Aetate)**:

- November 26, 2015: **Fr. Lawrence Frizzell**, a CAEDM priest and professor who has spent most of his ministry in the service of Jewish-Christian Relations at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, USA, offered a faculty/graduate seminar on “Jesus & Jewish Prayer” at Newman Theological College. **Rabbi Kliel Rose** (Beth Shalom Synagogue) offered a response to Fr. Frizzell’s presentation and fielded questions from the audience.



- November 29, 2015: Fr. Frizzell participated in a **Nostra Aetate 50th anniversary event** at Beth Israel Synagogue, along with Auxiliary Bishop Gregory Bittman, Rabbis Daniel Friedman and Kliel Rose, and well over two hundred Catholic and Jewish attendees. **Specific invitations were extended to the parishioners in neighbouring Good Shepherd and Annunciation parishes.** The Dec. 7, 2015 edition of the *Western Catholic Reporter* featured two articles about the event:

- [Vatican II declaration opened doors to friendly interfaith relations](#)
- [From persecution to partnership](#)

- December 2, 2015: Julien attended a retirement event at the University of Alberta for **Dr. Francis Landy**, long-time Jewish Studies professor at the U of A.



- May 5, 2016: Julien attended the annual **Yom Ha-Shoah Commemoration** at the Holocaust Memorial on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature.

➤ Catholic-Muslim Relations

The Office maintained active contact with members of various local Muslim communities:

- September 8, 2015: Julien offered reflections to the Board of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute-Edmonton (IDI-Edmonton) on the **study tour to Turkey** that he undertook with their organization in April 2015.
- On October 17, 2015, about 150 Christians and Muslims gathered at St. Charles Catholic Church to engage in a day of meeting and learning about one another's faiths under the auspices of [A Common Word-Alberta](#). The theme for the day was "**Building Community Together**" and it featured participants from Sunni, Shiite, Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, Mennonite and Aboriginal traditions. Representatives of both the Edmonton & District Council of Churches and the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities brought greetings to the event. **Specific invitation was extended to the parishioners of St. Charles parish.** A story about the event was printed in the November 23, 2015 edition of the *Western Catholic Reporter*: [Local Muslims, Christians dialogue, strive for harmony](#). **Special thanks to Rev. Frank Kuczera, OMI, Ms. Amber Tweedy and Ms. Pat Palichuk from St. Charles Parish for their support and assistance in coordinating this great event.**



- November 3, 2015: Julien attended a celebration to honour the Muslim holy day of **Eid al-Adha** at the Alberta Legislature.
- November 27, 2015: Julien attended an **Eid prayer service** organized by the Muslim Association of Canada (Alberta Federal Building, grounds of the Alberta Legislature).
- February 28, 2016: Julien attended **Navruz Celebrations** at the Edmonton Ismaili Jamatkana.



- March 5, 2016: Julien hosted an interfaith gathering at Al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton with CCODP Lenten Solidarity Visitor, **Mr. Hussein Itani**.



- March 21, 2016: Julien was invited to visit the **Edmonton Islamic Academy**. He spoke with the Grade 8 students there about the significance of Easter in the Christian tradition.

- April 12, 2016: Julien attended a private showing of **“Under Cover”** – a play about Islamophobia and Muslim-Christian relations; put on by Edmonton’s Concrete Theatre (Concordia University of Edmonton). The play was recommended to be played in our Catholic schools.



- May 18, 2016: Julien attended a lecture by **Dr. Reza Aslan** entitled “Fear Inc.: Confronting Islamophobia in North America.” This event was part of the Edmonton Public Library’s “Forward Thinking Speakers’ Series”. (Chateau Lacombe, Edmonton)

- On June 28, 2016, the Office co-hosted along with IDI-Edmonton, a **Community Iftar Dinner at Providence Renewal Centre**. About two weeks prior to the event (June 12), IDI-Edmonton Executive Director and Julien announced this activity after the masses at **St. Theresa’s Parish** (Edmonton). As a result, about 90 people attended this activity from a variety of Muslim, Christian and some other faith communities. A story about the event was printed in the July 25, 2016 edition of the *Western Catholic Reporter*: [Muslims, Catholics build bridges at Ramadan Ritual Meal](#).



- July 2016: A formal letter (accompanied by the official message from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) was prepared and sent to the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities (on the occasion of **Eid al-Fitr**).

➤ **Eastern Religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, etc.)**

Several events/activities took place that brought the Archdiocese into contact with members of Eastern Religions, namely:



- October 2, 2015: Annual **Mahatma Gandhi garlanding ceremony**. (Edmonton Public Library).
- October 2, 2015: 27th Annual Banquet of the **Mahatma Gandhi Canadian Foundation for World Peace**. (Radisson Hotel, Edmonton).
- Formal letters (accompanied by official messages from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) were prepared and sent from Archbishop Smith’s office to the Hindu Society of Alberta (on the occasion of **Diwali**), Sikh Communities in Edmonton (on the feast of **Guru Nanak Jayanti**), the Jain Society of Alberta (on the occasion of **Mahavir Jayanti**), and various Buddhist associations (on the occasion of **Vesakh**).
- January 30, 2015: Gandhi Memorial Event, part of the **U of A’s Festival of Ideas** (U of A, North Campus, Edmonton)
- February 5, 2016: Julien attended the opening service for the **2016 World Interfaith Harmony Week** (Edmonton City Hall)

- April 1, 2016: Launch of **Vaisakhi** “Celebrating Our Faiths” display in the Sikh Tradition (Edmonton City Hall)
- April 5, 2015: Celebration of **Mahavira Jayanti** with Edmonton’s Jain community. Julien brought greetings on behalf of the Catholic Archdiocese (Hindu Society Temple, Edmonton)



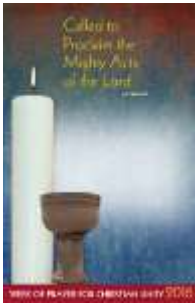
➤ **Regional, National and International Dialogues**

The Coordinator represents the Archdiocese in dialogue meetings at home and abroad:

- **Western Diocesan and Eparchial Coordinators of Ecumenism (WDECE):**
 - November 4-6, 2015: Annual Meeting of the WDECE hosted this year by the Archdiocese of Vancouver; Theme: “Interreligious and Ecumenical Learning.”
- **Anglican-Roman Catholic – National Dialogue Commission** (by appointment of the CCCB):
 - November 6-9, 2015 (Quebec City, QC)
 - May 10-13, 2016 (Toronto, ON)
- **Roman Catholic-Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – International Dialogue Commission** (by appointment of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity):
 - June 17-22, 2016 (Calgary, AB) – See Coordinator’s Report above.

C. Spiritual Ecumenism

➤ Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2016



The preparatory materials for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity brought attention to the reality of Christianity in Latvia. Invited by an ecumenical writing team from that country, Christians worldwide were invited to reflect on the theme: "Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of the Lord" (cf 1 Peter 2.9).

The Office was involved in **three activities** related to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2015:

- On January 17, 2016, **Bishop Greg Bittman** joined leaders and pastors from several Christian churches in the Edmonton area at an **ecumenical prayer service** held First Presbyterian Church (Edmonton) to open the Week of Prayer.

The service featured Latvian hymns and prayers/preaching around the biblical theme. The service was followed by a time of fellowship in the parish hall, around a beautiful table of delicacies and sweets.

A collection was taken at the service with all of the funds going to support the designated recipient for this year's No Room in the Inn project.



A news story about the EDCC service appeared in the January 25th edition of the *Western Catholic Reporter*: [Christian Leaders Come Together to Pray for Unity](#).

- January 18, 2016: Julien attended an **ecumenical prayer service** at **Newman Theological College** to mark the WPCU 2016. The service was organized by the Lay Formation Students of the College and highlighted the Christian diversity of the student population.



- January 25, 2015: Julien was invited to participate in an **ecumenical prayer service and discussion panel** organized by **Our Lady of Good Help**

Maronite Parish. Other panelists included **Msgr. Joseph Salame (Pastor of OLGH parish)**, **Fr. Raymond Guimond**, and other clergy from the local ministerial association.



➤ **Outdoor Way of the Cross**

The annual **Good Friday Outdoor Way of the Cross** is an ecumenical prayer event commemorating the suffering and death of Jesus. It is a time to notice how the gospel values of Jesus are important to individual and social life today.



The theme for this year's event was **"Transformation: Ourselves and Our World."**

Participants joined in a 6-station way of the cross pausing to reflect on social injustices occurring in the Edmonton area especially toward impoverished people and vulnerable populations.

Several hundred people participated in the event, and there was excellent print and television media coverage of the event including from the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun, Global Edmonton and the Western Catholic Reporter: [The Three-Fold Suffering of the Cross.](#)



➤ Taizé Prayer Events

An increasing form of ecumenical prayer ministry in the Edmonton area is the meditative style of prayer practiced by the monastic community of Taizé, France.



Once a month members of several churches participate in a **Taizé-style ecumenical prayer** ministry that takes place in the churches especially around the Bonnie Doon neighbourhood of Edmonton. Different churches in the area take turns hosting an evening of prayer, while a group of musicians leads the local congregation and friends from the neighbourhood in the chants. Typically between 30 and 60 people participate in these prayer evenings. The participating churches in 2015-2016 were: Holyrood Mennonite, **St. Thomas D'Aquin Catholic**, Robertson-Wesley United,

Resurrection Catholic, First Church of God, and Grace United. The group also led Taizé-style prayer evenings this year with the L'Arche community of Edmonton and prayer around the cross on Good Friday evening at the **Providence Renewal Centre**. The Archdiocese covers a licensing fee for printing copyrighted materials associated with this ministry.

Taizé prayers are also held monthly at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, and on the campus of the University of Alberta through a partnership of the chaplaincies at **St. Joseph's College** and St. George's Anglican Church. Occasional prayers are organized at **Newman Theological College**, and at various churches in the Edmonton area.

In 2015, leaders from several churches in the Edmonton area met to discuss the possibility of organizing an ecumenical pilgrimage for young adults to Taizé in July 2016. Two public information sessions were organized at Christ Church Anglican parish (Nov. 18, 2015) and **Good Shepherd Catholic parish** (Dec. 8, 2015). A Lenten Taizé retreat was also held at **Providence Renewal Centre** (Feb. 27, 2016). Regrettably very few people signed up to go on the pilgrimage – in part owing to a dedicated efforts in Catholic parishes to promote World Youth Day 2016 in Poland – and the Archdiocese made a decision to withdraw its support for the pilgrimage in 2016. The Anglican Diocese, however, did send four young adults to Taizé in July 2015. There are no plans to re-visit this project in the coming year.

The Archdiocese thanks all of the Taizé music ministry leaders and the participating churches for their hospitality in encouraging this ecumenical ministry in Edmonton.

➤ **Edmonton and Area Ministerial Association (EAMA)**

The Edmonton and Area Ministerial Association (formerly called the Edmonton Evangelical Ministerial Association) hosts a **monthly pastors' prayer** meeting at the Marketplace Chapel in the West Edmonton Mall.



➤ **Edmonton Ecumenical Peace Network (EEPN)**

The Edmonton Ecumenical Peace Network organizes an annual candlelight **Prayer Walk for Peace** through downtown Edmonton held during the evening on Remembrance Day (November 11). It follows an interdenominational prayer service usually held at McDougall United Church. The Archdiocese helps to promote this event and is often called upon to lead prayers during the service/walk.

➤ **Edmonton Prayer Breakfast**

Every year the Christian communities of Edmonton organize an **ecumenical prayer breakfast** to pray for the Mayor of Edmonton, for other elected and civic leaders, and for God's protection upon the city. This is a major undertaking attracting several hundred participants each year. **Special thanks to our Edmonton Catholic Schools for their participation in the planning and sponsorship of this great annual event.**



➤ **Ecumenical Mission of Strathcona County**

The mainline churches of Strathcona County organize an annual **ecumenical mission** that features preaching from one of the participating churches. The mission takes place over a four-day period and events take place in the morning, at mid-day and in the evening.



This year, October 25-28, 2015, the mission celebrated its 26th Anniversary. To mark this occasion, the organizers invited Bishop Jane Alexander to lead the mission. Bishop Alexander preached on the general theme of “Reimagining the World: Loving Our Neighbour as Ourselves.” inviting the Christian community of Strathcona County to re-energize and re-envision how they might use the mission as a means of evangelization.

Julien attended and brought greetings to the closing worship service at **Our Lady of Perpetual Help** Parish on Wednesday, October 28, 2015.

➤ **World Day of Prayer**

The Archdiocese promotes the annual **World Day of Prayer** organized and prepared by the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC).



The preparatory materials for this year’s World Day of Prayer service brought attention to the reality of Christianity in **Cuba**. Invited by an ecumenical writing team from that country, Christians worldwide were invited to reflect on Jesus’ teaching to his disciples, “Receive children, Receive me.”

Many services were held around the Archdiocese, often with the leadership or participation of members of the Catholic Women’s’ League.

➤ **Other Occasions for Spiritual Ecumenism**

- September 3, 2015: Blessing of new Women’s Residence at St. Joseph’s College (U of A)
- September 17, 2015: Opening BBQ for the School Year at St. Joseph’s College (U of A)
- November 2, 2015: St. Stephen’s College 91st Annual Convocation (U of A, Edmonton)
- November 13, 2015: Shine-FM’s Pastors’ Prayer Breakfast (The King’s University, Edmonton)
- November 19, 2015: “10,000 Reasons” Pastors’ luncheon in honour of the 10,000th episode of 100 Huntley Street (West Edmonton Alliance Church, Edmonton)
- December 19, 2015: Carolling/Distributing gifts at the Edmonton Remand Centre
- February 3, 2016: Consultation on Prayer at City Hall; religious delegates in conversation with Edmonton City Clerk’s Office (Edmonton City Hall)
- March 6, 2016: Exploration of the Word with RCIA Candidates (St. Charles Parish, Edmonton)
- March 27, 2016: 40th Annual Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service (St. Albert)

D. Common Witness and Discipleship

There are literally dozens of ecumenical/interreligious common witness projects occurring in the Archdiocese, so many that it is impossible to name them all. The following are examples of projects formally endorsed and/or supported through our Office:

➤ **Covenant Health – Diversity and Inclusion Committee**

Covenant Health is Canada’s largest Catholic healthcare provider, and is committed to respecting diversity and ensuring inclusive practices within its organization. The Archdiocese participates in quarterly meetings of their Diversity & Inclusion Committee.



➤ **Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative – Steering Committee**

The Archdiocese is one of 22 signatories to the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative, which animates faith-based activities aimed at tackling the problems of homelessness and affordable housing in the Edmonton area. A Steering Committee meets monthly to oversee projects associated with the initiative, namely:



○ **Habitat for Humanity – Interfaith Works Project**

Faith communities are invited to participate as lunch providers, prayer leaders, build-site volunteers or in **Habitat for Humanity’s** re-store, as part of an annual Interfaith Works Project.



○ **Catholic Social Services – Welcome Home Project**

Welcome Home is a volunteer based program, administered by **Catholic Social Services**, that provides companionship to individuals and families making the transition from homelessness to settling into a home.



➤ **No Room in the Inn Collection**

No Room in the Inn is an annual ecumenical collection to assist an affordable housing project in the Edmonton area. Parishes are invited to contribute all or a portion of their Christmas Eve offering toward this collection.

➤ **Phoenix Multi-Faith Society for Harmony**

The Archdiocese is a member of the Phoenix Multi-Faith Society for Harmony, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of inter-faith cooperation. Its board includes members from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths, as well as the Edmonton Police Services.



➤ **Other Common Witness Initiatives**

- August 6, 2015: **70th Anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bombings** (Alberta Legislature)
- September 21, 2015: **UN International Day of Peace** (Edmonton City Hall)
- September 22, 2015: Julien attended an Edmonton City Council Meeting along with other members of the Edmonton & District Council of Churches to endorse the city's **EndPoverty Campaign** (Edmonton City Hall)
- October 14, 2015: Launch of an exhibit related to the **Truth & Reconciliation Commission** and the national campaign for **Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women** (All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Edmonton)
- November 18, 2015: "Breakfast with the Guys" fundraising event for the **Alberta Council of Women's Shelters** (Chateau Lacombe Hotel, Edmonton)
- February 11, 2016: **Every Life Matters** press conference (CAEDM Offices)
- March 21, 2016: **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** (Edmonton City Hall)