

Gemeindebrief

August 2025

Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Markusgemeinde Vancouver, BC

Anschrift

1573 East 18th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC, V5N 2H4

Pfarrer Ulrich Hossbach

pastor@stmarkschurch.ca

Telefon: 604-566-2102

Sekretariat: Manuela Volkmer

office@stmarkschurch.ca

Telefon: 604-876-4312

Spenden

Via e-transfer: treasurer.stmarkslutheran@shaw.ca

Website www.stmarkschurch.ca

Andacht

Von Pfarrer Ulrich Hossbach

Geh aus, mein Herz – suche Freud!

*Der Sommer ist die Zeit des Ausgehens –
des Hinausgehens, aus dem Haus hinaus in Gärten, Parks,
an(in) Seen und ans(ins) Meer.*

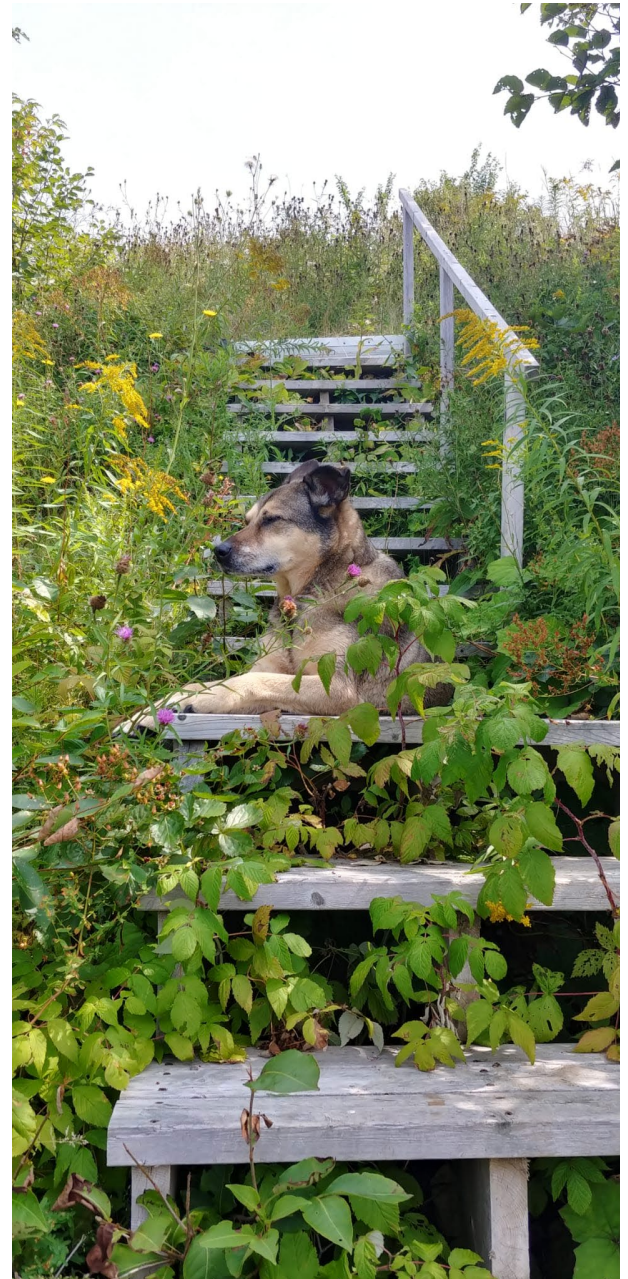
Ausgehen kann man nicht nur äußerlich. Ausgehen kann auch unser Herz. Ein bekanntes Kirchenlied ermuntert dazu: Im Blick aufs Äußere vermag sich das Innere weiten. Ausgehen, auch aus manchem was vorher vielleicht eng machte oder gefangen hielt, um erfüllt neu wieder anzukommen – und zu erleben, was guttut, heilsam und fröhlich macht.

Geh aus mein Herz und suche Freud...

Mit diesem Lied aus dem 17. Jahrhundert lädt Paul Gerhardt ein, den Blick wandern zu lassen von innen nach Außen – um sich dann wieder neu finden zu lassen in Gottes Schöpfung. Trotz und inmitten Kriegs, Pest und Verlust der eigenen Kinder verlor er nicht sein tiefes Vertrauen in eine schöpferische Kraft, die Menschen anregt zum Singen und Dichten.

Pflanzen, Tiere, Bäche und Wiesen, Wein, Weizen und Bienen werden besungen – bevor der Dichter innehält und seinem Vertrauen auf ein Leben nach dieser Welt Ausdruck gibt.

Als Literat unter den Liedermachern der frühen Neuzeit hat Paul Gerhardt in vielen seiner Texte alltägliche Beobachtungen so kunstvoll in Worte gefasst. Alltägliches wandelt sich zu Besonderem.



Dabei erweist sich Paul Gerhardt als Meister der Sprache. Seine Gedichte sind zugleich literarisch anspruchsvoll und volkstümlich einfach. Das Geheimnis seiner Poesie liegt wohl darin, Lehrsätze in Bilder zu verwandeln, Glaubenswahrheiten in muntere Sprüche und Bekenntnis in Erfahrung. So mit dem Alltag verbunden, erfahrbar und verstehbar für alle.

Geh aus...

Ausgehen – das konnten schon damals die Menschen, genötigt oder einladend.

Gehen: je nach Situation verbunden mit Unsicherheit und Unberechenbarkeit oder aber mit Zuversicht und Vertrauen. Denn wenn man geht, erstarrt man nicht, verliert man sich nicht. Gehen, um zu finden, neu gefunden zu werden.

Nach der Vertreibung aus dem Paradies erging die Einladung des (Mit)Gehens an Noah:

„Geh aus der Arche du und deine Familie und alle Tiere...“ (1. Mose 8, 16) Nach dem Rauswurf also ein Ausgehen als Neuanfang mit offenem Ausgang...

Geh aus...

Gott ermutigt zum Ausgehen: Abraham, dem ‘Vater des Glaubens’ (so wird ihn Paulus später nennen, weil er Gott darin vertraute) wurde ein Neuanfang auf verlässliche Weise verheissen: „Geh aus deiner Heimat in ein Land, das ich dir zeigen werde.“ (1. Mose 12,1) So viel Wanderschaft hat die Nachkommen teilweise müde gemacht.

Sich auf den Weg machen, sich gehen lassen – im doppelten Sinne: sich gehen lassen. Der dänische Philosoph Sören Kierkegaard entdeckte es als Lebensquelle: „*Vor allem verliere nie die Lust am Gehen! Ich habe mir meine besten Gedanken ergangen, und ich kenne keinen noch so schweren Kummer, den man nicht weggehen kann.*“

Gehen als Therapie. Gehen als Meditation.

Gehen – auf unterschiedlichen Wegen, um nicht in Routine zu erstarren. Denn Wandern hat sprachlich mit Wandlung zu tun, die beiden Worte haben die gleiche Wurzel ‚wenden‘. Nicht nur der Körper kommt in Bewegung, auch der Geist.

Kein Schritt ist vorgegeben, Richtung und Tempo kann jederzeit ändern/geändert werden. Dabei werden auch Umwege in Kauf genommen, ja manchmal geradezu gesucht. Die direkten Wege sind nicht immer die besten.

Gehen ist Musik. Das wusste Mozart, der spazieren ging, wenn er komponieren wollte.

Gehen heißt: Abschiednehmen und neu beginnen. Mit jedem Schritt wird ein Standpunkt verlassen und ein neuer gesucht. Nichts steht fest, alles bewegt sich – und alles geht vorüber.

Wandel und Vergänglichkeit sind nicht Theorie, sondern direkt erlebbare Wirklichkeit. Das Gehen ist Abbild und Symbol des Lebens überhaupt.

Eurer Pfarrer Ulrich Hossbach

Aus dem Gemeinderat

Von Traute Scholz - Präsidentin

Neuer Verhaltenskodex beschlossen

Der Code of Conduct wurde vom Kirchenvorstand auf Basis des Dokuments der BC Synode in Zusammenarbeit mit Rev. Elina Singh erstellt und im Juni 2025 beschlossen. Er beschreibt, wie wir in unserer Gemeinde respektvoll, achtsam und offen miteinander umgehen wollen – in Gottesdiensten, Gruppen, Versammlungen und Veranstaltungen. [Den Kodex findet ihr auf unserer Website](#) unter Recources and Links (Quellen und Links) ganz unten.

Einladung! Am **Sonntag, den 7. September**, direkt im Anschluss an den gemeinsamen 10:30 Uhr-Gottesdienst. **Um 11:30 Uhr** treffen wir uns im Gemeindesaal zum **Kaffee-Sonntag** – Rev. Elina Singh wird anwesend sein und gerne auf eure Fragen eingehen.

Warum ist das wichtig? Unser Ziel ist es, St. Markus als einen sicheren, einladenden Ort für alle Menschen zu gestalten. Wir möchten euch den Kodex vorstellen, **eure Fragen beantworten** und eventuelle Anregungen aufnehmen. Daher laden wir alle herzlich ein – kommt vorbei, bringt eure Fragen mit, und lasst uns gemeinsam über das sprechen, was unsere Gemeinschaft stärkt.

Live-Übertragungen des Gottesdienstes

Leider werden wir das Video-Streaming in den Sommermonaten nur für die deutschen Gottesdienste anbieten können. Wir suchen noch **dringend Freiwillige**, die mit in der Technik helfen möchten. Die Anwendungen sind sehr einfach und ohne großen Aufwand zu erlernen. Bitte wendet euch ans Kirchenbüro oder sprecht Frank oder Steffen in den Gottesdiensten persönlich an.

Aus dem Gemeindeleben

Taufe

Am Sonntag, den 27. Juli, feierten wir einen festlichen Taufgottesdienst mit **Pfarrer Ermisch**. Getauft wurde **Charlotte Valentina Koit** – wir heißen sie herzlich in unserer Gemeindefamilie willkommen! Ein besonderer Dank geht an **Familie Kempe** für die schönen Blumenspenden, an **Organistin Shannon Mattson** für die musikalische Begleitung und an alle **freiwilligen Helferinnen** und Helfer, die diesen Gottesdienst so liebevoll mitgestaltet haben.

Mach mit bei uns

Aus dem Kirchenbüro

Kaffee Sonntag

Wir möchten euch freundlich darauf hinweisen, dass Kaffee und Kuchen am Sonntag derzeit wieder ausschließlich aus dem Gemeindebudget finanziert werden sowie durch die Kuchenspenden einzelner Personen.

Wir bitten euch herzlich, euch wieder – im Rahmen eurer Möglichkeiten – **durch eure Spenden zu beteiligen**, damit wir dieses schöne Beisammensein weiterhin gemeinsam tragen können. Vielen Dank für euer Verständnis und eure Unterstützung!

Usher-Dienst (Begrüßungsdienst)

Wir freuen uns, wenn auch du dich für den einen oder anderen Sonntag als Usher zur Verfügung stellen kannst. Melde Dich gern über das Büro oder online über den Freitags-Newsletter an.

Foodbank

Helft mit beim „Einkaufen“, vorbereiten und der Ausgabe an unsere Gäste. [Tragt euch hier online als Helfer ein](#) oder scannt den QR-Code.



www.stmarkschurch.ca



Termine und Veranstaltungen

Alle Termine und Veranstaltungen findet ihr auf unserer [NEUEN Website](#) oder scannt den QR-Code.

Foodbank Abholung

Donnerstag, 14. August 2025 – 17:00 - 19:00 Uhr

Brauchen Sie Hilfe bei der Beschaffung von Lebensmitteln für den Monat?

St. Mark's, St. Joseph's und King's Cross helfen Ihnen gerne mit einer monatlichen Lebensmittelspende für die Nachbarschaft. Melden Sie Ihren Haushalt für die Lebensmittelhilfe an unter pastor@stmarkschurch.ca oder telefonisch unter (604) 566-2102.

Orgelkonzert bei St. Markus

30. August 2025 – 14:00 Uhr

Abraham Ross, Orgel

Joya Muma, [Viola da Gamba](#)

Albano Berberi, [Nyckelharpa](#) (schwedisch, wörtlich „Schlüssel-Harfe“)

Eine Auswahl von Reflexionen über das liturgische Jahr und die Jahreszeit. Auf dem Programm stehen Werke von Francois Couperin, Klaas Bolt, Anthoni van Noordt und anderen!

Abraham Ross ist ein aktiver Konzertorganist, Cembalist und Dirigent, der fantasievolle Programme präsentiert, die auf den neuesten Erkenntnissen der Aufführungspraxis, der Technik und des musikwissenschaftlichen Kontexts basieren. Zu seinen Auszeichnungen gehören die Teilnahme an internationalen Wettbewerben, Forschungsstipendien des Fonds de Recherche en Soci  t   et Culture von Quebec und der McGill University sowie Auftritte mit dem Resonance Collective (Los Angeles), dem Orchestre Symphonique de Montr  al und dem Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra. Er sch  tzt die Zusammenarbeit mit anderen K  nstlern unabh  ngig von ihrem Fachgebiet und ist mit verschiedenen Gruppen in Nordamerika, Argentinien und Europa aufgetreten.

Eintritt gegen Spende.

Backkurse starten im Herbst!

Unsere beliebten Backkurse gehen in die n  chste Runde – die Themen werden noch bekannt gegeben.

Samstags, am 20. September, 18. Oktober und 15. November 2025, jeweils von 10:00 bis 14:00 Uhr.

Schon jetzt vormerken und mit Vorfreude auf den Duft von frischem Geb  ck starten!



Deutsche Kindergruppe

Es geht weiter nach der Sommerpause

Samstag, 13. Und 27. September 2025

Vorschau

Sommerfest und 100 Jahre Kirchengebäude St. Markus

13. September 2025 von 12:00 – 15:00 Uhr

Unser Kirchengebäude wird dieses Jahr 100 Jahre alt! Für den neuen Bereich „Geschichte unserer Gemeinde“ auf unserer [Website](#) sammeln wir Erinnerungen, Fotos und Anekdoten zu allen ehemaligen PfarrerInnen unserer Gemeinde in Vancouver. Außerdem wird es eine historische Führung geben.

Wir laden alle Gemeindemitglieder herzlich ein, Beiträge, Geschichten oder Bilder, die mit früheren PfarrerInnen verbunden sind, an das Gemeindebüro zu senden. Jede Erinnerung hilft dabei, unsere gemeinsame Geschichte lebendig zu halten! Bitte sendet eure Beiträge per E-Mail an: office@stmarkschurch.ca

Wer backt den besten Kuchen?

Mach mit bei unserem Kuchenwettbewerb – ob fruchtig, schokoladig oder ganz kreativ: Wir suchen die süßeste Versuchung!

Wir suchen auch noch Freiwillige, die bei der Gestaltung mithelfen. Meldet euch bitte im Kirchenbüro. Vielen Dank für eure Unterstützung!

Thetis 2026

22. – 25. Juni 2026

Jetzt schon für nächstes Jahr über diesen QR-Code oder [über unseren Kalender auf unserer Website](#) oder per E-Mail anmelden.



Taufgottesdienst mit **Pfarrer Ermisch**. Getauft wurde **Charlotte Valentina Koit**

Projekte und Gruppen

Besuchskreis

Du möchtest anderen Menschen Zeit, Aufmerksamkeit und Gemeinschaft schenken? Unser Besuchskreis lebt von engagierten Ehrenamtlichen wie dir! Wir suchen neue Teammitglieder für unseren Besuchsdienst – Menschen mit Herz, Lebenserfahrung und dem Wunsch, für andere da zu sein. Ob jung oder alt, mit beruflichem Hintergrund im sozialen Bereich oder einfach aus persönlichem Antrieb: Jede*r ist willkommen!

Was wir bieten:

- Eine sinnvolle ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit
- Vorbereitung, Schulung und Begleitung, Regelmäßige Austauschtreffen
- Verlässliche Rahmenbedingungen & Schweigepflicht
- Bereichernde Begegnungen durch persönliche Besuche oder Telefonate

Unsere Besuche sind **keine Pflege- oder Haushaltshilfe**, sondern schenken Nähe, Gespräche und das Gefühl, Teil einer lebendigen Gemeinschaft zu sein. **Hast du Interesse mitzumachen?**

Dann melde dich bei uns – wir freuen uns auf dich!

office@stmarkschurch.ca

Newsletter

August 2025

St. Marks's Evangelical-Lutheran Church Vancouver, BC

Address

1573 East 18th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC, V5N 2H4

Pastor Ulrich Hossbach

pastor@stmarkschurch.ca

Telephone: 604-566-2102

Office: Manuela Volkmer

office@stmarkschurch.ca

Telephone: 604-876-4312

Spenden

Via e-transfer: treasurer.stmarkslutheran@shaw.ca

Website www.stmarkschurch.ca

Devotion

By Pastor Ulrich Hossbach

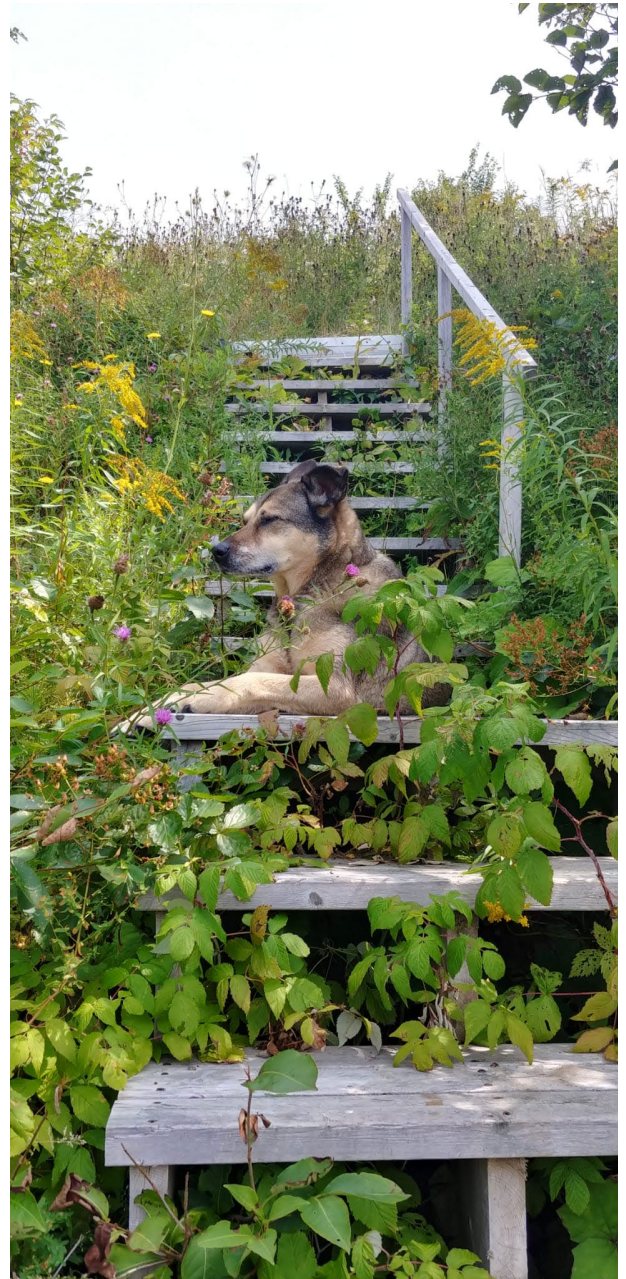
***Go forth, my heart – seek joy!
Summer is the season of going out –
out of the house into gardens, parks,
to lakes and to the sea.***

But going out isn't just something we do physically. Our heart can go out as well. A well-known church hymn encourages this: By looking at what is outside, our inner world can open up. Going out – also from whatever may have felt narrow or confining – can help us return renewed, and experience what is good, healing, and joyful.

Go forth, my heart, and seek joy...

With this hymn from the 17th century, Paul Gerhardt invites us to let our gaze wander—from inward reflection to outward wonder—so that we may rediscover ourselves in God's creation. Despite war, plague, and the death of his own children, he never lost his deep trust in a creative power that inspires people to sing and to write. Plants, animals, brooks and meadows, wine, wheat, and bees are praised—until the poet pauses and gives voice to his faith in life beyond this world.

As a literary figure among the hymn writers of the early modern era, Paul Gerhardt masterfully turned everyday observations into poetic expression. The ordinary becomes extraordinary.



In doing so, Gerhardt proves himself a master of language. His poems are both richly literary and simple in tone. The secret of his poetry lies in his ability to transform doctrine into imagery, dogma into lively phrases, and confession into personal experience. This makes his faith tangible, relatable, and accessible to all.

Go forth...

Even then, people went out—whether by necessity or invitation.

To go: depending on the situation, it may be linked to uncertainty and unpredictability—or to confidence and trust. Because when one goes, one does not freeze in place or lose oneself. To walk is to seek—and to be found anew.

After the expulsion from Paradise, God gave Noah the command to move on: *“Go out of the ark, you and your family and all the animals...”* (Genesis 8:16). After being cast out, going out becomes a new beginning—with an open end.

Go forth...

God encourages people to step out: Abraham, whom Paul would later call the “father of faith” for trusting in God’s promise, was assured of a new beginning: *“Go from your country to a land that I will show you.”* (Genesis 12:1)

So much wandering has wearied his descendants at times. To set out on a journey, to let oneself go—in both senses of the phrase. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard discovered it as a source of life: *“Above all, do not lose your desire to walk. I have walked myself into my best thoughts, and I know of no sorrow so heavy that one cannot walk away from it.”*

Walking as therapy. Walking as meditation.

Walking—on varied paths, to avoid hardening into routine. Linguistically, “wandering” is related to “transformation”—both rooted in the word *“to turn.”* It’s not just the body that moves, but also the mind.

No step is predetermined. Direction and pace can change at any time. Detours are accepted, even welcomed—because the straight path isn’t always the best.

Walking is music. Mozart knew this: he would go for walks when he wanted to compose.

To walk means to say goodbye and to begin again. With each step, a standpoint is left behind and a new one sought. Nothing is fixed; everything moves—and everything passes.

Change and impermanence are not theories; they are tangible realities. Walking becomes the image and symbol of life itself.

Your pastor, Ulrich Hossbach

Church Council

by Traute Scholz - president

New Code of Conduct Adopted

The *Code of Conduct* was developed by the Church Council based on the BC Synod's document and in collaboration with Rev. Elina Singh. It was officially adopted in June 2025. The Code outlines how we want to interact with one another in our congregation—with respect, mindfulness, and openness—whether in worship, small groups, meetings, or events.

[You can find the Code at the very bottom of our website](#) under *Resources and Links*.

You're Invited!

On Sunday, September 7, right after the 10:30 am Joint Service, we will meet at 11:30 am in the church basement for *Coffee Sunday*. Rev. Elina Singh will be present and happy to answer your questions.

Why does this matter?

Our goal is to make St. Mark's a safe and welcoming place for all people. We want to introduce the Code of Conduct, respond to your questions, and hear your feedback. Everyone is warmly invited—come by, bring your questions, and let's talk about what strengthens our community.

Live Worship Streaming

Unfortunately, during the summer months, we will only be able to stream the German-language services. We are still **urgently looking for volunteers** to help with the technical side. The system is very simple and easy to learn. If you're interested, please contact the church office or speak with Frank or Steffen directly after the service.

Our Congregational Life

Baptism

On Sunday, July 27, we celebrated a festive baptism service with **Pastor Ermisch**. **Charlotte Valentina Koit** was baptized – we warmly welcome her into our church family!

A special thank-you goes to the **Kempe family** for the beautiful flower donations, to **organist Shannon Mattson** for the musical accompaniment, and to all the **volunteers** who helped make this service so special and heartfelt.

Get Involved

From the Church Office

Coffee Sunday

We'd like to kindly remind you that coffee and cake on Sundays are currently being covered entirely by the church budget and through individual cake donations. We warmly invite you to support this lovely time of fellowship—within your means—**by contributing** to the costs through donations. Thank you for your understanding and your continued support!

Usher Ministry (Welcome Team)

We would be delighted if you could volunteer as an usher for one or more Sundays. You can sign up through the church office or online via the Friday newsletter.

Foodbank

Help with "Shopping," Prep, and Serving

Support us by helping with the "shopping," preparing, and serving food to our guests.

[Sign up as a volunteer](#) or scan the QR code.



www.stmarkschurch.ca



Dates and Events

You can find all dates and events on our [NEW Website](http://www.stmarkschurch.ca) or scan the QR-Code.

Food Bank Pickup

Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 5:00–7:00 PM

Do you need help accessing food for the month?

St. Mark's, St. Joseph's, and King's Cross are happy to support you with a monthly food donation for the neighborhood.

Register your household for food support by emailing pastor@stmarkschurch.ca or calling (604) 566-2102.

Organ Concertini at St. Markus

August 30th, 2025 – 02:00 p.m.

Abraham Ross, Organ

Joya Muma, [Viola da Gamba](http://www.stmarkschurch.ca)

Albano Berberi, [Nyckelharpa](http://www.stmarkschurch.ca) (Swedish: nyckelharpa, literally "key harp")

A selection of reflections on the liturgical year and the seasons. The program includes works by François Couperin, Klaas Bolt, Anthoni van Noordt, and others!

Abraham Ross is an active concert organist, harpsichordist, and conductor who presents imaginative programs informed by the latest insights in performance practice, technique, and musicological context.

His distinctions include participation in international competitions, research fellowships from Québec's *Fonds de recherche – Société et culture* and McGill University, as well as performances with the Resonance Collective (Los Angeles), the Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra.

He values collaboration across artistic disciplines and has performed with various ensembles in North America, Argentina, and Europe.

Admission by donation.

Baking Classes Start This Fall!

Our popular baking classes are back — topics will be announced soon.

Saturdays, September 20, October 18, and November 15, 2025. Each from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Mark your calendars now and get ready to look forward to the scent of fresh baked goods!



German Children's Group

We're back after the summer break!

Saturday, September 13 and 27, 2025

Preview

Summer Festival and 100 Years of St. Mark's Church Building

September 13, 2025 from 12:00 to 3:00 PM

This year, our church building turns 100! For the new "History of Our Congregation" section on our website, we are collecting memories, photos, and anecdotes about all former pastors of our congregation in Vancouver. There will also be a historical tour.

We warmly invite all church members to share contributions, stories, or photos related to former pastors. Every memory helps keep our shared history alive! Please send your submissions by email to: office@stmarkschurch.ca

Who bakes the best cake?

Join our cake competition—whether fruity, chocolatey, or wildly creative, we're looking for the sweetest temptation! We're also looking for volunteers to help organize the event. Please contact the church office.
Thank you for your support!

Thetis 2026

June 22–25, 2026

Register now for next year using this QR code or... [or through our calendar on the website](#). Or via E-Mail:



Baptism Service with Pastor Ermisch. Charlotte Valentina Koit was baptized.

Projects and Groups

Visiting Circle

Would you like to give others your time, attention, and a sense of community?

Our visitation group thrives thanks to dedicated volunteers like you! We are looking for new team members for our visiting ministry—people with heart, life experience, and a desire to be there for others.

Whether young or old, with a background in social work or simply driven by personal motivation: everyone is welcome!

What We Offer:

- A meaningful volunteer opportunity
- Training, preparation, and ongoing support, including regular team meetings
- Clear structure and confidentiality
- Enriching experiences through personal visits or phone calls

Our visits are not about providing nursing or household help, but about offering connection, conversation, and a sense of belonging to a living community.

Are you interested in joining? We'd love to hear from you!

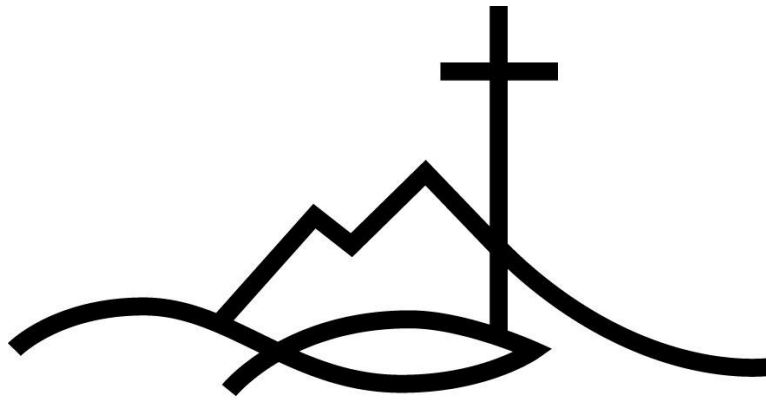
Contact us at: office@stmarkschurch.ca



Evangelisch-Lutherische St. Markusgemeinde
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.stmarkschurch.ca

August 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3 <u>10:30 am</u> Joint Service <u>11:30 am</u> Coffee Sunday	BC Day 4	5	6	7 <u>11:00 am</u> Memorial Service	8	9
10 <u>10:00 am</u> Dt. Gottesdienst <u>11:00 am</u> Coffee Sunday	11	12	13	14 <u>05:00 pm</u> Foodbank	15	16
17 <u>10:00 am</u> Dt. Gottesdienst <u>11:00 am</u> Coffee Sunday <u>11:30 am</u> English Service	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 <u>10:00 am</u> Dt. Gottesdienst <u>11:00 am</u> Coffee Sunday	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 <u>10:00 am</u> Dt. Gottesdienst <u>11:00 am</u> Coffee Sunday <u>11:30 am</u> English Service	Change happens... Find more information. For the online calendar Scan here 					



British Columbia Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Code of Conduct

**for Participants in Events, Meetings and Other gatherings
Organized by the British Columbia Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

**Adapted for use by
St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Vancouver, BC**

Drafted: May 2025 based on 2021 BC Synod Code of Conduct

Approved by St. Mark's Church Council: June 10, 2025

Code of Conduct for Participants in Events, Meetings and Other gatherings ^{1,2}

(Code of Conduct)

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), the BC Synod and St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church are committed to being a church that welcomes all of God's people in a safe, healthy, and accepting environment.

Systemic and structural racism, discrimination, and harassment has been and continues to be experienced by women, indigenous peoples, racial and ethnic minorities, people of diverse faith communities, people of different abilities, people of different ages, and members of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community. We recognize that the church and its members have exhibited such behaviours.

The ELCIC has adopted the following commitment:

This church upholds the dignity of all people. We recognize the image of Christ in every person and serve that person as Christ himself. In meeting diverse people, we begin with a core sense of respect for the value of each person as a unique child of God.³

This is why we are creating this Code of Conduct for all congregational events including studies, worship, groups, conferences and other meetings and events organized or co-hosted by St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

Expected Behaviours by Participants of the Congregation:

- Treat all persons fairly, with respect, courtesy, and dignity during in-person or virtual events including break and mealtimes.
- Be fair, respectful and courteous in any comments written or video postings made over social media platforms, emails or other technologies.
- Behave respectfully towards others and do not misuse personal or professional relationships.
- Be sensitive to cultural and social differences and practices, and careful in your use of language that may be disrespectful or demeaning.
- Respect personal boundaries set by others. If someone indicates "No", even without words, acknowledge/accept it.

¹ The Code of Conduct for Participants in Events, Meetings and Other gatherings Organized by St. Mark's has been developed based on that prepared and approved by the BC Synod, the ELCIC and by that of the *Lutheran World Federation*.

² This Code of Conduct does not supersede existing policies for Rostered Ministers such as Sexual Abuse or Harassment or Manual on Discipline.

³ ELCIC Social Statement on Human Sexuality 2011.

- Behaviours such as bullying, harassment, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- Speak with honesty, truth, and integrity when making accusations against others so as not to create one's own advantage over another.
- Commit to working with the process outlined even if you are the subject of the complaint.
- Be transparent when endorsing an activity/business motion/opportunity through public disclosure of any real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Maintain confidentiality of congregational business or privileged conversations as required (e.g. in camera discussions).
- Advocate for continual improvements to processes and systems for the benefit of all members and friends of St. Mark's.

For all events

- For events with over twenty participants a minimum of two people and preferably of different genders and with an understanding of and sensitivity to diversity, are appointed by the event organizer before the start of the event to form the Complaint Handling Committee (CHC). The CHC members will receive instructions from the event organizer on this Code of Conduct and the procedures to follow. For events of less than 20 participants the CHC committee will consist of one person.
- At the beginning of each event, the organizers shall remind all participants about the Code of Conduct. The CHC should be introduced at the first session. The attention of the participants shall be drawn to the Code of Conduct principles and the commitment of the congregation to uphold them.
- Due to time and space constraints for online meetings, it may be impractical for a CHC to function during the meeting. Participants shall be provided with an electronic copy of the Code of Conduct prior to the meeting and be advised that, following the meeting, complaints may be filed according to Procedure 7 below.
- Events organized with a partnering organization shall follow this Code of Conduct Policy or a similar Code of Conduct Policy of the organization co-hosting the event.

What action should be taken when someone violates the code of conduct?

The procedures to follow are in harmony with Matthew 18:15–17. In the case of criminal behavior, the matter should be referred directly to the police.

Procedure:

1. An individual who experiences or witnesses a violation of the Code of Conduct should speak directly to the subject of complaint in as timely a manner as possible, pointing out the violation in a reasonable manner and requesting that it stop/not be repeated.
 2. If there is no resolution, or if the complainant is not comfortable speaking directly to the subject of complaint, the complainant (including a third-party complainant) should speak to a member of the CHC, who will discuss with them potential next steps.
 3. If the complainant decides to begin a formal complaint process, the complainant should fill out the Complaint Form available at the event. The Complaint Form is also available at the church office.
 4. If the subject of a complaint is a member of the CHC, they shall recuse themselves from any participation in the complaint handling process. If the subject of the complaint is the sole member of the CHC, the complainant should speak to the organizer of the event.
 5. If the subject of the complaint is a rostered member of the ELCIC or full communion partner of the ELCIC, the CHC shall, as part of the process of handling the case, consult the ELCIC Manual on Discipline
 6. During the event the complainant should hand or transmit electronically the completed Complaint Form to a member of the CHC.
 7. After the event, the complainant should email the Complaint Form to the contact person from the CHC identified at the event. Complaints may be registered up to 30 days following the completion of an event organized by St. Mark's.
- All complaints will be carefully investigated in a time-sensitive manner. Wherever possible, the CHC will meet privately and separately with the subject of complaint and the complainant. Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
 - For the complainant, pastoral care and support should be made available. In cases where the complainant wishes to consider reporting the incident to the relevant legal and/or ecclesial authorities, they shall be offered support and assistance in considering such a report. However, if the complainant decides to pursue legal action against the subject of complaint, it shall be done by the complainant independent of St. Mark's.
 - For the subject of complaint, pastoral care and support should be made available. The CHC may remove the subject of complaint from the meeting or from positions where the offense could be repeated if the CHC determines it is reasonable to do so.

Working Definitions (Adapted from the *Lutheran World Federation (LWF)* Code of Conduct)

Bullying Bullying is the use of force or coercion to abuse, humiliate or intimidate others. The behaviour can be habitual and involve an imbalance of social or physical power. It can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and may be directed repeatedly towards particular victims, perhaps on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or ability.

Complainant The person making a complaint of a violation of the Code of Conduct. This may include a third party, someone who has witnessed a violation.

Complaint Handling Committee (CHC) The individuals appointed at an event organized by St. Mark's to receive and review complaints.

Discrimination Discrimination means exclusion of, treatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender including gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation or disability.

Event organizer Usually a St. Mark's Church Council or Staff member.

Harassment Harassment means any unwelcome comment or behavior that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating, derogatory, or any other inappropriate behavior that fails to respect the dignity of an individual.

Sexual harassment Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, comment, expressed or implied sexual demand, touch, joke, gesture, or any other communication or conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, written or visual, by any person to another individual. Sexual harassment may be directed at members of any gender and includes harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Sexual abuse Sexual abuse is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Subject of Complaint The person about whom a complaint is made for violating the Code of Conduct.

Zero tolerance The principle and practice of not tolerating any instance of sexual abuse, harassment, bullying and discrimination in all of our meetings and conferences and applying a clear procedure for breaches or violations.

Guidelines for Members of the Complaint Handling Committee (CHC)

1. Individuals or groups of individuals may come to you with concerns about how to handle a violation of the Code of Conduct. Your initial response is to listen to the complainant or to arrange a mutually agreeable time and place for a meeting. Such meetings should be conducted in private but in a public space.
2. Options for you to consider in dealing with a complaint are:
 - a. To encourage the complainant to speak directly to the subject of complaint.
 - b. To be willing to go with the complainant to speak directly to the subject of complaint.
 - c. To encourage the complainant to fill in a Confidential Complaint Form, and then to speak in private with the subject of complaint.
3. You will need to exercise your caring discretion to help the complainant choose which avenue to pursue.
4. In cases involving what you know to be, or which might be criminal behavior the matter should be reported by the complainant directly to the police.
5. Remember you are part of a team. Use the other CHC team member(s) as a sounding board. You may decide which one of you will speak to the subject of complaint or you may go together. You may also speak to the event organizer for assistance.
6. In any case, do your best to provide pastoral care and support to both the complainant and the subject of complaint. With the permission of the complainant or the subject of complaint you may ask others at the event to provide pastoral care or support.
7. Keep written notes of the actions you take and submit them, along with the original complaint form to the event organizer for confidential management.

CONFIDENTIAL COMPLAINT FORM

For Events Organized by St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church

This form should be completed by a person wishing to lodge a complaint. All information will be held securely, and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. It may also be filled out, scanned and emailed to the designated Complaint Handling Committee contact person for the event:

A. General data

Name of the person lodging the complaint:

Address:

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of the person you wish to lodge a complaint against (if known):

Date of incident: _____

Time of incident:

Title of Event:

Place of incident: _____

Date of reporting: _____ Time of reporting: _____

Signature: _____

B. Brief description of the incident or concern

State what happened, trying to follow the sequence of events from start to finish. If the incident location is not well known, describe the location based on your memory of it. Give a description of the "subject of complaint" if you do not know their name.

C. Name of witnesses: (if any)

Supply the names of witnesses and how they can be contacted, if known.
