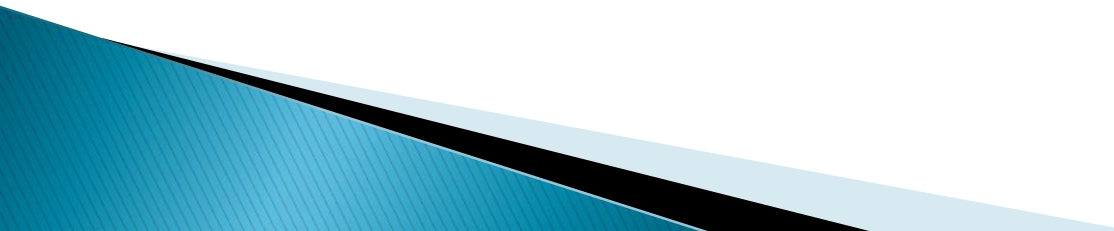


# Theological Responses to Medical-Assisted Dying

Dr. Janet Storch, Professor Emeritus  
University of Victoria

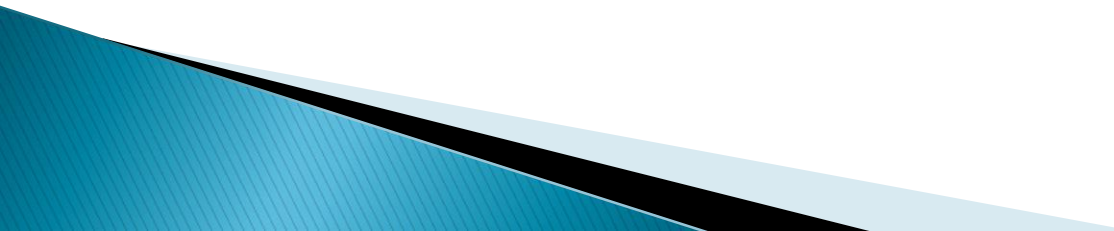
# Your Responses?

- ▶ **Situation 1:** A neighbour letting you know
  - ▶ **Situation 2:** A sibling or cousin dying and asking for MAID
  - ▶ **Situation 3:** You being asked to state your wishes
- 

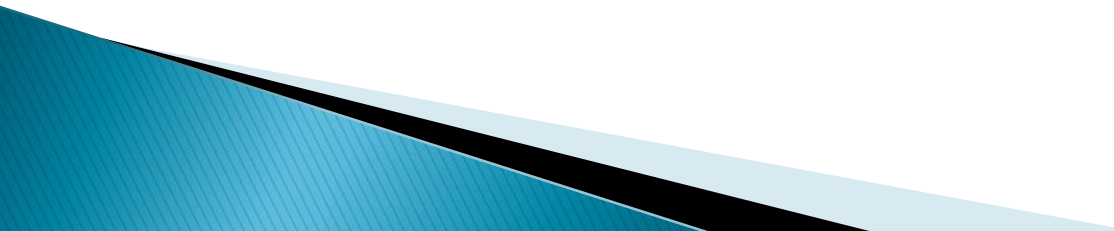
# From Two National Church Bodies....

- ▶ The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCIC)
- ▶ The Anglican Church of Canada

# Documents of the 1990s

- ▶ 1997. Lutheran Church opposition to Physician assisted death confirmed by National Convention
  - ▶ 1998. Anglican Church opposition to Physician assisted death determined by Study document and confirmed by Synod approval of the document
- 

# The ELCIC Resolution 1997

- ▶ Support and expand Palliative Care and Hospice Care
  - ▶ Support one another as a caring community
  - ▶ Do not support the legalization of “physician assisted death” or “mercy killing”
- 

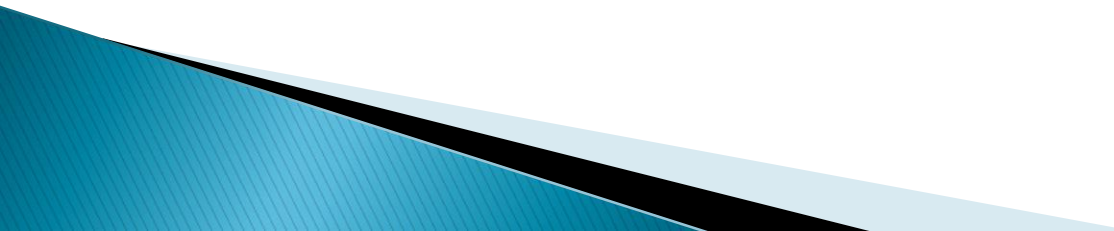
# Anglican Church of Canada

- ▶ **“Care of the Dying” 1998**
- ▶ A substantial document created by a 5 member Task Force of Anglican Theologians

# Cont...Anglican Task Force 1998

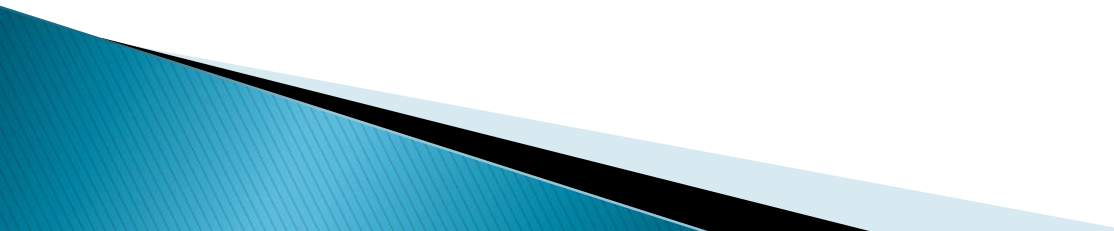
- ▶ “We believe that the balance of evidence continues to support the Church’s traditional and often repeated prohibition against euthanasia”

# Sentinel Event and the Lead Up to it ( MAID)

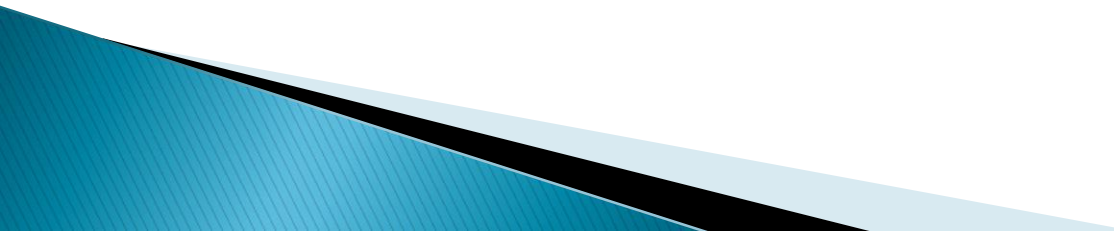
- ▶ Supreme Court of Canada hearing the case of **Carter v. Canada** (Attorney General), 2015 SCC5
  - ▶ Government passage of Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Criminal Code to allow **Medical Assistance in Dying** 2016
- 



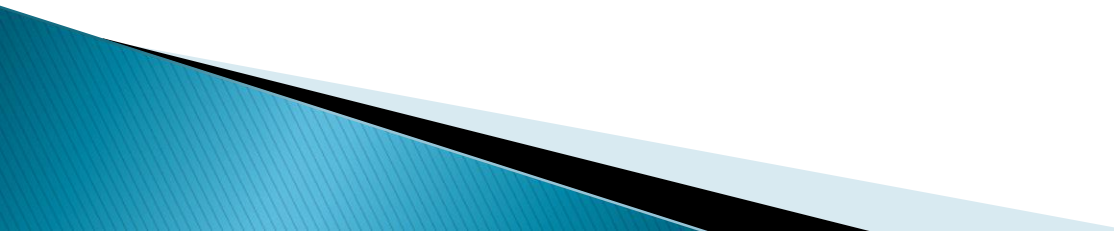
# Dual Commitments for JLS

- ▶ Invitation to serve as the Lutheran (ELCIC) rep on the Anglican Task Force (2014–16)
  - ▶ Appointment to the Lutheran (ELCIC) Task Force (2015–19) as part of a 6-member lay and pastor group
- 

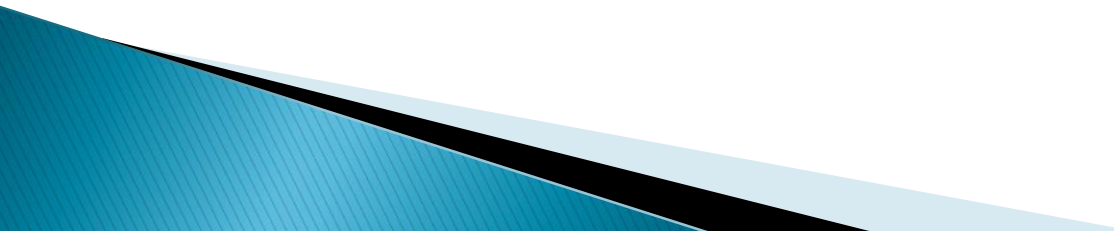
# Anglican Task Force 2014 (process)

- ▶ Used “**Care of the Dying**” as starting point
  - ▶ Also used a Study Guide supporting the 1998 position
  - ▶ Considered definitions and policy shifts
  - ▶ Met by Conference Call and 2 face-to-face meetings
- 

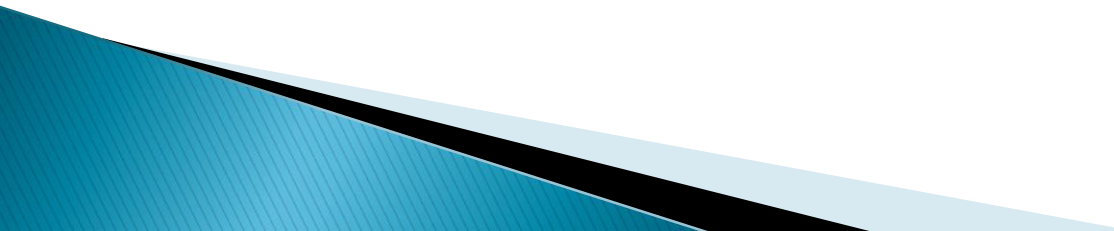
# Anglican Document 2016

- ▶ **“In a Sure and Certain Hope”**
  - ▶ Confirmed the duty to care as a primary directive
  - ▶ Obligates our accompanying those patients with love, respect and compassion whether or not we agree with all of the decisions they make concerning their care.
- 


# The context has shifted....

- ▶ From opposing the medical assistance in dying to....
  - ▶ The task now is to ensure this practice is governed in ways that reflect ...a just expression of care for the dignity of every human being, whatever their circumstances.
- 

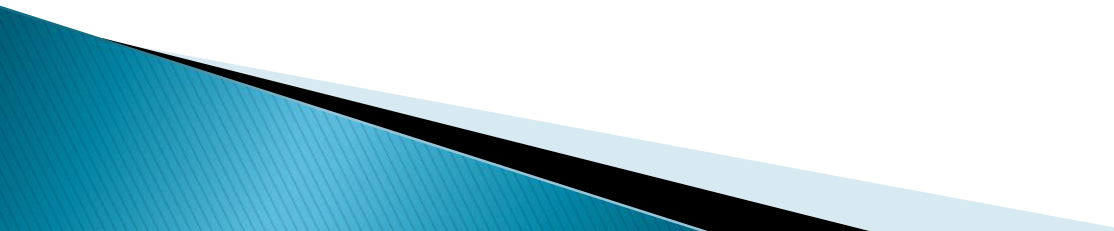
# Theological concerns/questions

- ▶ *Suicide*
  - ▶ *Life as a Gift*
  - ▶ *Suffering*
  - ▶ *Intentionality & Rationality*
  - ▶ Concerns: *Care and Community*
    - *Vulnerability & justice*
    - *Dignity and its Meaning*
    - *Conscience, Hope, Genuine alternatives*
- 

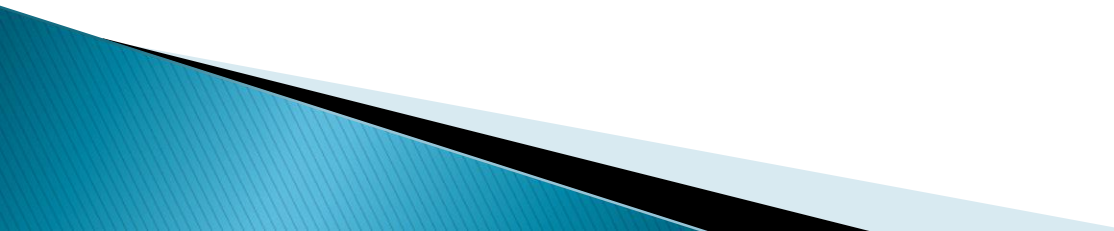
# Lutheran Church (ELCIC) motion

- ▶ 2015 National Convention
  - ▶ *That in light of advances in medical science and the recent SCC ruling decriminalizing doctor assisted death the National Church Council be directed to review our current Resolutions on Decisions-At-The-End-of-Life approved in 1997.*
- 

# Lutheran Church (ELCIC)

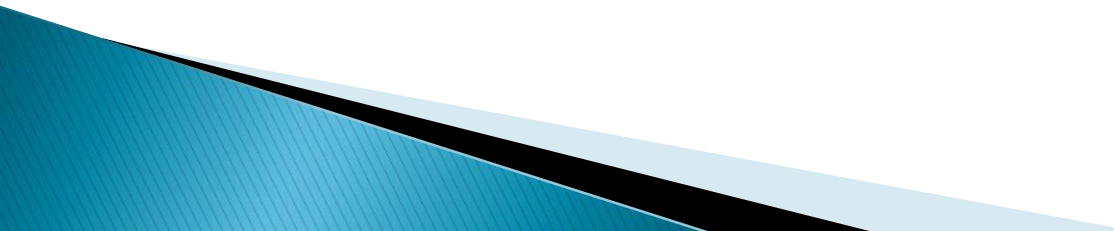
- ▶ Process
  - ▶ *Theological Consultation – 8 key Questions: 13 responses*
  - ▶ *Development of a Study Guide titled*
    - **Conversations on Medical Assistance in Dying**
    - Series of Questions for Study Group responses
- 

# Reflective Questions for Parishioners

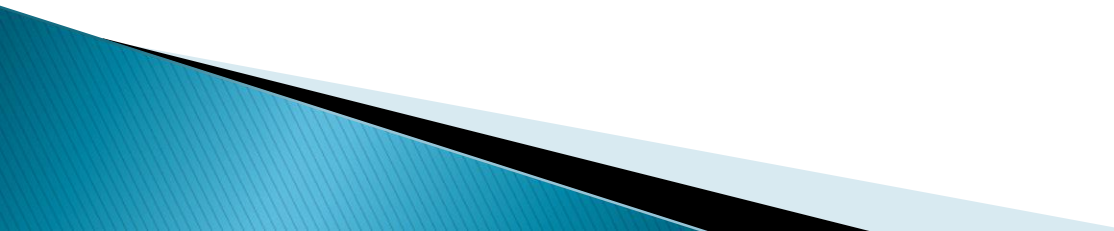
1. What role does the Christian community play in addressing the needs of the dying?
  2. What role does spiritual care play in addressing the needs of the dying?
  3. Can medical assistance in dying ever be part of a good death?
- 



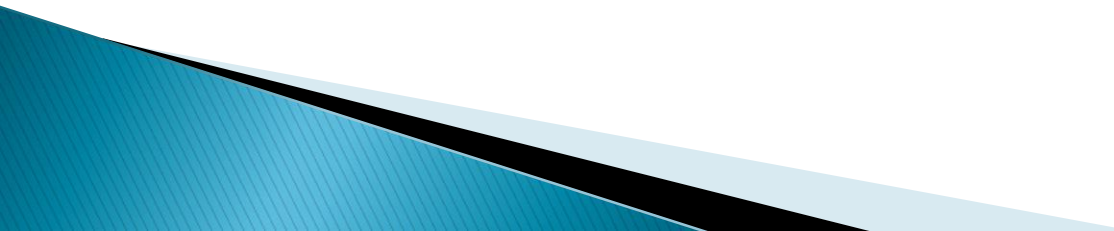
# ...Reflective Questions cont...

- ▶ 4. What core theological values guide our work?
  - ▶ 5. What guidance would you like from your church?
  - ▶ 6. What questions do you still have?
  - ▶ 7. Is there anything else you would like to share with the Task Force?
- 

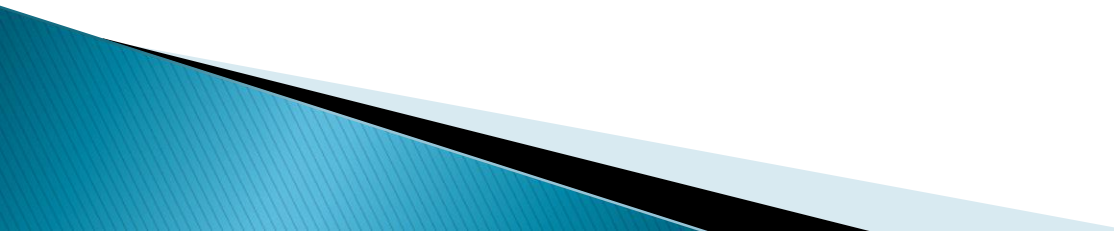
# Assurances from the Bible

- ▶ We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. To this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the living and the dead: **(Romans 14: 7–9)**
- 


# For ELCIC Council/Convention 2019

- ▶ Final Report of the ELCIC Task Force
  - ▶ Proposed Resolution
    - The Call to Journey Faithfully with those who are Dying: An ELCIC Resolution
    - 16 Affirmations
- 

# Affirmations

- ▶ That whenever we enter into a context where death is near, we are standing on holy ground
  - ▶ That everyone has a right to assistance in dying – good medical care, good palliative care
  - ▶ That we do not all have to agree on all matters – we live in a time of difficult questions & challenging issues
- 

# Assurances cont...

- ▶ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, or angels, nor rulers, nor things in the present nor anything to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
(Romans 8:28)
- 

# WEB SITES

