

THE LUTHERAN CONNECTION



NEWS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES OF THE TORONTO CONFERENCE

APRIL 2011

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www.toronto.easternsynod.org

The Toronto Conference website is now on the Synod website.

Toronto Conference Spring Meeting Saturday, May 7 St. Ansgar Lutheran Church 1498 Avenue Road, Toronto

Everyone is invited to attend the Toronto Conference Spring Meeting at St. Ansgar on May 7. Congregations are entitled to two delegates, but we encourage additional members of the congregations to attend as well.

Time

Registration is at 9:30 a.m. and the meeting will begin at 10:00. The cost is \$10 per person to cover materials and lunch.

Agenda

Items of business include reports, vote on bylaw changes, Conference Council elections, Synod Report and special presentations by four of our clergy. The meeting will close with worship being led by Pastors Sebastian Meadows-Helmer and Carrie Meadows-Helmer.

Elections

Four Council positions are to be elected. We strongly encourage nominations to fill these positions. Clergy and lay persons may be nominated. Please forward your nominations to Pastor Mark van House (Peace, Pickering), Pastor Gigi Young (Toronto Chinese) or Judy Baribeau. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Synod Report

Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Riitta Hepomaki, will present the Synod report. If you haven't met Pastor Hepomaki, this is your opportunity to meet her and welcome her to the Toronto Conference.

Presentations

The presentations will be given by Pastors Herbert Harms, Leif Vaage, Eric Schultz and Ernie Skujins as part of the worship service. These pastors serve in specialized ministries and will give insight into their work.

Lunch

The meeting will close with lunch being served at 12:30.

Please set aside this day to reconnect with members of our congregations for worship, business and socializing.

Our Pastors Comment

Pastor Mark van House Peace, Pickering

In April we transition from the penitential season of Lent into the celebratory season of Easter. While our Lenten journey moves us through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, our spiritual journey doesn't end. We are called to more than 40 days of reflection with our walk of faith. The celebration of the resurrection on Easter Sunday, we behold a horizon of hope and promise fulfilled in our voyage of belief. Take note of the faith opportunities below and join us as we travel together, a family united as the body of Christ.

Pastor Linda Douglas Zion, Maple

God works in our lives in ordinary ways for which we give thanks. Consider thanksgiving for a meal. What are we actually thanking God for? We thank God for a world that supplies wonderful food, for the blessing of taste and the joy of eating, for farmers and truckers and grocery store stockers, and for life itself – all of these are the results of God's creative and sustaining work. It is in this sense that Christians rightly give thanks for everything; not because God is the immediate cause of all good, but because God is the ultimate cause of these blessings. God doesn't drop a meal at our front door, but God provides the means for acquiring what we need.

Pastor Karen Jenkins Christ, Peterborough

We probably all have a cross in our homes, don't we? If not prominently displayed, Lent might be a wonderful time to get one out and place it in a central place. The death of Jesus Christ on a cross is crucial to our faith and we could say it is the crux of the Gospel message that Christ died for us in order that we might be saved. In addition to the cross, you might also have another earlier Christian symbol hanging around your house, or attached to your car, such

Conference Council Notes

■ 150th Anniversary

On September 25 the Toronto Conference will host a special service at Zion, Maple, at 3:00 p.m. to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Eastern Synod. Bishop Pryse will participate in the service. Zion is the congregation where the Eastern Synod was established. More information will be available later.

■ Anniversary Booklet

Congregations are asked to prepare a one-page history of their congregations to be included in a Conference booklet. Please forward your submissions to Judy Baribeau by June 30. One congregation has already responded. We're waiting for the 30+ remaining congregations to forward their stories. Photographs are also encouraged and will be used to make a cover collage.

■ **The Fall Conference meeting** will be held on October 1 at St. Philip's, Toronto, with the theme "Health Fair". A number of groups will be represented including alternative therapies. Please contact Pastor Susan Climo (Peace, Mississauga) if you are involved in any of these areas, or have contacts in these areas and would like to participate in the presentations.

■ 2012 Lutheran Cultural Event

We are beginning to make plans to hold a cultural event in the spring of 2012 that recognizes the cultural diversity in our Conference using food, art and entertainment. This event will replace the concerts we've held for the past five years. As plans continue, more details will be available.

as an Ichthus. Huh? Don't be surprised to find out that you already know this symbol, although you may not know it by its proper name. The Ichthus is the fish used by the early Christians to secretly identify themselves to other Christians. The word is itself an acrostic, which means that the word Ichthus is formed from the first letter of several words. In this case;

■ Iota (i) is the first letter of *Iēsous*, Greek for Jesus.

■ Chi (ch) is the first letter of *Christos*, Greek for anointed.

■ Theta (th) is the first letter of *Theou*, Greek for 'of God'.

■ Upsilon (u) is the first letter of *huios*, Greek for Son.

■ Sigma (s) is the first letter of *sōtēr*, Greek for Saviour.

Altogether, this means Jesus Christ, Son of God our Saviour.

These symbols are still used today to show that the ones who use them are practicing Christians.

Rev. Martha Tatarnic St. David's, Orillia

Being 'born again' is a term that has been over-used and mis-used in the Christian church so much that we have come to see it as a term to describe a particular kind of Christian. In truth, Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again very much pick up on the same sorts of affirmations made in our other readings this morning:

■ that we are invited to surrender our lives to the God of love, rather than going it alone.

■ that our relationship with God is based, first and foremost in God's love for us, rather than anything we do. God's unconditional love is often described in the parental terms we see here, of a father or mother's loving relationship with their helpless newborn.

■ that this life is a journey, a journey in which we are shielded and protected by God every step of the way.

Our Pastors Write*Continued from Page 2***Pastor Ann Krueger
Westside, Barrie**

I'm not suggesting that we sell our homes and start a new community (although some Christians do). But gathering to pray and study, gathering to dream and vision, in addition to the ways we usually gather – to worship and eat – it is worth making time for this. Because as we gather together in Jesus' name, we are transformed from individuals into a vibrant, God-breathed fellowship that is so much more than our individual parts.

That's the part of Westside all of us love – the vibrant warmth, the energy and joy that is so evident Sunday mornings and other times we gather. That's the Holy Spirit in our midst.

And so, along with council, I invite you to take part in the two visioning sessions that we holding the weeks of April 11 and 25 and then join with the whole congregation on Sunday, May 1.

May the Lord also add to our number those being saved.

**Pastor Lowell Nussey
Christ the King, Whitby**

One of the reasons that I am a disciple of Christ is because I believe someone has done something about death. When Jesus rose from the grave on that first Easter morning, he neutralized the power of death. Jesus promises to share this victory over death with all who trust in him. This is the reason we celebrate Easter. The tyrant of life has been toppled.

Obviously, each one of us must face the end of our earthly days at some point in time. Physical bodies that have been worn out and damaged don't last forever. We can endure this however, knowing that it will not destroy us because we shall be raised to a new life with Christ.

As you celebrate Easter this month, remember that this celebration is more than a ritualistic, academic, rehearsal of

past events – it is a relevant and deeply personal celebration of the freedom to live now, and in the future; that we have been given by our loving and powerful Lord.

**Pastor Susan Climo
Peace, Mississauga**

This Easter season, I ask you: What parts of you need to die so that God can raise you up? And what aspects of our life and work as a community need to die and rise transformed by our ever-creating God? This relinquishing, this letting parts of our lives die – it's not easy or pain-free, and we are trained by our society to avoid and deny pain and death of any kind at all costs. But we can be confident God will be with us through every moment of struggle and sadness and grief, and we can remember that after any death comes resurrection – new beginnings, new energy, new hope, new life. That's God sure and certain promise, a promise we celebrate at Easter, at worship every Sunday, and every moment of our lives.

**Pastor Christian Schweter
First Lutheran, Toronto**

It is our mission to show God's love to people by loving them. We are God's hand which he extends to us in reconciliation. Through our words and our actions we show that everyone is invited to participate in God's feast in particular also those who cannot believe. We bring the healing power of God to people who are injured, disappointed and bitter by taking these people just as God took us. We forgive, just as God forgives us, and we leave no place for anger in ourselves. We bring the good news that there is life after a life of consuming and that we share our blessing with others, are not jealous or suspicious that we may be holding the shorter end of the stick.

**Pastor Tuula Van Gaasbeek
Agricola, Toronto**

Easter is the most important day of the year. It tells us the good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He conquered sin, darkness and death. The resurrection gave us a faith in a living Saviour, who stays with us every moment of our lives from birth till eternal life. This biggest miracle of Christianity cannot be proved through science; it is not a scientific fact. We can only measure its power and influence both in history and in our individual lives. Wherever and whenever Christ walks with us, as he did with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, there will be miracles. We cannot see him, but we can see the impact of his presence: faith, hope, love and wisdom. Those are the proof that Christ is alive.

**Pastor Alexander Mielke
Martin Luther, Toronto**

Christ says, "In the world you face anxiety. But take courage; I have conquered

the world." In John 16, Jesus says this to his disciples during the last night when they realize that they are in great danger with their Master.

"In the world you face anxiety. But take courage; I have conquered the world." This is promised to us by the Lord who has experienced everything in his own body: weakness, illness, danger and death, evil and indifference from people. The disciples may remember the event with their Lord at the Sea of Galilee. At the time when the waves became very huge. So that they seemed to pull the small boat into the abyss. When they were full of fear of the power of the water, that was going to destroy their life. But then they saw the face of their Lord: calm and confident, safe in trust, even in the midst of the raging chaotic powers.

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Our Pastors Write

Continued from Page 3

Pastor Dennis Becker Faith, Oshawa

It is exciting to be Easter people, people of the new life. When all around the pall of death hangs heavy, we shine with the radiance of the noonday sun. We march triumphantly from the graveside knowing the final outcome is secure. We fix our hope, cast our anchor on the One who looked death in the face, stared it down, and won.

Easter may be late this year. But the new life of Easter is always with us. Revel in it. Soak it up, let it spill out in our smiles, our words, our outlook, our

hope. And let us pray that it is catchy – that those around us will warm in its glow.

Pastor Nadine Nicholds Augsburg, Brampton

So, if we are serious about engaging in good Lenten practice, then we're going to have to reframe our ideas about Lent. Yes, we will still concentrate on Christ's sacrifice for our sins, but instead of, perhaps, condemning ourselves and denying ourselves (I'm thinking here, of Alfred Molina's character in the wonderful movie *Chocolat*. Definitely see this movie if you have the chance) we need to start focusing on the fact that because of Christ's sacrifice we are forgiven, accepted and redeemed. ♦

Congregational Life Stories

We would like to include more items written by laypersons in *The Lutheran Connection*. If your congregation has a special program or event, please encourage a lay member to write a paragraph or two and submit it for the newsletter. Photographs are also welcome. If photographs are of people, please confirm their permission to publish them.

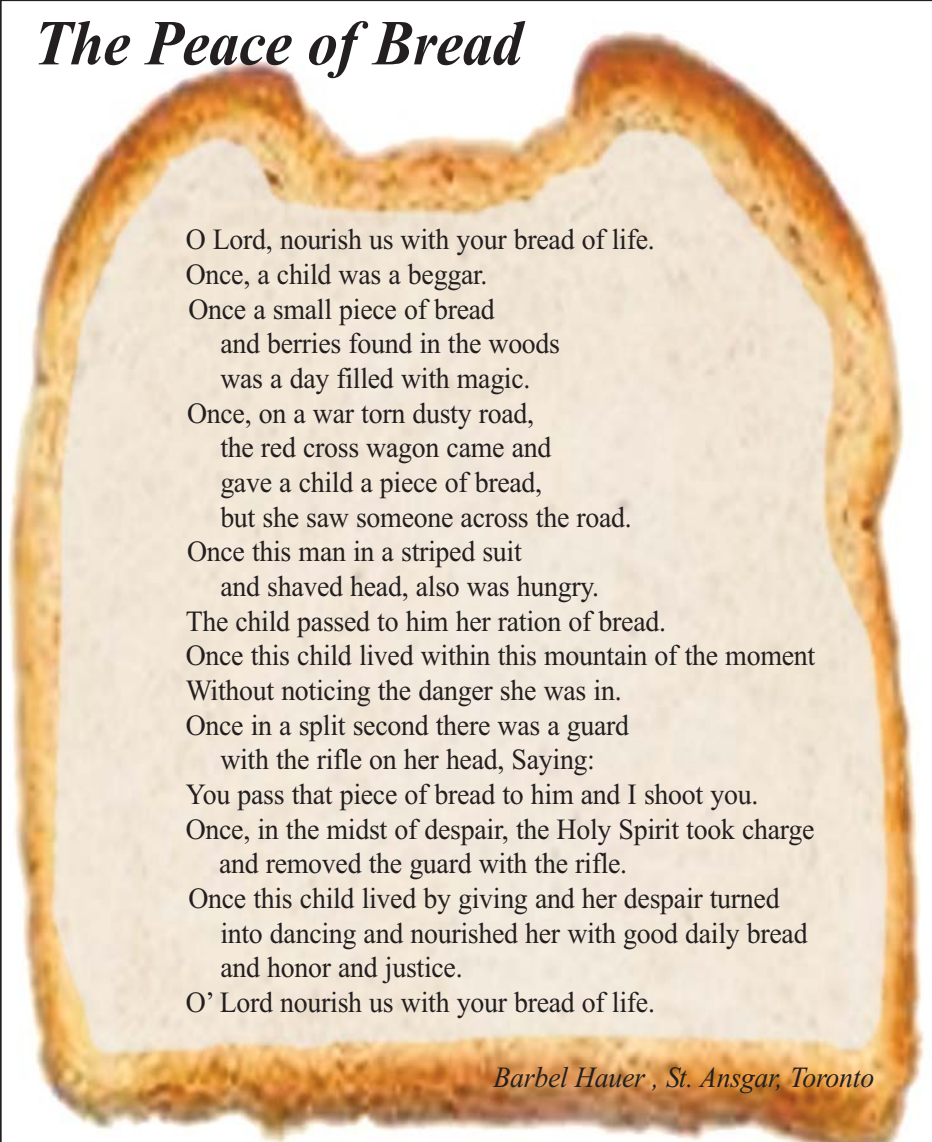
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Ecumenical Events

- **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, hosted a World Day of Prayer service on March 4.
- **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, is participating in the Neighbourhood Interfaith Group 25th Anniversary dinner on May 11 at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church. The Rev. Dr. Andrew J. B. Stirling of Timothy Eaton Memorial Church is guest speaker and his theme is "Embracing the Things that Unite Us".
- **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, hosted the eighth annual Mardi Gras Pancake Supper on March 8.
- Members of **First Lutheran, Toronto**, are invited to an ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service being held on Dundas Square in Toronto.
- **Christ, Peterborough**, is participating in Lenten hymn sing worship with St. Luke's Anglican.
- The Health Cabinet at **Christ, Peterborough**, sponsored a speaker from the Diabetes Association.
- On Good Friday, members of **Martin Luther, Toronto**, will participate in an ecumenical English service at Mimico United Church. Other Protestant churches in the community will also participate. ♦

The Peace of Bread



O Lord, nourish us with your bread of life.
 Once, a child was a beggar.
 Once a small piece of bread
 and berries found in the woods
 was a day filled with magic.
 Once, on a war torn dusty road,
 the red cross wagon came and
 gave a child a piece of bread,
 but she saw someone across the road.
 Once this man in a striped suit
 and shaved head, also was hungry.
 The child passed to him her ration of bread.
 Once this child lived within this mountain of the moment
 Without noticing the danger she was in.
 Once in a split second there was a guard
 with the rifle on her head, Saying:
 You pass that piece of bread to him and I shoot you.
 Once, in the midst of despair, the Holy Spirit took charge
 and removed the guard with the rifle.
 Once this child lived by giving and her despair turned
 into dancing and nourished her with good daily bread
 and honor and justice.
 O' Lord nourish us with your bread of life.

Barbel Hauer, St. Ansgar, Toronto

Our Congregations at Work

- **Peace, Pickering**, will hold a Seder Meal on Maundy Thursday.
- **First Lutheran, Toronto**, will hold a Passover Celebration on Maundy Thursday.
- **Westside, Barrie**, will hold its annual choir concert "Lift Up Your Voice, ALLELUIA!" on May 6.
- **Westside, Barrie**, will hold its spring musical on May 15.
- **Westside, Barrie**, will hold its congregational sale on May 14.
- **Epiphany, Toronto**, will donate the money from their "Looney Bins" to the food bank.
- **Epiphany, Toronto**, is beginning to make plans for its 50th anniversary celebration.
- The Seniors group at **Epiphany, Toronto**, heard a presentation on the potato at its March meeting.
- Pastor Michael Mills has resigned from **Advent, Toronto**. Pastor Peter Lisinski is continuing as Interim Pastor.
- **Christ, Peterborough**, will hold its rummage/bake sale on May 7.
- **Christ, Peterborough's**, "Mother's Day Gift" donations will give special mothers, members and friends of Christ Lutheran a special gift and visitation.
- **Zion, Maple**, is designating its Easter donations to Camp Edgewood.
- **Christ, Peterborough**, is holding a blood pressure clinic on April 17.
- **St. David's, Orillia**, is one of three churches who hosted "Taste and See That The Lord is Good" learning about the Eucharist workshop on April 9.
- Rev. Martha Tatarnic, **St. David's, Orillia**, together with her husband, are offering an Easter study for their respective parishes on the book *Seasons of the Heart*.
- The children, confirmands and youth will present a small passion play "The Stations of the Cross" during the Good Friday service at **Christ the King/Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thornhill**.
- **Christ the King/Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thornhill**, is holding an Egg Coloring Afternoon on April 23.
- **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, will hold a Yard Sale on April 30.
- **St. Ansgar's, Toronto**, Young at Heart Group will hear an Israel Travelogue at their May 11 meeting.
- **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, will hold an Ester Vigil service at 10:00 p.m. on April 23 followed by an all night vigil beginning at midnight. Their Easter Sunrise Service will be at 6:00 a.m.
- Members of **Peace, Mississauga**, and Grace, Oakville, are continuing on their "walk to Jerusalem" during Lent. So far they have made it through Quebec – with a ways to go.
- **Peace, Mississauga**, and Grace, Oakville, will jointly hold an Easter Vigil Service at Grace.
- The male voice choir "Harfentoene" will sing at the German Palm Sunday service at **Martin Luther, Toronto**.
- The gospel choir "Joyful Voices" is coming from Mannheim, Germany, to give a concert on April 23 at Martin Luther, Toronto.
- On May 30, **Martin Luther, Toronto**, is holding a discussion on "Introduction to the Understanding of Sikhism" as part of its "Getting to Know Neighbours – Understanding World Religions" series.
- **Martin Luther, Toronto**, is hosting the Joint German Ascension Celebration on June 2.
- The Lutheran Ladies Group at **Christ the King, Whitby**, sponsored a spaghetti dinner and the County Town Singers Concert on April 2.
- **Christ the King, Whitby**, is sponsoring a young girl from Ecuador through World Vision.
- **Christ the King, Whitby**, is collecting new and used surplus evangelical literature for needy nations worldwide. The Christian Salvage Mission coordinates these efforts.
- The Lutheran Ladies from **Christ the King, Whitby**, made dresses for Africa from new of gently used pillow cases and presented them on March 20.
- **Christ the King, Whitby**, will hold its annual yard sale on May 28.
- **Faith, Oshawa**, will hold a Maundy Thursday Seder Meal.
- **Faith, Oshawa**, will hold a Pint with the Pastor evening on April 28 – but will be postponed if the Generals are still playing.
- **Faith, Oshawa**, will hold its 9th annual Loonie Sale and Luncheon on June 5.
- Dzintra Erliha, a well-known pianist from Latvia, performed at **St. Andrew's Latvian, Toronto**, on March 20.
- **Augsburg, Brampton**, held a Lunch and Learn on March 27 and heard about the services of the Canadian Hearing Society.
- On April 10, **Augsburg, Brampton**, held a Spring Musicale to celebrate its 50th anniversary.
- The Sunday School at **Augsburg, Brampton**, is working on the "One community" project for CLWR during the Lent and Easter seasons. ♦

Green "Peace"

Thank you for your support as we continue to make our church a more eco-friendly place – in accordance with the ELCIC Greening of the Church. You may have noticed a few more changes lately. Along with our food containers and serving items that are stainless steel, glass or ceramic, we are introducing plastic items that are BPA Free. Many plastics contain a chemical called "Bisphenol A" which is found in various kinds of plastic food packaging, water bottles, plastic milk bags, food storage containers and sealing wrap. It is also used to line the inside of food cans. BPA is an endocrine-disrupting chemical linked with heart disease, breast cancer, diabetes, infertility and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. We've switched our food containers (Ziploc), water and juice pitchers to BPA free plastic.

Peace, Pickering

AGRICOLA LUTHERAN CHURCH

Joyful Voices

Gospel choir from Mannheim, Germany
at Agricola Church

Easter Sunday, April 24th, 7:00 pm



Tickets \$ 10 at the door

Welcome !

Agricola Lutheran Church

25 Old York Mills Road
(Yonge Street & York Mills
Road)

Phone: 416. 489. 7600
E-mail: agricola@rogers.com
Web page: www.agricola.ca



Community Events and Service

- **Peace, Mississauga**, sold daffodils on April 2 for the Canadian Cancer Society during the Cancer Society's annual campaign.
- **Christ the King, Whitby**, is collecting items for the Durham Inter-Group Immigrant Support Group.
- **Faith, Oshawa**, is collecting food and office supplies for Gate 3:16 during Lent.
- **Faith, Oshawa**, collects food in its Food Cupboard for a variety of charities. ♦

Youth

- Youth at **Westside, Barrie**, will participate in the 30 hour famine on April 29-30 in support of World vision. Youth at Christ the King, Whitby, held a game of Laser tag on April 16 and invited their parents to join them. ♦

Toronto Conference Contacts

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lkdouglas@sympatico.ca

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loreen00@sympatico.ca

Please send your parish newsletters, articles and other announcements you would like included in *The Lutheran Connection* to:

Judy Baribeau
23 Toynbee Trail
West Hill, Ontario M1E 1E8
or email
judybaribeau@rogers.com

Please indicate any items you particularly would like to have covered in the newsletter.

If you have any questions, please call me at 416-264-4527 or email to
judybaribeau@rogers.com



Exploring life issues with the Bible

Because you say YES to me

We are all on a journey of life; all looking for something that's worth living for. In the Steps course we come together to think about our own life experiences and to discover how stories from the Bible can be relevant to the different stages of our lives.

We use three-dimensional floor pictures to consider the life issues relevant to a particular Bible story; and by talking and listening to one another we come to a new understanding.

Each Steps course has four units. German units will start in spring, on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.: May 11 and 25, June 8 and 22. English units will follow in the fall.

If you are interested, please contact me beforehand by giving me your name and phone number: heike.block.mielke@rogers.com.

Pastor Heike Block-Mielke
Martin Luther, Toronto