

# THE LUTHERAN CONNECTION



NEWS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES OF THE TORONTO CONFERENCE

JUNE 2011

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The Toronto Conference Fall Meeting will be held October 1 at St. Philip's Lutheran Church, Toronto from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The theme will be a Health Fair. Watch for further information.

Please check the Toronto Conference website for the following items:

- Updated Toronto Conference Prayer Rotation
- Toronto Conference Choir Music Library

[www.toronto.easternsynod.org](http://www.toronto.easternsynod.org)

The Toronto Conference website is now on the Synod website.

## Toronto Conference Anniversary Booklet

150

Please remember to forward your one-page congregation's story – with a photo – to include in the Toronto Conference history book. Our objective is to include every congregation, so don't let your congregation be left out. The cover will be a composite of the church photographs. A copy will be given to each congregation and additional copies can be ordered for purchase. But... we can't prepare the booklet without your stories, so forward your information by June 30. Please send it to

Judy Baribeau  
[judybaribeau@rogers.com](mailto:judybaribeau@rogers.com)

We thank all the congregations who have already submitted their stories and photos.

# Our Pastors Comment

## Pastor Lowell Nussey Christ the King, Whitby

As you enjoy the new growth of June, the beauty of creation, I challenge you to take a few moments and reflect on how you have grown spiritually over the past few years. Like most healthy growth, spiritual growth is gradual and often goes unnoticed in the short term. You may not be able to detect any spiritual growth in yourself over the past year. So reflect back, say five years, and observe how your faith has grown.

Are you more thankful than you were five years ago? Are you more generous in word and deed? Are you spending more time in prayer and reading the Bible? Are you less judgmental? Are you less self-centred? Do you find it easier to talk about spiritual realities? Do you have an increased awareness of purpose and mission in life? Do you find it easier to share your time and possessions with those who need your help? Has it become easier to ask for and grant forgiveness? Have you grown in your appreciation of the value of life?

## Rev. Martha Tatarnic St. David's, Orillia

Summer provides opportunities in caring for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It also supplies its share of pitfalls. For many of us, summer means some vacation, time set aside for relaxation, being with family and friends, slowing down the frantic pace of life, recharging the batteries, enjoying fresh fruit and vegetables, barbecue, special meals, 'playing' outdoors. In other words, summer can truly be about recreation – literally, Re-Creation, where warm weather and more time and special plans all coincide to open our hearts and lives once again to the gift of who we are as God's creatures living in the goodness of God's created order. Of course, the converse is also true. For some, summer can be too much of a break with routine; it can be easy to lose touch with those things which keep our

## 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.

### ■ 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.

lives grounded, lose touch of the restraint and structure normally built into everyday routines which help us to feel healthy and grateful.

## Pastor Roy Thakurdial Bethesda, Unionville

The clouds change their shapes. Their thick, expansive spread may block our view of the blue sky. But, the sky is always there. We know amidst the changes and chances of life, in its confusion and chaos God is our Constant. The trials and tribulations of life come in various shapes and forms. Oftentimes, they threaten to block our vision of God. Yet God is always there, even in the difficult times. The One who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, He who changes not holds our lives in his hands. With this anchorage we can discern meaning and purpose in life even amidst its changing shapes and forms of life.

## Pastor Susan Climo Peace, Mississauga

That's what the words of our congregation's vision statement are intended to do. They are meant to be words that help explain to our neighbours and anyone who doesn't know us just who we are. They are also meant to be words that help to remind us of who we are, whose we are, and of what God created each of us to be and do. Each time we read them or hear them, the words of our vision statement can powerfully remind us of

our identity and our call as a community of God's people. The words of our vision statement can also help us make decisions about future projects or programs, as we can ask ourselves "Does this new opportunity match our vision? Does it honour and reflect who we really are?"

## Pastor Christian Schweter First Lutheran, Toronto

The Holy Spirit is the creativity of God. In the beginning in the book of Genesis (Genesis 1:2) God's spirit hovers over the water. In Genesis 2:7 the Holy Spirit is described as the breath of life, which God breathes into man.

The Holy Spirit opens the words of the Bible to us (John 14:26). Every time when a particular biblical word has special meaning, or when we find that the sermon speaks to us personally, then the Holy Spirit is behind this, correcting and inciting so that we can grow in our faith.

## Pastor Claudine Carlson Interim, St. Philip's, Toronto

Summer is upon us – a time for "getting away", relaxing, and easing up on our overly-scheduled lives. Many of us will be at cottages, many will be sightseeing, and some will be doing "eco-holidays". Whatever you do, I pray it will be a time of refreshment and renewal for you. I would hope you take the opportunity to worship at another church, perhaps outside of your "comfort zone" in a different denomination. But wherever you

## Our Pastors Write

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are, and whatever you do, I sincerely wish for you time to be in God's good and marvellous creation – unhurried time to notice it and reflect on the wonder of it all. All the beauty you see is God's, and is of God's making – all of it.

### Pastor Mark Van House Peace, Pickering

What does this mean (a good Luther type of question) for us?

Christian eschatology, the end time [ἔσχατον], is not represented by those who make claims to the “rapture”, especially in predicting its arrival: Matthew 24 and Mark 13 make clear to those who believe in the return of Christ (Christian Messiah) that the time is unknown to all but God our heavenly parent. The Biblical prediction is that many false prophets and messiahs will attempt to lead the faithful astray.

We continue to live our lives as faithful disciples of Christ. We bring Good News to those in need. We repent and we're forgiven, we seek repentance and forgiveness with one another. We dwell in the Word and we live through Word (Micah 6:8; John 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19). The world continues on. We laugh, we cry, we give thanks and praise to God. On this last point, as many prepare for Summer holidays and opening cottages for use through these next three months, we continue to worship.

### Pastor Dennis Becker Faith, Oshawa

Worship is work. It requires some effort to focus our thoughts on all that God has done, to open our hearts and hands to receive even more gifts from God's hands, to relinquish our hold on self and offer ourselves freely to God. It is work because so many things occupy our minds, fighting for attention, demanding allegiance, causing us pain and hurt, that it is hard to put that aside for a bit while we focus on God.

Worship is God-centred. It is never about us. It is about God and what God has graciously done for us. As catchy as those little tunes are that extol our love for God, our faithfulness and loyalty (what some call “dating Jesus music”) that is not the point of worship. For no matter how much we love God, God loves us more; indeed, our love has been called forth by God's greater love for us. Besides, our lives often do not measure up to those sentimental lyrics.

### Pastor Brian Wilker-Frey St. Ansgar, Toronto

While I understand why the task force is making these recommendations, I think they fail to face the reality of death and the opportunity to live in hope to the same extent as the motions on human sexuality do. You might say that these recommendations are like rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic. Now's not the time to hold on to an old structure that's been tinkered with. It's time to abandon the old structure and live in a completely new way.

How about abandoning the ‘synod’ structure altogether? How about redefining the role of bishop as more of a pastor and less of a CEO? How about embracing new online technologies so we can meet every year – or as often as necessary – until this thing is fixed? Now is not the time to be asking less of the crew of the Titanic, but more – much more. And if we die trying, so be it. We do believe in resurrection, don't we?

Endings are sad – I get that. The gospel doesn't promise ‘easy,’ it promises new life. It's hard enough for individuals like you and me to embrace this promise in a world that denies and avoids death at every turn. It's even harder for institutions like the ELCIC, that exist to resist change, to embrace real hope.

Please pray for our church as it faces these difficult questions and challenges, and the delegates who will be meeting in Saskatoon this July. As your delegate, I welcome your comments and feedback.

### Pastor Linda Douglas Zion, Maple

Where is that spirit operating now? What will its new manifestations be? The challenge is to try to see it, to anticipate it, before it happens, to guess which way the power of God is going. If the past is any guide, the Spirit of God will manifest itself in creative ways that will completely surprise us. It will be something we probably never guessed or expected.

Perhaps, with the new globalism produced by electronic communications and modern travel and the erosion of old economic and political barriers, a hundred years from now we shall see a Christianity vastly transformed by its openness to other religions and its desire to relate to them in the quest for a new and higher form of spirituality.

### Pastor Katharina Moeller St. George's, Toronto

Jesus Christ is our future and the reason and essence of our hope. God does not leave us alone with our questions and problems. He helps us, to bring order into our lives, to differentiate the substantial from the insignificant, so that we can live with an inner balance. He would like us to open ourselves to his joy and his peace, make room for them in our lives and receive them gladly. Then we can be there for one another with love and bring new hope to people.

We want to approach other people without prejudices, accept each other with love, be there and help one another whenever possible. We trust that the Holy Spirit will strengthen us and give us joy, when we share our hope and work towards peace. ♦



## Youth

■ Youth from **Faith, Oshawa**, will go to a Blue Jays game on June 29. ♦

# Our Congregations at Work

■ On June 29, **St. Andrew's Latvian, Toronto**, is hosting a social evening with the music group "Muza" from Latvia performing. It is being held at the estate of Maija Velme-Meyer and Ronald Meyer in Stouffville. Proceeds will aid the Latvia Committee.

■ **St. Andrew's Latvian, Toronto**, hosted a Deportation Memorial Service on June 14.

■ Members of **St. David's, Orillia**, are holding a social night on June 24 for parents and children.

■ Rev. Martha Tatarnic, St. David's, Orillia, writes an on-line blog for the North Simcoe News website called *Water Into Wine*. It is found at [www.northsimcoenews.com](http://www.northsimcoenews.com). It is a reflection on a variety of things – family, church, faith, community, social issues, etc.

■ Members of **St. David's, Orillia**, collected \$1,750 to cover the cost of a well in an impoverished part of the world.

■ Members of **Christ the King, Whitby**, are making plans for their Fall Sale, Bazaar and Tea Room to be held on October 15.

■ **Bethesda, Unionville**, will hold its Cemetery Memorial Service on June 19.

■ **Bethesda, Unionville**, will participate again this year in the Sharecroppers program. Proceeds will go to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Last year Bethesda donated over \$31,000 to the Bank. On June 12, FaithLife sponsored the first event in this year's program, a barbecue.

■ **Bethesda, Unionville**, is holding a Vacation Bible School the week of July 4.

■ The Seniors Group at **First Lutheran, Toronto**, welcomed the Consul General of Germany, Sabine Sparwasser, at its June 15 meeting.

■ **First Lutheran and St. George's, Toronto**, will hold joint services on July 17 and August 14.

■ **St. Philip's, Toronto**, is planning a Service of Pet Blessing on October 1 at 3:00 p.m.

■ **Peace, Pickering**, held a yard sale including bake sale and barbecue on June 4

■ **Peace, Pickering**, will celebrate Christmas in July on July 24.

■ **Peace, Pickering**, will hold a Lemonade Sunday on August 14.

■ **Peace, Pickering**, will hold its Vacation Bible School "Shake it Up" the week of July 18.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, held its 9th Annual Loonie Sale and Luncheon on June 5. Proceeds went to cover the cost of their two World Vision sponsor children.

■ **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, will hold its Vacation Bible School "Shake it Up Café" August 22-26.

■ The ELW at **Epiphany, Toronto**, held a May Strawberry Social and a mini book sale.

■ On June 8, the ELW at **Epiphany, Toronto**, hosted a program on soapmaking.

■ **Augsburg, Brampton**, holds its annual garage sale on June 18.

■ **Augsburg, Brampton**, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with guest speakers, celebration dinner and dance, and a concert.

■ Members of **St. George's, Toronto**, held a congregational outing with a boat trip to Orillia on May 31.

■ **St. George's, Toronto**, will hold bazaars on July 23 and September 17.

■ **St. George's, Toronto**, is planning to celebrate Golden Confirmation and Confirmation Anniversary on September 25.

■ **Christ, Peterborough**, will hold its Vacation Bible School July 18-22. ♦

## Ecumenical Events

■ **St. David's, Orillia**, is participating in Vacation Bible School "Panda Mania" from July 4-8 at St. James Anglican Church.

■ "Wacky Wednesdays" will be back for **St. David's, Orillia**, this summer when they will worship with other congregations on Wednesday evenings each week in different locations in the area.

■ Members of **St. Andrew's Latvian, Toronto**, held a joint worship service with Saint Luke's United at Allan Gardens.

■ Members of **Bethesda, Unionville**, will worship with Central United Church on July 31 and August 7.

## Toronto Conference Contacts

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## Community Events and Service

■ Members of **Bethesda, Unionville**, participated in the Unionville Festival with a float themed "The Earth is the Lord's". They borrowed a statue of Martin Luther for the float.

■ **Members of Christ, Peterborough**, are preparing 60-70 brown bag lunches for St. Paul's on July 3. ♦

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

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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](mailto:judybaribeau@rogers.com)