

THE LUTHERAN CONNECTION



NEWS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES OF THE TORONTO CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 2011

Inside

Our Pastors Comment

– 2 –

150th Anniversary Service

– 2 –

Congregational Life Story

– 4 –

Community Events
and Service

– 4 –

Youth

– 4 –

Our Congregations at Work

– 5 –

First Lutheran Church
160th Anniversary

– 5 –

Toronto Conference Fall
Meeting

– 6 –

Candles in the Window

– 6 –

Please check the Toronto
Conference website for the
following items:

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

www.toronto.easternsynod.org



Eastern Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Toronto Conference Celebrates the 150th Anniversary of the Eastern Synod

Sunday, September 25, 3:00 p.m.

Zion Lutheran Church,
8795 Keele Street, Maple

Bishop Michael Pryse will be guest preacher

Please join us for this celebration. History booklets with stories of the Toronto Conference congregations will be available. All congregations who provided information will get one free copy. Additional copies will be available for \$10 each.

- Please remember to bring your banners made from the fabric sent to you last month. These banners will be hung during the service.
- Various congregations will be providing special music that relates to the diversity of our backgrounds.
- The offering will be given to Eastern Synod Benevolence.
- Zion's annual Cemetery Service will be part of the celebration. The Cemetery's story is included in the history book.
- Please bring finger foods or sweets for the reception following the service.

Please encourage your members to attend this special Service.

Our Pastors Comment

Pastor Christian Schweter **First Lutheran, Toronto**

The mood in the Lutheran Church in Canada is presently quite divided. Some are full of joy that the last National Assembly in Saskatoon has at last validated the marriage and ordination of people who are in same sex relationships. They see the love of God to all people expressed in this decision.

For others these decisions are a reason for mourning and sorrow because they fear that the fundamentals of the church, the authority of the word of God, are undermined.

Some ask themselves whether this is not the last straw that will break the camel's back and think about whether they should resign from the ELCIC. Throughout history we have often seen church schisms and they have often been for what we now consider something minor: baptism for children versus adult baptism, how is Jesus Christ present in Communion, is it necessary for Christians to receive a "baptism of the Holy Spirit", when is a person born again and the list goes on.

Pastor Roy Thakurdial **Bethesda, Unionville**

The church is a voluntary organization. It is entirely up to individuals whether or not they be members of the church, participate in its life, support its ministry, contribute their time, talents and treasures to its mission, attend services regularly, occasionally or not at all. No one is penalized for not fulfilling expectations and responsibilities to the church. As a voluntary organization, much of the life of the church depends on volunteers. Without volunteers the church's operations would be seriously minimized if not altogether impossible.

Volunteerism in the church shares much in common with that of other organizations. There is one major difference. In the church one's volunteer work is grounded in the concept of stewardship. One's volunteer activities are premised

on the belief that everything belongs to God. We are merely stewards or managers of these things. We use our gifts and possessions in service to God, neighbour and creation. Further, we are accountable to God for the use of these things. Volunteerism as stewardship changes the way we serve, since essentially our service is grounded in serving God first.

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

Furthermore, we need to understand that the motions passed at convention are not *prescriptive*; i.e., they make room for some (a very few, I'm sure) congregations to move in directions that formerly would have caused censure from the Synod. These changes in no way require any congregation to, say, call a gay pastor or demand any pastor to preside at a same sex blessing or marriage. In fact, such decisions are to be made at the local level, and therefore, most ELCIC congregations will not be affected at all by what happened at convention. Recall that there are still some congregations that refuse to interview a woman when they're seeking a pastor, or that do not participate in communion of the baptized. "The local option" has always been a part of our life as Lutherans and in the entire Christian communion as well.

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

In fact, the reason why the Anglican and Lutheran churches have been able to enter so fully into a shared relationship on a national level is because our worship is so very similar. I have talked about History, Theology, and Politics over both denominations over the past few weeks, but Worship is where we actually share the most common ground. Both Anglicans and Lutherans centre their worshipping lives primarily in the celebration of the Eucharist – that regular remembrance of who we are, as the Body of Christ, through our sharing together in the gifts given to us at God's

table, through the assertion that Christ is with us on this journey. Anglicans and Lutherans, along with Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and some other denominations, affirm a basic shape to the Eucharistic worship (or liturgy): we Gather, we Listen to Holy Scripture, we Reflect, we Offer the gifts of our community as we prepare the Table, we enter into the Great Thanksgiving, we ask that God's Spirit Bless our bread and wine as the Body and Blood of Jesus, we Break the bread, Share our meal, and then we are Sent into the world to be who God has made us to be.

Many of the features that seem to be peculiar when someone first comes to St. David's – the real bread at communion, the proclamation of the Gospel from the middle of the church, those weird words that we sing at the beginning "Kyrie eleison" – all of those weirdnesses are found in both Lutheran and Anglican circles.

...All in all, it has been consistent feedback to both me and the Council that, despite the many anxieties about what worship would look like when the two churches became one, the blending of our traditions was much more effortless than anyone anticipated. And we have been amply blessed by the congregation being so willing to take the plunge, to see what this new thing might look like. Not only have we found ourselves lifted by worship that is both familiar and fresh, not only have we come to realize and bear witness to the world that we have more in common than we have dividing us, but the worship that we share together has, more than anything else, made us into neither Anglicans or Lutherans, but Church. One Church.

Pastor Linda Douglas **Zion, Maple**

The church has to change. And it will change because there are increasing voices calling for the church on earth to

Continued on Page 3

Our Pastors Write

Continued from Page 2

reflect the diversity of the church in heaven – with people from every tribe, tongue and nation, social status and condition. We are not immune to the challenges of our culture. We must change. The question we need to ask is not, “Who is here?,” but rather, “Who is not here?” The answer to that question will reflect the changes in our culture for we are not reaching those of other ethnicities, the young, the poor, the outcasts, and those not like us.

We need to open our eyes to those around us. We need to be open to and ready to pursue new ministries – ministries to the physically and mentally challenged, ministries to new ethnic groups. When you’re working with God, nothing’s impossible.

Nothing is impossible for those who are faithful to Christ. In the face of overwhelming challenges, there was one church, the church in the original Philadelphia. Jesus told them, “I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” We can also be that church of brotherly love, the church of the open door. For it is Christ himself who has opened that door. A door to the masses on earth today and the increasing populations in the years to come. It is a door or opportunity that Christ alone can open, and no one else can close.

Pastor Carey Meadows-Helmer, Interim, Epiphany, Toronto

Yours is a more recent history together as the congregation of Epiphany, although your nearly five decades of ministry is not a small accomplishment. Celebrate this! Hearing the stories about Epiphany’s journey is impressionable. It makes the walls of the church come to life, it makes our shared living faith in Christ be just that, living.

In this transition time I encourage you to remember and celebrate all that has

come to be here in place. Celebrating is part of what the church does well. We celebrate all types of anniversary. We celebrate all types of life events. In celebrating our past, we remember for the future. As you celebrate be attentive to what emerges. You may notice a strength or a weakness or a common thread woven throughout. And remember, all of these places are holy ground. There God is, right there with you.

Pastor Dennis Becker Faith, Oshawa

Why Jesus? Why don’t you wave your finger and correct all the ills of our world, those in my life especially? Why Jesus, don’t you open the eyes of everyone so that we all see things in the same light and agree on all things. Why Jesus, don’t you just tell me what to think, how to do things, and then make me do and think as you will? It would be so much easier.

But then I pick up the Bible and read the snippets of Jesus’ life and his words recorded in the Gospels. It becomes soon evident that God decided, through Jesus, to be a suffering saviour, to heal the world, to save the world by being a servant, even unto death. And then, in a most audacious move, calls us to come and do likewise. Why Jesus?

Pastor Lowell Nussey Christ the King, Whitby

From the very beginning the church discovered the need for organizational structure. In the sixth chapter of the book of Acts we read how, as the church grew, the twelve apostles had to make some decisions about how they would spend their time and energy. They said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to make sure people get fed.” So, they set up the first church council, a group of seven people, called deacons, who were responsible for organizing the service and support ministries of the early church. The deacons’ importance and effectiveness was such that one of them was the first Christian martyr, a man named Stephen.

And so it continues today – churches that effectively proclaim God’s word are those with an organization that supports and furthers that work – churches whose members are so committed to sharing the gospel that they give of their time and energy to make sure that happens.

In this issue of the *Mustard Seed*, and in the coming weeks you will be hearing of a number of opportunities to assist in supporting the life of our congregation. As regular programs restart and one or two new ones begin, you will be invited to share your skills in running these activities. Think seriously about what it means to be a church member. Membership is about more than simply having your name written in a church record book. It is about participating, in some way, in supporting the earthly body of Christ.

Pastor Brian Wilker-Frey St. Ansgar, Toronto

As you will read in my report on the ELCIC National Convention that was held in July, delegates took a chance and set our national church on a direction of radical change, change that is likely to prove to be too much for some. I’m talking about the adoption of motions approving same-gender marriage and declaring that homosexuality is not to be a barrier to ordination. Agree or disagree with this decision, it was clear that one direction or other had to finally be chosen. Too much pain was being caused, and too many lives, relationships, and communities were being torn apart under the old “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. The delegates at the national convention made a choice essentially saying to each congregation of the ELCIC, “now you choose. This option of radical ministry is now available to you, if you wish. But one way or the other, you must choose.” (And as the Canadian power rock trio, Rush, reminds us: Even if you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice!).

The council of St. Ansgar has set the congregation on a path toward making a

Continued on Page 4

Our Pastors Write

Continued from Page 3

choice, taking Bishop Pryse's advice to not wait until a same-gender couple comes seeking marriage at our church before we begin this process; that just wouldn't be fair to them. So, we are starting now before another request comes. Council has asked me to use the Wednesday Evening Adult Education classes to this end. I've observed that those most sincere in their opposition to these motions are simply striving to be faithful to Scripture. Therefore, the authority and interpretation of Scripture will be the focus of these classes.

Pastor Nadine Nicholds Augsburg, Brampton

The fact is, our society is sick. We suffer from "affluenza" (a term coined by the filmmaker John De Graff). Our society, and the organizations that have grown out of it, have taught us what to yearn for. Advertisers are telling us what they think should be our deepest desire. But the fact is, it is God's vision we need to follow and it is God's vision that will satisfy our desires.

Professor Barbara Rossings says that Jesus gives a message of hope to people who are hopeless. They are hopeless because they are left out of the economy or are cast aside, or downtrodden. Jesus told these folks that they have a place and that God does love and include them. She says that Jesus opened his heart so that we can see God's heart. And what God's heart is, is love and grace and loving the world and everyone in it. If we follow Jesus, we will love the world like Jesus loved it and love the people that Jesus loved, including the ones left out, cast aside or marginalized. And in this case, the definition of love is sharing our resources. ♦



Congregational Life Story

Fam Jam

At the end of August, St. David's received some excellent news from the Synod Office. Pam and I had met with Mark Harris, the Bishop's assistant, to fill him in on the ministry that we are doing at St. David's. Our new Saturday service came up in conversation, and he alerted us to the possibility that we might be able to access some Mission funds which are set aside for one-time start-up costs for new and innovative ministries. He encouraged us to put in a proposal; and last week we received his reply, along with a cheque for \$2,500 to assist in purchasing instruments and the sound equipment we need. In his letter, he said:

"I cannot tell you how excited I am about this ministry. I think it is a terrific idea! I hope and pray that you, and all who participate in this ministry, will be enriched and inspired through this effort."

In fact, we have had many encouraging signs along the way in planning Fam Jam. We have impressive musical talent right here at St. David's. We have received support, advice and offers of help from musicians within the community of Orillia. Instruments have been purchased, donated, and lent to us. And a wide spectrum of people – from our young to our more 'seasoned,' from long-time members of this congregation to newer parishioners or non-parishioners, from musicians and non-musicians – have given input and creative ideas to the initiative. The name Fam Jam came from Aaron Trindorfer, one of our younger musicians. He liked the 'family' reference as a way of indicating the importance of relationship and community at the heart of this worship. In fact, we have been saying all along that we want to create a worship space that is as comfortable and welcoming as one of our own Family Rooms.

Many of our St. David's regulars have come forward to offer to help with snacks and hospitality, to support the service as it starts up by attending and welcoming others, to create a core critical mass as we're starting out. And I know that the prayers surrounding Fam Jam have been faithfully and consistently offered.

*St. David's
Orillia*

Community Events and Service

- **Faith, Oshawa**, will collect items for the Thanksgiving Food Drive to be given to Gate 3:16.
- Members of **Christ the King, Whitby**, are collecting items for needy families through the Durham Inter-Group Immigrant Support Group.
- InterChurch Health Ministries is sponsoring a Speaker's Corner with guest speaker Dr. Lynn McDonald on Sunday evening, September 25, 7:30 p.m. at **Peace, Pickering**.

Youth

- Youth at **St. Philip's, Toronto**, held an All Youth Pizza and Fun Night September 16.
- Youth at **Christ the King, Whitby**, met on September 11 to plan their fall activities. ♦

Quiz

Here is a question to jog your confirmation class memory. The third commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it Holy." Why do Christians worship on Sunday and not Saturday even though Saturday is the Sabbath?

Bethesda, Unionville

Our Congregations at Work

■ **Bethesda, Unionville**, held a Corn Roast and Camp Fire on September 10.

■ **Bethesda, Unionville**, held a successful Doors Open.

■ **Christ the King-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thornhill**, is offering Bible studies on "Making Sense of Christian Faith".

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

■ **St. Philip's, Toronto**, will use a new jazz liturgy for Holy Communion on September 25.

■ **St. Philip's, Toronto**, is setting up a "Prayer Vine".

■ **St. Philip's, Toronto**, Bridge Club will start the season with a party on October 29.

■ **St. David's, Orillia**, donated 32 pounds of produce to the Sharing Place at the end of August.

■ **St. David's, Orillia**, is starting a new program this fall called "Route 66" for children grades 1-6 and will include fun, singing, storytelling, and games.

■ **St. David's, Orillia**, fall 12-week study program will be on "Eclipsing Empire: Paul, Rome and the Kingdom of God".

■ **Zion, Maple**, is making plans for its sixth annual fundraising concert in support of Zion Home.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, is celebrating the 30th anniversary of Faith Place on September 26-30 with a special worship service on September 28 and on September 27 an anniversary celebration with a freewill offering for African Relief.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, will study the book of Luke at its morning Bible study this fall.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, is encouraging members to invite people to Back to Church Sunday on September 25.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, is planning a Stewardship Talent Auction on October 30.

■ Pastor Dennis Becker, **Faith, Oshawa**, will be preaching on Discipleship September 11-October 2.

■ **Epiphany, Toronto**, has an active English speaking craft group that meets twice a month.

Agricola, Toronto, is celebrating its 80th Anniversary on September 25.

Bishop Michael Pryse will preach at a Bilingual Festival Worship service at 11:00 a.m. Also taking part will be Rev. Riita Hepomaki (Assistant to the Bishop) and Rev. J. Saarela.

■ **First Lutheran, Toronto**, celebrates 25 years of "Fellowship of the Least Coin" this fall.

■ **First Lutheran, Toronto**, plans to fill 160 We Care bags this year – one bag for each year for their 160th anniversary.

■ **First Lutheran, Toronto**, opened their doors from noon to 3:00 p.m. the week of September 6-9 and September 12-16. This allows Ryerson students to come in and speak to someone at the church.

■ **First Lutheran, Toronto**, is participating in the Back to Church Sunday emphasis on September 25.

■ The ladies at **Epiphany, Toronto**, held a "Come Out and Try Night" on September 14.

■ **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, is holding a Sunday School Welcome Back Breakfast on October 2.

■ **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, is promoting Back to Church Sunday September 25.

■ **Peace, Pickering**, will hold its seventh and final CROP Walk on September 24. The funds raised will be for CLWR and Project Next Step, with FaithLife Financial matching up to \$500 in funds raised.

■ The Congregational Life Committee at **Peace, Pickering**, will host Cake and Coffee on Confirmation Sunday, October 30.

■ The Men's Breakfast Group at **Peace, Pickering**, will meet on September 17.

■ The Women at **Peace, Pickering**, will hold their annual Stone Soup Supper on September 19. A speaker from Girls Inc. will be guest speaker.

■ **Christ the King, Whitby**, is holding "Bring a Friend Sunday" on September 25.

■ **Christ the King, Whitby**, is planning its Fall Sale: Bazaar, Yard with Tea Room for October 29.

■ The Keenagers at **Augsburg, Brampton**, met on September 13 to plan their 2011-2012 year.

■ Pastor Sonja Free will be guest preacher at **Augsburg, Brampton**, on September 25 for its 50th anniversary celebration.

■ On October 16, Jacob Moon will give a concert at **Augsburg, Brampton**.

■ **Augsburg, Brampton**, will hold a celebration dinner and dance on November 19 as part of its 50th anniversary celebration. ♦

Join us Sunday, October 2, 2011, at 2:00 p.m.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

For a joint German/English special celebratory service to commemorate our 160th Anniversary as the oldest Lutheran Church in Toronto.

116 Bond Street, Toronto (Dundas Subway stop)

Check us out at www.firstlutherantoronto.com

Come see why we're the "little church with heart in the heart of the city"

Toronto Conference Fall Meeting

Health and Spirituality Workshops and Displays

Saturday, October 1

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

St. Philip's Lutheran Church

61 West Dean Park Drive, Toronto

The focus for this fall's meeting is on Health and Spirituality. It is open to all Conference members as well as friends, family, and neighbours. The sessions will begin at 9:30 with a short worship service followed by three workshops with guest leaders. Everyone will have an opportunity to take part in all three workshops.

Since there will be no registration fee, attendees are asked to bring a bag lunch. Sandwiches and refreshments will be available for a small donation for those who forget.

People can come for just the morning or afternoon, or both. The demonstrators and related displays will cover a variety of subjects as they relate to health and spirituality and living a more holistic life. There is something for everyone.

Workshops (morning)

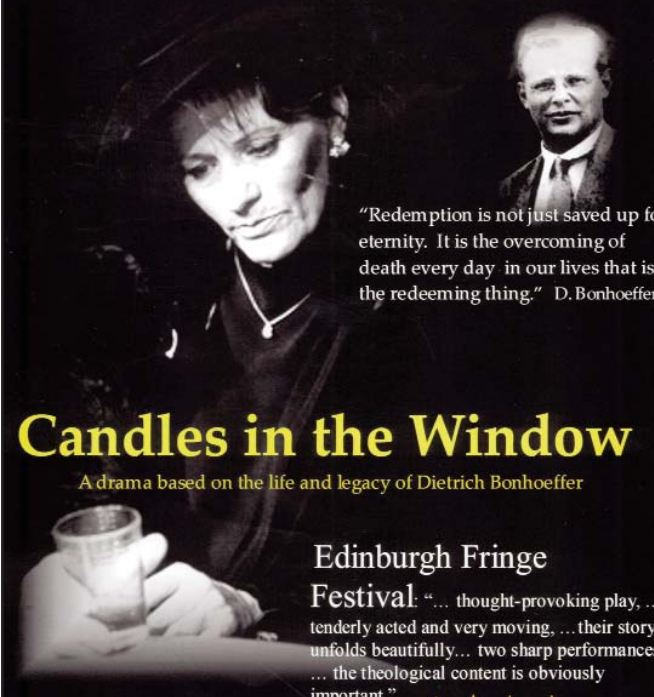
- InterChurch Health Ministries – relationship between spirituality and health
- Community Care Access Centre – long-term care
- Dr. Kristine Lund from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

Demonstrations and Displays (afternoon)

- ListenUp Canada
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canada Food Guides
- Ovarian Cancer
- Blood pressure clinic
- ... and more

See you there

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: A MAN OF FAITH FOR THE TIMES - THEN AND NOW



"Redemption is not just saved up for eternity. It is the overcoming of death every day in our lives that is the redeeming thing." D. Bonhoeffer

Candles in the Window

A drama based on the life and legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Edinburgh Fringe Festival: "... thought-provoking play, ... tenderly acted and very moving, ... their story unfolds beautifully... two sharp performances ... the theological content is obviously important."

★★★★★

www.belleherst.com

Booking at: info@belleherst.com

at **Christ the King – Dietrich Bonhoeffer Lutheran Church**
on **Saturday, October 15, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.**

149 Bay Thorn Drive, Thornhill, Ontario, L3T 3V2
Tel.: 905-889-0873 E-Mail: office@lutheran-church-thornhill.org

Admission: Adult: \$ 20 Children (17 and under): \$ 5

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

Toronto Conference Contacts

Dean: The Rev. Linda Douglas
905 669 9842 or 905 417 0519
lkdouglas@sympatico.ca

Secretary/Treasurer: Judy Baribeau
416 264 4527 judybaribeau@rogers.com