

THE LUTHERAN CONNECTION



NEWS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCHES OF THE TORONTO CONFERENCE

SUMMER 2011

Inside

Our Pastors Comment

– 2 –

150th Anniversary Service

– 2 –

Ecumenical Events

– 4 –

Our Congregations at Work

– 5 –

Community Events

– 5 –

Children in Worship

– 6 –

First Lutheran Anniversary

– 6 –

The Toronto Conference

Ministerial will be September 15 at 9:45 a.m. – location to be announced. The topic will conclude discussion of Brian McLaren's book *A New Kind of Christianity*.

Please check the Toronto Conference website for the following items:

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

www.toronto.easternsynod.org

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 Dean Park Drive, Toronto

Our Fall meeting is open to all members of our congregations as well as friends, neighbours and people in the community. We encourage you to invite others to come with you. We have invited health care specialists from religious-based organizations to provide morning workshops including Community Care Access Centre, and Lay Pastoral Visitation (by Dr. Kristine Lund of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary).

In the afternoon displays and information will be available from many health care organizations including Canadian Diabetes Association, Heart and Stroke Foundation, ListenUp, Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating, and more.

There is no registration fee. We will have some lunches available for a donation or you may bring your lunch with you.

We will begin with a worship service. You are invited to attend the morning or afternoon sessions or stay for the day.

Our Pastors Comment

Pastor Lowell Nussey Christ the King, Whitby

I know that the summertime is a time when many people go on vacation. I also know that this attitude often slips over into church attendance as well. I shall neither condemn or condone that behaviour.

What I will say, however, is “be sure and stay in the flow of God this summer.” Seek out nourishment from God’s Word. Drink in the water of life that flows from the generous heart of God. If you are traveling, attend a service of worship at a local church – it doesn’t have to be Lutheran. As well, take a Bible with you when you travel. God’s word can be fresh and powerful when read in a different environment.

Pastor Roy Thakurdial Bethesda, Unionville

At last summer is here. The sun is shining in all its glory. It invites us to bathe in its warmth, bask in its brightness, feed on its vitality and live in its energy. These long days of summer and sunshine offer a time for everything and every activity that regenerates and recreates us.

Summer is synonymous with recreation. It is a kind of Sabbath. During the months of summer people will take vacations and time out to do fun things with family and friends. Even as we enjoy a lighter side of life in summer, we are reminded of the sovereignty of God. God ordered all things that there is a time for everything and a season for everything under heaven. God blesses us with a variety of experiences with the coming and going of seasons. This summer as you surround yourself with the beauty of creation, take time also to enjoy the Creator.

Pastor Susan Climo Peace, Mississauga

“Just going to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car”.

Don’t get me wrong – I am a passionate believer in the central role of Sunday

Toronto Conference Celebrates the 150th Anniversary of the Eastern Synod

Sunday, September 25, 3:00 p.m. at
Zion Lutheran Church,
8795 Keele Street, Maple

Bishop Michael Pryse will be guest preacher.



Eastern Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

A Toronto Conference History Book is being prepared for this event. One copy will be given to each congregation that submitted their history and photo. Additional copies will be available for sale. All congregations will receive a piece of red vinyl by mail to prepare a banner that will be hung for the service. Details for the banners are in the mailing.

Zion’s annual Cemetery Service will be part of the celebration.

Attendees are asked to bring sweets or finger foods for the reception following the service.

The freewill offering will be given to Eastern Synod Benevolence.

Please encourage your members to attend this special service.

worship. God built us to thrive in community, in relationship with one another and with God; and we need opportunities to gather just like we need oxygen. But these gathering times are not the ultimate purpose of our Christianity; they are not the reason God has a church. Our Sunday mornings together feed, encourage and equip us for the ultimate purpose of our faith: service in God’s name in God’s world.

The work of our Council at Peace right now, and our congregation’s discussions about vision are all about this. We are seeking to recognize how God is calling us beyond going to church into being God’s church in our neighbourhood. We are answering God’s gracious invitation to embrace the joys and challenges of our full Christian identity.

Rev. Ilze Kuplens-Ewert St. Andrew’s Latvian, Toronto

Our young people promise to make real for themselves the life of faith in which their parents, grandparents and godparents have promised to nurture them.

Now, word by word, this promise gains clarity. Jesus stretches out his hands towards them and invites them onto the dance floor. Jesus stretches out his hands, on the cross, in blessing, so that their movements begin to mirror those of Jesus. The dance floor is their life, indeed, but even more, it is all of creation. The dance floor is where they will seize hold of Jesus offer to them to follow him, doing his work. The dance movements may be fast, or even gentle and slow, but they will learn to dance together. Jesus, and you.

These promises that our young people have once again made are meant for us all. Raise them up for yourself. Do you live as a child of God, among God’s faithful people? Do you have a sense of community with those like you, seeking hope, clarity, direction? Do you long to hear God’s voice speaking to you? You do, even if you try to put the absence of this connection to one side. And your fellow human being: Jesus clearly states that your neighbour is undefined, and

Continued on Page 3

Our Pastors Write

Continued from Page 2

indefinable. It is of no consequence what the colour of their skin, their gender or sexual orientation, age or level of educational attainment: if your paths cross, that is your neighbour. And justice and peace in all the earth?

Pastor Christian Schweter First Lutheran, Toronto

Taking a pause from church does not mean though that we are on vacation from being Christians or on vacation from our beliefs. We are not sending God on vacation.

Whether you go away or stay at home, do take the time to pick up your Bible and to read in it every day (in your lounge chair, under the shade of an umbrella, in the pool, in a tent). Continue to pray for your church and for the people in the congregation. And if you should happen to go to another church during the summer and experience something special, let us know about it here.

Pastor Alexander Mielke Martin Luther, Toronto



A Stone Drops in the Pond/ Ins Wasser faellt ein Stein – this is a famous song by Manfred Siebold,

actually a German interpretation of the English song *Pass It On* (Melody by Kurt Kaiser).

It all started at the Sea of Galilee. God's love dropped in the life of a few people; in the very beginning Jesus found little more than 12 disciples. This brought about so much, though, and sent circles so far.

Nowadays the Church of Jesus Christ is present on each continent, in every country – and these are still the expanding circles of that first tiny beginning.

It happens again and again in our congregation too. In everyday life as well as at special events. Our Summer Camp is such a special event to look forward to.

Pastor Linda Douglas Zion, Maple

The Missional Church is sent into the community. It's a place where Christians demonstrate their love of God. Millennials are committed to being incarnational, in the flesh, physically present. They see people through the eyes of Christ. They reject churches that view community as a population pool for growth but embrace churches that teach members to love community. Reaching community is NOT distributing flyers, BUT doing – repairing homes, helping elderly, caring for neighbours who have lost loved ones. They hunger to learn about Scripture and are turned off by diluted doctrine, anaemic Bible teaching and preaching. They have a serious approach, NOT lukewarm like that of Boomers' churches.

Millennials want to see revenues directed outwardly for mission work in community, nations, and the world. They feel churches suffer from "Baby Boomers reflux." Boomers give to the church, but it comes back to them to keep them content. They hire staff to do ministry they won't do. Money goes to make buildings more comfortable for them. Then churches begin all kinds of programs for Boomers and their families to keep them happy. That is not New Testament Christianity. That's a religious social club.

Pastor Brian Wilker-Frey St. Ansgar, Toronto

But now the pendulum has swung once again. For better or for worse, Christendom is quickly receding – it has even disappeared altogether in the lives of many young Europeans and North Americans – while non-Christian influences, scriptures, philosophies, dress, art, music and so on are ascending faster and faster all the time. Spiritually, we find ourselves in a world closer to that of Tertullian than the one in which we were born. What stands for orthodox Christian belief and practice can no longer be assumed. What gives Holy Writ its authority is once again being examined

and questioned. Great and passionate debate is once again being held over what it means to be a follower of Jesus in this time and place. Christians are once again being made, not born.

While there is some fear within me over what this means for our beloved church and our traditions, this fear is overcome by a sense of excitement about what being made Christian again and again, day in and day out, might mean for us as disciples of Christ. We have to learn how to make and be made followers of Jesus once again.

Pastor Ann Krueger Westside, Barrie

These words (Isaiah 41:9-10) were originally shared by the prophet Isaiah with the dispirited Jewish survivors, in exile in a strange land. But the words are universal, for all people in every generation, whenever life is difficult, even overwhelming, and also whenever we sense God calling us – and we are afraid.

These words from Isaiah meant a lot to me when I was struggling with the desire to quit my job and enrol at seminary – for I was very afraid. I've also shared those words with those struggling with cancer or other serious illnesses. It's very reassuring to know that God is with us in all the circumstances of our lives.

Pastor Mark van House Peace, Pickering

It's time for relaxation. Whether it's a retreat to the cottage, vacationing by vehicle or plane, church people, along with the general populace, will be taking time out for R & R. It's still time to keep the Third Commandment.

We do not serve God in isolation. As covenant stewards we are called to gather together, to give thanks and praise to God, for our faithfulness to be renewed, strengthened and restored. Wherever you find yourself on the Sabbath, congregate with others and keep this commandment. As Luther reminds us in his Small Catechism:

What does this Mean? "We are to fear and love God, so that we do not despise

Continued on Page 4

Our Pastors Write Continued from Page 3

preaching or God's word, but instead keep that word holy and gladly hear and learn it."

Pastor Peter Lisinski Advent, Toronto

Did you know that the word "goodbye" has roots in the earliest evolution of the English language? Its original meaning is best reflected in the phrase, "God be with you." Thus, whenever people end a telephone conversation or take leave of one another, saying goodbye offers a prayer for, and speaks the promise of God's abiding presence with them. Indeed, the word "goodbye" is a parable for the whole of life. All human beings live – consciously or unconsciously – in and by the grace of God. But those who actively and deliberately seek God's presence in life's comings and goings, learn to live thankfully for all God's gracious gifts, and inspire one another to share the abundant blessings God has created all people to enjoy – in this world, and throughout eternity.

Pastor Sebastian Meadows-Helmer – Christ the King-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thornhill

An important component of the life of our church is education. Learning about one's faith does not stop after confirmation, but is a life-long process. Our Education Committee has some wonderful programs planned starting September.

We do fellowship well. Our Thanksgiving Dinner, Spring Fest, Sunday fellowship times, and our social groups promote friendships and allow for sharing of joys and concerns, and mutual Christian encouragement.

Communion is an integral part of our life as Christians, when we gather as a family around the table of our Lord, where He is both host and meal. We receive forgiveness and reconciliation, and we celebrate with all the saints who have gone before us, in anticipation of the Great Feast which is to come.

The Christian life is fundamentally a life of prayer. Paul reminds us to "pray without ceasing", not only on Sunday mornings, but in the shower, while commuting, before tying our shoes, and whenever we've got a spare moment.

Pastor Tuula van Gaasbeek Agricola, Toronto

In the early church, no fasting was allowed during the fifty days after Easter, and kneeling was forbidden. It was a jump up and shout time. The great gladness of Easter could not be contained in one day, so it just burst through one and went on for fifty.

As you might guess, fifty was not a random choice. Fifty is a week of weeks plus one: seven days times seven and you get forty-nine. Add one and you get fifty. Why add one? If a week is seven we add one, then we come to an eighth day. There is an ancient Hebrew tradition about the eighth day. It's one day beyond the structure of a week, one day beyond our usual framework of time and toil, one day beyond business as usual, one day beyond the week-in and week-out same old, same-old daily grind. Even the Beatles understood about the eighth day...remember the song: "Ain't got nothing but love babe, eight days a week."

The eighth day is our opening into the new day envisioned on Pentecost, a day

of all-embracing love when people from every known nation and language on earth, from every class, every gender and every age are joined together in community through the Holy Spirit. And that community is called the church, a people born on Pentecost... thus, our communal birthday.

Pastor Dennis Becker Faith, Oshawa

Sure it is good to drop out of our cumbersome routines for the summer. Sure there are times when we are far away from home. But wouldn't it be nice to gather with some new people of God for worship? Many campgrounds have worship time on Sunday; most towns or cities that we are in have churches of some sort or other. And even if we don't worship with others, we can at least talk about God "when we are away."

So pack your Bibles along with your bathing suit and fishing gear. Pick a Gospel and read through it. Set aside a few minutes around the campfire to discuss what you've read. Challenge your children or spouse to come up with one new thing from your reading that day. "Today I liked..." or "Today I learned..." Talk about it. See where it goes. I bet that they see things that you never saw before, just as you will see things that they haven't seen. Share. ♦

Ecumenical Events

■ Members of **Christ the King, Whitby**, are invited to All Saints Anglican Church for their special celebratory Worship and Thank You dinner on September 11. The building had been gutted by fire and has been rebuilt.

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

■ Members of St. John's United Church in Oakville will worship at **Bethesda, Unionville**, on August 14. St. John's is Bethesda's Sharecropper Project partner.

■ On May 15, members of **Zion Maple, and Christ the King-Dietrich**

Bonhoeffer, Thornhill, celebrated a joint communion service at Holy Trinity Anglican, Thornhill, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Waterloo Declaration.

■ **St. David's, Orillia**, participated in Vacation Bible School from July 4-8 with St. James Anglican Church.

■ Members of **Faith, Oshawa**, will join with St. Paul's Presbyterian, Knox Presbyterian, and Northminster United in a fall study program "Knowing Your Neighbour". They will explore the faith of their Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, and Sikh neighbours. ♦

Our Congregations at Work

■ **First Lutheran, Toronto**, is encouraging members to invite people to “Back to Church Sunday” on September 25.

■ Pastor Carey Meadows-Helmer has been appointed Interim Pastor at **Epiphany, Toronto**.

■ **Epiphany, Toronto**, is making plans to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

■ On July 31 Manfred Siebald performed at **Martin Luther, Toronto**, during the service as well as a matinee concert following the service. He is a well-known singer/songwriter in Germany.

■ Members of **Martin Luther, Toronto**, visited a Sikh Temple on July 16 as part of their “Getting to Know Neighbours – Understanding World Religions” series.

■ On the weekend of June 19, 30 guests from the Lutheran Institute of Theological Adult Education in Noerdlingen/Bavaria visited **Martin Luther, Toronto**. Their brass band performed during the worship service.

■ **Zion, Maple**, is making plans for its Sixth Annual Fundraising Concert for the Olive Branch tentatively scheduled for November 13.

■ Pastor Peter Lisinski has accepted the call to be pastor of **Advent, Toronto**, effective August 1.

■ The community gardeners at **Advent, Toronto**, held a Summer Festival in the Garden on July 6.

■ **Westside, Barrie**, is holding Tuesday evening worship services during the summer.

■ **Peace, Pickering**, celebrated Christmas in July on July 24.

■ On August 14, **Peace, Pickering**, held Lemonade Sunday.

■ **Peace, Pickering**, held a Vacation Bible School July 18-22.

■ The women at **Peace, Pickering**, held its annual Prayer Walk on August 15.

■ On September 11, the **Latvian congregations** will hold a Memorial Day worship at York Cemetery.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, is planning a Talents Auction for October 30.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, will study the Gospel of Luke in its Bible Study sessions this fall.

■ **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, is making plans to celebrate its 85th anniversary on October 23. The congregation is asking for old pictures of St. Ansgar events, or people to give the church for its archives. The congregation is also preparing an oral history and is encouraging its members to share their memories.

■ **St. Ansgar, Toronto**, is holding its Vacation Bible School August 22-26.

■ **Faith, Oshawa**, raised \$723 at its Loonie Sale and luncheon and also received a \$500 grant from FaithLife Financial.

■ **Christ the King-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thornhill**, will begin a bi-weekly Bible study with program called “Making Sense of the Christian Faith”.

■ On April 17, the Women’s Choir “Pfälzische Kurrende” from Germany sang at **Christ the King-Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thornhill**. ♦

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.

Community Events and Service

■ **Bethesda, Unionville**, will participate in “Doors Open Day” on August 27 from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

■ **Epiphany, Toronto**, hosted a Blood Donor Clinic on August 6.

■ **Zion, Maple**, is looking for donations for the Roger’s/Rotary TV Auction 2011 on December 2-4. The Olive Branch is one of the charities that will receive proceeds from the auction. ♦



The first harvest has been made from St. David’s, Orillia, Pilot Project Community Garden

Children in Worship

Worship is filled with many beautiful sounds. Each sound has its place in enriching the worship experience. Awakening the spirit to these sounds helps us to experience worship in nuanced ways. Who can hear the swelling sound of the organ as it carries worshippers in its flight on wings of joyous praise and not surrender to it? And which spirit is so callous that it will not serenely rest in the soothing silence that fills spaces in the worship. Add to these the joyful sounds of singing, praying, greeting and you get a truly wonderful experience of the Divine and human meeting in a common space we call worship.

There are other sounds in worship that are like music to the soul. They are the

many sounds of children in the worship. One of the most beautiful sounds in worship is that of babies gurgling in their peculiar language. Whatever incoherent speech they are making, it never fails to bring smiles to the faces of adults. A wailing baby rebels against some discomfort unknown to us might cause some frowns and grumbling. Yet how much does that wailing remind us that the church is a family – baby and all.

One of the sounds that is familiar to us is that of our children coming up to the sanctuary after Sunday School in the hall. Their excited shouts and laughter and their running feet ascending the stairways announce their coming well in advance of them exploding through the doors. With smiling faces and



outstretched hands they join the milling adults, “The peace of the Lord be with you.” What memories they bring back. What pleasure and joy their presence gives.

Our Lord says “Let the little children come to me, do not stop them....” Yes, Let our children come. Let them always feel welcome; wailing, gurgling, running, screaming, laughing. For this is what family is and we are a family.

*Pastor Roy Thakurdyal
Bethesda, Unionville*

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.firstlutheranto.com

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



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