

## Showing the true light to those awaiting the torch

**WESTBANK, B.C.** - At 4:30 p.m. Monday, January 25, the Olympic Torch came to this community, and Redeemer Lutheran Church responded, setting up a tent and offering free coffee and hot chocolate to the hundreds of people who came to cheer as runners moved it along



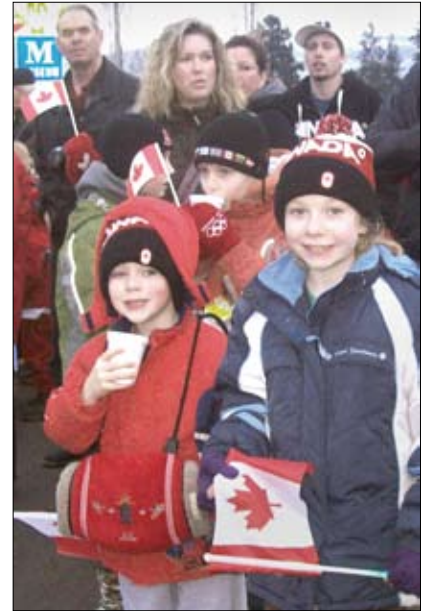
Pastor Jonathan Asmus (I) in front of Redeemer's Welcome Tent greeting onlookers along the torch route.

the highway through Westbank on its way to Kelowna.

Fred Voight served the hot chocolate, while Rev. Jonathan Asmus spoke to the crowd waiting anxiously for the torch to appear. Church members handed out pamphlets and Olympic devotions as people excitedly discussed the upcoming arrival. Families cheered, shouted and waved energetically as the procession passed by.

The Olympic spirit showed in wearing red and white and waving flags, but it also provided an opportunity for Redeemer Lutheran to talk to people about the real joy in life, Jesus, and invite them to worship with the LCC congregation.

*Muriel Threinen and Charlene Waines Wiltink*



Jessica and Carson Wiltink await the torch.

## Emmaus Lutheran congregation celebrates 80 years of blessings

**SEXSMITH, Alta.** - "Thanks be to God" for His continued blessings and provisions so that on August 16, 2009, Emmaus Lutheran Church celebrated 80 years of Christian service in the community. Emmaus still holds services most Sundays and maintains a stable congregation, unusual among rural congregations today.

Local dignitaries, friends and former members attended the historic anniversary event. The church also received many congratulatory notes and well wishes. Following the worship service people shared memories, played games, and enjoyed the delicious food provided for all. The congregation thanked God for the privilege of sharing the wonderful news of salvation during these past 80 years.

The Emmaus Lutheran congregation of the North Kleskun district, though officially founded April 14, 1929, has beginnings that actually go back to 1915, when the



Rural Alberta congregation celebrates ongoing ministry.

first German Lutheran families settled in the area. The first Lutheran missionary arrived in 1919, and thus Emmaus became the "mother" of Lutheran churches in the Peace Country. Worshippers held services in various homes, until in 1930 they made plans to build a church with cemetery on property donated by Louis Steinke. They dedicated that church—built by volunteer labour—on December 14, 1930, just in time to hold Christmas services there.

In 1931 Rev. R. E. Luening began serving the congregation once a month from Spirit River,

and Emmaus made plans to open a Christian day school. When Rev. F. Gabert was called, he became the church's first permanent pastor and teacher (though no parsonage existed yet, and he had to billet with congregation members). The school opened with 13 students; by year's end enrolment had grown to 24. Emmaus Day School closed in 1944 when it merged with North

Kleskun Public School. Teachers were scarce, so Emmaus' Rev. Pearce taught at the public school that year. Back then, pastors conducted the twice-monthly worship services both in German and in English. Early members helped a strong choral group and Bible society grow within the church. Many early pastors spent hours riding horseback to serve rural churches such as Emmaus. We have to admire the stamina and dedication of these pastors and founding members.

*Submitted on behalf of  
Emmaus Lutheran Church*

## Grey Cup party a rehearsal for Olympics

**SURREY, B.C.** - St. Luke Lutheran Church hosted a big-screen, big-sound broadcast of the Grey Cup game for 45 members and neighbours as part of its preparations for the 2010 Olympics. The goal was reaching out to families and friends of members, as well as those in the surrounding neighborhood. By meeting new people, building personal friendships, and witnessing, the committee hoped to encourage others to come into God's family and eventually become members of the congregation. The church will be part of *More than Gold*, a network of ministries aimed at mobilizing Christians for service and witness in connection with the Games.

The Evangelism Committee had a number of logistical problems to deal with when it came to pulling off the November event. The first was installing a satellite dish to receive a broadcast feed of the game. Next, it had to find audio and video equipment. The projector used for Sunday services turned out to



Top: Brenda Weiss (left) and Shirley Wisdahl. Bottom: Chris Govaski holds baby Sophie Govaski.



work fine for projecting the game onto the wall of the gymnasium. Some of church's musicians lent their personal amplifiers and sound

systems to help create a full-scale theatre-like experience. The committee made a brochure that was included in weekly church bulletins, posted on the website and circulated to nearby homes.

The success of the Grey Cup party has given the committee the confidence to broadcast two high-adrenaline Olympic events: the USA-Canada men's hockey game, followed by the men's gold medal game. The plan once again will be to invite friends and family of church members, circulate brochures to families in the vicinity, and post signs on the property advertising the events. In keeping with Lutheran tradition, a concession stand will offer fans lots of good food in the way of hot dogs, chili, chips and drinks. For fans attending, it'll almost feel like

being there.

For more information, see St Luke's Calendar and News pages at [www.sllc.ca](http://www.sllc.ca).

## A message in glass for 100th anniversary

**LETHBRIDGE, Alta.** - When Immanuel Lutheran Church members celebrated 100 years of ministry on Sunday, November 15, they unveiled a huge stained-glass artwork in the chancel to commemorate the blessings of our Lord. Members could get postage stamp stickers commemorating the stained-glass project as well.

Heinz and Patricia Demes of Demes Glass Studios created the eight-by-ten-foot work depicting the foundations of Immanuel's ministry—Word

and Sacrament—as well as some local landmarks and landscape. Many will enjoy the glowing glass in years to come, and it serves to remind all who view it of God's great blessings to the congregation.

Approximately 420 people attended the uplifting worship service which featured special music and guest preacher LCC president Rev. Robert Bugbee. A delicious meal following the service provided ample time for fellowship.

Stained glass window commemorates 100 years of blessings.



## Airdrie mission: from vision to mission

**AIRDRIE, Alta.** - For a community of 35,000, Airdrie stands out. Some 74 percent of the population is under age 45, and 34 percent under age 15. For most of its history, it never had a Lutheran Church–Canada congregation. After retiring in October 2006 from Mt. Calvary in Red Deer, Rev. Jim Schuelke felt called to start an LCC mission in this demographically promising town situated on Highway 2 north of Calgary.

To help establish the mission, Calgary circuit pastors contacted members of their congregations living in Airdrie to gain permission for Pastor Schuelke to contact them about starting work in their area.

In January 2008, Rev. Schuelke and Dr. Glenn Schaeffer met with 15 families and three circuit counsellors to discuss his vision and the practical possibilities. They formed a core group, then set out to establish regular worship, Bible study and Sunday school. For the next 15 months the fledgling congregation met in the education wing of the local United Church. Worship services happened twice a month, with adult instruction classes and Sunday school directly afterwards.



Worship service led by vicar Rod Parker.

In the fall of 2008 the group began talking with Redeemer Lutheran Church in Didsbury, Alberta, and decided to apply for a vicar together. In December 2008 the group had its first children's Christmas program, Singing Gloria.

On Palm Sunday 2009, the Airdrie mission finally began weekly worship services, at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic School. May 2009 brought another new reason to celebrate. LCC's Placement Committee had granted their request for a vicar! Rod Parker and wife Tammy would begin work in August 2009 at the Airdrie mission as well as at Redeemer.

Working under Rev. Robert Mohns, vicar Rod began getting to know the congregation through member visits. He also helped increase

the mission's online presence through blogging, podcasting sermons and classes, and moderating a discussion forum. He also stirred interest in using the online Evangelism Explosion program, XEE, as means of equipping congregation members and confirmation students to reach out to their community.

Now known as Shepherd of the Hills (members hope it will become a constituted congregation of Lutheran Church–Canada) the mission continues to provide Sunday school, Bible studies and worship. Current projects include planning a special Palm Sunday to mark the anniversary of weekly worship and involve the community. Learn more about the mission's past and future at [www.airdrielutheran.com](http://www.airdrielutheran.com).

## Guess who's coming to dinner?

**GRANDE PRAIRIE, Alta.** - In October and November, Faith Lutheran held an innovative fundraiser to raise money for a seminary student at Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton. Several families signed up to cook meals, while others signed up to eat. Sounds fairly straightforward, but there was a twist. Neither the chefs nor the diners knew beforehand where they were going or who was attending! Not only did they share a fantastic



(l-r): Rick Slater, Sara Slater, Samuel Isley, Jeanette Thiebert, Elmer Buchberger, Sharon Buchberger, Reg Isley and Emily Isley.

meal, they also played games and visited. What an amazing way to not only support a student (or another mission), but to also grow in fellowship with other Christians!

While each diner was asked to donate a minimum of \$15, the Lord blessed the fund-raiser with much more. Adding donations of those who could not attend, this event raised nearly \$2000. Congregation members look forward to having surprise guests for dinner again soon!

## More than 1000 walk to Bethlehem in B.C.

**PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.** - On December 16 and 17, Hope Lutheran Christian School hosted the Bethlehem Walk, an outdoor presentation that dramatized Christ's coming and changed Hope itself into Bethlehem.

To bring people to the walk, Hope rented a large World War II-era searchlight that shone in the night sky, visible for more than two miles. One woman, who came to the walk with her 10-year-old daughter, commented that her daughter saw the light as they were Christmas shopping and insisted they come find out what it was for. On a night when they intended simply to Christmas shop, they heard about the true meaning of Christmas. What a blessing!

Guests to the Walk queued down York Street, awaiting an invitation to join a guided group that would enter a large tent in the school parking lot that provided shelter for the multiple scenes. Groups started at the Garden of Eden, learning about man's fall into sin and the need for a Saviour. From there they heard

the prophets foretelling Jesus' birth. The next scenes led to the angelic proclamation that Mary would carry the Son of God. From there they heard Caesar Augustus' decree; saw Mary and Joseph interact with the innkeeper; heard the angel choir; witnessed the arrival of the wise men from the East and a scene of reflection at the stable. The tour ended in the sanctuary with musical presentations by students from Grades 5 through 8.

There was a real baby in the manger, and live animals—sheep, donkeys, goats and llamas (disguised as camels)—provided an exciting and unpredictable element. Many people did a double-take as they walked through each scene.



Light leads the way to the true meaning of Christmas.

Bethlehem thanks God for all the people who spent countless hours preparing for this ministry outreach.

## Vacation Bible school at Christmas?

**KITIMAT, B.C.** - When Redeemer Lutheran Church contemplated new ways of witnessing in the community, someone commented that during Christmas break many children sit around with nothing to do. From this came the idea that a mini-VBS would be an amazing way to reach out to the neighbourhood in winter as well as summer.

Over the three days of Christmas Bible school, children learned about "The Promise Given," "The Promise Fulfilled" and "The Result of the Promise." Twenty-four children attended (many from unchurched families) with local youth helping coordinate crafts and games. Asked "Did you have fun?" and "Did you learn about Jesus?" the children gave a resounding and enthusiastic "yes!"

Many ways of thinking outside the box to reach our communities can pop up—this is just one. We pray God will give us new and exciting ideas to do more in the year to come!

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us," 2 Corinthians 5:20 (ESV).



Gathered around the Christmas tree, children came to learn about God's promise fulfilled in Jesus.

## Sharing His story, sharing resources

**EDMONTON** - The district Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) met at Redeemer Lutheran Church October 23-25. Speakers wove the convention theme, *Share His Story*, through their presentations, emphasizing the purpose behind LLL's work in Canada, in the United States, and around the world.

Banquet speaker Mick Onnen, International LLL president, stressed to listeners why it is so important for each one to reach out to family,

friends and people met daily, sharing with them how God works in our lives. Bob Felstead (governor of Region 15: Canada) treated attendees to a live teleconference with Ricardo Arguello in Nicaragua. Richard Cohrs, from the LLL head office in St. Louis reported positively and enthusiastically about the good things happening in the Men's Network (<http://www.lhmmen.com/>). Stephen Klinck, managing director of LLL-Canada updated the group on work

being done through the Canadian office. Gordon Schoepp, president of LLL Alberta-British Columbia District, welcomed them all.

In addition to learning about the league's work, the group raised \$4043 for LLL work in Nicaragua. Designated donations amounted to \$2543, with a \$1500 added grant from FaithLife Financial.

Well attended, this was the district group's seventh biennial convention.

*Ellen Weinheimer, Klondike Zone*



### From the President

**J**anuary 21 is the most depressing day of the year. At least that is what one psychologist says, and he identifies a number of factors to support his claim.

He points to the long cold winter nights. He says that by this time, most people have broken their New Year's resolutions and feel bad about it. Many have also had to come to grips with the large amount of debt they incurred over the Christmas season.

Whether he is accurate or not, we have all been sobered by grim images of the devastation that has taken place as a result of a catastrophic earthquake in Haiti. Almost every newscast increases the projection of those killed by the quake and, as I write this, the death toll stands at around 150,000. The numbers are staggering and the personal stories, heartbreaking.

What do we, as Christians, have to say to a world groaning under the curse and consequence of sin?

I am reminded of the healing of the paralytic. News had spread that Jesus was in Capernaum. Many came to the place where he was staying. They filled the house to hear Jesus preach. There was no way that the four men who carried the paralytic could get close to Jesus so they opened the roof of the house and lowered the paralytic into Jesus' presence.

The Bible doesn't tell us how he became paralyzed. In our day and age, people face the tragedy of paralysis all too frequently. A car accident, a sports injury, even slipping on a patch of ice: all might be recipes for life-altering disasters. We can't even begin to imagine how dramatically someone's life can be changed in an instant. Sadly, these injuries are permanent since medical science has not yet figured out how to cause

the spinal cord to grow back together. There isn't much hope with this kind of an injury.

The crowd must have held its breath as it wondered what Jesus would do for this hopeless paralytic. And then he did the unexpected. He announced, "Son, your sins are forgiven." With these words, Jesus underscores that the spiritual condition is of far greater concern than our physical condition. He also made a bold statement about his own nature. Even the scribes said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Exactly! Jesus *is* God! He *can* forgive sins. And in order to show that He had such authority, He then healed the paralytic. Which was the greater miracle? The paralytic's body has long since decayed and turned to dust. But, as a forgiven sinner, he is with his heavenly Father awaiting the resurrection.

Our Lord is compassionate. He knows our weaknesses and feels our pain. He walks with us in the darkest of tragedies. The forgiveness of sins which we receive through faith brings with it hope. St. Paul writes, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:5).

What is your tragedy? What is your grief or pain? What is your struggle or loss? In the forgiveness of sins won for us at the cross, we are assured of God's gracious care for us in life and in death. Here is the confident hope we have in Christ: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18 ESV).

*Rev. Don Schiemann*

## B.C. congregation marks anniversary and looks to the future

**NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.** - After a year without a pastor, Mt. Calvary Lutheran ended the year on a celebratory note. In June, 2009 the congregation celebrated the installation of its fourth pastor since 1942, Rev. Kyung-Hyun (James) Kim. Vacancy pastor Rev. Sanford Schelp officiated at the service attended by pastors and congregation members from the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley circuits.

In October 2009 Mount Calvary celebrated its 75th Anniversary, thanking God for the many blessings He has bestowed on the congregation over years. Joining in this special service on the afternoon of October 18 were two former pastors, Rev. Sigmund Redenbach, lector and Rev. Sanford Schelp, guest preacher. A celebration program directed by Henry Waack highlighted the congregation's many musical talents.

Mt. Calvary was established as a congregation serving New Westminister on January 6, 1934. Two years later the current church property was purchased for \$650. By 1937, the church's first buildings (church, church hall, and parsonage)

were completed. An extension was added in 1957 and stands as the church today.

This past Advent season was a time to reflect on God's riches blessings, but it was also an opportunity for renewal and rededication of service in Christ to our community with our new pastor and a new focus for the next 75 years.

*Corinna Andriulaitis  
Mt. Calvary  
Lutheran Church*

Right: Henry Waack and Pastor Kim play a duet for the 75th Anniversary Celebration. Both men are concert pianists!



Rev. Redenbach, Rev. Kim, Rev. Schelp, Bethany Andriulaitis



## We have lift-off!

**CALGARY** - On Sunday, January 10, seventy people from all over northwest Calgary gathered in St. Basil Catholic School's gymnasium for the first-ever Loving Saviour Lutheran Church worship service. Fifteen of the people attending (representing five homes) were newcomers to the group—an encouraging start for a new worship site!

The service began with district executive Dr. Glenn Schaeffer leading a rite for establishing a satellite worship site. The sermon and rest of the service focused on Luke's account of the baptism of Christ and celebrated Jesus as our "place trader" who opens heaven to sinners. Children enjoyed

their special program during the sermon along with a children's song and object lesson incorporated into the service.

In the first two Sundays after the launch service, three of the five families who visited Loving Saviour on January 10 have visited again, and two other families attended for the first time. Arranging follow-up home visits for all has been a high priority in these first few weeks, and will continue to be a priority.

Please continue praying for Loving Saviour, its people and those it is reaching—and that God will grow His kingdom in northwest Calgary through its ministry among them.

Visit the ABC District website at [www.lccabc.ca](http://www.lccabc.ca)

Send news, photos, articles and announcements six weeks prior to publication month.  
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