

Dedicated servant/leader called home

VICTORIA, B.C. - Provincial cabinet minister and member of Faith Lutheran Church (Courtenay, B.C.), Stan Hagen died suddenly of a heart attack January 20 at age 68. Among those attending his filled-to-capacity memorial service



Stan Hagen

Saturday, January 24, at Faith were B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell, Lieutenant Governor Steven Point and Attorney General Wally Oppal.

A long-time Comox Valley MLA, Hagen started his career in provincial politics in the late 1980s, in the Social Credit cabinets of Bill Vander Zalm and Rita Johnston, then reentered the field as a B.C. Liberal in 2001. He played a significant role in developing Vancouver's Science World (now TELUS World of Science and held the post of agriculture and lands minister at the time of his death.

Premier Campbell noted that "Stan served as minister of 10 different ministries in governments from 1986 to 2009. No one in Canadian public life can match that. He worked with people in a way that

encouraged them to do their best, as he worked on their behalf."

Tom Cooper of the Vancouver Christian group City in Focus called Hagen "highly esteemed in both the political and wider community" and described him and

his wife, Judy, as "deeply committed followers of Christ."

Rev. Tim Rumsch officiated at the traditional Lutheran service that opened with "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." The message text, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3-4), led to an explanation why Christ's resurrection gives us a reason to "praise" and "hope" even in our grief and sadness.

"One More Song for You," a gospel number originally by the Imperials, closed the service on a personal note. "In preparing for Stan's service," said Rev. Rumsch, "I learned that he had a special interest in gospel—he used to sing in a local gospel group when he was younger.

The family requested this song and arranged to have it performed by local musicians."

A second, even larger memorial service—put together by a committee of Stan's friends and political associates—took place later the same day at Mark Isfeld Secondary School. "I don't know the numbers in attendance," commented Rev. Rumsch, "but I wouldn't be surprised if it was a couple thousand." He added: "My part was small—a short prayer and benediction at the end—but I had a number of strangers tell me they appreciated hearing the witness to Jesus Christ in that afternoon service."

Although Hagen was prominent in the community, and his political responsibilities kept him busy, Faith fondly remembers his presence, said Rev. Rumsch—"in particular the solo 'Were You There?' he sang during our traditional Good Friday service a few years ago. His death has had a significant impact on members of the congregation as well as the community."

His wife, five children and three grandchildren survive him.

From reports by Lloyd Mackey (B.C. Christian News) and Rev. Tim Rumsch (Faith, Courtenay)

Two milestones for B.C. congregation

CLOVERDALE, B.C. - Zion Lutheran Church and School celebrates its congregation's 75th anniversary and school's 50th birthday this year.

The congregation has grown from a small group of German-speaking founders, holding house meetings, to three worshipping communities (German traditional, English traditional and English contemporary services), with a daughter church and a combined average weekly attendance of around 400.



The Sunday, January 18, celebration commemorated the church's January founding date.

All three worshipping communities joined for a service highlighting—through words and large-screen images—the many ways God has blessed the congregation over the years. Worshippers gathered for a potluck meal after the service.

Coming up on Saturday, May 2, is an evening celebration service followed by a catered full-course banquet at the church. While the service is open

to all, banquet admission requires advance tickets (\$20 adults, \$10 ages 6 to 12, children under 5 free). Tickets, available through the church office, must be booked prior to April 1. Send cheques to Zion Lutheran Church, 5950-179 Street, Surrey, BC V3S 4J9. (Questions? Phone the church at 604-576-1394 and ask for Linda.) The evening's program includes a PowerPoint and video presentation. Glossy 2009 calendars, with historical photo-collages on every page, will sell for \$10 at the event (or can be mailed for \$1.50 extra).

A celebration of the school's 50th anniversary is in the planning stages for fall.

Communicating with glass inside and outside

PORT ALBERNI, B.C. - Rolf Bernstein, now 89, makes stained-glass panels that have found homes from British Columbia to California. One of his first major projects, completed 20 years ago, was for his home church, Grace Lutheran on Vancouver Island—known ever since as the “church with the windows.”

The series of 10 depicts the seasons of the church year. At night, with lights on inside, the windows make a spectacular witness to the Lord. Rolf also designed illuminated altar crosses for each season and other small items to beautify the church. Grace’s pastors all receive large stained-glass crosses as gifts for serving the congregation.

Recently Rolf completed three windows for an ELCIC-Anglican Church in Port Alberni. His windows, doors and divider panels also adorn the town’s Timberlodge hotel/restaurant and Hospitality Inn. Private homes proudly display commissioned lamps, large and small angels, and other works. One of my favourites is a small Last Supper scene hanging in a window at home.

Another outstanding display of his work stands at Our Saviour Lutheran Church (Parksville, B.C.), which commissioned Rolf to make a window for the end of its sanctuary. In its south-facing setting, it catches all possible sunlight and, illuminated, glows warmly at night. Shelly Brown (Bethany Lutheran, Campbell River,

B.C.) designed the window in black and white; Rolf chose all the colours. Planning took nine months; cutting and putting together the glass pieces took another three months of solid work. But with the help of a carpenter, the team installed the window in two hours!



Rear sanctuary window at Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Parksville, B.C.

Completed in 2000, its finished size is 1.8 by 4.57 metres. Nine rectangles and three triangular top pieces, each weighing more than 20 kilos and containing ninety different kinds of glass, make up a kaleidoscope of colours and textures. Then there’s the lead! Rolf calls this window “my thank-you to the Lord.”

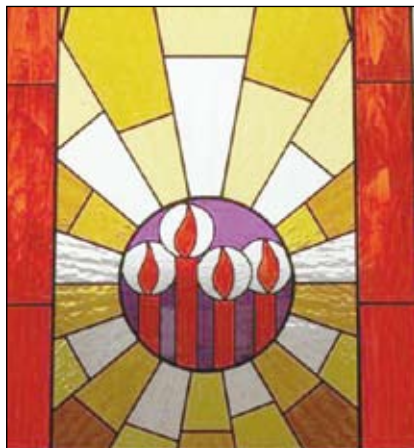
A self-taught artist, Rolf began his avocation after retiring at 65 from MacMillan Bloedel, where he worked for 29 years. One day his wife brought home two stained-glass panels from a second-hand store, and this piqued his interest. “I can do that,” he said. He studied books, travelled out of town to buy supplies and tools, and soon a prestigious artisans’ show was inviting him to display his work. (He ended up participating in the show for 15 years.) His home itself is a gallery. The piece that ended up in California was the result of people driving by, seeing his home, coming in and commissioning a work right on the spot.

Rolf’s secret? He says first you have to have a vision of what you want to do and then put it into reality—translate your mental picture into glass.

Many people are thankful to our Lord for Rolf and his desire to share his gift with us. Mindful of his own blessings from God, he loves to share his art with the church—and it shows.

Linda Fenske

Church season windows at Grace Lutheran Church, Port Alberni, B.C.



Central Alberta congregation welcomes new pastor

LEDUC, Alberta - Reverend Neil Stern was installed at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, during a special service Friday, March 6, 2009. Pastor Stern's installation coincided with a previously planned visit from Concordia University's Handbell Ensemble and Concert Choir.

The Handbell Ensemble performed pre-service music and the Concert Choir, under the direction of Dr. Joy Berg, performed three sets of music during the service. Dr. Stephen Chambers' sermon was particularly meaningful for the congregation.



Back row: Dr. Stephen Chambers; Rev. Harold Clarke; Rev. Lorne Manweiler; Rev. Al Lewis; Rev. Cliff Haberstock Rev. James Schuelke. Middle: Vicar Clint Magnus; Rev. Jim Heinbuch; Rev. Les Gierach; Front: Rev. Don Hennig; Rev. Mark Hennig; Rev. Neil Stern; Rev. Robert Marshall; Rev. Russ Howard; Rev. Al Schmidt.



From the President

Where do you draw the line? How much are you prepared to bend and yield? What is non-negotiable?

What are you prepared to go to war over? Is this a battle you want to fight? Those are all good questions to consider when you are tempted to let your emotions take control of a volatile situation.

One question in particular sticks in my mind during the Lenten season: "Is this the hill to die on?" The metaphor comes from a battle that took place during the Vietnam War. U.S. Marines—ordered to defend their position on a hill, even if it meant fighting to the last man—knew the attacking Viet Cong sorely outnumbered them. They knew they would probably die just because someone in authority believed that hill had to be defended. But surrender was not an option. This spot became their "hill to die on."

You've got to think pretty long and hard before you come to the conclusion that your position, whatever it may be, is the "hill to die on." You've got to be 100 percent committed to that position. No doubts. No second thoughts. No compromise. Retreat or surrender is not an option.

Two thousand years ago there was a hill outside the city of Jerusalem known as Golgotha. Our heavenly Father made a choice in eternity: Golgotha was the hill to die on. Our redemption was at stake and He made the gracious choice to offer up His Son for the sins of the world. So Jesus, Son of God, set his face toward Golgotha. There He would be crucified.

St. Paul writes, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is

written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree' " (Gal. 3:13). Humanly speaking there is no apparent victory here. He was condemned by the governing authorities to die the death of a criminal. He was also cursed in our place under the law and died the sinner's death. Nothing appeared to be won on that hill but condemnation and death. So why make that His hill to die on?

Several hundred years earlier, the prophet Isaiah saw this hill and in prophecy spoke of what would be gained: "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Our redemption, our eternal salvation, stood at stake. Without Christ's atoning life, death and resurrection, we would all be eternally lost. So, out of infinite love and grace, God made Golgotha the hill to die on. It had to happen here, and it did. The battle was fought and won. Sin was paid for and the sinner's death at Golgotha defeated when God raised His Son from the dead. What appeared to be total defeat at that hill became complete victory for us.

What is to be our response to this? Luther said it so well: "...that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity."

Rev. Don Schiemann

Let's talk statistics!

EDMONTON - Being an ardent baseball fan automatically makes me a fan of statistics. Following baseball is simple; you don't even need to watch games to know what's going on. Just read the statistics. You'll know who hit, who had a bad day, how good the pitching was, what left-handed batters did between 2 and 3 p.m. that day, and so on. Statistics are important to the game of baseball, but not only the game of baseball: they're also important to the operation of our district and Synod.

Each year Lutheran Church-Canada sends out the "Lutheran Church-Canada Statistical Report" form to every LCC congregation across Canada, which includes every congregation in the ABC District. The form is a request for stats about your congregation. It's only four pages long but filled with questions.

I read the form before writing this—all four pages. Although it didn't rival the book I'm currently reading (*I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*) it did help me better understand why LCC needs statistics and why they must be kept current.

We're in the process of planning the 48th District Convention, so we've been relying on some numbers to help us plan accurately. However, there are two things we found out that concern us:

1. Only two-thirds of all congregations respond regularly to this request for information.
2. Some congregations have *never* responded.

So that means some of our numbers—the ones we use to plan your convention—are wrong or at the very least incomplete. Practically speaking, costs for the event could be skewed by wrong statistics. We divide the cost among all the parishes based on the total number of communicant members. If these numbers are wrong, we have costed the convention wrong and delivered incorrect assessments to congregations.

Former Drumheller pastors install third



Former Drumheller pastors Revs. Garry Dombrosky (l) and Lloyd Huber (r) welcome Rev. Curtis Boehm to the post.

DRUMHELLER, Alta. - Two pastors connected through years of faithful service to Grace Lutheran Church welcomed a third—recent seminary grad Rev. Curtis Boehm—at Boehm's installation, July 28. Rev. Garry Dombrosky served as Grace's pastor

from 1976 to June 1989; Rev. Lloyd Huber held the position from 1990 to his retirement in 2007. It was a truly remarkable day of unity with men who have served the congregation for more than thirty years.

A concrete example: I received a call saying we'd assessed one congregation for 180 communicant members when they only have 122. Upon investigation it turned out to be true, but we found out something else: the last statistical report was sent in 1996! The resulting \$287.10 shortfall will have to be covered from general district revenue, which means all the other congregations in the district must pay for that error.

Enough said. The real message I want to convey is this: please, when you receive your "Lutheran Church-Canada Statistical Report" form, electronically or in hard copy, don't ignore it. Please take the time to complete and return it. It would be so helpful for the LCC office and the district offices.

*Kurt Robinson, executive assistant
District Services and treasurer*



HIS CALLING:
TO FAITH... FOR LIFE
ROMANS 1:7

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www.abcevents.ca

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

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