

Church sign continues to stop traffic

SASKATOON - An article in the April 2006 issue of *The Canadian Lutheran* reports how the church sign in front of St. Paul's Lutheran on Taylor Street attracts quite a bit of attention from passersby. Fast forward to 2010. A Saskatoon radio host passes the church every day and mentions its "often funny and thought-provoking signs" on his morning show.

On March 12 St. Paul's Rev. Mark Dressler appeared with that host, Brent Loucks, on

NewsTalk 650 CKOM, where they discussed sharing the Gospel with

concise and humourous messages.

What are some of Rev. Dressler's favorite signs from the past 15 years? How about:

- Anger is just one letter short of danger.
- Where do *you* want to spend eternity—smoking or non-smoking?
- A closed mouth gathers no foot.
- Without the bread of life you're toast.

A link to the interview is at www.lccinfodigest.ca. Search for "radio."



St. Paul's "sign guy" Les Hollinger and his brainchild.

Circuit studies abuse prevention policy

Abuse happens in any age group, social stratum or ethno-cultural group. It is vital that guidelines be put in place to prevent abuse and protect children and vulnerable individuals (p. 4).

Developing a policy to prevent abuse of children and vulnerable adults is the first step in creating a safe environment and indicate a zero tolerance for abuse, neglect or maltreatment within your congregation (p. 6).

REGINA - Each participant at the Wascana Circuit convocation received these statements as part of the district's *Abuse Prevention Policy Manual*. Approximately 20 lay people and pastors attended the morning workshop at Grace, Saturday, February 13.

Wascana Circuit Counsellor Rev. Ted Giese opened the seminar with prayer, then led the group through a Bible study, printed in the manual, on the prevention of abuse in the church. Representatives from Ecclesiastical Insurance of Calgary, experts in abuse prevention in church settings, made a presentation. Regional manager Betty Dietz and senior claims representative Russ Shepard spoke on protecting



Workshop participants learn about district policy on abuse.

children, youth and vulnerable adults in the congregation; what to do when someone alleges abuse; on the consequences of abuse; guidelines for preventing abuse; and legal implications. They were joined by Susan Fedyck, an insurance broker from Aon Reed Stenhouse.

Congregations, no matter how large or small, are strongly encouraged to adopt some form of the district's proposed abuse prevention policy. It is sad that measures like this have to be taken, but in a fallen world God's people need to "be wise as serpents" (Matthew 10:16 ESV) to

help protect the innocent. Copies of the *Abuse Prevention Policy Manual* have been sent to every Central District congregation. It includes instructions for implementing the policy. If you require assistance, please contact the Central District office.

In other business, pastoral and lay delegates heard an update on Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, presented by director of development Daniel Deyell. They also discussed mission opportunities in the circuit and set plans in motion for future activities.

African community celebrates

WINNIPEG - Oromo community leader Assefa Aredo received his preaching and worship licences February 28, marking a new level of achievement in Lutheran Church-Canada's Pastors with Alternate Training (PAT) program. LCC president Robert Bugbee made the presentation at Immanuel Lutheran. Aredo is one of seven current PAT students.

Even though he is the second PAT student to reach this milestone (James Kay of the Nuer mission congregation in Edmonton was the first), Aredo is the first to have done so at a distance from either of the seminary communities. PAT takes individuals from ethnically or geographically isolated communities for which it would be unrealistic for students to undertake four years of seminary study.

A culture and a language, Oromo is spoken by roughly 30 million people worldwide. The growing Oromo congregation in downtown Winnipeg is part of a larger network scattered across Canada. Most members are recent immigrants from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Their Christian roots date back to German and Swedish Lutheran missionaries



Assefa Aredo with members of the Winnipeg Oromo congregation.

who brought the Gospel to eastern Africa beginning in the late 1800s.

Today, the Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia is the largest Lutheran church in Africa, claiming more than five million members. Many Oromo also come with ties to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, which along with LCC is part of the International Lutheran Council.

Rev. Richard Beinert



(l-r): Rev. Robert Bugbee, Assefa Aredo, Rev. Richard A. Beinert.

Another worker for the north

LA RONGE, Sask.

- Consecrated and installed February 21, Melissa McNeil serves as the new Director of Parish Services for La Ronge Lutheran Fellowship.

District President Rev. Thomas Prachar preached at her morning installation service, and women of the congregation served lunch for the 50 in attendance.

Since the La Ronge youth group has grown, it has now been split into two groups. Melissa, busy working



(l-r): Rev. Wayne Olson of La Ronge, Melissa McNeil, Rev. Thomas Prachar.

with youth in addition to evangelism and outreach, plans to take up to 35 young people to the National Youth Gathering in Edmonton this July.

Coming Events

July 4

100th anniversary celebration, 10:30 a.m., Holy Trinity, Luseland, Sask.

July 25

100th anniversary celebration, Zion, North Southey, Sask.

August 1

50th anniversary of ordination, Rev. Don Koch, Living Christ, Lipton, Sask., 10:30 a.m.

August 22-24

District Board of Directors, Lumsden, Sask.

Confidence in Christian living not *DiffiCult*

DRYDEN, Ont. - Combating cults provided the focus for this year's annual youth group retreat, February 5, 6 and 7.

Under the rubric *DiffiCult*, Rev. Sye Van Maanen led some 50 young people through the often confusing subject of cults, touching on Wicca, Ouija boards and haunted houses,

along with a number of highly publicized TV shows. He assured participants that in our baptism we are given the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and devil, and the promise of eternal life. The devil has no hold on us—Christ does!

Icebreaker games, glow bowling, a giant "luge" slide, and a servant event

for which the group made 200 pizzas completed the weekend. Proceeds from pizza sales will go to the local food bank and help youth attend LCC's national youth gathering in Edmonton this summer.

Rev. James Wood, Our Saviour, Dryden, Ont.



DiffiCult participants take a photo break.

Society board meeting culminates in mission festival

YORKTON, Sask. - Concordia Lutheran Mission Society held its board of directors meeting February 4-7 at Zion Lutheran. The board voted on new mission projects for 2010 in Ukraine, Nicaragua and Southeast Asia, concluding Sunday, February 7, with a mission festival focusing on the work of the gospel in Nicaragua. Lutheran Church-Canada president Rev. Robert Bugbee preached for the closing service and reported on his recent visit to the churches and people of Nicaragua.

Visit <http://www.concordiamissions.org> to learn more about new projects and how to partner in missions with CLMS.



The board convenes (back, l-r): Lauren Bugbee; Darcy Wershler; Rev. Gilvan de Azevedo; Terry Goerz; Revs. Irvin Pudrycki, John Grande and LCC president Robert Bugbee; (front, l-r): Rev. Albert Schmitt; Anne Taylor; Dr. Edwin Lehman; Dr. Norman Threinen; William Andrew; LCC's mission and social ministry executive, Dr. Leonardo Neitzel and Rev. Daniel Moeller (Springside, Yorkton).



President Robert Bugbee, Rev. Dan Moeller, vicar Douglas Zahner

Mission fest sees God's hand at work worldwide

SASKATOON - Early in the frigid morning of February 13, St. Catharines seminary student Oleg Schewtschenko arrived in Saskatoon to attend the circuit's Mission Fest at Faith Lutheran Church. As people warmed themselves with fresh, steaming coffee, Oleg recounted his faith journey—from a little boy in the USSR curious about a God he must not mention, to the eager pastor-to-be about to return to his homeland (see related story in *East District News* page 34). Participants' faces shone with amazement and gratitude at what God can do in spite of our human sinfulness and seemingly ironclad political regimes.

The festival focused on missions close to home as well as those in faraway places. Rev. Dr. James Dimitroff (Grace, Saskatoon) spoke about his upcoming (November 2010) trip to Odessa to serve as a short-term professor of theology at Ukraine's Lutheran seminary—one of Oleg's alma maters.

Rev. Wayne Olson of La Ronge, Sask., discussed the uniqueness of First Nations communities, the importance of longtime work in

the north and how he sees the hand of God working through his efforts and those of a new Director of Parish Services Melissa McNeil.

Rev. Randy Heide (St. John's, Warman) spoke about the relative "newness" of his 100-year-old church in the Saskatoon bedroom community of Warman, the joys and difficulties of shepherding a mission congregation.

A Foods of Ukraine banquet—for which 81 participants snapped up tickets—followed the presentations in Faith's downstairs hall.

Mission Fest's total offering, when brought to the Lord's altar, came to \$3800, including contributions made at the festival, some previous offerings, banquet funds, and a \$500 grant from FaithLife Financial.

Faith's pastor Rev. Rudy Pastucha, along with congregation member Renate Bishopp—who heard Oleg Schewtschenko's moving account of Ukrainian life at LWMLC's 2009 Ottawa convention—spearheaded



Congregation member Ann Johnson and guest speaker Oleg Schewtschenko model Ukrainian garb.

the festival. "As in any major undertaking, an army of people from all over the Saskatoon Circuit were involved," says Renate. "Too many in each congregation to mention here, but a huge thank you is hereby 'shouted out' to all of them!"

The event also included a Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) Four Corners sales area as well as a display table for Lutheran Care Society.

From a report by Renate Bishopp

Raising LAMP funds: from bake-off to take-off

THUNDER BAY, Ont. - The boys of Lappe Lutheran Sunday school got together March 28 to bake a batch of cookies for a Palm Sunday fund-raiser that also included a crafts sale and festive lunch. With the congregation's support, their efforts raised \$239.28. In cooperation with LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots) and a team of volunteers from southern Ontario, the funds will help the children of Weagamow, a remote northern Ontario community, receive the blessing of a vacation Bible school.

Mary-Anne Barton



Cookie bakers (l-r) Westin O'Connor, Colton Herneshuhta, Lucas McCullough and Nicholas Titan.

Congregation planning centennial

NORTH SOUTHEY, Sask. - "On this Rock, I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18) forms the foundation of Zion Lutheran's 100th anniversary celebrations this summer.

Events begin with a worship service at 2 p.m., Sunday, July 25, featuring guest preacher Central District President

Thomas Prachar. A program follows, with supper at 5 p.m.

Congregation members would be honoured to have friends and former members join them on this day of celebration. Please reply to Pastor Lowell Dennis, Box 427, Cupar, SK S0G 0Y0 or phone 306-723-4899.

Through Word and Sacrament, the Lord has built His Church, calling sinners to repentance and faith in Christ. The congregation prays that the Lord of the Church continues to be with His Church as the Good News of His salvation is proclaimed to the community and beyond.



Ponderings from the president

Preventing and addressing abuse

Recently in one of our circuits I attended a seminar encouraging congregations to establish an abuse prevention policy. [See story page 26] Such documents have become increasingly necessary as the church, existing in a sinful society, tries to deal with sinful people working within its walls. We now encourage police checks for all staff in the congregation, especially those working with children and youth in Sunday school, vacation Bible school, youth groups, and so on. This can even apply to people working with the elderly and homebound as "elder abuse" is on the rise.

I have heard many people wondering aloud: "Do we really need such a policy? Our congregation is so small." It doesn't matter the size of your congregation, whether you are in a rural setting or an urban one. Sexual predators can turn up where we least expect them. Verbal and physical abuse and harassment can be initiated by seemingly stable individuals. In fact, abusers may likely find more ample opportunities in the church because we are (usually) so trusting and forgiving. Our congregations need such policies in place "so that we may exercise the best possible care for one another in a spirit of Christian love" (LCC Central District *Abuse Prevention Policy Manual*, p. 11). All our districts have manuals to assist congregations in writing such a policy.

In light of renewed allegations in the Roman Catholic Church concerning priests committing acts of sexual abuse, could similar allegations be raised against pastors and deacons in our Lutheran Church—Canada? Unfortunately, abuse has happened in our church and will happen in the future. For when sin is rampant in a fallen world, and when the church is composed of sinners, evil is bound to rear its ugly head.

One of the difficult issues facing the Roman Catholic Church is not only the fact that priests committed sexual abuse, but how church officials handled the sinful behaviour when it came to light. Bishops stand accused of hushing up allegations of sexual abuse and then simply moving priests to other parishes. Accusations even abound as to whether the church offered counselling to victims—or just to abusers.

Lutheran Church—Canada has two major documents to assist us in dealing with allegations of abuse, harassment or misconduct by pastors or deacons: our *Policy Regarding Misconduct by Professional Church Workers*, as well as the *Synodical Handbook*. To briefly summarize: if, after practising Jesus' advice in Matthew 18:15-16 (confronting the church worker individually, and then with others present from the congregation) and still no resolution occurs, then a complaint is made in writing to the district president. He appoints a review committee composed of lay people and clergy to investigate the issue. The district president places the accused church worker on "restricted status," making that individual ineligible for a call. The allegations could then either be dismissed for lack of evidence or, if evidence shows abuse has taken place, disciplinary action may be taken that could lead to suspension and removal from the roster of Synod. According to law, civil authorities may need to be notified.

Throughout this entire process, the guidelines call for offering pastoral and professional care to the victim, the accused and their families, to the congregation and peers in the ministry. Again, this is a brief outline of detailed procedures that must be followed. Contact your district office for the complete guidelines.

While this policy may have its flaws, it confronts and exposes sin in order that healing and reconciliation can take place. That is always the goal of resolving all conflict, whether in the church, your family, or the workplace.

Rev. Thomas Prachar

Congregation celebrates new sanctuary

DRYDEN, Ont. - Members of the Dryden Area Lutheran Parish dedicated the long-awaited new sanctuary at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Sunday, January 31.

Our Saviour sold its former church building and moved into

a vacant school early in 2006. Since then they've undertaken many renovations, always working toward the goal of completing a new and larger worship space to accommodate the needs of a growing congregation.

Last spring work started in earnest—they demolished the north end of the building, leaving only the floor. The process piqued much neighbourhood interest, especially when roof trusses—arriving in three large preassembled pieces—needed to be raised by a huge crane. The church used local contractors and, wherever possible, volunteers. The Central District's Church Extension Fund helped finance the project.

The dedication included selections from the choir and the youth and children's praise bands. Gary Case brought greetings from the city of Dryden.

Guest preacher, District President Tom Prachar faithfully encouraged the congregation using God's Word and the promises we have, made sure in Jesus Christ. A light luncheon in the fellowship hall following the service served 210 members and guests.

Rev. James Wood



Rev. James Wood (left) and Central District President Thomas Prachar (right) seated in the new church sanctuary.

Raising the roof sparked neighbourhood interest.



Congregation honours musician



Judy Maki at the organ.

THUNDER BAY, Ont. - Calvary Lutheran Church's February 14 service brought special honours to the congregation's musicians including Judy Maki for her long and faithful service as organist.

Judy, who began accompanying church services at age 12, recalls playing a small electric organ in the early days of Calvary, more than 55 years ago. One Sunday in the middle of the service the organ mysteriously began picking up a local radio station signal, much to the astonishment of Judy and the congregation!

Sometimes she walked more than a mile to church to play for services. When there was a funeral service, she often received a ride from work and back in the middle of the day to serve as organist.

Over the years Judy's faithful commitment and caring attitude have served as a fine example of the dedication that enables Calvary to be a window of God's love in its community.

Joan Black

Visit the Central District website at www.lcccentral.ca

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

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