

## “World within a block” offers unlimited mission opportunities

**TORONTO** - I never fully realized how many opportunities the Lord provides until I began my mission work in St. James Town. Located just a couple of metres from Trinity Lutheran Church in downtown Toronto, St. James Town is Canada’s most densely populated and culturally diverse area—and thus known as “the world within a block.”

The local branch of Toronto Public Library, located near Wellesley Community Centre, is one of the places I go regularly not merely to borrow books but, more important, to meet interesting people. A man named Gebreigziabier, originally from Eritrea, is one of them. In mid-September I met him sitting on a bench under a tree. He wasn’t comfortable speaking English, but by using pen, paper and body language, he began telling me of his home country, his age, his second language (Italian), and where and how he learned it.

I gave him my card and invited him to ESL at Trinity, half a block away. Initially we missed connecting, but a couple of weeks later, a young lady sitting next to us at the library kindly translated our entire conversation, and since then we’ve met once a week to study basic English expressions. It’s my prayer that one day he will sing the hymns of Christ with the people of Trinity congregation.

Another ongoing opportunity involves helping children through after-school programs at St. James Town Youth Centre (SJTYC). I happened to meet a Nepalese family (a woman named Lexmi and her children) in the elevator. We said hello and then left the building through different exits—only to meet up again by chance a couple of minutes later. From there we chatted more. Since Lexmi worked at SJTYC’s playground, through our acquaintance I now know more children at SJTYC. I now see the family once a week through the after-school program.

Such opportunities seem limitless, since through the children I get to know their parents and families. People in St. James Town know who I am and what I do in their community. The Lord always provides us opportunities to build relationships with individuals and groups in our communities. The message that Christ and His people care for them is heard.

I pray that members of our district congregations would become involved in such blessed opportunities so that everyone would know of Christ the Lord and be brought to the



Greater Toronto Area missionary Rev. Min Kim with Lexmi, a Nepalese volunteer at St. James Town Youth Centre.

Baptismal Font and the Sacrament of the Altar.

Rev. Min Kim

East District Intercultural Missionary

## Pumpkins and apostles at retreat

**TAVISTOCK, Ont.** - East District Lutheran Young Adults (EDLYA) met for a fall retreat at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, October 31. Since Reformation Day coincides with Halloween, what better ice-breaker for participants than carving pumpkins? Then, led by Deacon Jenn Shack, the group watched and explored Dr. Paul Maier’s video series, *Christianity: The First Three Centuries*, discussing the persecution of Christians and the struggles of the early church.

During the event, the young adults elected officers and circuit

representatives. New president is Ruth Krey; vice-president, Ruth Pollex; secretary, Krysti Martin; treasurer, Susi Scott. Circuit reps include Jenn Shack (Hamilton); Amy Stickel (Kitchener); James Gerber (Stratford); Erica Martin and Jessie Julke (Niagara); T.J. Poehlman (Windsor); Andrew Kuhl (London). Pastoral advisor is Rev. David Gallas (St. Peter’s, New Hamburg, Ont).

Krysti Martin, EDLYA secretary  
*Turning 18 this year—or know someone who is? Keep your eyes peeled for 2009’s EDLYA retreats. Check [www.edlya.ca](http://www.edlya.ca) for details.*



East District Lutheran Young Adults display their pumpkin carving skills

## Getting a head start on the season

**BURLINGTON, Ont.** - Prince of Peace Lutheran Church's annual carol sing, *Christmas Now!*, drew some 90 people on November 28. Held on the Friday before Advent—before people's calendars become overloaded—it is a good way for busy families to start preparing for Christmas, and an opportunity to invite friends, neighbours, and the community-at-large.



Discovering the origins of some Christmas carols.

Beginning with “O Come All Ye Faithful,” each of the 11 carols led off with a short reading describing the origin of the words and music, the way these have changed over the years, and the carol's significance for us today. A diverse group of readers—both

men and women—ranging in age from 14 to 70 delivered these mini-meditations. After each reading, the congregation rose and sang with a deeper understanding of the carol itself and a greater appreciation for the faith that drove its creation.

Throughout the hour-long program, the organist used different registrations (i.e., stops or instrument sounds) to put each carol in its historical context—very effective in helping attendees identify with the first Christians to sing these well-loved carols. At one point, after beginning “Silent Night” with chimes, the organist stopped playing entirely and let the congregation finish it a cappella in four-

part harmony, creating a special moment for all.

Following the final carol, “Joy to the World,” the congregation enjoyed a selection of Christmas baking, hot cider, tea, coffee and juice set out for fellowship in the parish hall.

*Linda Ladwig, secretary, Prince of Peace*

## New at the 2009 Convention



**WINDSOR, Ont.** - Several info sessions are planned for the upcoming East District convention in May. Delegates

and guests will have an extra opportunity to ask questions of the keynote speaker, Dr. James Lamb, Executive Director of Lutherans for Life. Dr. Lamb will give three presentations centred around the convention topic of life issues and bio ethics and the convention theme, “Give Jesus Glory: Our Body. His Temple, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday morning. The break-out Q&A session will occur on Tuesday afternoon after lunch. Bring your questions with you.

Following Dr. Lamb's session, you'll have the opportunity to select one of three options for a second 50-minute info session. Mr. Al Feth,

East District Gift Coordinator for Lutheran Foundation Canada will hold a session. A session about Lutheran Church-Canada Missions will be available. The third option

is about IT solutions and how they may be applied in your congregation. More information will be available in your Registration Packages, coming soon.

## Children celebrate Jesus' birth



**BARRIE, Ont.** - Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd and Loving Savior Lutheran Church held a Christmas program at the latter location on December 21. Through drama, music, songs, readings and recitations, the children and youth brought the story of Jesus' birth to the combined congregations.

*Rev. Stephen Omoregie*

## Choir sings with SOUL

**ST. CATHARINES, Ont.** - On December 19 the Niagara Area Lutheran Choir sang for the men and women of SOUL (Spiritual Outreach Uplifting Lives)—a ministry at Christ Lutheran Church that reaches out to developmentally disabled people residing in our community. Some days more than 100 people attend the SOUL program.

On this occasion, since it was SOUL's Christmas party, their own choir also sang for the Lord. The sounds might not always

have been perfectly pitched, but there is no doubt they were eminently pleasing to our Lord. The SOUL choir's verve and enthusiasm was strong and made each song pleasing in its own way.

SOUL offers a structured program three days per week, funded by Christ Lutheran along with some outside assistance

and, as always, lots of volunteer help.

Howard Bogusats



SOUL choir enthusiastic about singing for their Lord during their Christmas party.



### From the President

#### Anknüpfungspunkt

**O**ne of my pastimes is reading. Every year I read about a dozen novels, several history books and, of course, theological works.

Why, you might ask, do I read novels? Well, certainly for entertainment, but contemporary novels are also windows into our culture; they help us understand where western culture is moving. Sadly, culture is moving away from its Christian orientation.

Six years ago I read an interesting book entitled *Evangelism for Normal People* by John Bowen, an Anglican professor at Wycliffe College in Toronto, who makes the point that we need to understand our culture to do effective evangelism. January and February, the Epiphany season, is the traditional time when we emphasize missions and evangelism in the church. I'm taking the liberty to reprint a president's message that appeared in the January/February 2003 issue of *The Canadian Lutheran*.

Bowen, in his book, asserts that "an Athenian kind of evangelism becomes increasingly important." Today the starting point in any evangelistic encounter has to be different. Like Paul we need to understand our culture: its questions, its doubts, the "points where it feels the effects of separation from God."

In short we need to be on the lookout for what Germans call *anknüpfungspunkt*. A *knopf* is a button, *knüpfung* is "buttoning," and *anknüpfung* is "buttoning on." The word *punkt* has the same origin as the English word *point*. So *anknüpfungspunkt* becomes the "buttoning-on point," the point where the button goes through the buttonhole.

Think of it this way. The Gospel is like a precious button that will fit into the buttonhole of a person's

life and understanding. The trick is to link together button and buttonhole—in other words, to find the *anknüpfungspunkt*, the places or place where God is already at work, seeking to catch people's attention. Bowen cites Paul's sermon in Athens (Acts 17) as an example. His sermon begins with "as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship." Sharp eyes are sometimes more important than an eloquent tongue. Bowen cites examples of God creating *anknüpfungspunkt* in the most unlikely places; for example, in cartoons, movies and novels.

Paul's approach to evangelism is that God is already involved in people's lives, trying to catch their attention and make them aware of the spiritual issues of life. I learned this lesson some years ago at Whitby Psychiatric Hospital when I was assigned to be chaplain of the adolescent unit. I was amazed so many troubled youth claimed to have *experienced* God. They would tell stories of experiencing God in one way or another. God had bypassed their intellect and communicated directly to their hearts. *The buttonhole was there!*

That's what Paul discovered at Athens: God had already been at work in that culture, preparing the buttonhole for the button! Paul was looking for *anknüpfungspunkt*. That's exactly what Jesus was doing in the story of the woman at the well (John 4, 5). Before she met Jesus, God was already active in the woman's life. Jesus brought it to fruition.

Bowen makes the point that *Evangelism is primarily God's passion, not a human invention*. We are apprentices to God; we are co-workers alongside God. We need to be on the lookout for *anknüpfungspunkt*, places where God is already at work. Yes, it will involve risks, but the kingdom does not advance unless God's people are prepared to take risks. But it's much easier to take the risks with the Spirit's help.

Rev. Al Maleske, President

## Seminary celebrates Advent, looks forward to “Lucky in Love”

**ST. CATHARINES, Ont.** - Sounds of Advent lessons and carols filled the air, lifting the hearts and spirits of 114 participants at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary’s (CLTS) Martin Luther Chapel on Sunday evening, December 7.

Members of the seminary choir, Resurrection Lutheran Church choir, instrumentalists, readers from all levels of the seminary community, and guests from throughout the area joined together to hear, sing and proclaim the coming of Jesus Christ.

Two days later, residents at Shaver Hospital, across the street from CLTS, received poinsettias and best wishes as students used their longer Tuesday lunch hour to carol and bring holiday greetings to patients at this long-term care facility.

Earlier, on Friday, December 5, students hosted an Advent/Christmas social for CLTS faculty and staff at Grace Lutheran Church. Student John Rapp served as MC and organized a quintet of musically gifted students and wives. The Seminary Guild provided a ham and presented gift certificates to each student. Children received gifts from Concordia Seminary Students’ Association.



CLTS shares the message of Christ’s birth in song.

Next up in terms of celebrations is a Valentine’s Day event, dubbed “Lucky in Love” (human and divine) set for Friday, February 13. Sem wife

Tara Lyn Hart—a past Juno nominee and Canadian Country Music Awards winner—will entertain in a dinner-theatre format.

*CLTS e-newsletter*

### Upcoming Events

Visit [www.lcceastdistrict.ca/events.htm](http://www.lcceastdistrict.ca/events.htm) for more information about happenings in the East District this month. **Please mark your calendars ...**

- **EvangelFest 2009** “Plugged In—Switched On”: April 24-26, Redeemer University College,

Ancaster, Ont. Registration due March 30

- **East District Convention:** May 10-13, Holiday Inn Select, Windsor, Ont. **Theme:** “Give Jesus Glory: Our Body, His Temple.” **Essayist:** Dr. James Lamb, executive director, Lutherans for Life; **Topic:** bioethics and life issues.

### Correction: we missed Katie!

**ST. CATHARINES, Ont.** - One name was left off the photo caption accompanying the article “Praise the Lord with trumpet (and tuba)!” in the October 2008 issue. In the picture, peeking out from behind her music stand (third from right in the middle row) is trumpet player Katie Juritsch. Sorry, Katie!

Katie may be the youngest member of Grace Evangelical Lutheran’s Brass Choir, but she is not the newest. That honour goes to her mother, Lois Juritsch, trombonist, who always wanted to learn a musical instrument. She played her first public performance that day!

*Linda Schappert*



Katie Juritsch, youngest member of Brass Choir at St. Catharines.

Visit the East District website at [www.lcceastdistrict.ca](http://www.lcceastdistrict.ca)

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

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February 13, 2009**