

## New building takes shape in Tillsonburg

**TILLSONBURG, Ont.** - One year after the formation of Peace Lutheran Church, the new church building at the corner of highways 3 and 19 grows nearer to completion.

In place are the Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF) of the sanctuary walls and footings for the rest of the building, which will include classrooms, offices, washrooms, a large narthex, and a fellowship hall to accommodate more than 200 people. The sanctuary will seat 225 to 250.

More than 50 volunteers from the congregation have taken the required safety training and signed up to work on the project at various stages.

Rev. Ron Mohr holds devotions and Bible study with the work crew every Monday morning—beginning each work week with food for the soul. Peace volunteers provide a daily hot lunch and coffee-break snacks for all the builders, including professional tradespeople.



Some of the many volunteers certified to assist with construction (l-r): Bob Boyd, an interested neighbour, John Puhr, Harold Mauthe and Murray Sandham.

ICF construction is a new generation of technology that uses expanded polystyrene building forms filled with poured concrete to create stronger, safer, more comfortable and energy-efficient walls. ICF buildings are also more fire- and sound-resistant. Expected completion of the project is December 2010. Come by anytime and check out the progress!

*Rev. Ron Mohr,  
Peace, Tillsonburg*



Polystyrene forms constructed and braced. Inset shows the reinforced interior of the walls prior to filling with concrete.

## Stratford congregation closes after 45 years

**STRATFORD, Ont.** - With heavy hearts the East District bids farewell to another congregation—St. Matthew, which opened in 1964 without a building but with a congregation of 135.

Rev. Paul Zabel, East District president, preached at the final Divine Service on January 10 and performed the Rite of Closure. St. Matthew's current pastor, Rev. Daniel Kitsch, will continue to serve St. Paul's in Tavistock (previously a dual parish with St. Matthew). The official disbanding took place January 28, with much of the church's property given to other district congregations and missions.

Organizing work for a church in this part of Stratford began in the late 1950s—a time when St Peter's, also in Stratford, was experiencing "growing pains" and the future looked bright. An offer of land on the corner of Britannia and Forman provided further encouragement for expansion.

Vicar David Deppe, who served St Peter's at the time, led St. Matthew's first worship service on April 12, 1964. The congregation met in the gymnasium at Avon Public School. Organist for this first service, William Ney, Jr., later attended seminary and in 1973 was ordained at his home parish. Rev. Ney now serves another LCC St. Matthew, in Stony Plain, Alberta.

In 1966 the church laid the cornerstone for its own building, while still a mission congregation subsidized by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Ontario District. It remained subsidized for many years. Over its 45-year history, 10 pastors served the membership—Revs. Charles Evanson, Michael Elliot, Lawrence Eifert, Gilbert MacDonald, James Lindemann,



Closing its doors for the last time, St. Matthew donated much of its church equipment to other LCC congregations and missions.

Allan Harlos, James Bloch, Gary Robinson, Raymond Maher and Daniel Kitsch.

The church is grateful that God provided many members of the congregation who remain dedicated and committed followers of our Lord Jesus Christ so that His kingdom here on earth may be enlarged as we wait for His heavenly kingdom to come.

*Adapted from a history of St. Matthew  
presented at the closing service  
by John Tepker, congregation chairman*

## A simple question results in a mission trip

**LEÓN, Nicaragua** - Twelve members of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Ontario, began their journey to Nicaragua in the early hours of January 2. Revs. Maximo Urroz and Roberto Carlos Rivera (pastor/liaison with the LCC's mission) greeted the team upon arrival at Managua airport, whisking people, luggage and vacation Bible school supplies away to the small hotel in downtown León that would be home base for the next seven days. Though they wouldn't be there much during the busy days to come, Rev. Robert Krestick and his wife Elizabeth, Mayra Palma (wife of Redeemer's vicar Oscar Castillo, both originally from Nicaragua), Danielle and Ruth Breton, Darla Budan, Lucille George, Cathy and Darryll Holland, Kristen Kahle, Ray Taylor and Wayne Weiberg found that the hotel's lovely courtyard made a great location for afternoon discussion sessions and craft preparation in the evenings.

Members of the three communities the team would serve hosted an emotional Sunday welcome service at Iglesia San Pablo, the church of St. Paul, in La Cartonera. The church was overflowing with adults and children, some outside the doors, some peering through the glassless windows and some on the roof looking down through slats—all excited to see the *gringos* who had come to visit and help with VBS for a week.

Starting the next morning, and each morning at 8 a.m., the team van loaded up and headed to the three church sites. At the first stop, Iglesia San Pablo, Rev. Krestick led the team in prayer before dropping off Cathy, Darryll, Mayra and Wayne to help deaconess Gerri (wife of Rev. Urroz) lead activities for 100 children. Five minutes down the road, at the smaller Iglesia Dios de Gracia (Grace of God church) in Marañonal, another 100 children waited with Pastor Henry and deaconess Anna, for Darla, Kristen, Lucille and Ruth to help. At the last stop, near Telica, Danielle, Ray, Rev. Krestick and his wife Liz worked with Rev. Urroz and teacher Gondi in a unique location under tamarind trees. Almost 300 children and adults from this community, called Gracias a Dios (Thanks be to God), came to hear the Gospel and learn about the greatness of God.

Friday's emotional farewell included a morning of piñata-breaking (organized by the Nicaraguan staff) and exchanging gifts. With hugs, tears, and the words "Vaya con Dios" (Go with God), team members said

goodbye to their beloved Nicaraguan children and cherished co-workers. Some mothers responded that they are waiting for our return with open arms.

Seeds of this mission trip were planted in April 2009 during a live video Internet conversation on *Skype* between Redeemer's congregation and missionary Maximo Urroz in Nicaragua. Rev. Urroz thanked Redeemer for supporting his work since 2006. When asked, "What else can we do?" he suggested: "Come down here and help us with vacation Bible school."

Many expressed interest, so planning and preparation were squeezed into the next six short months. Encouragement from others in the Kitchener-Waterloo area who regularly travel to Nicaragua helped immensely. The Lord's hand was upon this mission from groundwork activities through to the open-air communion service at the team's Managua hotel before the long trip home to Canada.

*Ruth Breton and Darla Budan, Nicaragua mission team members*



The entire 2010 León, Nicaragua team.



At Iglesia Dios de Gracia in Marañonal, another 100 children arrived to enjoy the day with Pastor Henry and deaconess Anna, assisted by Darla Budan, Kristen Kahle, Lucille George and Ruth Breton.



Cathy Holland, Darryll Holland, Mayra Palma and Wayne Weiberg helped deaconess Gerri (wife of Rev. Maximo Urroz) lead activities for 100 children at Iglesia San Pablo.

## Let's do it again!

### MATAGALPA and JINOTEGA, Nicaragua

Eighty children in Matagalpa and 130 children in Jinotega gathered for vacation Bible school from Dec 28 to 31 with their Nicaraguan pastors, deaconesses and parents. Adding something extra was a Canadian team, MataMission, made up of 14 members from three Kitchener-Waterloo congregations—all easy to spot in their blue T-shirts bearing outline maps of Nicaragua.

Discussions about the school's format had begun the year before with Rev. Hector Morales, LCC missionary to Matagalpa, who recommended using age-appropriate Lutheran VBS material in Spanish. He suggested



The MataMission 2009 team.

Nicaraguans teach the Bible stories; then Canadian amigos could rotate children through five activities including snacks, two crafts, games, and singing in Spanish.



Some of the MataMission team in their identifying blue T-shirts greet the children.

Visiting two communities each day proved challenging. (After Wednesday, the workload was reduced.) The last day in each community ended with a fiesta of piñatas, ice cream and lots of fun.

After a wonderful week of building

friendships, MataMissioners overwhelmingly decided, "Let's do it again." The team recognizes that remote Nicaraguan communities are often overlooked due to challenging logistics, and hopes the next visit will take them to another Lutheran church near the Honduran border.

They thank all who supported MataMission fund-raisers, and note that

unused funds were donated toward purchasing a used truck for pastors to bring people to their churches and continuing outreach in Matagalpa province.

In addition, each Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua pastor received a Spanish-language Proclaimer, a device with a recording of the New Testament that can be hand-cranked or solar-powered. The team delivered these on behalf of Historic St Paul's, Messiah and Faith Lutheran churches for use in confirmation classes, Bible studies and outreach to the blind, elderly and nonreaders.

*Jane Ford, MataMission member*

## Board of directors makes financial decisions

**KITCHENER, Ont.** - On January 25 at the district office, the 2009-12 East District Board of Directors gathered for its second regular meeting and:

- Explored opportunities for endowments, RSPs, and other financial tools to expand options for Funding the Future with the Church Extension Fund (CEF).
- Amended CEF interest rates, effective February 1, 2010:
  - o Savings account reduced from 2.25% to 2.0%
  - o One-year promissory note reduced from 3.25% to 3.0%
  - o Three-year promissory note reduced from 3.75% to 3.5%
  - o Five-year promissory note reduced from 4.25% to 4.0%
- Approved expanding District Liaison tasks to include acting as the congregation's CEF

Representative where there is not already a CEF Representative in the congregation.

- Approved the amended constitutions of two Ontario churches, Good Shepherd Lutheran (London) and Faith Lutheran (Dunnville).
- Encouraged congregations to consider contacting East District archivist Carol Nagel to discuss documents that may become part of the East District archives. She has been actively preserving a record of our collective history.
- Decided to reinforce the annual distribution of congregational



The East District's 2009-12 board includes (l-r): Paul Schultz, Rev. Paul Zabel (president), Naomi Klages, Paul Otterman, Lois Griffin, Rev. David Bode (chairman and 1st vice-president), Rev. Warren Hamp and Reg Tiegs. Absent from the photo: Rev. Ron Mohr (2nd vice-president) and treasurer Ray Taylor.

officer forms and Delegate/Liaison appointment forms, even if there may be an overlap. The delegate is the congregation's "proxy" vote in compliance with both the Canada Corporation Act and Lutheran Church-Canada, East District convention resolution 09-2-7.

*Reg Tiegs, District Secretary*

## Lutherans carry Olympic torch in Ontario

**PORT ELGIN, Ont.** - Steven Roth, a member of Messiah Lutheran Church in Waterloo, carried the 2010 Olympic torch in the town of Port Elgin on December 28, 2009. Steven is a Grade 11 student at Bluevale Collegiate institute in Waterloo. He works at Chicopee Ski resort and enjoys snowboarding with a passion.

*Richard Roth,  
Messiah Lutheran Church, Kitchener.*



Steven Roth carries the Olympic torch.

**KITCHENER, Ont.** - Another East District torchbearer, Carol Wilkinson, a member of Faith Lutheran Church in London, writes, "I was very blessed on December 27, 2009 to participate in the Olympic Torch relay in Kitchener Ontario and to have over 40

friends and family cheering me on. "Encouraged to share 'our story' with other torchbearers, I shared how blessed I am to be a Canadian, and how much I love this country and how my love of sports and the Olympics came from my father—all those Saturday and Sunday afternoons watching Jim McKay on Wild World of Sports!

"I also was able to be in Vancouver during the Olympics as one of the



Carol Wilkinson

20,000 volunteers dressed in blue (or smurfs as we were called). My husband George represented the London Police Service as one of the 7000 police officers from across Canada who provided security in both Vancouver and Whistler. Despite the many long hours—what a blast to be in Whistler for a month.

*Carol Wilkinson,  
Faith Lutheran Church, London*

## Lutherans, Muslims, Jews discuss challenges

**ST. CATHARINES, Ont.** - It's challenging to be a "fool" in the eyes of a secular society, believing in an ultimate truth in an age of postmodernism, says Andrew Korchok, a member of Brock University's Lutheran Student Fellowship (LSF).

Korchok, who attends Trinity Lutheran Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, made those comments during an on-campus multi-faith fair at Brock, Wednesday, February 3.

The event gave students the chance to discuss the benefits and challenges of being a person of faith on a secular university campus.

Also attending the fair were members of the Jewish Student Association, Muslim Student Association, the Student Christian



At the Lutheran info table (l-r): frequent Lutheran Student Fellowship guest Michael Anastasiou, seminarian Oleg Schewtschenko, Andrew Korchok, and Margaret Stephenson.

Movement, and other Christian clubs.

Korchok drew his comments from 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23 and a weekly Bible study held Monday nights in the lounge of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, located on the Brock campus.

He also confessed that this ultimate truth is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on the cross for the sins of the world and that salvation is found only in Him.

Margaret Stephenson, of Our Saviour Lutheran Church, Niagara Falls, said her faith in this Saviour gave her complete confidence in the forgiveness of sins, freeing her to receive higher education as a blessing from

God and an opportunity to live out her life under His grace.

During the fair, students marked areas of agreement where cooperation can exist, as well as areas of danger to their faiths.

An LSF booth attracted many who were interested in the teachings

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Lutherans, Muslims, Jews continued of the Lutheran church and kept Rev. Kurt Lantz, university chaplain, busy answering questions about justification, Mary, icons, baptism, and abortion.

Students interested in further discussion were invited to the LSF Bible study, Sunday services at Resurrection Lutheran Church near the campus, and daily chapel at the seminary.

The LSF Monday night Bible study is led by Lantz and usually draws eight to 12 students of different

Christian backgrounds, including Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal, and Syrian Orthodox.

For more information, contact Pastor Lantz at [klantz@brocku.ca](mailto:klantz@brocku.ca) or the Facebook page of Lutheran Student Fellowship, Brock University and Niagara College.

*From a report by Rev. Kurt Lantz, Resurrection, St. Catharines and campus chaplain, Brock University*

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

## APB for confirmands

**WATERLOO, Ont.** - Redeemer Lutheran Church will host a confirmation reunion Sunday, May 16 as part of its 75th anniversary celebrations. Church workers, members and friends—all are invited to the 10 a.m. service with guest pastor Rev. Gerald Scholz, followed by a luncheon at the church. For more information or to RSVP, call the church office at 519-745-5027. Come renew old friendships and join in the memories.

*Jane Ryan, Redeemer, Waterloo*



### From the President

#### “This Is Mine!”

*“As your days, so shall your strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25 ESV).*

The setting is Afghanistan, the eastern part of the country. To reach it, you travel through old settlements bombed out by recent efforts to drive Al Qaeda and the Taliban out of the region. Destruction stretches all around. But in contrast it pulses with the activity of a people with a will to rebuild.

A traveller stood in a bombed village one day where not a wall of any home was left standing. Nearby, another settlement was going up to take its place. Walking through the rubble, the stranger heard whistling and suddenly saw a young man, about 30 years old, picking up some sticks and stones. The young man was gathering fragments, because he was one of the settlers helping rebuild the village.

He told the traveller that for much of his life he had lived in exile, the victim of persecution. Some nights he was even afraid to go to sleep for fear that his life would be taken.

Now he found himself back in his homeland, a land of little material wealth, but with a strange song in his heart. The traveller asked him how he could be so happy—he seemed to have so little to be thankful for. He smiled, then pointed to the barren ground as he said, “This is mine!” Only then could the traveller understand the deep feelings in this man’s heart. So what if he had to sleep on the hard ground with only a tent over his head? That mattered little, for he had the assurance of knowing he was secure at home and no longer had to live in fear.

Whenever I think of this incident, which I read about a number of years ago in a news magazine in a

hospital waiting room, I am reminded of how much we Christians have to be thankful for. Perhaps we do not have as many material blessings as we may desire. But think of the security! Our faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior from sin is built on the Rock of Ages. Christ died for each one of us, and we can point to the cross as our foundation stone and say, “This is mine!”

For me, one of the highlights of worshipping during the season of Lent is the opportunity to revisit, through the pages of Scripture, places where the passion and resurrection of our Lord took place:

- The Upper Room, where our Lord instituted His Holy Supper
- The Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was tempted to turn away from going to the cross to die there for our sins
- The High Priest’s Palace, where Jesus was put on trial and the verdict rendered that He had blasphemed God by claiming to be the Son of God and Messiah of the world
- Pilate’s Court, where the Governor delivered Jesus up to be crucified
- The Hill of Calvary, where Jesus actually suffered and died for our sins
- The Empty Tomb, where we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord that guarantees our own resurrection from the dead

As I visited these places during the season of Lent, I was reminded and assured of the place God has provided for me, the place built on the foundation stone of our Lord Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross for our sins.

My prayer is that you too will make use of all the opportunities you have to visit and revisit these places in Scripture. And that you will be able to say, like the young man in Afghanistan who patiently picked up sticks and stones, “This is mine!”

*Rev. Paul Zabel*

## Historic St. Paul's celebrates across the generations

**KITCHENER, Ont.** - A frigid morning with a brisk wind blowing didn't deter members of Historic St. Paul's Lutheran Church as they began celebrating their 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary January 3 with a procession along the east side of the church to the original entrance of the 120-year-old church building.

Two members cut a red ribbon stretched across the door as Rev. Mark Hartburg invoked the blessing of our triune God. The first ribbon-cutter, Ralph Westfall, had been baptized by Rev. William Boese, who served as president of the Canada District from 1908 to 1918. Completing the task was Miriam Sokvitne, the congregation's oldest member. Miriam, who days later turned 97, is a great-great-granddaughter of pioneer Joseph Schneider, from whom the church property was purchased for "seven pounds, ten shillings lawful money of Upper Canada" in 1834.

Local dignitaries also joined the procession, including Kitchener's mayor Carl Zehr and MPP Elizabeth Witmer, as well as guest preacher Rev. Dr. Kenneth Voegel (Our Saviour, London, Ont.) who is a "son of a son" of the congregation (through his father, the late Rev. Hermann Voegel). The *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* and CTV both covered the event.

Emphasizing the generational continuity, throughout 2010 the congregation plans a number of special services led by the sons of former pastors:

- Palm Sunday, March 28—Rev.

Richard Eissfeldt of Florida (son of Rev. Arthur Eissfeldt, 1943-64) preaches.

- Seminary Sunday, September 19—Rev. Dr. Thomas Winger, Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary's acting president (son of Rev. Dr. Roger Winger, 1978-91) preaches.
- Reformation Sunday, October 31—Rev. Dr. Thomas Korcok (son of the late Rev. John Korcok, 1964-78) preaches.

A series of Sunday evening lectures, sponsored by the Rockel Lecture Fund, began on February 28 with Dr. Emil Silvestru of Creation Ministries International, who spoke on "The Darwin Delusion" in conjunction with screening a new film, *Darwin: The Voyage That Shook the World*. On May 2, Dr. James Lamb, executive director of Lutherans for Life, presents "Lord of Life or God of Death?" TV host and newspaper columnist Michael Coren speaks on September 19. Q-and-A time and light refreshments follow each lecture.

On the last weekend of May, Historic St. Paul's hosts a confirmation reunion and open house (2-5 p.m., Saturday, May 29), with old photos and other archives on display, including period quilts. An anniversary book and cookbook



At the opening procession (l-r): chairman and crucifer Maurice Wathke, guest preacher Rev. Dr. Kenneth Voegel, Rev. Mark Hartburg and Miriam Sokvitne.

(with covers by a local watercolour artist, the late Peter Goetz) will be available for purchase.

On Sunday, May 30 at 3 p.m., LCC president Rev. Robert Bugbee serves as guest preacher, with reception following. A choir of current and former members, joined by organ, brass, handbells and timpani, accompanies the service. Those wishing to take part in these festival events may RSVP Doris Schaeffer ([dorisschaeffer@rogers.com](mailto:dorisschaeffer@rogers.com), 519-893-8328).

The congregation thanks the Lord for the outpouring of His grace throughout these many decades, and seeks His blessing as they carry out the anniversary-year motto: "Telling another generation" (Psalm 145:4).

*Rev. Mark Hartburg, pastor,  
Historic St. Paul's, Kitchener*

## Son of congregation returns

**BARRIE, Ont.** - Seminarian James Prophet, in his second year at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, brought the good news of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to his home congregation December 27.

At the combined Loving Saviour/ Good Shepherd worship service, held at Good Shepherd, members found



Seminarian James Prophet

it a blessing to have one of their own—who had been raised in the congregation as a child—preach the Word of God. "And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news' " (Romans 10:15).

*Rev. Stephen Omeregje, Good Shepherd, Barrie*

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

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Next deadline:  
May 7, 2009