

A twenty-year impact on the church continues

KELOWNA, B.C. - In 1988, Joel Haberstock, Paul Mercier, David Liefertz and Gary Brucker formed The Crew to play at the first Lutheran Church-Canada Youth Gathering. At that time, Brucker says he thought they would play together as a group for a year. Last year, they played their 20th anniversary tour. Entitled "Father of All" Tour, the group travelled across Western Canada in May and June, then continued in November with concerts in Ontario and the US.

Yet, the influence of The CREW goes well beyond tours, concerts and CDs. More than 100 other people have followed in their musical footsteps since they helped establish CREW Ministries in 1994.

"We have repeatedly seen how God somehow takes our gifts and efforts and does some cool things with them," says Gary Brucker, a member of The CREW who has also served on the CREW Ministries board since its inception.

CREW Ministries expanded on the group's performance-based ministry music, humour and drama to share God's message of the saving love of Jesus Christ. Each year, the organization recruits, trains and sends teams of musicians across the country. So far, the organization has launched more than 30 teams. Some of those teams record CDs through another CREW offshoot - CREW Music others have launched their own music careers as a result of their CREW Ministries training.



The CREW, David Liefertz, Paul Mercier, Joel Haberstock and Gary Brucker, perform at Grace, Saskatoon.

"It is amazing to us to see how God has used CREW Ministries to use the gifts of over 100 youth and young adults since 1994 on our full-time and summer teams. The impact on these individuals and on those whose lives they have touched is a loaves and fishes kind of thing," says Brucker. A number of former CREW Ministries' team members now serve in full time church work.

Kristin Kihn is currently part of *Redefined*, CREW Ministries' current full-time team. She took a year off her studies at Concordia University College of Alberta to join. Although being a member of a full-time CREW Ministries team means putting your life

on hold, living out of a suitcase and staying in other people's houses for \$100 a week, Kihn has no regrets.

"I believe that music is an essential part of the worship experience and I'm so happy to have this year with CREW

[Ministries] to experience all different flavours of music," Kihn admits.

Kihn says she values the close friendships that develop among the group members and the opportunity to grow personally and spiritually during the year on the road.

The music of the CREW Ministries teams also unites their audiences, says Rev. Jim Schnarr, pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Hamilton, who has seen The CREW play more times than he can count.

"CREW Ministries gives us a forum to meet together with every age group and have fun as Christians," he says. "These gatherings go far beyond a 'concert' atmosphere by drawing the assembly into actively participating."

What's next for The CREW? "We have joked that it will be funny to be touring with walkers when we're 80," says Brucker. "We're not sure what God has in store for The CREW or for CREW Ministries. We just want to continue to be open to His leading."

CREW Ministries is now auditioning for 2009 summer teams. For more information go to www.crewministries.ca

Lisa Baldock



Current CREW Ministries team *Redefined*. Back: Samantha Ross, B.C.; Kaila Sillman, Thunder Bay, Ont. Front: Eric Moffett, Kitchener, Ont.; Kristin Kihn, Lamont, Alta.

Holiday school fire creates challenges

EDMONTON - Sometime during the early morning of December 29 a fire started in the furnace room of the gym at Faith Lutheran School. Quick response from the fire department limited the spread of the flames, but smoke and water damage extended to the school library and sports equipment room. Soot and carbon deposited throughout the school via heating ducts required a complete cleanup of all surfaces and materials, and air scrubbers with HEPA filters brought into each room to ensure air-quality standards. The fire also damaged the roof, and firemen removed a section to fight the flames.

Working with the insurance company, school administrators created an action plan to address damage and repairs. A local cleaning and disaster restoration company managed a complete cleanup of classroom areas within five days, enabling the school to reopen January 6. The gym wing of the school will undergo a full cleanup and repairs, and should be ready to reopen by the end of February.

The full extent of damage requires replacing four furnaces, the hot-water heater, all library



Quick work by cleaning and restoration crews meant classes were only delayed by one day

books, library computers, bulletin-board materials, and all sports equipment (with the exception of metal standards and large gymnastic equipment). Students and staff are thankful for the offers of help extended by staff at Concordia High School and by next-door neighbour St. Nicholas Catholic Junior High School.

“Offers of help are much appreciated,” says Faith principal Ken Albinger. “Naturally there is going to be a major cost to the school, as both our contents and building insurance policies have a substantial deductible, which

we will have to meet out of our very limited income revenues.”

Albinger noted that as of now the school is not accepting donations of sporting goods, new or used books for the library until all repairs and rooms have been reopened. He asked the LCC at large for continued support through prayer. “We would also like to encourage members of our church in the Edmonton area to consider sending their children to Faith, or to join the Edmonton Lutheran School Society to actively support the ongoing development of Lutheran schooling in our

city.”

When staff and students began their first day back with a chapel service—a day late—school chaplain, Pastor Rich Docekal (All Saints, Edmonton), offered thanks that there were not injuries as a result of the fire and that those involved with the cleanup have been so helpful. The school’s program will continue with only minor disruptions to the education of the students.

Inquiries and words of encouragement may be sent to Faith Lutheran School, 11515-36 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5W 2A9, e-mail faithschool@shaw.ca.

High school team enjoys success

EDMONTON - Due to its recent success, the Thunder Basketball Team at Concordia High School has returned—for the second year in a row—to being ranked in the Top 15 2A schools in the province! Including their hosted tournament (Dec. 12-13), the Thunder is currently on an eight-game winning streak, capped off by winning a 3A schools’ tournament in early January.



In its first game after Christmas break Concordia was victorious over New Sarepta (65-16). Then, the following weekend the team entered a 3A tournament in Beaumont and, behind the strong leadership of co-captains Mike Brodie and Aaron

Kruse and the complement of Jack Panas, Concordia Thunder won the tournament!

After a two-and-a-half week mid-season break for diploma exams, Concordia heads into the busiest part of the season which includes 15 games between Jan. 29 and Feb. 24. All this begins with a prestigious tournament January 29-31 in Three Hills. League playoffs begin the last week of February leading up to Zone Playoffs March 13-14 in Redwater where hopefully the Thunder will qualify for the provincial championship in Picture Butte, March 19-21.

Keith Kruse

True meaning shines through

ST ALBERT, Alta. - As a parent of King of Kings Christian Preschool I had the pleasure of witnessing the true meaning of Christmas through the eyes of 25 children on Wednesday, December 10. The children sang many songs as well as put a production on called "The ABC's of Christmas". The production had each child tell something about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, using a letter of the alphabet.



Children provide true meaning of Christmas.

It was so beautiful to see so many kids. The children did an amazing job, under the leadership of Mrs. O'Neil and her assistant Mrs. Weitzel.

One can tell much time and effort was put forth to pull off such a beautiful concert. We are blessed to have wonderful leadership teaching our young children. The true meaning of Christmas was definitely there that evening.

Jen Lastwika



From the President

Put a frog in a kettle of cold water, it's said, and if you slowly bring the water to boiling point, the frog won't notice. I don't know how true that is, and it's not something I would recommend trying. Potentially quite messy, it's always fatal for the frog.

I do know that like the frog in the kettle, it is easy for Christians to get used to sin. Abortion—the killing of unborn children—used to evoke a strong reaction and condemnation on the basis of the fifth commandment. Today far too many churches stay silent on the issue. Unmarried couples living together, rare at one time, are in the majority now. Before, such an arrangement was considered adultery. Now pastors attest that the majority of couples who ask to be married are already cohabiting. Until recent years most denominations agreed that homosexuality was clearly a sin and reserved marriage for heterosexual unions. Even that has changed as more and more denominations move toward ordaining homosexuals as pastors and blessing same-sex unions. And gratuitous sex and violence in the media that was considered unthinkable 20 years ago has become commonplace, delivered in high definition to our television sets.

Every Sunday before the confession and absolution in our liturgy, we are encouraged to take a moment for self-examination and reflection on God's Word. I don't know about you, but I barely get started and then it's time to move on to the confession of sins.

The season of Lent will soon be upon us—a time for sober reflection on our lives as individuals and corporately as a church. It is a time to ask if we have become like the proverbial frog in the kettle. Are there sins in our lives with which we have become entirely too comfortable?

As we consider our sinfulness, it is also a time of repentance. St. Paul wrote, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). It's time not only to recognize sin for what it is, but also to turn our backs on it.

But how can sinful people not only recognize their sin but also repent of it and resolve to amend their sinful life? The season of Lent is also a time to focus on the cross. It was there that Jesus secured our redemption by His atoning sacrifice. In our baptism, our sinful natures were nailed to the cross with Jesus. We have died with Christ so that sin is no longer our master. We are not under sin, but under grace.

In 1804 Thomas Kelly wrote the hymn "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted" (LSB 451) based on Isaiah 53:3-5. He understood well the gravity of sin on the one hand and the glory of our redemption on the other:

*Ye who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the
evil great
Here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt
may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the
awful load;
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed, Son of Man
and Son of God.*

*Here we have a firm foundation, here the refuge
of the lost;
Christ, the Rock of our salvation, is the name of
which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, sacrifice to
cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded who on Him
their hope have built.*

Rev. Don Schiemann

Hablamos español in B.C. parish

CHILLIWACK, B.C. - In March 2007, St. Paul's Lutheran Church began ministry to migrant workers. The community sees mostly Mexican farm labourers who come to Canada for a portion of the year.

St. Paul's has an afternoon service, followed by a lunch and then some classes in English. We have averaged about 25 people per week. We run the program from March to about September/October when most of the migrants return to Mexico. We are now getting ready for next March when we will begin again.

At this time we are looking at changing the format by adding a regular Spanish-language Bible class for those who are interested. In addition, we have one of the workers taking some extension courses in Spanish through Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. It provides a lay worker training course, in which he is currently enrolled. When completed he hopes to go on to seminary training.

This ministry was suggested and started by a couple from our church, where the wife is originally from Nicaragua. It has been an exciting venture to see the spiritual growth in the lives of so many of the workers!

High School receives recognition

EDMONTON - Concordia High School (CHS) was one of four schools recognized as charter members of the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta (AISCA). Duane Plantinga, AISCA's executive director, presented principal David Eifert with a framed certificate citing Concordia's 50 years of contribution to the support of independent schools.

At the November 27 dinner marking AISCA's 50th anniversary,

Harvest in Alberta



RED DEER, Alta. - Last Reformation Sunday, October 26, 2008, Rev. Don Hennig and members of Mt. Calvary welcomed 52 new members into God's family of believers.

STAR treatment for students and teachers

EDMONTON - Concordia High School's graduating class of 2008 left a legacy behind with the gift of two StarBoards for classroom use.

What are StarBoards? Described as "interactive electronic whiteboards," they integrate a teacher's computer files and handwritten notes on a tablet screen, projecting the image onto a larger screen for students to see. Instructors can face their students while explaining material, interact with them and check for comprehension. They can also email class notes to a student who is absent, or post the material on StudentsAchieve, an online collaboration system for students, parents, teachers and administrators.

In humanities courses teachers can type in new material as they lecture and highlight important



Teachers Irene Keogh and Amy Lynn discover the features of Concordia High School's new StarBoards.

ideas. Math teachers can post graphs and add notes. Even coaches can use StarBoards to go over specific plays on the court. All in all, these Star Boards are a great addition to the classroom!

Visit the ABC District website at www.lccabc.ca

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

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Minister of Education Dave Hancock shared his reflections on the value of Alberta's 167 independent schools in strengthening the province's education system. Hancock invited students, staff and community members of each school to be involved in the process of continuous improvement.

Grade 12 CHS student Joyce Lee provided piano music during the hospitality hour preceding the banquet.