

How missions happen: making unlikely connections in Québec City

QUÉBEC CITY

- For years the possibility of one day doing Lutheran outreach in Québec City seemed slim. Various ideas put forth remained wispy. Basic elements just never seemed to come together. Either people, money or time was lacking—sometimes all three. A decade or more passed without definitive action. Then suddenly circumstances seemed to cry out *now*.

Rev. Frank Morgret (emeritus) and his wife Nancy decided to move to Old Québec City and communicated with my church, Église Luthérienne de l'Ascension (Montreal), knowing we were the closest LCC congregation. The next year a Malagasy Lutheran woman I'd met, who had just arrived in Montreal from Geneva and come to worship, took a job in Québec City. Then Rev. Harold Ristau became a chaplain at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier, a relatively short drive from Québec City. Since I knew about all three moves, and had been again looking at mission possibilities, I e-mailed everyone to see if they were interested.

"Yes!" came the answer. With regular irregularity the small band began meeting for worship *chez les Morgret* in their home chapel. By this time another Malagasy Lutheran couple said they would join. (Malagasy is the name of the language and people group of Madagascar.) Meanwhile yet another LCC chaplain, Rev. Jason Kouri, arrived to serve at Valcartier...and then there were 15. Another, the Quebec man whom the woman from Geneva had married, eventually also joined.



The Quebec City congregation meets in a former prison, now a library—The Morrin Centre.

When all this was coming together, we applied for—and received—mission seed funds from the East District's 125th anniversary offering. Despite an extensive search, we could find no church in which to meet. But a 19th-century prison (turned private library) announced on its website that it was available for rental. And that is where our monthly 5:00 p.m. Lutheran services now take place. Our grant covers newspaper ads and one year of monthly trips by de l'Ascension pastor/missionaries David Somers and Razafy Razafindrakoto to lead Divine Service. Donations from the local community pay the rent. Although the missionaries are not actually based in Québec City, cell phones with a local number, allow them to respond to inquiries.

In October 2008 Québec City hosted a congress of Francophone nations. The president of Madagascar requested a gathering of Malagasy representatives from across North America and asked to meet with a pastor ministering among the Malagasy diaspora in Québec. Since a man who attends our service is president of the Malagasy Association in Québec, he invited our own Pastor Razafindrakoto—who gladly took the opportunity to distribute

the magazine *Good News* in Malagasy and announce our Lutheran services. (At least 40 Malagasy speakers are LCC congregation members in Québec.) And then there was the Cameroonian family, friends of members in Montreal, who just showed up at the January service.

This outreach venture has proved to be an amazing experiment in the coordination of

elements that, while alone are weak, become strengthened and empowered through cooperation. While the military chaplains cannot be mission workers for congregations, they can assist with services, support the mission, conduct local follow-up calls and help distribute catechisms and catechetical material. Worshipers invite and welcome visitors to further instruction by the pastors.

For the first year, the retired pastor, Rev. Morgret, became the anchor in this rather confusing array of contributing factors. Even though he was not fluent in French, he led the initial French services in creative ways for the greater good.

This varied and sundry gathering allows for one segment of the people of God to be blessed through God's gifts, and provides a meeting place for those who learn of our presence to come and ask questions. And those contacts do come: a call here, an e-mail there, at least once a month from people who have questions. God alone knows where this will lead. While this window of opportunity is open, we will make the proclamation to edify and make known the Grace of our Heavenly Father in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

From a report by Rev. Dr. David Somers, Église Luthérienne de l'Ascension, Montreal

Putting together the pieces at Peace

TILLSONBURG, Ont. - Some 160 people met at the former St. Luke's Lutheran Church February 8 to celebrate Charter Sunday for a new church, Peace Lutheran. Rev. Ron Mohr and East District president, Rev. Allen Maleske led worship services. Dinner and fellowship time followed in the church basement, where President Maleske presented the charter to congregational chairman Carl Ehl. Rev. David Bode, London Circuit counsellor, brought greetings to the group on behalf of circuit churches.

A banner, designed and made by Pastor Ron and Karen Mohr, incorporates the Chi-Rho symbol and a dove into the word *Peace* along with texts from John 14 and Galatians 5. At the potluck dinner those attending assembled a puzzle made up of 45 squares, each with a Bible verse referring to peace. As the solvers put each piece into place, they read the verses aloud.

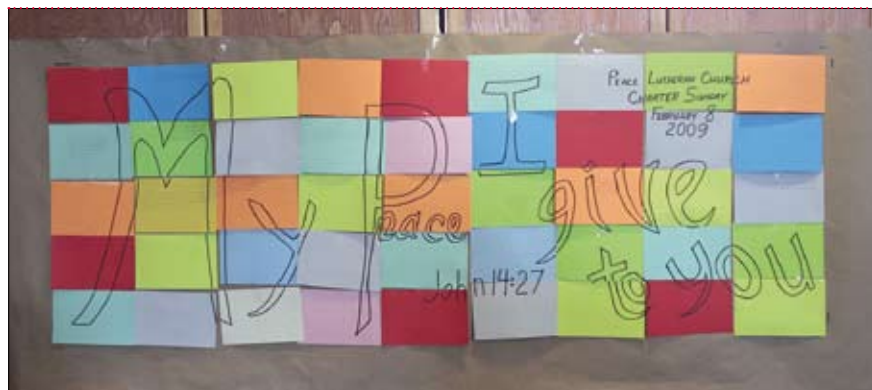
Merger talks between St. Luke's and St. Peter's Rhineland (Delhi, Ont.) began more than a year ago. On January 13, members of

both congregations met to ratify a constitution and choose the name of the new church. They purchased land in Tillsonburg, and this spring will begin building a new facility to accommodate the combined church's nearly 400 members.

Rev. Ron Mohr, Peace Lutheran, Tillsonburg

Right: Chairman Carl Ehl with Rev. Ron Mohr and President Al Maleske in front of Peace Lutheran's new banner and logo. The Ontario church merges the former St. Luke's and St. Peter's.

Below: Members and guests assemble a puzzle banner spelling out *Peace* and read Bible verses related to the name.



Praising the Trinity through art



ST. CATHARINES, Ont. - A mural created by Howard and Lorraine Bogusat of Christ Lutheran Church is on display at First Trinity Lutheran in Buffalo, N.Y. Produced in 2002, the piece depicts 70 diverse figures gazing up at and praising the Trinity, which is highlighted in gold leaf. Lorraine was the main artist and painter while Howard did more of the carving.

"We strove to get all manner of folk into the picture—small, large, black, white, old, young," said Howard. "The small figure at the top left represents a child with leukemia. It was originally pink, but during the mural's creation the pastor and his wife came to see the progress and we pointed out all the features. It turned out they had lost a boy to leukemia some years earlier. We changed the figure to blue and the family added a message on the back before it was mounted."

From a report by Howard Bogusat, Christ Lutheran, St. Catharines

Special invitation to preachers visiting Atlantic Canada!

DARTMOUTH, N.S. - Faith Lutheran Church currently does not have an on-site pastor serving them. But every summer a few pastors take advantage of a special offer, which really helps the congregation.

Any LCC/LCMS pastor willing to lead Divine Service on a Sunday, can stay in the church's small apartment (located in the basement of the church building) for up to a week along with his family.

Faith asks any LCC pastor who may be planning a vacation in Nova Scotia this summer (or at any other time) to consider this

invitation. Apart from the last two Sundays in July and the first two in August, every other date is still available.

For more info, please contact Rev. David Milette (Good Shepherd, Moncton, N.B.) at pastor@goodshepherd.nb.ca or 506-384-9453.

Notice of meeting

The Annual and General Meeting of Lutheran Church-Canada, East District, will take place during the district convention, May 10-13, 2009 at the Holiday Inn, Windsor, Ontario. This meeting will elect officers, receive financial statements, appoint auditors, and consider

such other business as may come before the meeting. All members of the corporation are entitled to be represented at the meeting, in person or by proxy.

*Reginald A. E. Tiegs, secretary,
Lutheran Church-Canada,
East District.*



From the Vice-President

"Do You Know the Pilot?"

“...And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20 NIV).

We've read, seen and heard a lot recently about Chesley B. "Sully" Sullenberger III, the pilot who on January 15 safely landed US Airways Airbus SAS A320 on the Hudson River without serious injuries to any of the other 154 people aboard the plane.

Then-President George W. Bush said, in a statement after the incident: "Laura and I are inspired by the skill and heroism of the flight crew as well as the dedication and selflessness of the emergency responders and volunteers who rescued passengers from the icy waters of the Hudson. We send our thoughts and prayers to all involved in the accident."

Immediately after hearing from her husband, Lorrie Sullenberger reported that the first thing he wanted to convey was: "We're very grateful everyone got off the plane safely!"

In like manner, how many of us have not been touched by the professionalism and humility of this man of few words?

The incident reminds me of an account I once read about a gentleman riding in a plane hit suddenly in midair by a terrible storm. As the plane bucked and tossed, he began talking with the man seated across from him, who wore an officer's uniform. As their

conversation veered from lightning strikes to safe landings, it turned out the uniformed man was a pilot who had spent countless hours in the air, but on this particular flight was simply a passenger. How reassuring were his words when he said: "I've known the man piloting this plane for a number of years. He's one of the very best and I have complete confidence in him."

How often has the prayer come from my lips and yours: "Jesus, Saviour, pilot me over life's tempestuous sea"? How reassuring it is for us to know personally the Pilot of our lives, and also to have such complete confidence in Him. It is only when faith falters that there is room for fear to creep into our lives. For no matter how severe the storms may be, no matter how heavy the burdens or strong the temptations, when Jesus is with us and directing our course and assuring us of His presence, we know we will be safely directed to our destination.

If I'd had to land that plane this past January on the icy Hudson, or pilot any plane through a storm, I'd have been afraid, very afraid. Tragedy might have resulted because of my lack of knowledge in that particular sphere. At many times in our lives also, you and I do not have the power to achieve victory, to conquer a certain obstacle. But we never have to be afraid when we have the confidence that the Master is Captain of our lives, and when we become assured it is His power that will be able to see us through!

Rev. Paul Zabel, First Vice-president

New members welcomed



BARRIE, Ont. - By the grace of God, on January 11, Loving Saviour/Good Shepherd Lutheran Church welcomed 34 new members. Two new members and family (including children) came through transfer, and the rest through adult instruction. The special service ushering the new members into the body of Christ took place at Loving Saviour.

Rev. Steven Omoregie, Loving Saviour/Good Shepherd, Barrie

Exploring doctrinal unity in the East District

Growing out of discussions with pastors in the district and a resolution from our 2006 district convention addressing doctrinal unity, the East District Board of Directors formed a Doctrinal Unity Committee made up of Frank Johnson, Jim Mulligan, Revs. David Bode, Marvin Publitz, Bryan King, Kevin Walrath, Paul Zabel and District President Allen Maleske. The task placed before them was determining how best to promote unity of teaching and practice among the congregations and pastors in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes that make up our district.

Meeting in March 2007, the committee decided that a series of conferences on doctrine and practice could be useful in presenting our historic and official doctrines, as well as the normal and accepted practice that grows out of those doctrines. Guided by President Maleske, the committee determined that four areas deserved special attention, while highlighting the unity of pastors and the people they have been called to serve. We chose the theme Pastor and People Together, with four sub-themes: in Service, in Worship, at the Table and in Missions.

The next hurdle was logistics. Which pastors could give day-long presentations on each topic? Where could we hold a minimum number of conferences per topic while ensuring

accessibility for a maximum number of people?

Clearing the first hurdle, we selected as presenters Rev. Dr. Albin Stanfel (former district president) on Service; Rev. Warren Hamp on Worship; Rev. Dr. Bryan King on the Table (the Lord's Supper); and Rev. David Bode on Missions.

We cleared the next hurdle with the help of congregations in London, Burlington and Ottawa. After the first conference, the committee decided to add a fourth location in the Kitchener/Waterloo area. Thanks to the people of Prince of Peace (Burlington), Faith (London), Redeemer (Waterloo) and St. Luke (Ottawa), whose congregations acted as regional centres, for their hard work and generous spirit.

DVDs of the St. Luke presentations can be obtained from the East District office. Many thanks to Ilene Fortin and Darryll Holland for the hard work they contributed to this project.

With three of the four conferences completed (which amounts to eleven sessions as each topic is given in each regional centre) we look forward to a presentation on our theology and practice of missions, with an emphasis on the work pastors and people do together, which Rev. Bode will present this spring.

Rev. Dr. Bryan King, St. Luke, Ottawa

Please mark your calendars...



April 24-26
Redeemer University College,
Ancaster, Ont.

Registration due March 30

East District Convention
May 10-13

Holiday Inn Select, Windsor,
Ontario

For more information about happenings in the East District this month, visit www.lcceastdistrict.ca/events.htm

Memories needed

KITCHENER - In addition to ongoing special events, Grace Lutheran Church will celebrate its 65th anniversary November 15. Anyone with memories to share of the early years of the church, or names and addresses of former members, please send the info to gracelutheran@bellnet.ca or Grace Lutheran Church, 136 Margaret Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2H 4H9. Phone: 519-742-7431.

Visit the East District website at
www.lcceastdistrict.ca

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

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