

First Christian celebrations for new Canadians

WINDSOR, Ont. - Holidays and special occasions continue to offer wonderful opportunities for cross-cultural outreach. But so do such everyday occasions as sharing a cup of coffee or a ride to class.

A young Hindu woman who visited First Lutheran for the 2008 Easter service was honoured in November with a baby shower. "I prayed to Jesus Christ during the time I was in church to grant my prayers for a second child," she recalled, "and he answered." Forty-two women from every WECLO congregation attended. Rev. Gilvan de Azevedo blessed the couple, whose baby girl was born November 21. They will bring the child to First Lutheran for a blessing during the church service.

English as a second language (ESL) classes remain another excellent outreach tool. Fellow ESL student Sylvia Lindquist of Windsor's Peace Lutheran Church (LCMS, English District) volunteers as a driver and has developed a great relationship with students from the Sikh temple, or *gurdwara*. Sylvia and her husband Cliff visited the *gurdwara* and later invited the Sikh group for coffee at their home, along with Rev. Greg Lutz and other church members. What a wonderful testimony in reaching out and making friends.

As Rev. Lutz spoke about Thanksgiving during one ESL class, students immediately called out for their own get-together. One student listed the reasons: "We've never had a chance of being invited to a Thanksgiving party. Also, we're all one family!" Hurried preparations brought more than 65 friends of



Rev. Gilvan de Azevedo (First Lutheran, Windsor, Ont.) blesses a young couple.



Thanksgiving dinner with new friends.



WECLO ladies attend an Advent function at Faith Lutheran in Troy, Michigan.

WECLO congregations to Peace. Rev. Lutz led devotions and spoke about the grace of God in everyday life and what each of us has to be thankful for. The lesson taken away by all in attendance? Christian love transcends race, gender and religion. "I have a completely different view of Christianity than what I had when I lived in India," said one Sikh visitor. "So many friends—loving and caring."

On the heels of Thanksgiving came Christmastime. At one ESL

class WECLO's lay missionary Javed Khan explained what certain things associated with Christmas mean—trees, lights, Santa Claus, mistletoe and so on. Rev. Lutz then gave a detailed explanation of the real meaning of Christmas and how Christians want to "keep Christ in Christmas."

At the outreach Christmas party, more than 35 students and their families attended as honoured guests. Ladies from WECLO congregations brought food and desserts; volunteers brought gifts; Wayne Patterson from Peace Lutheran did a fine job as Santa. Rev. Mark Hartburg, East District assistant to the president, joined the gathering, along with his wife and daughter. In total more than 72 folks attended. Bible verses from Luke were read in Urdu and Arabic. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful evening.

Last year Javed's wife, Nighat Khan, led a group of WECLO women to an Advent function at Faith Lutheran Church in Troy, Michigan, near Detroit. More than 200 women from various ethnic groups and religions participated in an evening filled with praise, worship, song and stage events. Plans are under way for a similar function in 2009.

*From a report by Javed Khan,
WECLO missionary*

Windsor/Essex County Lutheran Outreach (WECLO) is a joint effort between LCC East District and LCMS English District congregations to reach out, with the guidance of lay missionary Javed Khan, to non-Christians in the Windsor area.

Hammers swinging for new church school

MONCTON, N.B. - While children continue enjoying their daily activities at Kingswood Academy Day Care, their elders pound nails, twist wires and install siding elsewhere—on the Concordia Academy of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, which will house the day care and a new Lutheran school for kindergarten through Grade 8.

With initial plumbing on the new building completed, the siding and wiring work continues; IT infrastructure and insulation have begun. “All in all, we are progressing well, thanks be to God!” the steering committee reports.

Sunday, May 24 is the date set for the new school’s dedication.

Please continue praying for the Lord’s divine guidance in all aspects of the school: contractors and their workers; volunteers; the called principal/teacher; principals from other LCC schools who have volunteered their assistance; the current day-care children, parents and teachers; future students; Good Shepherd’s members, and our supporting group across the district.

*Steering Committee,
Concordia Academy of
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church,
Moncton, N.B.*



Top: Concordia Academy of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Moncton, N.B. takes shape. Bottom: Children at Kingswood Academy Day Care enjoy activities as they await their new school.

Mixing it up for children in Haiti



(Back, l-r): Derek Wylie, Johanna Burrows, Kurt Schmidt, Jacob Rinas, Gatluak Gatluak, Rebecca Smyth, Sarah Smyth, leaders Pat Petruccelli and Catherine Schnarr. (Front, l-r): Sunday Gatluak, Sophia Rinas, Nicole Wylie, Sarah Price, Alex Newbold, Brenna Petruccelli, Sherman Macklin (Haiti Lutheran Mission Society). (Others, not shown, who helped: Lucas Petruccelli, Taylor and Erica Rasmussen.)

HAMILTON, Ont. - The youth of Pilgrim Lutheran Church had a great time measuring out flour, baking soda, chocolate chips and other goodies, filling and selling jars of dry ingredients for chocolate chip cookies and cranberry cornmeal loaf at Christmastime. Together with the congregation, they raised \$500 toward *Feed the Kids: Haiti Lutheran Mission*, a sum presented to Sherman Macklin from the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, Sunday, February 1.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Burlington, Ont.) and June Caskey helped start the project and also donated ingredients.

Rev. Jim Schnarr, Pilgrim, Hamilton, Ont.

Forty-five year dividend

TORONTO - After 45 years of outstanding service, John Samiec retires this year as treasurer of St. John's Polish Evangelical Lutheran Church. A member of the church council since 1954—the year of St. John's founding—John became treasurer in 1964.

Church secretary Piotr Gajer said St. John's is "very grateful for his 45 years of outstanding volunteerism, his exceptionally high standard of work, and his willingness to help anyone."

Born in the south of Poland in 1926, John was one of the youngest soldiers in the Second World War. The end of the war found him in Italy,

where he met a Polish pastor, the late Helmut Pruefer. Years later Rev. Pruefer, as pastor of St. John's in Toronto, blessed the marriage of John and Hilda Samiec.

May God bless you, John, for your many years of commitment and service to our Lord.

From a report by Piotr Gajer, St. John's Polish Evangelical, Toronto



John Samiec

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 President

He died for you and me!

It is not pleasant to watch someone die—particularly if that someone is dear to you.

Difficult and unpleasant as it is, we must nevertheless take a long, hard look at Jesus' death, because we are involved. You see—as we have heard so many times before during the Lenten season—"He died for you and me."

The gospel writer John portrays Jesus' crucifixion in brief declarative phrases: "So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him..." (John 19:17-18 ESV). John's gospel is unique in its reporting of the scene; in the emphasis and interpretation he makes of the sign placed above His head on the cross. The inscription, at Pilate's order, read: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19).

Johann Sebastian Bach includes a similar point of reflection on the name of Jesus in his St. John Passion. Thinking about the name of Jesus in the context of the cross, Bach has the chorus sing as if it was the confessional response of believers:

In the depths of my heart,
Your name and cross,
Shine at all times and in every hour.
Because of these I can be happy.
Let this picture appear to me
As comfort in my time of stress,
As you, Lord Christ, so freely
Have sacrificed your life for me.

In the gospel, John's final quotation from the cross is a declaration that clearly shows Jesus has completed His ministry: "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30).

Jesus passed the test of His obedience; the atoning work for fallen man was done; death will henceforth be swallowed up by life, and the estrangement of man with God healed by forgiveness. It is finished! You and I are involved in this because "He died for you and me."

Again, Bach in his St. John Passion finds a joyous application:

My true Saviour, let me ask you,
Exalted in your crucifixion,
You yourself have said: "It is finished!"
Have I been made free from death,
Inherited the kingdom of heaven?
Is the whole world redeemed because of this?
In your suffering
You can, indeed, say nothing.
But look, you bow your head
And answer silently: Yes!...
It is finished!
O comfort for sick souls;
The night of mourning
Atones for me in your last hour;
The lion of Judah triumphs with power
And wins the battle.
It is finished!

Rev. Al Maleske

Making friends is key to outreach

HAMILTON, Ont. - Missionary Cynthia Khan led an evangelism workshop, "How to Reach Out," on Saturday, January 17 for 37 members of Hamilton Circuit congregations. Held at Redeemer Lutheran Church (Rev. Jim Anderson), the event focused on Cynthia's personal experiences which she used examples of how to reach our neighbours, particularly Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.

She suggested that when trying to reach people, whether from immigrant communities or not, start with everyday actions:

1. Talk to them. Sometimes we're shy about approaching someone new. But if you chat with them about everyday things, you might be surprised at how much you have in common. Sometimes immigrants feel we are arrogant. By breaking the ice with simple conversation, we can open doors in talking to them about our faith.
2. Serve them. Particularly among Muslims, any humble service meets with deep wonder and respect. This will open doors to

conversations about our Servant Saviour and the motivation behind our actions.

3. When answering their questions about Christianity, be honest and don't be afraid of not knowing all the answers.
4. Remember: God is in control. When we become discouraged by a lack of immediate results, remember that God knows His plans for the Kingdom and how your efforts and faithfulness fit into that plan.

As Canadians adjust to new technology, Cynthia noted God is using it to reach into restrictive countries. North American immigrants are successfully sharing their faith with families back home using phones and e-mail where owning or reading Christian literature is illegal.

Cynthia and her husband, born into Christian homes in Pakistan, came to know about the Lutheran church through a work friend in Saudi Arabia. With greater restrictions against practising Christianity in Saudi Arabia, they felt led to work as missionaries in North America, becoming the first Asian missionaries with People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO).

Kathy Birkett,

Hamilton Intercultural Support Group

An evening of music marks Friday the 13th



Tara Lyn Hart sings at a fund raiser for the St. Catharines seminary.

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. - Seminary wife and country-music star Tara Lyn Hart helped make Friday the 13th "Lucky in Love" for friends of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary (CLTS) as 210 guests enjoyed a fund-raising evening of fine food and song at Hernder Estate winery in West St. Catharines.

Hart—a Juno nominee, Canadian Country Music Award winner and wife of CLTS student Perry Hart—shone in her dual role. She began singing at age 5 and started recording for Sony Music at 17; she's performed at the Grand Ole Opry and with The CREW. At Hernder's Hal Draper, an accomplished musician and

songwriter from Oshawa, Ontario, played backup.

Also on the bill were award-winning musician Paul Hoerd, a member of Grace (St. Catharines), who performs locally at the Americana Hotel in Niagara Falls; Greg Palmer, a CLTS MDiv student and organist at Grace with training in classical and jazz guitar; and John Rapp, nearing the end of his seminary studies, who majored in voice at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo and toured with CREW Ministries for two years.

What a talented group of individuals, and what a fun evening!

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Visit the East District website at
www.lceastdistrict.ca

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

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