



# "Celebrations"

*A publication of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories*

*Spring 2006*

## ***In this issue...***

- ✓ Bishop's Report.....page 1
- ✓ Around the Synod
  - World Mission Festival
  - Synod Convention.....page 2
- ✓ Lutheran Outdoor Ministry
  - "To Serve & To Grow".....page 2
  - "God in the Wilderness".....page 3
  - Camp contact Information....page 3
- ✓ Study Conference 2006.....page 5
- ✓ Schartner Benefit, "A Testament Of Love and Support".....page 6
- ✓ Bawlf Lutheran Triplets .....page 7
- ✓ Highwood's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.....page 7
- ✓ A Lutheran Ski Trip.....page 8

## **Follow Jesus Out of the Harbour**

"Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!" rings out as we celebrate Easter once again. In a world filled with the bad news of war, violence of all kinds, tensions between ethnic and religious groups, we have good news to share. God has not given up on this world. God still loves it enough to come in the person of Jesus to absorb all the hate and violence that we can throw at each other and put it to death on the cross. That powerful message is delivered through our Holy Week services and reminds us that God is not finished working in this world yet.

My favourite picture of the church is that of a racing sailboat. These boats are designed for storms, and need the power of the wind to

function as they are designed. They are absolutely useless moored in a quiet harbour somewhere. The church is designed for storms, whether we like it or not. Jesus keeps leading us out of our safe places into the midst of the world's conflicts. We may not be able to fix much personally, but we are the presence of the risen Christ wherever we are called and sent, and the Holy Spirit works through us to create a new reality.

We are called to be communities of healing in each of our congregations as we gather weekly around the Word and Sacraments. Baptized into Christ and nourished with his body and blood, we are "little Christs" to each other. This means that our work of reconciliation begins at home. We are called to model conflict resolution according to Matthew 18, showing our neighbours a more effective way of working through conflict than revenge and violence. We are to see one another as persons for whom Christ died, making it very difficult for us to harbour mean thoughts about one another. As we practice this at home, we are enabled to see the whole world differently: those folks who seem so different from us are also people for whom Christ died. Our church camps this summer will be places where our children, youth, and families will be able to practice reaching out in the name of Jesus to people we do not know well.



As we absorb all the bad news of the world around us, rather than feeling afraid, or small, or weak, or helpless, we are called by Jesus to follow him into the thick of things. We participate in the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. We reach out to those affected by war, disease, or natural disasters. We are not afraid to accompany people in their search for justice and peace. We share freely of all the gifts God has so abundantly poured out on us. We can go in person through the various mission programs of our church, or we can support others through worldwide organizations that depend upon the willing participation of followers of Jesus, like Canadian Lutheran World Relief.

God grant us courage to follow Jesus out of our safe harbours into the world around us, sharing in word and deed the Good News of Jesus' resurrection. May our ELCIC continue to become a church in mission for others as we bring hope to our hurting world. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! I wish all of you a joyous Easter Season.

In Christ,

+Stephen P. Kristenson, Bishop

## **Around the Synod**

### **World Mission Festival**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, you are invited to "Gathered for the Sake of Mission" at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd (40 Holmes Street, Red Deer). This World Mission Festival will feature Pastor Charles and Anita Jackson (Kenya, Africa), Bonnie Wepler (Papua New Guinea), Leah Ganes (Afghanistan), Diane Kilbourn (member of Mission to Colombia Team), Kelvin Krieger (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada), and our own Bishop Steve Kristenson. For more information, contact the synod office at 780.439.2636.

### **Synod Convention**

Under the theme "Jesus Calls Us", the synod will meet at the Capri Centre in Red Deer from June 8-11, 2006. For more information, contact the synod office at 780.439.2636.



**LOMAN**  
Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Alberta and the North

The camps participating in Lutheran

Outdoor Ministries in Alberta and the North (LOMAN) view outdoor ministry as an opportunity to provide programs of Christian education, worship, fellowship and recreation to a wide variety of people. LOMAN facilities operate as places of retreat from the stress and pressures of life. They provide both a point of entry into a life of Christian faith, as well as an opportunity for rejuvenation.

### **To Serve and To Grow**

For me, Camp Kuriakos was little more than a name mentioned at Synod functions or appearing on promotional brochures. But in 2000, Camp Director Pastor David Larsen asked my husband,



Brad, about serving as a resource pastor for a week. Not being much for camp, Brad politely declined. However, upon hearing of the offer, I immediately accepted on behalf of my family.

We've now served as resource pastor and family for six years. For us, it's not just spending a week sharing Jesus with ninety 8 to 11 year-old campers, some of whom may have never heard the Gospel. It's also a chance to enjoy the outstanding young people who work as counsellors and staff. It's not easy spending 23 hours a day, 5 1/2 days a week with campers. We encourage them in

their work and faith, through conversation and prayer. We also have the gift of receiving from God through the campers, staff and beautiful surroundings.

Our congregation, Nazareth Lutheran in Standard, has a long history of supporting the camp. We've been a part of confirmation retreats since they were offered and have sent many SITs and counsellors. Our past and present members can be found in camp photos. Wanting to share that experience, Nazareth annually contributes to the "Campership Fund" that subsidizes campers who otherwise couldn't afford to attend. Supporting the camp through finances, groceries, quilts and staff, is one way our church shares the love of Christ with others beyond the borders of our village.



For me, my family and congregation, Camp Kuriakos is an important part of our life in Christ, as it provides us the chance to serve and grow in the knowledge and love of God and to help others do so as well.

- By Manny Everett

### God in the Wilderness

In my four summers of camp ministry, my last summer at Wilderness Ranch was very different from the first three, at other Alberta camps. Gone were the pleasant amenities, such as cafeteria food, electricity, swimming pools, and heated buildings. But despite sleeping in canvas tents, cooking over a fire, no showers, being outside all day, and riding horses; something was definitely special about the Ranch. It is something that you can't quite put your finger on and that one must experience to know.



The experience of God at the Ranch is a little like Aslan from the Chronicles of Narnia. Aslan is not a tame Lion, but a good Lion. Like Aslan, the God we know at the Ranch is encountered in the wildness and beauty of the nature in which we live for the week. There are dangers around us but safety in God and in community.

Wilderness Ranch changes people. Kids who have never been trusted with responsibility care for a horse for a week. Many campers have never been away from home or spent much time away from the city. Many have never experienced a lifestyle where each person must contribute to survive. By experiencing God in raw nature, the Ranch tells the story of Christ and the Gospel, and tells the story of the Gospel in our lives.

- By Erik Parker



For more information about the camps of LOMAN or to register, contact the camps directly.

Camp Kuriakos (on Sylvan Lake, central Alberta)

Rev. David E. Larsen or Laureen Wray  
403.748.3927 (office), 403.746.2702 (camp)  
[www.kuriakos.ab.ca](http://www.kuriakos.ab.ca)

Mulhurst Lutheran Camp (on Pigeon Lake, central Alberta)

David Bragg  
780.389.2174  
[www.mulhurstlutherancamp.ca](http://www.mulhurstlutherancamp.ca)

Hastings Lake Lutheran Bible Camp (half hour drive east of Edmonton)

780.662.2557  
[www.hastingslake.com](http://www.hastingslake.com)

Wilderness Ranch (two base camps – 50 km west of Claresholm or 25 km north of Crowsnest Pass highway)

Doug Rawling  
403.625.3403  
[www.wildernessranch.ab.ca](http://www.wildernessranch.ab.ca)

Braeburn Lake Christian Camp (87 km north of Whitehorse)

867.668.4079 (Trinity Lutheran Church, Whitehorse)  
867.393.5011 (camp)

Peace Lutheran Bible Camp (Peace country, north-west of Grand Prairie)

Rev. Don Bolstad  
780.532.4978  
They are undergoing renovations and upgrades and will not be running camps this summer.

Living Hope Camp Association (at Deer Valley Meadows Camp, between Stettler and Red Deer)

Dean Scrivens  
403.783.8377

## Study Conference 2006

Our synod's annual Pastors and Lay Church Workers Study Conference took place in Canmore, Feb 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>. Those attending enjoyed some time of learning, discussion, spiritual rejuvenation, rest and relaxation. This year, we welcomed a number of people from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, including fifteen seminary students, professor Dr. Gordon Jensen, and new president Dr. Kevin Ogilvie.



Keynote speaker, Dr. Harry Maier, gave an engaging description of the Roman Imperial society



in which the apostle Paul lived and evangelized. He explained how Paul used the societal structure of his time to his advantage, converting many people to Jesus Christ in a very short time. By converting the prosperous trades people at the top of Roman households, each of which included many slaves and business associates, Paul had access to everyone under them. Paul put a complete counter spin on the Roman philosophy. Dr. Maier explained how the house churches of Paul's day gained status based on their apostolic pedigree of who

converted them, similar to our present day denominations. Paul urged them not to boast of their apostolic pedigree but of their service to the Lord. Dr. Maier stressed that Paul says you don't get honor by status. You get honor by rejecting status. Dr. Maier posed the question, "How do we use the institutions of the world to preach the Gospel in a way that builds people up and doesn't tear them down?" We live in a contemporary society that worships capitalism, yet we are called to give up everything to follow Christ. How do we live with that dichotomy? We too live in a paradox, like Paul.



Bishop Stephen Kristenson spoke at the "Bishop's Hour" one evening. In June, our synod will be electing a new bishop, as Bishop Steve has indicated he will not continue as Bishop of our synod. He conducted an "Exit Interview", answering questions used in this type of interview with pastors in our synod. He noted the technology changes since he first began as Bishop. Twelve years ago, there was no email at the synod office and now the computers are all networked together. His greatest joy was visiting individual

congregations. It took six years to visit every congregation in our synod. One of his frustrations was trying to connect the seminary in Saskatoon with our synod. Bishop Steve encouraged our



synod by saying, “The sky is the limit. You decide. You can do whatever you want to do. There is literally nothing you can’t do.” We are one of the most resourced synods in Canada. If we wanted to, just imagine what we could do.

Another evening at the study conference, National Bishop Ray Schultz spoke. Bishop Ray gave thanks for the money that has been donated over the past year or two to GHDA, CLWR

and the various special disaster funds. He spoke on the theme of our national church, “To be a church in mission for others.” Bishop Ray encouraged us to work for others and serve God in celebration of our differences.

Many thanks to the organizing committee, the conference chaplains and anyone else involved in the study conference. We know you worked hard to plan yet another fabulous event!



## A Testament of Love and Support



“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.” (1 Corinthians 12:26) On March 10<sup>th</sup>, a beautiful expression of this verse was demonstrated at St. John Lutheran Church in Calgary. Like so many others among us, Rev. Earle Schartner is battling cancer. Praying for Pastor Earle, Shirley and their family is essential. The most important gift we can give is prayer. However, people wondered if there was anything else they could do to help. So often, we watch helplessly from a distance, not wanting to intrude. Some people prefer their privacy, which we must respect. However, a long term illness financially and emotionally impacts a person and their family in such dramatic ways. Life becomes a struggle. How can we show love and support for people living with cancer and other illnesses? In this case, people found a way. The South West Conference Clergy Cluster decided to ask Pastor Earle if they could sponsor a benefit evening for he and his wife, Shirley. Pastor Earle’s humble reaction was to decline the offer. But then, Pastor Arnold Alksne told him, “Just let the people love you.”

And by the grace of God, that is exactly what happened.

St. John Lutheran Church was packed that Friday evening with over 300 family, friends and colleagues of Pastor Earle and Shirley. With pizza, salad, drinks, sweets and good conversation, there was fellowship. A free will offering covered the cost of the food, with any extra going to Pastor Earle and Shirley. A silent auction of donated items provided another way to financially support them. After the meal, the gathering moved to the sanctuary. Pastor Earle sat in a place

of honour, in a comfortable Lazy Boy arm chair that sat in front of the first row of pews. Over the next several hours, over 20 acts entertained everyone. There were full choirs, small singing groups and soloists. There was laughter and joy. There were many words of appreciation for Pastor Earle and Shirley. There was love and support. There were lots of hugs. After the congregation sang "Amazing Grace", the Schartner family came to the front of the church and everyone else circled around them. It was a beautiful visual expression that summed up the entire evening. The evening's MC, retired Bishop Telmor Sartison concluded the night with Romans 8:31-38 followed by the singing of "Children of the Heavenly Father." Pastor Earle thanked the gathering and said, "I feel very affirmed." Dean Klaus Ohlhoff commented that after hearing Romans 8 and singing the final hymn, it "created one of those moments where heaven and earth were one, and the Word became flesh once more. The city felt like a different place this morning, touched by the afterglow of God's evident love and grace."



Thanks to the organizing committee, including Pastor Julianne Koivisto-Barlow, Pastor Arnold Alksne and Pastor Don Hall. Our God is good. We are called to come together and be the body of Christ in this world. Through this benefit, we honoured and supported one of God's children. That night, I believe God was smiling lovingly and saying, "It is good."

### Bawlf Lutheran Triplets



On January 15<sup>th</sup>, Bawlf Lutheran Church made history when Rev. Calvin Skriver baptised triplets, Randi Lynn, Jamie Beth, and Levi Kendall. Their parents, Merlee and Kendall Severson, and 2-year-old big sister, Robin Lee, are members of the Bawlf congregation. According to church records, which date back to when the congregation began in 1902, this is the first set of triplets baptised in the congregation. The triplets were born on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Thanks be to God!  
 - Submitted by Carol Uglem



### Highwood Lutheran Church Celebrates Fiftieth Anniversary

Highwood Lutheran Church, Calgary will celebrate its Fiftieth Anniversary with a Year of Jubilee, beginning on Pentecost Sunday, June 4, 2006. Bishop Stephen Kristenson will be our guest at this Festival Anniversary Service. The chosen theme for this Year of Jubilee is "Called to be Servants, Sent Out in Faith."

Highwood Lutheran Church began as a “package mission” of the American Lutheran Church to serve Northwest Calgary. The ALC provided funds for a property, the construction of a church, the purchase of a parsonage and the equipping of an office. Twenty-three people worshipped at the first service on June 10, 1956.

The groundbreaking ceremony was July 1, 1956, and the building was dedicated November 25, 1956. The congregation grew rapidly, reaching a baptized membership of 172 by the end of



November 1957. By December 1957 the congregation was self-supporting. By the end of 1964, it had grown to a baptized membership of over 400. With an average worship attendance of 192, they faced the problem of crowded quarters. The congregation voted to construct a larger church building and convert the first church into an office and education building. The present church building was dedicated January 12, 1969. Seven pastors have served Highwood Lutheran Church in its fifty-year history. Pastor Don Nevile has served Highwood since 1994.

The year-long celebration includes a special first Sunday of each month from September 2006 to May 2007. On these Sundays, we will recognize different groups such as Sunday School teachers and children, Church Council members, those confirmed at Highwood, those married at Highwood, etc. The celebration will conclude with a banquet on Saturday, May 12, 2007.

For more information contact Highwood at 403-289-8206 or [www.highwoodlutheran.com](http://www.highwoodlutheran.com).

- Submitted by Bruce Beamer

## A Lutheran Ski Trip

Lakeland Lutheran Church (Cold Lake, AB) and Lord of Glory Lutheran Church (Lac La Biche, AB) spend two days skiing at Marmot Basin in Jasper, AB. They drove up Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>. Friday and Saturday were skiing days. Sunday, they drove back home. The fifteen youth and six adults rented the Jasper Lutheran Church facility and prepared their own meals. They spent the evenings in fellowship enjoying songs, devotions, games and snacks. Sunday morning, the group participated in the church service singing “Consecrated” during the offertory.

- Submitted by Lila Wollmann



**“Celebrations” IS A PUBLICATION  
OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE  
OF THE SYNOD OF ALBERTA AND THE TERRITORIES.**

**ITS PURPOSE is...**

...to connect the people and congregations of our synod.

...to provide a forum for celebrating the people, places and mission of the congregations in our synod.

...to help us learn from each other and encourage each other in our work for Jesus Christ.

**SUBMIT** articles and photos about the life, work and mission of the congregations of our synod to the “Celebrations” editor, Lisa Rude at:

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Please include name, phone number and email or address with all submissions. All submissions will also be considered for the ABT Synod section in *Canada Lutheran*.

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