



“Celebrations”

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(Header photo of stained-glass window courtesy of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Calgary. Window design by Geoff Jamieson.)

Claiming Our Heritage



St. John of Northmark Lutheran Church (Woking, AB)

Luther believed in teaching the faith to the people of God through the words of the hymns they sang in worship. Words set to music are much easier to

remember – ask any teenager. In the context of Reformation, consider this hymn text from F. Pratt Green, “The Church of Christ in every age / beset by change, but Spirit-led/ must claim and test its heritage/ and keep on rising from the dead.” (LBW #433, stanza 1).

Heritage in this context means our tradition of faith and life, our doctrine and our practice. Think of it as our spiritual genealogy. Many people are fascinated by the exercise of tracing their family tree, as far back into history as they possibly can. The Internet makes this a much easier task than it once used to be. My wife traced her family tree back to 1806 (before the days of the Internet) and discovered, to her chagrin, she had a paternal great-great-uncle in Helena, Montana who had been hanged as a horse thief. Thankfully, everybody else on the

maternal side of her family went into the Lutheran ministry.

But why in the world be interested, and invest time and effort, in accumulating the names and stories of dead relatives? Don’t these amateur genealogists have something more current, more relevant to occupy them? In truth, these people actually believe that where they come from can tell them a great deal about who they are. Their roots give them wings. They are doing nothing more or less than claiming their heritage.

How do we do that with our spiritual heritage – how do we claim it? We do it by painstakingly sharing our faith-stories with one another, our children, grandchildren, church families and friends. We deliver as of first importance what was first given to us. We pass on the faith – whole, intact. We are committed to this so our people can do what F. Pratt Green encourages them to do: claim and test their heritage, so that the Church can be resurrected in each succeeding generation.



The face of Lutheranism has changed in my lifetime – much more pluralistic, and grateful for the Spirit’s promise of unity in diversity, because our diversity is very great. No longer does a Lutheran’s last name identify his or her ethnicity. We come from all over, and we are stronger for it. But the pluralism and diversity means it’s that much more important for us to make it possible for Lutheran people to claim their Lutheran heritage. The Partners in Faith initiative, The Lutheran Handbook, and Kelly Fryer’s Reclaiming the “L” Word, are good starting-points. But the momentum to be about this task of claiming our heritage needs to increase. We are this generation’s keepers of memory and guardians of identity. It is our work to do.

George Forell said it best when he wrote in his book The Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary: “If we do not know who we are, we cannot be anything to anybody else.” That’s a compelling thought, it seems to me, for third millennium Lutherans – especially as we approach and mark Reformation Sunday.

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Around the Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Worship



One day introductory sessions are being offered to help you get to know this new resource of our church. Sessions will take place 1:30-8:30 on November 19 at Hosanna Lutheran in Edmonton, 8:00-3:30 on November 25 at Unity Lutheran in Medicine Hat and 1:00-8:30 on November 26 at Hope Lutheran in Calgary. Cost is \$20/person or \$55 for 3 people from the same congregation. Each participant will receive a copy of the new worship book. Please bring a bagged lunch or supper. Register through the synod office at 780.439.2636 or abtsynod@elcic.ca. For other questions or a friendly introduction to the new worship book, please contact our synod’s resource person, Robyn Simpson Mohr at rs3@augustana.ca or 780.679.1536.



2007 Study Conference for Clergy and Lay Church Workers

“...And Still We Seek Peace” is the theme for this year’s study conference that takes place February 5 –8 in Canmore, AB. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Tom Yoder Neufeld, a professor at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo. His areas of research and teaching are Jesus, Paul, and issues of peace in the Bible. He has published numerous articles, both scholarly and popular, as well as two books. The Thursday morning speaker will be Bishop Victoria Matthews of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton. Please note the fee schedule has changed significantly for this year. You are responsible for booking your own lodging. For more information, call the synod office at 780.439.2636.



Dr. Tom Yoder
Neufeld



Bishop Victoria
Matthews

Images of Spirituality

“Images of Spirituality” is an annual ecumenical gathering for Christian women. Next spring, April 13-15, the 18th gathering will take place at Entheos Retreat Centre near Calgary. There are five sessions, beginning on Friday night and ending with a Eucharistic celebration on Sunday morning.

This year’s theme is “Rainbow Joy” led by Rev. Helen Smith, a Presbyterian minister, and a Lutheran minister, Rev. Marty Tuer. All women are invited to join us as, through worship, discussion, prayer, music, art and dance, we celebrate one of the fruits of the Spirit and paint a rainbow of joy.

The cost for the weekend is \$175 for those registering before January 31, 2007 and \$190 for those registering after.

For further information, go to www.imagesofspirituality.00freehost.com, send an e-mail to imagesofspiritua@canada.com or phone Heidi Miller-Zerr at 948-7978.

2008 National Youth Gathering

Our synod is the location of the next National Youth Gathering in Whitehorse, YK. Rebecca Dacko Brink, a local Whitehorse Lutheran youth, put it this way, “On the last day (of the Winnipeg gathering), the very last thing they did was announce where the next gathering would be, and to my amazement they announced it would be in Whitehorse! Right now there is nothing I am more excited for, to reunite with my friends, feel the love of the Lord, and praise Him with all my might!” Calling all youth, plan now to be there in 2008!

A Young Couple in El Salvador

Jessica and Ryan Fontaine’s experiences volunteering for 6 months in El Salvador with ELCIC Missionary Pastor, Brian Rude. They worked in Prisons and with street youth in the capital city, San Salvador.



Ryan, in the red T-shirt, and Jessica, in front, during one of their many prison visits.

We were working in Edmonton, when we heard Pastor Brian Rude speak at a U of A Lutheran Student Movement evening. Jessica and I were debating what to do with our lives in the next year. I suggested that maybe we should go to El Salvador to work with Brian, learn about the Salvadoran people, their lives and their language. We emailed Brian and he said that he could find a role for us. We spent the summer saving money working in Jasper and headed out in Mid-October.

Brian was on holidays when we arrived, so Mauricio, Director of Quetzalcoatl and Brian’s friend, picked us up at the airport. Since we didn’t speak Spanish and he didn’t speak English, the first day was an interesting one. We were tired and found communication to be a little difficult. We managed to express very well that we

thought his country was quite green. I found out later when we started to get the language down better that he asked me if we wanted to have breakfast and I responded, "Nice to meet you." We had a good laugh at that.

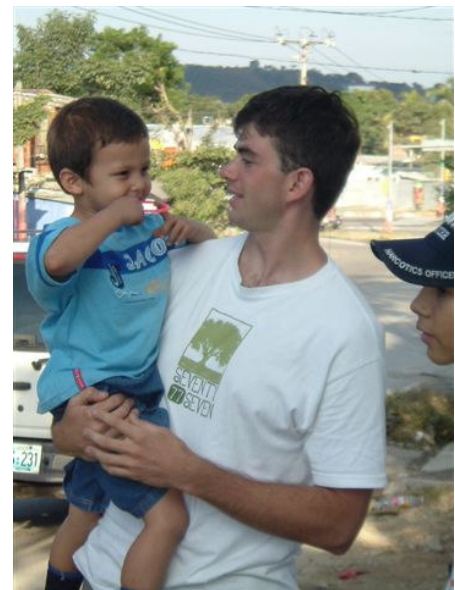
We spent most of November in Antigua, Guatemala taking Spanish lessons and returning at the end of the work year to San Salvador. Our first experience with work was in the Chalatenango Prison in the Department of "Chalate." Much of our time in El Salvador was spent in the prisons, but the majority of it was with street youth in the local "barrios" of San Salvador. Quetzalcoatl facilitates workshops that tackle issues related to prisoners and street youth in El Salvador to better them personally and socially. Our work was very hands-on. We spent one day a week in prisons, and several nights a week in the actual neighbourhoods of the street youth. At the neighbourhood meetings we would assist with sociodramas, group activities and develop one-on-one relationships with youth.

Some of the youth befriended us right away. Guiri grew up in the Atlanta neighbourhood and he took us to all sorts of places around the capital, San Salvador. His girlfriend and his stepchildren took us to the beach one weekend where we stayed with his Aunt. Anytime we needed someone to show us around the city, like which bus to take or where to go, Mauricio, Guiri, Brian, Jorge, or anyone else from the office was willing to show us the way.

The people are friendly, despite the daily violence with which they live. It's a different world in El Salvador compared to Canada. There are 12 murders a day in a country about the same size as Vancouver Island with a population of 7 million. The gangs are the cause of much of the violence, but the lack of justice is a root cause of more violence than the gangs could ever deliver. We felt relatively safe because of how Brian and Quetzalcoatl took care of us, but not everyone has the luxury of friends and family to look after them.



Ryan is out front and heading for the soccer ball.



Ryan holding a Salvadoran child.



Jessica buying a banana in a local market.

Our first week back in North America, we found ourselves overwhelmed by a cereal aisle the size of a small Salvadoran market. Since then we've become more accustomed to spending our Salvadoran month's budget for ourselves in a week in Edmonton. We definitely miss pupusas (stuffed tortillas) and

I don't think we'll ever be able to go back completely to the way we were before we left.

I begin University in September at the U of A. I hope that I can be in a position to affect some real positive change for our Latino brothers and sisters by finding a career in government policy for immigrants and refugees. Jessica is releasing her new CD "Either Way" and has since been writing songs about the plight of the poor and the politics of poverty.

Thank you to everyone who supported us through emails and prayers and by supporting Brian Rude, who made this life changing experience possible for us. We have an hour long presentation prepared for congregations that are interested in the work of Brian Rude and the Salvadoran people. You can contact us at ryanandjessicafontaine@gmail.com.

By Ryan Fontaine

Bishop Ron Mayan's Ordination



Left to right— Bishop Michael Pryse, Bishop Elaine Sauer, Bishop Cynthia Halmerson, Bishop Telmor Sartison, Bishop Stephen Kristenson and Bishop Gerhard Preibisch.



Rev. Phil Hink giving the synodical bishop's staff to Bishop Ron Mayan.

Archbishop Oscar Romero said, "I can't. You must. I'm yours. Show me the way." His words graced the cover of the bulletin for the ordination service of Bishop Ron Mayan, who was ordained as Bishop of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories on Sunday, September 17th. Bishop Ron begins his service to God as our bishop in humility, following God's call, by the grace of God.

This was a day of celebration as our synod welcomed our new bishop, elected at this past June's synod convention. National Bishop Ray Schultz, Bishop Ron's predecessor Bishop Stephen Kristenson, the other ELCIC synodical bishops, many of our synod's clergy, members from Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Red Deer, synod office staff and many other congregational members from our synod joined Bishop Ron and family. The celebration rang out in the music made by voices, piano, drums, guitar and trumpets!

In his address, National Bishop Ray Schultz spoke of the duties of a bishop. He reminisced of the joy he found in his

parish ministry and how much he missed that. However, he also expressed the importance of the role of bishop and the need for that service. He explained that the work of a bishop is "the secular service of the church". Bishops are the administrators of the church. They pay the bills and run the human resources department. Their work is necessary so that the parish pastors



Bishop Ron communing Brenda Clayton, a member of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

can do their work. "Bishops are the husbands and handmaids of the Bride of Christ. That is our vocation. And to that vocation, I say thanks be to God."

The day was not all happy for all people. Those from Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd were not only rejoicing with our new bishop, but also grieving the loss of their much loved pastor. For them the day was bittersweet. Thank you to them for hosting the ordination service and a wonderful meal and social time afterwards.



Bishop Ron receiving a hug from his eldest son, Jeremy.

As Bishop Ron begins his service to us in the Synod of Alberta and the Territories, we are asked to pray for him and support him in that role. Bishop Ron is only one servant. We all serve with him. To quote Bishop Ron's letter of call, "We pledge you our prayers, our love and esteem, and our hearty cooperation in the work of the Lord committed to your care." Together, we pray for guidance as we humbly serve our God.

Vision and Perseverance Give Results

In 2002, St John's Lutheran Church of Northmark (Woking, Alberta) formed a building committee with the goal of completing some major renovations by the Alberta Centennial in 2005. This past summer, we celebrated the completion of our renovation project with a rededication of the church. In attendance for that special celebration were Assistant-to-the-Bishop, from the E.L.C.I.C., Phil Hink, and Archbishop John Clarke from the Anglican Diocese of Athabasca. Also in attendance were representatives from our partnering churches, the Lutheran and Anglican Churches in Sexsmith, the Anglican Church in Spirit River and the Lutheran Church in LaGlance. Many friends, members and former members, from years gone by visited, brought the attendance to over one hundred people. We had a great time, reminiscing about the past, and renewing old friendships.

The original building was completed in 1946, and had only some minor changes over the next several years. The church now has a brighter sanctuary with a bigger altar area and beautiful etched altar glass. The old windows were replaced with more energy efficient ones and the building was properly insulated. The biggest change was the construction of a full basement under the building to replace the crumbling foundation. We now have an area for coffee and



fellowship that is a most welcome addition. We also installed an indoor toilet! The outside of the church has received new roofing and siding. A wheel-chair ramp was built and the landscaping that was started in the summer will continue into this year. The building committee has decided that it will continue to work towards the completion of the church basement, which already has a pastor's office.

It has been an exciting yet trying time for us at St. John's. We have been without a pastor since September 2003 and have begun a partnering project to help us find a spiritual leader. During the renovation we continued to hold our services each Sunday by renting space at the community halls in the area and our attendance has held steady through it all. We have been truly blessed by the people in our community who embraced and supported the renovation project. It was their dedication and perseverance that made it possible!

Submitted by Darlene Knezevich

An ELW Anniversary Celebration

Where can you find sixty ladies wearing 1950-style long dresses, crowned with wide brimmed hats in 2006? This August event took place in the oasis of the Hanson backyard, bordered by a shimmering blue pool and the sun's warm rays after a morning rain. Each person was blessed by the surroundings. This memorable afternoon was blessed by God's presence as we sang songs of praise and shared God's Word.



But it was the ELW Twentieth Anniversary cake that reminded each member of the significance of the day. We were reminded of a time in 1986 when the Evangelical Lutheran Church Women (ELCW) and the Lutheran Church Women (LCW) declared there was to be only one official women's organization. The Evangelical Lutheran Women Inc. became the official women's organization of the ELCIC.



A program to affirm and celebrate these past twenty years, sharing memories of lessons learned about the differences of cultural backgrounds of our ELW family, was enthusiastically performed. "Dolls: Our Childhood Friends and Teachers", taken from an ELW Program Resource Collection, revealed to us that there are dolls that link us to our

heritage. They also remind us of the importance of sharing our values and our faith with our family, neighbors and friends, just as we shared our love for dolls with our classmates years ago. We were all admonished to revive memories of the past, memories of a doll that taught us to love and to share. It admonished each ELW member to realize the importance of sharing our values and our faith with one another.

The past twenty years have seen regular gatherings of the ten circles of Messiah ELW studying God's Word, serving when needed, praying for one another, giving help to the less fortunate and fulfilling various needs in the community as they arose. We are a family with various backgrounds, similar to the assortment of dolls described, but with a mutual aim to walk with Jesus.

We were blessed as we departed from the festive garden celebration. I venture to say that each member breathed a prayer something like this one... "Dear Lord, kindle in each of us the desire to follow you with a childlike spirit of love just as children, playing with dolls, shared your message of love and sharing when young. Thank you for the twenty years of ELW ministry. Equip us to venture into the years ahead with renewed eagerness to grow closer to you, Lord, and to one another. Amen."

Submitted by Sylvia Engen

Communion Without Steps Project



This past spring, Christ Trinity Lutheran Church in Lethbridge completed renovations to their chancel. Their old Communion railing was removed from its position half way

to the altar. A new position was selected which would allow people to come from the pew and commune without having to use steps. The design, by Pastor Gary Nickel, makes it easily removable for a more open chancel area except during Communion. The old wooden railing was crafted into the top railing and new metal legs and supports were constructed. Friends of the congregation, Matt and Gordon, from other churches did the basic construction. Willy Stanke, a member of Christ Trinity, did the metal adjustments to make it easily removable. Ralph Sjovold, another Lutheran, prepared the wooden railing.

**"Celebrations" IS A PUBLICATION
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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:

lisa.rude@telus.net
324 Woodfield Pl. SW
Calgary, AB T2W 3Y1
403.686.7311

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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