



# “Celebrations”

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

*Fall 2008*

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

## **Bio-Fuel: Is This About Ethics?**



One of the pastors in our Synod came in to visit me recently and in the course of our conversation he wanted to raise an issue that

had been troubling him. He wanted someone in the Church to address bio-fuels. Specifically, he felt the Christian voice needed to be heard when agricultural land formerly under cultivation to provide food for livestock and human beings was being diverted to produce crops that can be processed to yield bio-diesel and bio-ethanol. In our part of the world that means driving by increasing numbers of fields of yellow canola, and seeing lesser numbers of fields of wheat and barley waving in the breeze. The gospel text appointed for one of the earlier Sundays was Jesus’ encounter with the Canaanite woman, the one with that infamous line spoken by Jesus: “It is not right to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs” (see Matthew 15). My pastor friend re-interpreted this story for our context: “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it in our gas tanks”.

The media are making us very much aware of the global warming crisis. I for one am convinced that the human family needs to reduce its carbon

footprint on our planet. At the same time as renewable and sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels are being researched and first generation bio-fuels are being developed and used commercially, lo and behold the media make us very much aware of a growing global food scarcity. Food prices are up everywhere – here in Canada too. But, generally speaking, our children won’t be going hungry. That is an issue for the developing countries. Are we in fact complicit in taking the children’s bread and throwing it in our gas tanks when we are trying to be environmentally more friendly by gassing up at those

stations selling that 15% ethanol fuel product? Are we helping environmental matters in the long run when we purchase and drive flex fuel vehicles? My pastor friend called it an ethical issue in the extreme. It got me wondering...

A little research on bio-fuels indicated that the first generation of sustainable bio-fuels are in fact not very environmentally friendly, and do cost humanity in terms of a reduction of arable land devoted to food production. But we've got to start somewhere. I was heartened to discover that we are already into the second, third and fourth generation of bio-fuel production and as the research progresses, it yields smarter bio-fuel products. There may be some partial answer here to our addiction to petrochemical fuels. How could I not be in favor of that?

A few weeks after this pastor's visit, I watched a documentary on the development of the electric car by one of the Big Three automakers. We had the technology for a viable electric car in 1995, and they were in limited production. People were leasing them and loving them. There was a considerable waiting list to get one of these vehicles. And then a day came when there were no more electric cars in production. Those who had leased them were not allowed to re-lease or purchase them. These electric vehicles were seized, and subsequently crushed and shredded. And all of this was done as quietly as possible. Someone's interests would not be served by the widespread introduction of viable, reliable electric vehicles. There's only one of these prototypes left in an automobile museum --- sans internal workings, of course.



Photo by Lisa Rude

And then there are those human-interest stories at the end of the national news broadcasts --- stories about thinking individuals who come up with the science to burn something other than gas or diesel to fuel their vehicles. The one I especially like is the story of the guy who runs his fifteen-year-old diesel VW on the waste cooking oil from fast food restaurants. As stewards of creation, when it comes to alternative, sustainable fuels, what would it mean for us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God? Meet you at the grease vat behind McDonalds...

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop

## **Around the Synod**

### ***Lay Pastoral Assistants' Course***

On Nov. 8, **Bishop Telmor Sartison** will be leading an LPA course on "Paul: Mission Developer, Teacher and Letter-writer Extraordinaire." The course will take place at Faith Lutheran Church, Calgary. For more information contact the synod office at 439.2636 in Edmonton or toll free at 1.866.430.2636.

### ***Upcoming Lecture by the Chester Ronning Centre***

Nov. 12, 5:30-7 p.m., check out “Hildegard of Bingen in Her Time and Now” with Ingrid Cramer-Doerschel (F104, Faith & Life Building, Augustana Campus, Camrose). For more information on this lecture and others, go to [www.augustana.ca/ronning](http://www.augustana.ca/ronning) or call 780.679.1198.

### ***Joint Rural Ministry Event***

“From Survival to Engagement: Being Church in the Rural West” will be held in Shelby, Montana January 30-31. **Bishop Jessica Crist** (Montana Synod, **ELCA**) and **Bishop Ron Mayan** (ABT Synod, **ELCIC**) are jointly sponsoring this event. Some years ago, a highly successful cross-border Rural Ministry Event took place in Medicine Hat, Alta. Attendees to that event report they came together wondering what they had in common, and left with a real sense of common purpose. This is for people who live in the rural environment – farmers, ranchers, small town business people, agricultural people, and rural or small town clergy from both sides of the border. We will worship together, study and discuss together, and listen to engaging speakers. We will share our stories and find the connections between those stories and the Christ-story. If you are interested in attending this event, please contact Kathy Budgell in the ABT synod office at 780.439.2636 or [kbudgell@elcic.ca](mailto:kbudgell@elcic.ca).

### ***Study Conference for Clergy and Lay Church Workers***

February 2 - 5, the annual study conference will take place at the **Silvertip Resort** in Canmore. The **Rev. Dr. Ken Doka** will speak on the topic “How We Grieve as Related to Pastoral Care.” The Thursday Brunch guest will be The **Rev. Erin Phillips** and our visiting bishops will be The **Rev. Derek Hoskin** and **Bishop Gerhard Preibisch**. Please encourage your pastors and church workers to attend this event, as Bishop Mayan indicated in his article in this issue of Canada Lutheran. For more information or to register, call the synod office in Edmonton at 780.439.2636 or go to [www.albertasynod.ca/leadership/synod\\_study\\_conference](http://www.albertasynod.ca/leadership/synod_study_conference).

### **What keeps you coming back to your home church?**

This list is a compilation of the short answers received when this question was posed on the abtsynodnews email list. I would encourage others to send in a few paragraphs expanding on their own answer to this question. We can get passionate about a sports game or a team rivalry. It's time to express your passion about your church! Submit articles to the editor, Lisa Rude. Contact info on the last page of this issue.

- the great music
- our heart for social ministry and feeding the less fortunate
- great programming
- meaningful worship services
- the special people
- the pastor
- the welcoming atmosphere
- a present Christ, working through the people
- my family's church
- close to home
- married there and/or children baptized there
- the warm feeling of friendship
- the truth and purity of the preaching



## Greening the Church – An Edmonton Congregation’s Efforts



*Hope Lutheran Church in Edmonton is taking their desire to be more environment friendly to an active level by greening their church in some very practical ways. From education to action, the members of Hope Lutheran are trying to do their part in taking care of God’s creation. Their church secretary, **Jenny Samm** explains.*

We have held three forums for our congregation and community members to attend about the environment. In February, we discussed air quality in the Strathcona area. In May, we had a speaker come in to give us ideas about how to become more environmentally friendly. A representative from **Norwex** came in October to tell us about their environmentally friendly products.

In addition to education, we are actively greening our church through several projects:

1. We are collecting batteries to take to our Edmonton eco-center.
2. As we use up cleaning products at the church, we are replacing them with environmentally friendly products.
3. We recycle and limit our use of paper by conducting church business by email, our newsletters are also emailed out, and our church uses a PowerPoint for the church service to cut down on paper needed for announcements and other items for the bulletins.
4. We put a list of 4 or 5 ideas in our monthly newsletter for members to try at home to be more environmentally friendly. For example, a 100 mile picnic, walking or biking rather than driving, shopping local, etc.



We also learn from each other through a section in our monthly newsletter called "Confessions of a Christian". People from our congregation anonymously submit their confessions of how they have made a change in their life to care for creation.

Photos by Lisa Rude.

"I go shopping for groceries on Saturdays. For years now, I have known about the Farmer's Market at Capilano Mall on Saturdays but I haven't purchased my produce and baked goods from the Farmer's Market. It just seemed like too much hassle to get groceries from Safeway and other items from the Farmer's Market. But I have decided to make a change and support the local farmer's market! I am glad I've made this change because my Farmer's Market purchases have been very tasty!"

"I am addicted to yellow stickies! Throughout the day and sometimes even the night I am constantly making lists of things to do, grocery lists, crazy ideas I have, etc. on yellow stickies. When, I'm through with them into the garbage or recycling bin they go. Meanwhile, I toss paper with writing only on one side into the recycle bin. My confession is that I have been wasting paper and filling our landfills with yellow stickies! But don't worry, I've stopped this bad habit! I'm now making scratch pads out of paper (with writing on one side) and I've given up my addiction to yellow stickies!"

"I would come home and watch my favourite mexican soap opera and then go back out to do errands. I realized I would save fuel by stopping to do my errands on my way home. Now I plan my drive home to include my errands such as grocery shopping, a haircut, or a stop at the hardware store. I don't always get to watch my soap opera, but I can record it and I am saving fuel."

"I didn't think that I needed to be involved in the blue bag recycling program offered by the City of Edmonton so I just threw all my waste into the garbage. I live on my own and live very simply so I didn't think that I would have enough to recycle in order to warrant purchasing blue bags. Well, guess what? I was wrong! Last month, I started putting my recyclables in a blue bag and by the end of three weeks I had a full bag!"

"I have purchased 2 cloth shopping bags but I have not been using them when I go grocery shopping because I forget them at home.

Last month, I started keeping the bags in my car so I always have them with me when I go to the grocery store."

*Hopefully, Jenny Samm's story gave you some ideas. Now, here is your challenge. Get together with some of the leaders in your congregation and discover ways you can make your church greener and take care of the world God has entrusted to us. And don't stop there. Act on your ideas and then share your story with the rest of us.*

Submitted by Jenny Samm (Hope Lutheran Church, Edmonton)

## Putting the Soul in Psalms

What do you get when you mix four Lutherans, two Roman Catholics, and an Anglican? Sounds like the set up for a joke, but this combination has resulted in the formation of "**Standing Stones**", an ecumenical band based in Okotoks, Alta.

It all started when three Okotoks congregations were preparing to run an Alpha course – "10 weeks to explore the meaning of life", and I (a member of Holy Cross, Okotoks) was asked to organize a song team representing the three congregations – Lutheran, Roman



(left to right) – Shannon Deardoff (drums), Karen Jones (vocals), Colleen Fernley (vocals), Jennifer Vandergrift (vocals and bass guitar), Robert Arsenaault (vocal and guitar), Ian Willumsen (guitar and vocals), Dora Hall (vocals and keyboard). Photo courtesy of Standing Stones.

Catholic, and Anglican. With a list of names and phone numbers, I called to invite some singers and musicians to commit for the 10 weeks. A few said no, and six said yes.

When we got together, I expected that some pleasant, acceptable music would result. Instead, we actually sounded good! We also had an amazing sense of blessing, and we liked each other. That was five years ago and we're still making music!

For some of us, it was the answer to a heart's desire that we could hardly

express. We named our band "Standing Stones", after a video Bible study we completed on the biblical and worldwide practice of raising stones to mark the spot of a significant happening or miracle. Playing together as "Standing Stones", we've felt the joy of making beautiful music in praise of our God!

Beyond contemporary Christian music, we have developed quite an eclectic style, which includes blues, reggae, country, and rock-and-roll. People say they love our harmonies and rich sound. One of our members, **Jenn Vandergrift**, specializes in putting psalms to contemporary tunes.

All of the Stones are active in their own congregations, but our greatest sense of calling is in leading worship together in many of the congregations around Okotoks, Calgary, and sometimes more distant communities. We have led worship in Anglican, United, Evangelical, Lutheran and Roman Catholic congregations. We've learned liturgies - playing with keyboards, guitars, bass and drums - for monthly mass or worship services at the local Catholic and Lutheran churches. We've also performed for various benefit concerts and prayer breakfasts.

When we first started, we used many of the contemporary praise songs available through **Christian Copyright License International (CCLI)**. We also enjoyed taking hymns and contemporizing them. But one of our favourite things to do is take the lectionary readings and choose a theme with appropriate music that will, as Martin

Luther said, “drive Christ,” or lift up Jesus. We hope to usher the congregations into the awesome presence of God, even as we seek to go there ourselves.

About a year ago, our music took a new direction. We booked the **Sanctum Retreat Centre** near Caroline, Alta., and spent the weekend getting to know each other better. We’ve always felt close and make a point of entering into prayer before we practise or perform. However, we didn’t realize how God was going to use that retreat time! We spent the first evening sharing our stories – the good, the bad, and the ugly. There was an amazing sense of fellowship and transparency. After that breakthrough, we woke up the next morning with several new songs that were inspired by what we had shared. A song that came to be known as “His Place” describes the turmoil of a youth and an experience of God’s grace. “The Glory of God” is a reflection on God’s intervention in a fallen creation.

Shortly afterward, we contracted with **Bruce Rawlings** of the **Rawling Brothers**, a chart topping duo based in Lundbreck, Alta., to record us right in Holy Cross. We hope to launch our CD in the fall.

Our collaboration with Bruce led to a recent concert with the Standing Stones and the Rawling Brothers, affectionately known as the “Rawling-Stones” concert!

We would welcome inquiries at our web-site - **[www.standingstones.ca](http://www.standingstones.ca)**, about our performances and our coming album.



(left to right) – Jennifer Vandergrift (vocals and bass guitar), Dora Hall (vocals and keyboard), Robert Arsenault (vocal and guitar), Colleen Fernley (vocals), Karen Jones (vocals), Shannon Deardoff (drums), Ian Willumsen (guitar and vocals). Photo courtesy of Standing Stones.

By Dora Hall

## Survivors In Our Midst

Survivors. They are in our midst. By rights many should not be with us. Somehow they beat the odds. Survived horrendous tragedies, accidents, illnesses, wars, kidnappings, and camps. Lived through the most desperate of times. Endured the worst of circumstances. Are they a statistical anomaly or a sign of something deeper...beyond themselves?

I am one of them. Hodgkin's Disease in 1975. Chemotherapy and radiation. Skin cancers and infertility some of the "late-effects." Aortic valve replacement in 2003 for a congenital heart defect. Onset of leukemia in December, 2004. Four rounds of chemotherapy. Reduced to under 120 pounds but even so, remission and return to work, but then relapse and resignation. Stem-cell transplant in November, 2006. I've been in the "system" and surrounded by white coats long enough to know the benefit of modern medical research and technology. They always seemed to have something for me. No

guarantees mind you, simply the possibility of remission, recovery, perhaps...a cure. An earlier time, another place, likely not. A mystery at the very least. A wonder for sure.



Pastor Don Hall, in the foreground, worshipping at the synod convention this past June. Photo by Lisa Rude.

Survivors help us move forward as a community. Without a community that shares its knowledge, resources and wealth we would not have the benefits of a medical system that gives people a chance for recovery and return to the community. In the end it is not about my good humor or attitude, nor my positive outlook and involvement in the protocol, nor any alternative healing modalities, dare I say it, "my" prayer and faith. O yes, they play a vital part in the journey but they do not guarantee the outcome. No books to write about some "secret" I've learned. No hidden knowledge. No miraculous technique. If survivors have learned anything it is the humility that it is not about "me" or anything they've done, but about the community that brought them through. From faith we declare it is both the community of the Holy Trinity and the communion of saints.

It is folks like Tina. A 33-year-old American female. Unwed mother. Veterinarian assistant. Her stem cells gave birth to my new immune system. She was a closer match than my brother. So much so that we

had to ask, "Mom...?" Something deeper here, yes. We are as "brother and sister" at a level that confirms we are from one ancestor, one God. Not everyone gets a match. A universal registry of unrelated donors. But we need more.

It is folks like Patrick. A "companion" along the way since 2005. Same age. Same illness. He received his transplant 18 days ahead of me. He died in April. My medical team had no answers. They see it all the time. One survives, the other does not. The stem-cell transplant that gave us a chance was because of others- both the successes and the failures that came before- as well as our donors. We who survive are part of that journey where future generations will benefit. Patrick was a companion along the way and both his life and death have purpose.

Survivors live with the question, "Why me?" Those who fall at your right and your left yet you stand. We need to guard our hearts from misplaced guilt. It was not that I deserved to live nor that my survival was at the expense of others. As the community came to my aid so it is that I remain for the sake of the community. There is a story to be told.

St. Paul, facing an uncertain future, declared, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall chose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with

Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account" (Philippians 2:21-24).

There is always the "far better" as there is the "more necessary." There are survivors in your midst. We exist not simply for our own survival but "on your account." I do not say that in any triumphal spirit. Survivors are signs of hope. A product of the community's care and God's grace.

The "far better" remains our common hope...but not yet. We survive. We continue. We live. We tell our story, when we are ready. And, we move forward...together, in mission for others.

By Pastor Don Hall

Pastor Don Hall has served ELCIC congregations in Leduc and Okotoks, Alberta. Along with his wife, Dora, are two chosen children, Jonathan, 19, at U of A, Edmonton, and Rachel, 16, living in Okotoks. For stem-cell donation, see [www.onematch.ca](http://www.onematch.ca).

## Kids' Night Out

### Creative Sunday school program boosts attendance

Edberg Lutheran Church, Edberg, AB, is a small congregation in a small community with a big heart. When the number of children attending Sunday school dwindled to only 5 at a time, church leaders decided to try another tactic: Kids' Night Out. Every Friday from 7-8 p.m., 15 to



Parachute fun!

Photo by Pam Reber

25 children and youth attend Sunday School, which includes songs, stories, crafts, prayer, memorization, skits, pizza suppers, discussions, movie nights and game nights. The church also organized an overnight retreat for older youth.

In addition to Friday evening events, children also participate, on special occasions, in plays and music performances at church. This was definitely God's idea.

Submitted by Pam Reber

## Gifts from the Heart - Every Sunday

Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, in Calgary, is the oldest Lutheran church still holding services in its original downtown location. Trinity is serious about being In Mission to Others. One way in which this mission is achieved is through support for **CLWR**, **GHDA**, and ELCIC's Gifts from the Heart. The congregation shares lunch together every Sunday and at this lunch they contribute their nickels, dimes, loonies and often larger denominations to the Gifts from the Heart tin on the lunch table. So far, the congregation has "bought" two goats, two gardening kits for Zambia and a bathroom makeover for

constructing simple latrines and bathroom enclosures. Through Gifts from the Heart, Trinity supports the needs of the poor, both within Canada as well as throughout the world.

Submitted by Phyllis Gillanders

## Together through the Corn Maze

Life is like a maze. Around every corner there are many choices to make. Those who took part in the Sunday school event on Sept. 19 discovered this, when they chose to have fun “getting lost” in a corn field! Over 25 people from our church, between the ages of 2 & 77, came together for a family evening of fun at the Lacombe corn maze. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the **Foodgrains Bank**, a special design of the maze was created, including the theme words, “End Hunger”, and a design of people holding hands around the world.

As we waited for everyone to arrive, the children and adults enjoyed the rubber duck races, farm animals, goat walk & giant slides. Then we began our adventure in the maze. We all started together using the theme questions as a guide, but often found ourselves splitting into little groups and surprisingly, often finding one another again, around another bend. After several dead ends, and many, many corners, and laughs, we found our way to the exit. There were a couple bridges and many markers along the way to help keep us on the right track. As we neared the end of the 2nd phase, the sun was setting, and so we enjoyed finding our way by the light of flashlights, and headlights on people’s hats!

After our big adventure, we sat around a campfire to enjoy some snacks and s’mores, and a chance to laugh & share together about our experiences. This evening reminded us that God gives us direction & light for our path, as well as the encouragement of family & friends, for our journey through the maze of life.

By Emma & Gail Berg (Grace Lutheran Church, Bentley, AB)



Photos by Bernadine Serediak

## Exploring Muslim-Christian Understandings

Amid the beauty of the deep purple Rockies Mountains framed in blazing autumn gold trees, forty retreaters attended the fifth **Retreat of Our Own** in Canmore, Alberta. This retreat has become an annual gathering of persons interested in exploring theological issues in a relaxed and stimulating setting. Our meeting place this year was the historic St. Michael's Anglican Church in Canmore. This setting provided a wonderful, home-like space to interact with each other.



The group began their sessions with the creation of quilt squares that will be incorporated into a retreat celebration quilt. Each person or couple wrote their message for increased understanding in our world on a fabric square. "Take genuine interest in the other person", "Discover God's Diversity, Learn, Love, Share", "We are all one together", "Be Still and Know that I Am God", "Peace Be to You!" These examples and the fact they will be connected into a quilt of messages illustrates the manner in which all our lives and beliefs are interwoven. This exercise was a unique way to open our exploration of understanding the comparisons between Biblical and Muslim descriptions and tenets.



This year's keynote speaker was **Rev. Dr. Volker Greifenhagen**, Professor of Religion at **Luther College, University of Regina**. Our explorations led us to consider the question: The Bible and Qur'an: Competing or Cooperating Revelations? While Christians often discount the value of reading the Bible and other religious books together, we wondered whether these texts could be read and compared in order to illuminate our understanding of our own faith and of other faith groups. In the three sessions we took familiar Biblical

stories and compared them with similar Muslim texts in the Qur'an. This comparison led to a rich discussion and many questions about the differing style of the two Holy books, the common roots and family trees, the purpose of the writing, and the difficulties that one experiences when one is limited by translations. For example, Jews, Christians and Muslims see themselves in very different ways as inheritors of Abraham's promise from God. Our myths and misunderstandings of Muslims and the Qur'an were evident as

we probed common views and issues such as women's issues, Sharia Law, the role of feminist Muslim women today and worship practices of Muslims.

**Rev. Dr. Dittmar Mundel** led us in our worship over the weekend. The wonderful melodies and harmonies of Taize filled the hall for morning and Friday evening worship. It has been our tradition to "invite" **Marty Haugen** to join us through use of his beautiful Holden Evening Service. This year we also used Now the Feast and Celebration for our farewell worship and communion celebration.

We came away having just begun our exploration of Muslims and the Qur'an and Christianity and the Bible. Dr. Greifenhagen's rich and engaging presentations, his open interactions with our questions and us, left us wanting more.

By Dianne Kieren

### **Norwegians Eat Sauerkraut in Support of CLWR**

Reformation Day provided the opportunity for Pastor Randy Meissner to use not only his talent for preaching but also for cooking. Some claim that Norwegians have been known to convert to actually liking Pastor Randy Meissner's personal recipe for sauerkraut. This claim was all that it took to bring full attendance for a scrumptious meal following the Reformation Day service. The Church Council's Evangelism/Outreach Committee prepared and served the meal and funds raised were given to a **CLWR**-sponsored school in Cambodia and our Church Building Fund. This was also the second of two events that have brought a total of \$1500 in grants from **FaithLife Financial**.

**"Sauerkraut alert! Rumor has it that a certain pastor is going to inflict homemade sauerkraut on unsuspecting members of Risen Lord on Reformation Sunday after worship. Be warned and be there!"**



Pastor Randy stirs a pot of his famous sauerkraut.  
Photo by Ethel Dembinsky.

Reformation Sunday was the final in a series of sermons preached by Pastor Randy on the subject of "The Seven Marks of the Church" as defined by Martin Luther in 1539. We enjoyed learning more about the Church's Core teachings, including the Holy Cross, Holy Baptism, the Word, Holy Communion, the Ministry, Confession & Forgiveness and Prayer. A pastor who preaches well and cooks well - we are blessed!

Submitted by B. Bunge Eisert (Risen Lord Lutheran Church, Edmonton)

### **Twenty Years of Service in El Salvador**

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose, hosted a celebration of **Rev. Brian Rude's** 20 years of service in El Salvador. His ministry has mainly focused on people living on the fringes of society, as shown by his work in an orphanage, in prisons, with gangs on the streets of San Salvador, and to those with HIV/Aids. He has been involved with education programs for the prevention of HIV/Aids.

**Rev. Kenn Ward** complimented Brian Rude's parents, **Rev. Milton and Gladys Rude**, for the strong Christian upbringing they have given, not only to Brian, but also to other members of their family. Young people from the congregation read special greetings from current and former ELCIC mission leaders, including **Bob Granke** (Executive Secretary of **Canadian Lutheran World Relief**), **Rev. Paul Nostbakken**, **Rev. Peter Mathiesen**, and **Rev. Paul Johnson**. Through these letters, we were reminded of when Rev. Rude was imprisoned in 1998 for his solidarity with the people of El Salvador. His imprisonment gave rise to a great out-pouring of prayer in North America. After twenty hours of detention, he was released, and deported, later to return to his ministry in El Salvador.

Rev. Rude has been and is an out-spoken, prophetic advocate for the rights of the marginalized over against the forces in society which discriminate against them. Rev. Rude, in his response, noted that Messiah is a part of the missionary sponsorship program, and thanked the congregation for its on-going support, not only in money but also in prayer. He mentioned several people who had visited El Salvador, thanked them for coming and encouraged others to visit El Salvador not only to learn of the conditions, but also to see evidence of the work of the church there.

On behalf of the congregation, **Ray Blacklock**, chair of the congregational World Mission Group, presented Rev. Rude with a certificate of recognition and appreciation for his service in El Salvador. In anticipation of Rev. Rude's departure for El Salvador on October 22, the gathering joined in prayer, and concluded with the singing of Now Thank We All Our God.

Submitted by Ray Blacklock



The five young people in the middle read the special greetings. Left to right, Back row – Rev. Kenn Ward, Rev. Brian Rude, Phaedra Palo, Colden Palo and Gladys Rude. Front row – Elsye MacInnis, Sarah Haugen, and Rohan Manaloor. Photo by Rav Blacklock.

**“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.

**Submissions for the Winter 2009 issue must be received by December 31.**

**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](mailto: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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