



Celebrations

*A publication of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Spring 2011*

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A special thanks to the **Canada Lutheran** editorial staff for any of their edits used in articles that also appeared in the ABT synod section of *Canada Lutheran*.

Header photo of stained-glass courtesy of Faith Lutheran, Calgary. Window design by Geoff Jamieson. All photos in *Celebrations* by Colleen McGinnis, unless otherwise stated.



Power Failure

We must avoid the Christian Church's most frequent sin: choosing power over love.



There is a significant cohort in the ELCIC whose spiritual roots come from outside this church. More than a few pastors and even greater numbers of laypersons have left other Lutheran churches for a variety of reasons and found a cordial, enlivening home in the ELCIC. I don't know if it has been said in print before, but on behalf of all of us who call ourselves emigrants and refugees, thank you ELCIC for your ministry of hospitality to us. You have made us feel at home; indeed, we are home. Our thank you is heartfelt.

Some of us came to the ELCIC wounded and broken. We bear scars to this day. That is especially so for those who were preparing to become pastors in the midst of the turbulence and power politics that characterized my former church in the 1970s. Earlier this year Fortress Press published a book by James C. Burkee called "Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod". It bears the overreaching subtitle: "A Conflict That Changed American Christianity". That is to say too much. But those of us who survived that era find that Burkee's research confirms what we knew and feared in our hearts at the time: that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Burkee's book is a soul-wrenching read. (Visit www.lutheranforum.org for two reviews on this book.) And while it's not necessary to bore you with the details, the book teaches—if nothing else—that the Church must always keep an eye out for the ebb and flow of the power and the politics within it. For the average person in the pew, this means that we must never substitute "church" and our vision or version of it, for God. It is only and ever God who is to be served. Idolatry, even in the name of faith, remains idolatry. For those to whom church leadership is entrusted, there is a need to constantly remind (and be reminded) that the church is not an end in itself, only a means to the end, which is always, and ever, to give honour to Christ and his name that we bear.

Renowned priest and author Henri Nouwen once wrote that perhaps the greatest and most frequent sin the Christian Church commits is choosing the way of power over the way of love. Without putting too fine a point on it, Lutherans are adept at power and politics. We are fighters rather than lovers, as evidenced by the ongoing propensity of the Lutheran communities to divide and splinter.

Each year on April 9 we commemorate Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian and Lutheran martyr. Many contend that Bonhoeffer's most significant written work is "The Cost of Discipleship", (Touchstone, 1995). Certainly his careful delineation of "cheap grace" versus "costly grace" is a needed corrective for the Church at any point in time. So also, his most memorable quote: "When Christ calls [one], he bids [them] come and die."

If you choose to delve into Burkee's book, you will need some healing afterward. There is a balm in Gilead: re-read Bonhoeffer's "Life Together" (HarperOne, 1978), which explicitly explains how we are to be in community with God and each other in the fellowship of Christ's body, the Church.

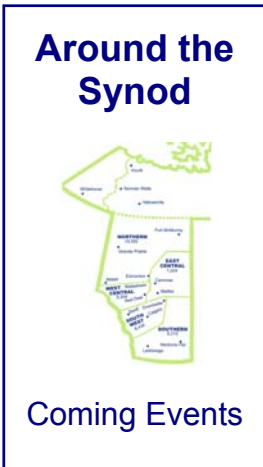
By Bishop Ronald B. Mayan

For your library:

Power, Politics and the Missouri Synod: A Conflict that Changed American Christianity by James C. Burkee (Fortress Press, 2011)

The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Macmillan, 1966)

Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, (Harper-One, 1978)



Do Something Different at Camp this Year:

Cow Crazy

Live the life of a working cowboy on a cattle ranch with the Livingstone Mountains as a backdrop. Enjoy Christian fellowship around the campfire on a three-day retreat for groups of 4 to 10 adults at Wilderness Ranch in southern Alberta. Contact Doug Rawling: drawling@telusplanet.net to book your group retreat.

Dance Daze

New for 2011 – Step into a weeklong session at Camp Kuriakos with an experienced dance instructor and learn several styles of dance. Participants will perform their routines at the Friday evening show. The camp runs July 31 – Aug 5 for young people ages 11-16. Maximum 15 campers. Contact: info@kuriakos.ab.ca or 403-748-3927.

MADD for Mulhurst

That's **M**usic, **A**rt, **D**rama and **D**ance. Explore your creativity within the backdrop of the outdoors during two exciting weeks, July 10-15 and July 31-Aug 5. The sessions wind up with a presentation of your artistic discoveries in a service of praise to God. Grades 3 – 12. Contact Mulhurst Lutheran Camp: (780) 389-2174.

Whisk What?

At Braeburn Lake Christian Camp north of Whitehorse, Yukon, some things are a little different. For instance, the sun doesn't set. At mealtimes, grace is said with gusto! The camp director must eat spaghetti with a giant, industrial sized potato masher. Trading Giant Utensils in for a "better" one is not allowed, even if Caesar salad is difficult to eat with a whisk. Oh – and watch for pudding! Watch for pudding?? Check the July schedule at www.braeburncamp.ca or call Trinity Lutheran Church at 867-668-4079.

Family Fun

Relax. Let somebody do the cooking for you while the kids are busy with their own programs, Bible studies, songs and games. Grandma and Grandpa can come too. Jul 10 to 15 – at Hastings Lake Bible Camp with Rev. Lee Woolery & Rev. Alvin Sorenson. Register at www.hastingslake.com or call 780-662-2557.

At age 65
Mulhurst Lutheran Camp
is not slowing down!
Come join the birthday
celebration on the
Fun Razer weekend
June 4 & 5.
Call Linda 780-389-4355
or Lorraine 780-490-0882



Photo by Ingrid Parker

Ecumenical Action

Vital Church Planting: “reChurch – Take Another Look”

May 26-28, 2011, at Concordia University College in Edmonton, Alberta.

Workshops will cover:
Mission in Aboriginal communities;
Fresh Expressions of Church;
Mission in Rural and Urban Communities; and more...

For information, please call the Anglican Synod Office at (780) 439-7344; or visit:

www.vitalchurchplanting.com

www.edmonton.anglican.org.



Acadia Place Project launched at Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Calgary.

KAIROS Calgary, representing 10 Christian denominations, and the Calgary Homeless Foundation support families at risk of or experiencing homelessness as they are rehoused with support at Acadia Place - a 58-unit apartment complex in S.E. Calgary.

Together, their goal is to raise \$1.5 million toward the mortgage on Acadia Place to provide lower rents for those most in need, and to engage volunteers in building projects and tenant support. If you can help, please call:

403-237-6456

**People for Progress
First Annual Charity Golf Tournament
to support educational programs for
underprivileged individuals
June 8 – Springbank Links, Calgary**

For information, contact Mary-Ann Stushnoff (Our Saviour) at 403-605-5563 or check the website: www.peopleforprogress.net

“May the Lord drive us to care about all His creation and iron out the kinks in our thinking so that we ensure that everyone is on par in opportunities for education and scores a decent quality of life. After all, life is the Master’s Tournament.” *Ron Bennett, Our Saviour*

Excerpts from letters of Rob and Keiko Witmer, United Church of Christ, Japan:

“Thank you for your continued concern and prayers for what is happening in Japan.”

March: “Farmers in the prefectures near the reactors are not able to ship some produce that is said to have a high level of radioactivity. But consumers have become very suspicious of any food items, including fish, which come from areas near the reactors. Dairy farmers are having to throw their milk away and, in some cases, where they have been evacuated, they have just had to leave their livestock to die.”

April: “In the areas hit hardest by the earthquake and tsunami, the work of looking for those missing or dead, moving debris, hauling and distributing necessary goods to those living in shelters goes on quietly and inconspicuously. The cherry blossoms are blooming and there are stories of how evacuees found strength just by viewing them.”

Thanks to Margaret Sadler

Faith in the Oil Patch – a trans-border conference

More than 30 farmers and ranchers with or without oil and gas leases met with clergy from the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Synod of Alberta and the Territories January 28 and 29 in Lethbridge, Alta., to explore how to be faithful people in oil country. Many are directly dependent on oil or gas for income and almost 100 per cent benefit from oil. Yet oil and gas exploration and consumption is putting God's creation under an immense strain. Four perspectives were presented and discussed. It became clear that ethical decision-making and action can become complex when our oil-dependent life and life-style, our economy, our politics and our understanding of religion is at stake.



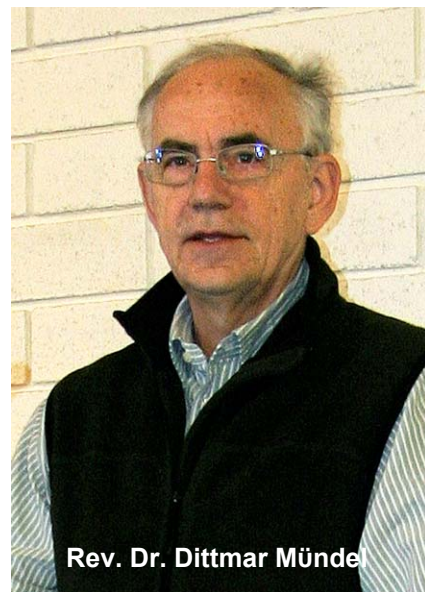
Donna Kennedy-Glans

One perspective was offered by Donna Kennedy-Glans. A former vice-president of Nexen energy company, Kennedy-Glans grew up on a farm in Ontario. "We should try to straddle farming and oil so that we can sit well in the saddle," she said. Straddling does not mean to "God-wash" or "green-wash" the concerns regarding energy production. It means instead to be a "bridge-builder" between various groups and interests. Listening well to aboriginal communities and their concerns, as well as to the oil companies' goals is the beginning of such a dialogue. Both groups have to know that someone understands the dilemmas they face. The bridge-builder creates "a breathing space in times of crisis" by helping all involved see beyond their own self-interest and into the greater community.

Rev. Dr. Dittmar Mündel from the University of Alberta Augustana Faculty gave the perspective that

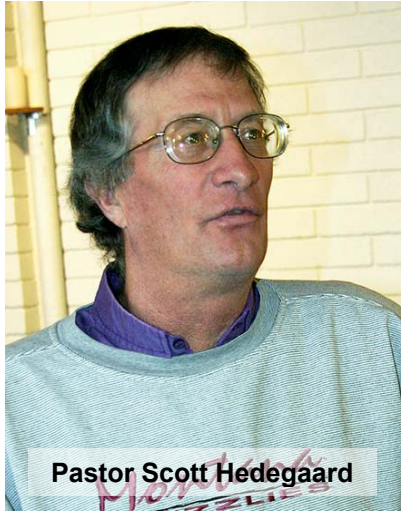
Hosea would have, once a prophetic imagination was cultivated. Hosea called the still prosperous Israel "adulteress" for "running after other lovers for her wool, her oil, and flax." While still believing in God, they were following the god of fertility as their way of trying to secure their ongoing prosperity. We are in a similar situation, said Dr. Mündel. We can't assess the damage that oil, gas, and coal, are creating for our environment through unfettered exploitation, when we put our ultimate faith in the god of progress. Oil becomes a quasi-divine power that ensures our progress. Any creature as idol is destructive to God's creation. We are willing to sacrifice many things, including the clean air, water, and land, as the necessary "price of progress".

Pastor Scott Hedegaard spoke from the perspective of someone who was "oil patch trash" for 12 years. He described the dangerous life of those who viewed the oil patch as "the place that God forgot." He was



Rev. Dr. Dittmar Mündel

Photos by Dittmar Mündel and Pat Mader Mündel



Pastor Scott Hedegaard

part of the young, male, hard-living crowd, that was viewed by companies as commodities valued less than their expensive equipment. The young men, aside from abusing alcohol and drugs, salved themselves and their pain through material possessions, purchased, of course, on credit. And, since a bust tends to follow a boom in the cycle of resource exploitation, their debt load became particularly stressful. For Hedegaard, it was faith that literally saved him and allowed him to ultimately take a different path in life. Since he followed Jesus, who experienced God’s presence most powerfully in God’s absence: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46) he knew where Jesus bonded most fully to our human condition and became one of us. No matter where we work, God does not forget us.


Rev. Dr. Cam Harder, from Lutheran Theological Seminary Saskatoon, concluded the presentations with a series of questions to guide our ethical discernment. In his ethical framework, it is important to ask, “Whose oil is it anyway?” and to acknowledge that all of creation – the earth and oil – are the Lord’s and not ours to do with as we wish. “How much are we really responsible for?” We, following the Genesis story of a limited garden, are neither managers nor stewards of all of creation, but of our little, bounded piece of it. Even one little piece of land is so complex in its web and interconnections that it is presumptuous to assume we can be stewards of very large areas. “Who are God’s favourites?” In contrast to thinking that we alone are the favoured creatures of God, we have to acknowledge that God is present in all of creation. We have to think in terms of the whole earth community in which we live and not just our immediate, human neighbours. And finally, we must ask, “What is God up to in this place?” We have to think and make our decisions based on discerning how God is working among us.



Rev. Dr. Cam Harder

Those wishing to pursue this important conversation can get copies of the talks from the synod office. It is a matter of faith and the health of our piece of God’s creation.

By Dr. Dittmar Mündel, Augustana Faculty



These people still need our help...
Japan - Colombia - Chile - Haiti

Canadian Lutheran World Relief will help you help them!

www.clwr.org or 1-800-661-2597

A Camp for All Ages *Come and Join the Fun.*

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Alberta and the North (LOMAN) is a vital and exciting part of our church's ministry. Wilderness Ranch (near Claresholm), Hastings Lake Bible Camp (near Tofield), Mulhurst Lutheran Camp (on Pigeon Lake) and Camp Kuriakos (on Sylvan Lake) are a group of outdoor ministry partners within the ABT Synod.

Each camp runs outstanding, Christ-centred summer programs facilitated by well-trained summer ministry teams of college-aged Christian role models. Joint Staff Training is an annual five-day event in mid-June before the start of summer program season. The ministries of LOMAN show their unity by planning and conducting a diverse and effective training experience. Topics and activities include Bible Study, program and worship planning, camping skill development, information on Lutheranism (being Lutheran isn't a requirement of being on staff or a camper), twice daily worship, a community-building night out, risk management, and excellent discussions about faith and the building of lifelong friendships.



Photos supplied by LOMAN

Although most summer programming is geared toward children, all four ministries also offer intergenerational programs such as summer family camps, servant events as well as retreat facilities and opportunities. Our confirmation retreat invites Lutheran and Anglican confirmation classes to camp for a weekend. The camp staff provides everything from food service to programming to overnight supervision while Pastors



and leaders focus on covering a significant portion of their confirmation curriculum and strengthening group dynamics within the class.

Camp isn't just for kids! Visit the individual camp websites to find an opportunity that's right for you at one of our gorgeous and welcoming LOMAN campsites. Their addresses can be found on the synod website at www.albertasynod.ca under Special Ministries – Outdoor.

By David Bragg, LOMAN Chairperson

From the Pew

We are accustomed to messages and stories being delivered from the pulpit. In this section of “Celebrations” you will read words belonging to people who sit in the pews. Over time, stories will be collected from churches throughout our Synod. They may tell of personal faith journeys or memorable experiences from the present or past – something uplifting, something funny or something sad. This offering, coinciding perfectly with Mulhurst Camp’s 65th birthday, is from St. John’s Lutheran in Wetaskiwin.

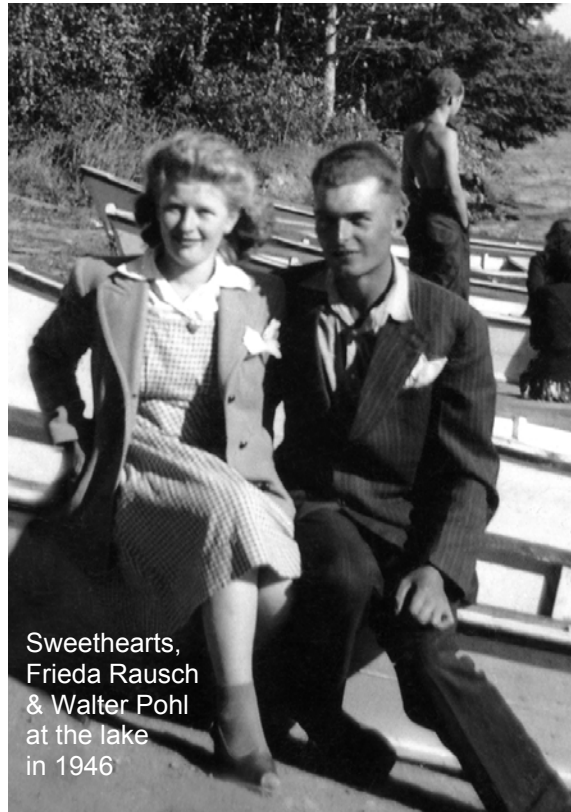
Walter and Frieda Pohl: **Memories of Mulhurst Camp**

When the snow melted in the spring of ‘46, a legacy was about to take root and grow beside the wildflowers and aspen. Volunteers began building Mulhurst Lutheran Camp. Brush was cleared and because there was no sand, stones from the lakefront were pushed into the water to make a “beach”. Granaries were pulled onto the site for some of the men to sleep in and the main hall was built.

One crew poured the foundation. Walter Pohl’s job was to help lay the floorboards. When he began measuring, cutting and fitting it soon became apparent that something wasn’t quite right. But in a true testament to the creativity of farmers and amateur carpenters, the building went up, strong and solid, two feet wider at one end than the other!

By July, even though the interior had yet to be finished, the camp was running and Walter was back, this time as a camper. Frieda Rausch was there too. She had been given time off from her work as a housekeeper, and Walter from farming. For a full week they enjoyed the rare freedom of getting away from their regular lives and the fun of being with people their own age – 130 young adults swimming, rafting, playing baseball, singing hymns and studying together!

There was no electricity. They lit coal oil lamps and lanterns when it got too dark to see. All the food – milk, bushels of potatoes, onions, carrots and freshly butchered meat - was brought in from neighbouring farms. Volunteers baked bread and cooked on a wood stove in a granary brought in for that purpose. Soups or stews were carried in water buckets to the main hall, ladled into



Sweethearts,
Frieda Rausch
& Walter Pohl
at the lake
in 1946



Frieda and Walter Pohl - 2011

bowls and eaten on makeshift tables the same height as the benches for sitting. There were tubs for washing dishes, basins for washing hands and faces, the lake for bathing. The cooks slept in the kitchen. The girls slept on beds of hay behind a partition in the main hall, the boys outside in tents. One of the pastors curled up in comfort on the reclining front seatbacks in his Nash car. The camper fee, which included bringing in a guest speaker from the U.S. education department, was \$10.00 each.

Although Walter and Frieda already knew each other through their association with Luther League, their romance blossomed during that week at camp and they married on November 21, 1946. Frieda smiles. "I knew of three other couples who were seriously courting at camp. They all got married. Who knows, there could have been more!"

Through the years, their association with Mulhurst Camp continued. All of their six children attended, and they donated time, money, and food. When their grandchildren were old enough, they took them to the lake so they could play in the water. Until recently, Frieda, with the St. John's women's group, baked cookies for camp.

This year, as both they and the camp celebrate their 65th anniversary, Frieda and Walter remember the scenery, the sunsets, the campfires and the singing. They were always aware of the reason they were there – to worship and praise God. Frieda says, "It was a powerful experience, learning with so many others to respect creation and our creator."

By Walter and Frieda Pohl, St. John's, Wetaskiwin, as told to Colleen McGinnis

Wilderness Ranch – Bringing People and God Together

Photo by Miriam Den Oudsten



Wilderness Ranch completely brought me, and my life back on track. The raw experience with the people at camp and with God is incomprehensible. I have everything to thank for this camp. It's a way to escape the world of make-believe; at camp it's just the real you and fellow Christians surrounded by nature. *(Anye)*

Camp has always been a place to come together as Christians and take every worry and concern to God. Being able to do so in the beautiful wilderness seems to have a purifying effect. After a week of camp with amazing people, you leave with a clean slate and a mad desire to return as soon as possible. *(Amy)*

Camp is a fun way to get to know yourself and God better. *(Annika)*

I can say that going to camp literally saved my life. Going to Wilderness Ranch let me really meet with God. The counsellors, well, one in particular, helped me realize that even when it seems that no one else is there, God is. When it feels as if no one cares about you, or if you're on this earth, God cares and is with you every step of the way. *(Danica)*

Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO)

In November 2010, IELCO Bishop Eduardo Martinez welcomed close to 30 Companion Synod representatives and partner organizations to a two-day consultation and dialogue in Bogota, Colombia. In his opening words he expressed the desire to explore, together, the mission of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. "Each voice is important," he said. "Each voice is valued. Each voice is equal."



L to R: Former IELCO Bishop Sigifredo Buitrago, Cathy Kochendorfer, IELCO Bishop Eduardo Martinez, and Rev. Larry Kochendorfer

Photo submitted by the Kochendorfers

The purpose of this gathering was for IELCO to present their *Plan Misional* to their companions, to lay out their priorities and to receive feedback as to how they see their church, synod or organization accompanying IELCO in the future. The need for an urgent awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Colombia is evident in the realities of: forced displacement, forced recruitment, sexual violence by gender, death by conflict, internal displaced persons, and confinement. Education is key in the role that IELCO can play within its own midst and as public witness in Colombian society.

In presenting IELCO's *Plan Misional* and the process used in its development, Bishop Eduardo explained the changes that the plan required in its structure. Since this plan had only recently been adopted, several pieces were still being clarified. He spoke of IELCO's priorities: base growth in congregations; securing the infrastructure of church buildings and properties; lay and ordained leadership, including the development of the school of theology; enhancing the diaconal (service) structure and ministries; and, consolidating the central administration of finances and moving to greater sustainability.

The Companions and organizations were asked what was needed from IELCO and to identify where they could project their future accompaniment of IELCO. Participants shared that the need was: greater communication; a list of project priorities; increased opportunities for mission exchanges; and help with advocacy in our own contexts.

I shared that the following accompaniment could likely be expected from the ABT Synod:

- Regular ABT Synod journeys to Colombia beginning in 2012
- An invitation for Bishop Martinez to be our Synod's guest at the 2012 Synod Assembly in Camrose which could include a reaffirmation of our Companion Synod relationship
- A gathering of representatives from current partner congregations for support, information sharing, and planning
- Further exploration of partner congregations within our Synod

Together with the wonderful hospitality, great conversation and rich learning, of particular importance for me through the consultation, was the opportunity to meet and to be in conversation with the participants from the two ELCA synods in attendance.

My wife, Cathy, and I look forward to journeying again to Colombia with 22 participants from Ascension Lutheran, Edmonton following the national convention in Saskatoon.

By Rev. Dr. Larry Kochendorfer, Assistant to the Bishop, ABT Synod

Dramatic Easter Vigil a First for the Yellowhead Cluster

On April 23 six clergy of the Yellowhead cluster, led by Bishop Ron Mayan, gathered in Vigil to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The service, held at Immanuel Lutheran Church of Rosenthal, was a shored experience of the traditional Vigil of Easter, but one that still proclaimed the resurrection powerfully.



Vigil Photos by Ken Naess

Through a series of dramatic readings the story of God's interactions with humanity was told up the moment when the young women found the tomb empty. The readings were begun by a worship team from Immanuel under Rev. Lucretia van Ommeran-Tabbert that creatively captured the atmosphere of the creation, complete with masterfully imagined crashing waters. The Rev. Sean Bell presented a 'radio interview' that focused on the story of the parting of the Red Sea, after which he and Rev. Erik Parker led the congregation in the camp song "Horse and Rider to the Sea".



Then Rev. Doug Heine appeared as the 'hawker of salvation' from Isaiah and offered a delightful retelling of the traditional reading from Isaiah 55. Doug's booming voice captured the attention of everyone present. Rev. Mick Macintyre played the part of the prophet Ezekiel, putting a slightly modern twist on the ancient vision of the valley of the dried bones, then Rev. Erik Parker retold the story of the three young men from the book of Daniel. Rev. Jim

Bredeson read the New Testament reading from Romans. Bishop Ron Mayan proclaimed the gospel of the resurrection and preached a sermon that included selections from St. John Chrysostom's *Easter Homily*.

This was the first time that the Vigil had been held in the area, and it was well attended by people from Edmonton, Spruce Grove, and Stony Plain as well as groups who came from as far as Edson and Hinton. Everyone gathered together afterwards for a potluck supper before returning home, with news of the resurrection ringing in their ears.

By Rev. Mick Macintyre, St. Matthew's, Spruce Grove

Andy Bannister Explains Conversational Apologetics

Andy Bannister, the animated lead apologist of RZIM Canada (Ravi Zacharias International Ministries), had no difficulty in holding the attention of the room full of people attending the 2011 Synod Study Conference in Canmore, Alberta.

He defined apologetics as formal argumentation in defence of something. In this case, it is the branch of theology concerned with the defence or proof of the Christian faith. Breaking it down further, it means talking about faith and our relationship with God. For many Christians this is not an easy thing to do, but at some point, every one of us is called to answer some big questions. Why do we pray? Why do we go to church? Why do we believe in life after death? Why is Jesus Christ important to us?

As Christians we need to remember that we are ambassadors to Christ. We need to respond and not walk away from the big questions. Most importantly, we need to answer with gentleness and respect, with our “worldview” spectacles firmly in place. In addressing the worldview, Andy presented the following principals. **We need:**

1. *complete* confidence in Christ and in the gospel’s message
2. *to be* equipped to be completely thought-through people. Too many Christians do not know what they believe or why they believe it.
3. *to have* genuine concern and compassion for those without Christ.
4. *courage* and boldness. We need to rediscover our voice and to realize we can love and respect people while standing firm on what we believe.
5. *to think* constantly about how to engage our culture, focusing one eye on the world and the other on the gospel so we can make that cultural connection.
6. *to pray* seriously and intentionally for our neighbours, our community, our world and to be bold in what we pray for.
7. *to be* actively engaged with the social needs of our communities. People need to see in us what the love of Christ looks like at the social level – social action and evangelism together.
8. *unity*. When Christians stand together, God often does astonishing things.

He concluded by saying that all of this is difficult, all of this is hard, but we need to rise to that challenge because there are so many opportunities out there. We need to step outside of our comfort zone. We need to act.

By Colleen McGinnis



Andy Bannister

Photo by Mike Wellman



Taking a “ski break” at the study conference.
L to R: Rev Jim Appleby, Rev Kirk Tastad,
Rev Tim Wray, and Andy Bannister

The Amazing Race; Run with Perseverance in Red Deer



Connie Landstrom

Mission minded people gathered March 26 at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer to hear a live video chat with Brian Rude from El Salvador. Brian's mission is to promote well-being, self-esteem and AIDS prevention in his work with prison inmates and at-risk youth. He provides pastoral support for AIDS patients and family members. "I approach my work with open ears, an open heart and open arms," he says. "Every visit is an inspiration and a blessing."

Diaconal Minister Connie Landstrom has had many opportunities to run the amazing race. A former missionary to Papua New Guinea, teacher at CLBI, pastor at Holy Family in Yellowknife, and now a missionary "in retirement" to Tanzania, she continues her missional life. "I thought about the race," she says, "and I

believe that whether you walk or run, it means going the distance. We also need to be aware of the other participants in the journey. It's amazing how God mixes and matches people and opportunities. These are years for action; not retreat from the vision and work in your neighbourhood and the world. That little 2 letter word still exists – Go!"

Alberta Lutherans have been involved in Colombia since the 1930's, most recently in the ABT Synod's capacity of companion synod with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia. Five years ago Ascension Lutheran, Edmonton decided to support a designated ministry project in Colombia and in 2009 Pastor Larry Kochendorfer traveled there with a group of youth and adults. He says, "I believe that journeys like this are life transforming. We can never be the same again." *The Gospel in action.*

Stepping Stones ... Connections

During lunch at the Amazing Race, I met Brenda Auge, an elementary school teacher and former member of Holy Family Lutheran in Yellowknife. She had come from her new home in Christina Lake, B.C. to see Pastor Connie Landstrom.

In August 2007 Brenda travelled with Pastor Connie to Tanzania as part of Holy Family's connection with the Mara parish in Arusha, Tanzania. While there she visited a nearby school, distributed gifts of supplies she brought from Canada, and addressed the teachers and students. Later that fall she received an email from the principal, Joachim Mdongwe, who shared his plans for he and his wife, Dora, to obtain their B Ed degree.



Brenda Auge

Together with the rest of the congregation, Brenda went to work filling her "Coin Jar" with loose change, Holy Family's method of collecting funds for their overseas missions, and in October 2010 Joachim and Dora graduated from Meru University.

When Brenda moved to B.C., her coin jar went with her, and now her new church family, Christ Lutheran in Grand Forks has begun the tradition of saving and rolling coins. Their cause? Buying lunch for students at Oloirien Secondary School in Arusha who cannot pay their school fees, and otherwise may not eat that day. *The Gospel in action.*

By Colleen McGinnis

Sarah Rudd Installed as Diaconal Minister at Holy Spirit



On April 9, Sarah Rudd (third from left) was consecrated and installed as a Diaconal Minister at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Edmonton. "It was a wonderful evening of community and celebration," she says, "as if the Holy Spirit stepped into the everyday and enveloped us all in the presence and joy of God." The sermon by Diaconal Minister Karen Triomphe was a reminder of the ministry of the diaconate, one of service and welcome, of justice and compassion. Sarah will direct her skills to the area of youth and family ministry.

Faith Nostbakken



In the fall of 2010, Faith Nostbakken, of Glory Lutheran, Sherwood Park, received the Master of Theological Studies degree graduating with distinction from Newman Theological College, Edmonton. Her research paper

for the degree's final project was: "Lutheran Spirituality: Living the Paradoxes of Faith by Ordinary Ways and Means." Faith was also presented the Joseph N. MacNeil Outstanding Achievement Award.

She is a trained spiritual director rostered at the Providence Renewal Centre, Edmonton and her ministry is recognized by the ABT Synod.

***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, Colleen McGinnis 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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