

notes from Hosanna JULY 2009

HOSANNA LUTHERAN CHURCH **Volume 23 Nbr. 7**
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Explore the Wonders of the Word!

Grab your gear and join us for a week of rockin' good fun at

DISCOVERY CANYON Vacation Bible School!

Sunday, July 5 - Thursday, July 9

6:30 - 8:15 pm

All kids from age 3 through Grade 6 are invited to join in!

Each day offers a new Bible story to explore through loads of fun activities - cool crafts, catchy songs, fun games and science experiments.

Come one or two days or all week.

Cost is FREE! Bring a friend!

VBS Mission Project

This summer our Vacation Bible School plans to focus on the ministry of On Eagle's Wings, an ecumenical Christian ministry officially recognized by the ELCIC. Offerings will be used to help fly volunteers and ministry staff into northern communities to give the children of the North (Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alberta and Saskatchewan) a VBS experience similar to the one they are having. While learning about children of the North, our kids will practice stewardship and discover the joy of giving and partnering with others.

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR TIM GRAFF

Thank You

I want to begin by thanking the staff, lay leaders and members of Hosanna for welcoming us as a family and assisting me in settling into ministry here.

June has certainly been a whirlwind of activity as I've begun to meet the people of Hosanna and learn about its ministry. I'm not sure July will be any less hectic since we have now sold our house in Calgary and will be moving on July 23. Until that time though, I will be searching for a new home and I ask for your prayers in this matter. I trust that God will continue to be faithful to us as he has proven himself to always be.

Newsletters and the Church's Future

I am of an age where I find myself caught between older generations where newsletters were run off by hand and younger generations who would rather listen to sound bites or video clips than have to read anything in print. Personally, I enjoy a good book and continue to read printed copies rather than electronic versions on a "Kindle" (a device for reading books electronically). At the same time though, I work extensively on a computer and turn to the Internet for most information.

The traditional church newsletter symbolizes the dilemma we find ourselves in as a church. We are caught up in a printed past that primarily services an older generation, a past that younger generations cannot always relate to. We are struggling with that past, trying to discern what to hold onto and what to break free of. At the same time though, the future continues to rapidly unfold before us, creating even greater gaps in communication between the church and the world God has sent it to proclaim good news to. How will we communicate the Good News if we use forms that no one seems to want or understand anymore?

WUZ UP God?

A youth oriented website has captured my question this month in the following way: "WUZ UP God?" What's God up to? Where is God leading us to? I'm not sure about the details, but I believe God is seeking to renew the

church in a way that will bring out the best of the past and yet make it into something new for the future.

In the short time I have been in your midst I have discovered a depth of compassion and love here. You are a community that cares deeply about people. I also sense that you are a people willing to adapt and grow. Our challenge though, will be to avoid rushing into quick fixes and yet at the same time, to steadily unbuild the church so that it can be reshaped by God's Spirit.

God has provided us with the raw resources, a rich heritage and incredible promises. I am hopeful that the good work begun here will move towards God's kingdom purposes.

Whatever God is up to I am excited that we can be part of it together!

Pastor Tim

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June 7, 2009

To Hosanna congregation and Church Council

It has been a privilege to serve Hosanna congregation as interim pastor over this past year. This is a wonderfully warm and dedicated group of Christians, with such a very able, hard-working and good-natured staff.

Being part of it is reward in itself, but then you added a lavish "second retirement" gift as well: the large patio planter and the very generous gift basket.

My sincerest thanks! May God continue to bless your ministry.

Pastor Cliff Guebert

Happenings at Hosanna

CALLING ALL ASPIRING DECORATORS!

On the Thursday before VBS starts (July 2 at 10:00am) we'll meet to decorate the north end of the church and hallway in a desert canyon theme. Rocks, cactuses (cacti?) a suspension bridge, sunset, desert animals... Then on Sunday July 5 after church, we'll finish up by rearranging and decorating the sanctuary and narthex. Come on out and put your creative juices to work! Talk to Sonja if you have questions.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Especially during the summer months we would like to encourage the participation of children and youth in various aspects of the worship service. If you are interested in assisting by handing out bulletins, collecting the offering, bringing forward communion bread, etc., please see Sonja or Evelyn in the narthex 10 or 15 minutes prior to the start of the service and she will pair you up with an adult to help.

Youth who are interested in playing instruments during worship should talk to Kari before she begins playing for the service to receive instructions on using your talents to enhance the worship music.

SIDEWALK RE-CONSTRUCTION in front of the church is expected to start in a few weeks. This means that parking in front may not be available, and possibly there will be no access to our front doors for a time. Consider using the north or alley doors if the front is not accessible. Extra parking is also available across the street in the JP High School lots on Sundays.

At the same time as the City does it's work, we plan to also re-do our front walkway with Paving Stones. Your special gift to the **PAVING STONE FUND** will help to make this happen.

The COOKBOOK SALE has been quite a success, with proceeds going to the Paving Stone Fund. There are a few extra books that are still available; talk to Johanna if you want one, but missed getting your name on the order sheet. Each book is \$20.00 (payable to Hosanna).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, HOSANNA! This year, Hosanna celebrated her 22nd anniversary on June 7th. As of the end of June, the total gifts received was approximately \$1800.00. This will be divided equally between the Hosanna Bursary at the Lutheran Theological Seminary-Saskatoon (LTS) and the Koh Kandal School Project in rural Cambodia. You may still add to this by writing "Anniversary" on one of the other lines on your offering envelope.

AT THE INSTALLATION SERVICE for Pastor Tim Graff on June 7th, the offering was designated to the Hosanna Bursary at LTS. \$808.00 received at this service will be sent to the Seminary to add to the bursary. The proceeds from this investment are given to a student at the seminary each year. Thank you.

WELCOME TO Samantha Silver, Hosanna's summer employee.

Sami will be working in the office over the summer. One of the tasks will be updating our membership records, so you might receive a call or e-mail from her or find a form in your mailbox asking for your birth date or baptism date or e-mail address, etc.

Samantha has just completed Grade 12 at JP High School and plans to attend The University of Alberta in the fall, working towards a BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts degree) or a BA Hon (Bachelor of Arts Honours degree) in Theatre. She and her parents Judi and Doug, and her brother, Phillip, have been members of Hosanna for 7 years (since 2002). Many will know Sami from the youth group, VBS or her acting involvement in youth services.

STAFF VACATION SCHEDULES:

Pastor Ron - on vacation now, back on July 14

Evelyn - away July 5-15

Lindsay - away July 1-6, 24-31

Sonja - away July 14 - Aug. 15

Johanna - away July 1-5, July 31-Aug.17 (plus days TBA)

Dear Hosanna Congregation,

Terry and I want to thank you so much for all your kind words, best wishes, love and support as we prepared for our wedding. It means a great deal to us. We do anticipate having a reception for all of our Edmonton friends and family sometime this Fall. We will keep you posted. God bless.

In Christ,

Terry and Evelyn

As I write in preparation for the July Newsletter, we have just completed our Sister Parish Service, worshipping and celebrating using the music of Central and South America. This was the 19th year that we have held this service, a service that reminds us to look around us: at our partnership with Divine Redeemer Lutheran Church and their Pastor, Miguel Angel Solorzano Fernandez in San Miguel, El Salvador; at our immediate neighbourhood and community; at our city, region, province and country to see that our God is an awesome God who loves us all in each of our own circumstances. However, we are reminded to not just look around us, but to go out and show God's love in as many ways as we can.

A note of gratitude goes out to those who helped shape or participate in the service - William Ramirez and his family: Maria, Jose Manuel, Juan Carlos, William Miguel & Jose Reyes; brass players - Nicole and Alana; Nils Hahn, Karl Hahn, Erwin Veugelers, Andrea Vogel, Kari Heise; and singers: Nancy Neumann, Rodina Couling, Josie Couling, Colleen Vogel, Mark Vogel, Ron Flamand, Ron Propp, Barry Couling, Terry Grieger & Greg Springate. The readers, communion assistants, ushers and worship assistant were all part of the El Salvador Support Group here at

Hosanna - and they also provided a wonderful lunch for us. THANKS TO ALL.

I see that many of you have signed up to be Worship volunteers for this next year. THANK YOU. Whatever you do is greatly appreciated and immensely important to our Worship Services. It is so wonderful to be part of such an active congregation. If you missed signing up during the T&T campaign, don't worry - you can always contact me...

Keep your eyes open in the Fall, when we will be implementing a schedule for special music, just like the Worship Volunteers, where individuals, families and other groups will be scheduled to provide special music at our services - BE LOOKING FOR IT!!! (Thanks to those of you who have already signed up on this specific list!!)

Enjoy God's blessings each day...

Evelyn,
Director of Worship and Music

Our FOOD BANK Ministry

Thank You, Hosanna family, for your contributions during Food Bank Awareness Month. We collected 3 heaping shopping carts of food - some of which stayed to replenish our supplies for people in need who come to our door. The rest went to the Food Bank. (See letter below.) Thank you also to those who answered our call for grocery bags!

Here are some statistics to chew on and digest:

From mid-March to mid-May we have served 338 adults (62 new), 159 children (37 new) and 14 infants (2 new). During the same period in 2008 we served 146 adults (35 new), 90 children (13 new) and 2 infants (0 new). Our average number of families served each week increased to 19 from 10 in 2008.

Thank you to all our volunteers who faithfully give their time to serving the growing community of people who depend on the Food Bank. Thank you especially to Ray Killips who, after many years of dedicated service picking up the hampers from the Food Bank warehouse, has had to retire. Thanks to Jack Smale and Ralph Trippel for coming forward to fill Ray's shoes.

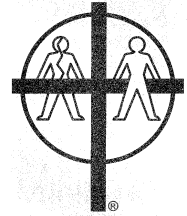
Diane Omerzu, Coordinator

Re: Your Kind Donation to Edmonton's Food Bank (June 19, 2009)

Your kind donation of 179 kg of food is truly appreciated by Edmonton's Food Bank (EFB). Each month, more than 15,000 individuals are served by hamper programs affiliated with EFB. We also distribute food to soup kitchens, shelters and other community meals.

Unfortunately, hunger and poverty exist in our community all year round. We believe that with continued commitment by our donors, volunteers, and community partners, we can make a difference in the health and well-being of our neighbours in need. We appreciate your contribution towards our work.

Marjorie Bencz, CM, Executive Director.



Questions & Answers about STEPHEN MINISTRIES

What is Stephen Ministry?

Stephen Ministry is a system through which members of Hosanna are trained and organized to help provide Christian caregiving. This multiplies the amount of caring ministry Hosanna can provide by giving us a whole team of skilled caregivers who are equipped to bring Christ's healing love to people who are grieving, in crisis, or experiencing other stresses in life.

Why Lay Ministry?

Stephen Ministry is based on the idea that all Christians are ministers. The responsibility for passing on God's love is for all Christians, not just for a chosen few. God has given us all gifts for ministry and called us to put those gifts to use. Stephen Ministry is a place where people with special gifts for caring ministry can use those gifts to bring Christ's love to people in need.

Why Stephen Ministry?

We have many needs for care in our congregation and community: people experiencing divorce, grief, a terminal illness, loss of a job, relocation, an empty nest, retirement, hospitalization, loneliness, and many other stresses or challenges. Often people suffer silently or do not request or receive the level of care they really need. With only two pastors for a congregation of about 900 members, you can quickly see why it would be impossible for our pastors to meet every single need of every

single person. Stephen Ministry expands the care Hosanna can offer and gives us a larger pool of people with the gifts, skills, and calling to bring Christ's love and care to those who most need it.

Who Benefits from Stephen Ministry?

Everyone benefits! Those receiving care from Stephen Ministers benefit because they receive prayer and support throughout the crisis they face. Stephen Ministers benefit through the spiritual growth they experience from being involved in meaningful ministry. Our pastors benefit because caring ministry at Hosanna is expanded, and fewer people will slip through the cracks. Most of all, you benefit from the knowledge that special care is available to you should you need it. In addition, you now have a place where you can refer a friend, neighbour, coworker, relative, or anyone else you know who is going through a difficult time. Stephen Ministry makes Hosanna a much more caring place!

Who Are Stephen Ministers?

Stephen Ministers are members of Hosanna who have gone through 50 hours of training in providing high-quality Christian care to individuals experiencing a crisis or challenge in life. Each are assigned a care receiver and meet with that care receiver for about an hour each week.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

I hope everyone has a relaxing and rejuvenating summer! Remember to keep your eyes and ears open during the summer months for some fun impromptu events. If you're in town and are stuck for something to do, don't hesitate to call me and we'll get a group together to have some fun in the sun!

THANK YOU

I would like to extend a special thank you to all those who have participated in Youth this year. I would also like to thank all of those is taken care of for approved fundraisers!

Lindsay Vandermeer, Director of Youth Ministries

What's Happening With WEICOP?

At the latest meeting of the West Edmonton Interfaith Coalition on Poverty (Weicop) held on June 11, 2009, a group from the Fusion Fellowship Church at 10125 - 153 Street gave a presentation on their community kitchen program. The program currently operates twice a month from their Church. They are hoping to expand to once a week in the fall. Each participant pays a cost of \$3.00 and is able to take home three full meals per person in their family. Child care is provided by the participants taking turns looking after all the children present, and cooking tips and nutritional information is also provided. The program is also working with the Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre to set up special kitchen sessions for men that the Centre has taken off the streets and placed in apartments. If you would like more information on this program, or if you would like to find out how you might be able to support the program, you can phone 780-952-2873. They would be pleased to hear from you.

John Campbell, Hosanna Representative to Weicop

BOOK REVIEWS - by Natalie Hohn. New to our paperback library!

Letters to the Thirsty - for Vision, for Life, for Rest by Edward Miller.

Seventy Devotions. The author, a former pastor, is the director of Bible Study Ministries in Newport, Rhode Island (which he founded in 1975). Published by Waterbrook Press, Colorado Springs © 1998, 192 pp.

The author encourages us to realize that God is always seeking us, though we often feel that we must be the seekers. Based upon scripture texts carefully chosen to support his findings, he not only encourages his own spiritual growth but tries to answer requested spiritual questions from a longtime friend.

We are encouraged to believe that God loves us with an unchanging love that never had a starting point and never will come to an end. Nothing we are, have or do will ever increase God's love toward us. He cannot love us more; He will not love us less; the spring of His love will ever be His love. There it is, in all of its beauty, wonder and mystery. Never stop responding to the Lord - the secret of all true seeking.

THE PAPERBACK LIBRARY IN THE
SOCIAL ROOM OPERATES ON
THE "HONOUR SYSTEM."

Living the Serenity Prayer: True Stories of Acceptance, Courage and Wisdom.. Published by Adams Media, Avon, MS © 2008 186pp

Though some of the sentiments of the prayer have been traced back as far as AD 500, the Serenity Prayer as we know it today was written and introduced in the early 1940's by American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr as a tag line to a sermon he delivered. In 1942, the prayer came to the attention of a New York Alcoholics Anonymous member who showed it to pals in AA. Another member, a printer, immediately printed the prayer on 500 wallet sized cards distributed at no cost. Eventually, the Serenity Prayer became AA's official prayer.

The book is a collection of stories from different contributors who tell of their experiences in using this prayer to bring courage and peace into their lives.

The Serenity Prayer begins as follows; there are 2 additional less familiar stanzas.

**God, grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and the wisdom to know
the difference.**

OUR PRAYER CHAIN

To request prayer for yourself or for others, contact:
Del Bennett or the pastors at 780-484-3932.

If you are interested in being part of the prayer chain,
please also contact any of the above.

THE CHURCH AT LARGE

From Margaret Sadler:

You've heard me talk about Lutheran World Federation "LWF" before.

- ▶ In 2000-01, Marcus and I worked with LWF in Mauritania. We were so impressed with the organization that we have continued to look for opportunities to maintain our connection.
- ▶ In 2003, the LWF gathered in Winnipeg for its Assembly—its highest governing body of its 140-member communion that gathers from around the world once every six or seven years. In anticipation of Lutheran visitors from around the world to that Winnipeg meeting, I worked with the Communications Committee of Synod to arrange a study tour in the Edmonton area. Some of you may remember the group that visited us here at Hosanna—Lutherans from Indonesia, Sierra Leone, and Germany. (Lisa Omerzu recently visited Marga and Hans Eberhard in their home in Meppen.)
- ▶ And then, in 2006, when Marcus and I were looking for opportunities for our year of service, once we saw the LWF opportunity in Cambodia, everything else paled in comparison.

Remember my comment that the LWF Assembly is held once every six or seven years? The 10th Assembly was in Winnipeg in 2003, so... the next Assembly, the 11th Assembly, will be held in July 2010 in Stuttgart, Germany.

The 11th Assembly theme is "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread." This fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer challenges the LWF and its assembly delegates to define prophetic responses to all injustice that threatens life in abundance: exclusion, poverty, lack of safe water, HIV and AIDS, neoliberal globalization, interreligious conflict, human rights violations, among others.

The vivid green bud of the Assembly logo illustrates this universal need for nourishment - how the petition for "daily bread" is both simple and vital, a basic commitment to ensuring life in dignity for all.



Each of the 140 member churches is designated a certain number of delegates and our ELCIC has announced its delegation. I recently received an email from our National Bishop Susan: "This is to inform you that National Church Council has voted "To appoint as delegates to the LWF 11th Assembly [National] Bishop Susan Johnson, [Eastern Synod] Bishop Michael Pryse, Jeff Buhse [a young man from Winnipeg], and Margaret Sadler."

I am so pleased and very honoured to have this opportunity and hope that I can "take you with me" through my preparations in the coming year.

ORDINATION: Erik Parker has accepted the call to St. John's Lutheran Church of Golden Spike, and will be ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament July 4th. Everyone is invited to Erik's Ordination at Calvary Lutheran Church 10815 76 Ave on July 4th, 5PM . Dinner and Reception to follow.

DESERT BLOOMS IN ETHIOPIA

Over the past six years, CLWR and its partner agency, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, have been supporting a project in the Afar region of Ethiopia that has significantly improved quality of life.

The project is focused on Aura, a village located about 500 km northeast of Addis Ababa near the border of Djibouti. Prior to 2003, people in this region subsisted as migratory livestock herders who struggled to find sufficient feed for their animals in the desert environment. In November of that year, working through Support for Sustainable Development, a local non-governmental organization, a base camp was established to serve as the nucleus for a permanent settlement. A major water management project was also initiated to tap the Aura River in a series of canals that now provide a year-round source for irrigation. Two crops per year are now possible. With training, farmers have learned to grow and

market sorghum, maize, tomatoes, peppers, papaya and sesame.

Since its inception, the base camp has grown to 100 households and is home to a high school, health care clinic and agricultural research station. All told, the project benefits some 650 households in the region. Overall management of this life-enriching endeavour, which involved an investment of nearly \$500,000, has now been successfully transferred to the local community.

- CLWR News Service

Bishop's July / August 2009 E- Message

I sometimes fear that my recognition and appreciation of the goodness of creation is hampered if not crippled. As a case in point, my landscape photos of Lazy Lake, BC - which serve as wallpaper on my computer screen - cause me to reflect on creation's beauty in a way that I seldom, if ever, do when I am in my backyard. I confess: my backyard is not a worship space; it is a work space. The lawn is not for enjoying - it is for mowing. The foliage of the trees and bushes are not for reflecting upon - they are for pruning. Even Dianne's potted flowers are not for admiring - they are for dead-heading. Why must we drive six hours before we hear nature sing? Perhaps it is because the mountain vistas require nothing of us - there is really nothing for us to do, except to lose ourselves in wonder, love and praise of the Creator Whose handiwork stops us in our tracks. My computer screen image is a sorry substitute for the real thing. I am living in the creation without recognizing that I am of it.

In his book *All Nature Sings* (Franciscan Press, Quincy University, 2002) former Lutheran bishop of Alberta J. Robert Jacobson notes that God's desire for us is that we truly live out the new kinship with all God's creation which was restored to us through the cross of Jesus Christ. If we had that perspective firmly fixed in us, not only would our life experience be richer, but our priorities in life might be rearranged in some major ways. "Creation bursts with promise. Wonders of creation are everywhere to be found. It is a paradise of beautiful things, beautiful creatures, beautiful people." (pp.383-386)

The sun is shining. Yet even when nature is singing, we don't do Sabbath Rest very well. Even when the pace of work lessens, and we can push away from our desks and monitors (and all the other accoutrements of modern work that hold us hostage), Sabbath Rest still eludes us. We believe the lie that we are what we do. Jacobson writes: "The value that the Lord derived from the First Sabbath Rest is precisely the value he desires for us... It is the value of a complete break from work, a pleasant regular interlude in our daily routines... We are simply to do it out of respect for the Creator. We are simply to trust that God knows what is best for us." (p. 395)

Take time this summer to re-connect with God's handiwork, near and far away. Try doing it without feeling guilty...

+Ronald B. Mayan, Bishop
Synod of Alberta and the Territories
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada