



January / February 2015

On the run after Christmas ...

Did you know that the Holy Family became refugees after they were visited by the magi? The Evangelist Matthew writes: "Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod" (Matthew 2:14-15). You can feel it: Joseph is scared. Only 14 days after his son was born he is so scared that the long journey through the Sinai desert to Egypt doesn't discourage him. King Herod threatened to kill all firstborn sons because the magi announced a newborn king. Nothing bothers king Herod more than someone who might take away his power and his wealth. He would never let it happen.

Joseph wants just one thing: His son shall live. So they leave Bethlehem without any notice by night to escape.

Many of you heard on Christmas that the Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) has sent a request to our congregation to support the refugee family Kanoun. This Christian family had to leave their hometown in eastern Syria in 2012 and is now in Beirut, Lebanon. In Canada they hope to find a safe and peaceful future. They have relatives in Etobicoke who will take over financial responsibility for sponsorship. Facilitated by the CLWR we as the Martin Luther Church have the opportunity to support the Kanoun family as a "constituent group" and to help with their social integration here in Canada, e.g. accompanying them to a doctor's appointment, helping them learn the English language, introducing their

three sons (between the ages of 17 and 27) to hockey.

What are the next steps?

Currently the CLWR is completing the application for Citizenship and Immigration Canada so that the family can receive a refugee visa. The application will be processed by the Central Processing Office in Winnipeg. This will take up to 9 months. After an interview and a medical exam they will get their visa to enter Canada. After arrival they will immediately receive permanent resident status.

What can you do?

Right now we ask you to pray for the family to help them keep up hope. We will also pray for them in our services. To prepare for their arrival we will form a support team that will coordinate our help. You can join this team or you can let us know what kind of help you can provide.

Thank you very much for all the offers we have received so far. May you and your loved ones have a safe and blessed new year 2015.

Sincerely,
your

In this issue read:

- What does Canadian Lutheran World Relief do?
- A visit from Martin Luther
- Introduction: The gospel of Mark
- Pulpit exchange in February
- Record attendance on Christmas Eve

Words from our Presidents

Dear congregation,

a whirlwind year is quickly coming to an end. We are very excited about all the activities and all of your participation this past year. We notice that the council initiative to become even more welcoming and inviting has started to spread roots (more information to come in the following months). This was easily seen at the Christmas bazaar on the first of Advent and even more so at the awesome performance of 36 actors (donkeys and camels included) at the Christmas play. We receive a lot of positive feedback which inspires us as we head into the year 2015.

Challenges with the integration of Wesley United Church are being overcome by constant open communication and a willingness to work together to keep the doors open for less fortunate people in our neighbourhood. The numbers for the community supper had dropped significantly in the first months at our location but are now increasing to previous levels.

What's up and coming?

Our apprentice, Yvonne Kohlmann, who is volunteering all of her Christmas vacation to contribute to the success of our church, arrived just in the nick of time for the December council meeting with a very special friend who is close to all our hearts. Wrapped safely in a box, this friend crossed the Atlantic in the luggage compartment of the Lufthansa airplane, to be unpacked in all his glory at the parsonage. Please listen to the announcements to find out when you can find video footage of this event on our website. Yes, you have probably guessed it by now. The Reformer, Martin Luther will soon begin his visits to members of the congregation to have his picture taken with you in your living room, with your most prized flower in the garden or as he reads with you.



If your New Year's resolution included thoughts of volunteering for a worthwhile cause, we have any number of excellent opportunities for young and old to embrace. The Syrian Refugee Team, the worship team, coffee team, women's church group, daycare board, Sunday school team and many more prospects are waiting for inspired people like you to make a real difference in 2015. We are looking forward to greeting and meeting with you in the New Year

Thankfully, your Presidents
Keith and Iris

Our new worship team starts in January

After the worship seminar in October and November, people were excited to participate more and to play an active role in worship. All who are interested are more than welcome to join our new worship team, whether you attended the seminar or not. You can find more detailed information on the new bulletin board in the foyer of our church.

Next meeting: Tu., Jan 6th and Tu., Feb 24th, at 7:30pm in the church.

Contact: Christian Ceconi, Ph. (416) 567-2487, pastor@martinluther.ca

Welcome Team continues

We keep on strengthening our tradition to be a welcoming and inviting church. The welcome team has its next meeting on Friday, Jan 9th at 10:00 am in the church.

All are welcome. Come and help!

Contact: Iris Schweiger, Ph. (905) 625-9174

Lenten Services every Wednesday, beginning on Ash Wednesday (Feb 18th)

We start into the time of Lent with our Ash Wednesday services (at 6:00 pm in German and at 7:00 pm in English) on February 18th. Throughout the time of Lent we have Lenten services every Wednesday at 6:00 pm in German and at 7:00 pm in English. We celebrate the English services together again with the other Protestant Churches of Mimico like last year.

Summer Camp 2015

The preparations for our Summer Camp 2015 have already begun. We hope everybody saved the date in their calendar. Just to remind you: **it's August 15th to 21st, 2015**. Flyers and sign up forms are available in the foyer of our church. Prices are the same as last year.

You can sign up at any time by contacting the church office. There is a discount for early registration until Feb 28th.

Contact: churchoffice@martinluther.ca, Ph. (416) 251-8293.

Everybody is welcome to join the camp team for preparations.

Contact: Anna Lisa Wienecke, campdirector@martinluther.ca, Ph. (416) 939-7441.

World Day of Prayer at Martin Luther Church on March 6th

White sandy beaches, coral reefs, crystal clear water: all this is found around the 700 islands of the Bahamas. Located between the USA, Cuba and Haiti, this island state is a dream come true for tourists. The Bahamas are marked as the richest Caribbean country. In addition it offers a multitude of Christian denominations.

But problems trouble paradise: extreme dependence from other countries, high unemployment rates and domestic violence against women and children.

Both sides of the coin come to light in the service written by the women of the Bahamas for the World Day of Prayer 2015. The central part is dominated by the reading of John (13:1-17) where Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. In the midst of violence and poverty this passage speaks to the women of the Bahamas as they discover Jesus active charity in this simple act.

All around the world women celebrate services on the 6th of March 2015 as part of the World Day of Prayer.

This year Martin Luther Church hosts this special event for all German Lutheran congregations in the GTA. We start with the service at noon and finish with a lunch provided afterwards.

Annual general meeting and welcoming of new members on Feb 22nd

During the service on Feb 22nd we will welcome new members and introduce them to the congregation. The service is followed by the annual general meeting. All confirmed members who participated in the life of our church during the past year have the right to vote.

On the agenda are reports and budget as well as the election of new council members and the annual plan for 2015.

60th anniversary of our church and visit from Martin Luther

In 2015 our congregation will turn 60. At the same time we are in the midst of the "reformation decade" leading us to the great jubilee of the reformation in 2017. Therefore Martin Luther himself will visit our congregation. On Sunday, Jan 18th he will come to our joint service and he will also start to visit members of our congregation.

Would you like to host Martin Luther at your home?

You can open your doors to Martin Luther as well. This is how it's done.

You come to church for a Sunday service of your choice to pick up Martin Luther. At home, you take a picture with him, your family and some friends you've been eager to introduce Martin

Luther to. On the following Sunday you bring him back to church for the beginning of the service.

Book your appointment with Martin:

Church office, Tel. 416-251-8293,

office@martinluther.ca.

Our guest on pulpit exchange Sunday: Pastor Rick Kwiatkowski

On Feb 1st Pastor Rick will preach in Martin Luther Church. Since Dec 1st he is the interim pastor at First Lutheran.

Pastor Ceconi will preach on Feb 1st in Christ the King Dietrich Bonhoeffer Church in Thornhill.

Bible Study every other week about the Gospel of Mark

On Feb 3rd a new series of bible studies will begin. We meet at 1:30 pm for the German group and at 7:30 pm for the English group.

Please bring your own bible if possible. You will get a plan for all meetings until summer during our first session. We will discuss texts from the gospel of Mark which are mentioned in the lectionary for the upcoming months.

Please also read the short introduction on Mark in this newsletter.

Next meetings: Feb 3rd, Feb 17th, March 3rd, March 17th.

Contact: Christian Ceconi, Ph. (416) 567-2487, pastor@martinluther.ca

News from ELCIC, EKD and DELKINA

Our Congregation is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Eastern Synod. We are partnered with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and member of the Deutsche Evangelisch-lutherische Konferenz in Nordamerika (DELKINA).

What does Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) do?

With your support and prayers, CLWR continues to effectively and efficiently respond to and challenge the causes and consequences of poverty around the world.

During the past year CLWR adjusted its strategic direction, which resulted in an increased emphasis on refugees and internally displaced people, with continued support for small-holder farmers.

We sharpened our focus geographically and took steps to work closely with long-standing partners in an effort to generate support from govern-

ment sources.

The results have been impressive. I was filled with a strong sense of pride when visiting northern Jordan and meeting with Syrian refugees receiving CLWR support, with major assistance provided by the Department for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, in cooperation with The Lutheran World Federation.

Children and their families now have a secure, safe, dry and warm place to live in host communities. Jordanians and Syrians are living and working side by side in pursuit of a common future, whether they might live in neighbouring countries or next door to one another.



What a difference we are making in the lives of Syrian refugees and Jordanians! To see the happy faces of Za'atari refugee camp residents, with sweaters from CLWR! What a huge difference this will make in the winter.

On behalf of my colleagues and me, I offer my heartfelt thanks for your support and the trust you place in CLWR to deliver programming and goods that are changing lives in Jordan and around the world. We give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve, in the name of Christ.

-Robert Granke, CLWR Executive Director
More information: www.clwr.org

Bedford-Strohm new Council-chairman of the Evangelical Church in Germany

(epd) The Bavarian Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm is the new President of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). The 54-year-old was elected to succeed Nicholas Schneider as top representatives of more than 23 million Protestants in Germany. Bedford-Strohm, will represent the EKD for the next twelve months. Because of a serious illness of his wife Anna, Schneider had resigned a year before the end of the term in office.

The new EKD Council has been Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria for three years.

Bedford-Strohm studied Protestant theology in Erlangen, Heidelberg and Berkeley (USA). He has professional experience in pastoral ministry, as well as a university professor, including Systematic Theology and contemporary issues in Bamberg and is married to Deborah Bedford-Strohm psychotherapist. The couple has three sons. Under the title "Whoever believes it is saved" Bedford-Strohm published 2013, a religious conversation with his son Jonas.



Theological Background: The Gospel according to Mark – the beginning of all gospels



It began in Jerusalem

In the middle of the old city of Jerusalem, near the guest house of the German Lutheran church is located the old Syrian Orthodox St. Mark's Monastery. Not long after you walk through the door and start talking to the people, you will hear: "This is the childhood home of the evangelist John Mark (second gospel). The first Christians gathered together in this home." Even though this view is not shared by all historians, the place is filled with the history of the early church in Jerusalem, to which the author of the gospel probably belonged. He learned and heard the stories about Jesus from the first eye-witnesses and apostles. Since the 2nd century he was identified with John Mark in the circle of Paul, who is mentioned in various places (Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11; Acts 12,12.25; 15,37.39). Whether this connection is accurate remains uncertain. The gospel was probably written around 70 AD.

Mark – the first gospel

Mark begins his gospel with the phrase: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of

God" (Mark 1:1). The Greek word *euangelion* (gospel) describes as much "good news". This is exactly what Mark intends to write. With his account he wants to awaken faith and joy, as he brings the good news of Jesus Christ to the people. So it is much more than a biography or a report. Mark creates a new kind of narrative, and starts a new literary format, the gospel.

But not only is the new important to him. He connects his Gospel with the Old Testament, with the prophets of old. The first phrase is followed by quotes from Malachi and Isaiah: "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3).

Beginning of a new era

As he tells of John the Baptist at the river Jordan, he establishes a connection to the escape of the Israelites into the Promised Land, the beginning of a new era. Similarly Jesus rings in a new era for Mark with his arrival in the world. Mark sees himself as an ambassador of this new era marked by Jesus. He wants to tell the people: "Jesus Christ, who lived as a man among men, was the son of God, in which the kingdom of God came into the world. He is the crucified and risen. We are invited to follow him." (H. Brantzen, *Who am I for you?*, Freiburg 2006).

The Year B in our lectionary, which has begun with the first Sunday of Advent, is dedicated to the gospel of Mark. More information will follow in next month's newsletter.

Christian Ceconi

Remarks and Reports

Lively Advent season with record attendance

With the joint service on the First of Advent, we experienced a brilliant start to the Christmas season. Not only the busy Christmas Bazaar had everyone excited but also the well-attended worship.



We sincerely thank the Dimpflmeier business for their generous donation for the bazaar!

On the 3rd of Advent, 36 actors performed a wondrous Christmas play. An imaginary time machine sent all participants and congregation members into the time of the birth of Christ to actively participate in this exciting story.

Many thanks to Amadios Pizza for the generously supplying and strengthen our actors with your delicious pizza.

Finally, on Christmas Eve, we experienced record attendance compared to past years: between both services there were over 400 people.

Thank you to all who generously participated in this exciting Advent- and Christmas season.

We congratulate ...

On November 16, 2014 **Malakai Ardern Lee Atin** was baptized. We welcome him as a new member in the congregation. His parents Heather and Aaron have selected a baptismal verse from Numbers for him:

*The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace..
(Numbers 4:24-26)*

We mourn ...

At the age of 32 years on October 29th, **Alexander Johann Stoefer** passed away. We said goodbye to him at a funeral service on November 8th.



At the age of 71 years on November 2nd, **Christel Mauke** passed away. We said goodbye to her at a funeral service on November 7th.

**So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.
God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.**

(1 John 4:16)

Regular Groups and Contacts

Choir

Every Tuesday at 6 pm. Next Rehearsal Jan 20th.
Choir Director: Linda Marcinkus, Tel. (416) 255-2612

Women's Group

Once a month, Wednesday at 11am at church.
Next meetings: Jan 14th and Feb 11th (weather permitting).
Contact: Daina Wienecke, Tel. (905) 939-2601

Church Coffee Team

Contact: Waltraud Laser, Tel. (416) 766-9373
Sign up sheet in church entrance

Confirmation Classes

Next course starts September 2015. Contact:
Pastor Christian Ceconi, Tel. (416) 567-2487,
pastor@martinluther.ca

Youth Group

Next Meeting: See MLC Youth Group page on Facebook or contact:
Amy und Sonja Schweiger, Tel. (905) 625-9174

Bible Study

Discussion on 14 Tuesdays at Martin Luther Church of texts from the Gospel of Mark. At 1:30 pm in German and 7.30 pm in English respectively.
Contact: Pastor Christian Ceconi, Tel. (416) 567-2487, pastor@martinluther.ca

Summer Camp Planning Team

Meeting upon request.
Contact: Anna Lisa Wienecke, Tel. (905) 939-7494.

Sunday School Team

Sunday School every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Next meeting: January 2, 7:30 pm.

Contact: Tanya Zielke, Tel. (416) 622-7032, tanya.a.zielke@gmail.com

Welcome Team

Next meeting: Friday, January 9, 10:00 am at church.

Contact: Iris Schweiger, Tel. (905) 625-9174

Worship Team

Next meeting: 7:30 pm on January 6 and on February 24 in the church.

Contact: Pastor Christian Ceconi, Tel. (416) 567-2487, pastor@martinluther.ca

Website Team

Next meeting: Jan. 20, 7:30 pm in the church.

Contact: Eike Schamburek, eike.schamburek@gmail.com

Support Team for Kanoun Family

Contact: Church office, Tel. (416) 251-8293, office@martinluther.ca

Martin Luther Church Daycare Board

Contact: Ulrich Karthaus, Tel. (519) 942-6244

Martin Luther Church Daycare Office

Contacts: Helen Schmidt (Administrator),

Teresa Kurek (Supervisor)

Tel: (416) 259-2861

daycareoffice@martinluther.ca

Community Lunch & Food Bank (Wesley Mimico United Church)

Every Saturday, 11 – 1 pm (except for the last Saturday of the month)

Volunteers always welcome!

Contact: Karen MacPherson, Tel. (416) 255-4337

We're here for you:

Church Office

Anita Ratz and Marlena Muller

Tel. (416) 251-8293, mlchurch@bellnet.ca

Office Hours:

Tuesday, 9:30-12

Wednesday, 9:30-12

Friday, 9:30-12

Pastor

Pastor Christian Ceconi

Cell. (416) 567-2487

e-Mail: pastor@martinluther.ca

Office Hours and visits by appointment. Please give us a call or send a short e-mail.

Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCIC & EKD)

2379 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Toronto, ON M8V 1B7, Phone: (416) 251-8293, Fax: (416) 259-2889

Pastor Christian Ceconi, Email: pastor@martinluther.ca

Cell Phone (416) 567-2487

German Radio Devotion, Sundays 9:30 am on AM 530

Church Newsletter Publisher: Martin Luther Church, Pastor Christian Ceconi

Website and Email Distribution: Mona Frantzke; Mailing: Anita Ratz

Service Plan

Jan. 1 2015	New Year's Day		5 pm Joint Service with Jazz music	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 4 2015	2nd Sunday after Christmas/Epiphany		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 11 2015	1st Sunday after Epiphany / Baptism of our Lord		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service Both with Holy Communion	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 18 2015	2nd Sunday after Epiphany		11:00 am Joint Service with Baptism of James Sykes and Visit from Martin Luther	Pastor Ceconi
Jan. 25 2015	3rd Sunday after Epiphany		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi
Feb. 1 2015	4th Sunday after Epiphany / Pulpit Exchange		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Kwiatkowski
8. Feb. 2015	5th Sunday after Epiphany		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service Both with Holy Communion	Pastor Ceconi
Feb. 15 2015	Transfiguration of our Lord/ Last Sunday after Epiphany		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi
Feb. 18 2015	Ash Wednesday		6:00 pm German Service 7:00 pm English Service	Pastor Ceconi
Feb. 22 2015	1st Sunday in Lent / Invokavit		11:00 am Joint Service with Welcome of New Members and Holy Communion Followed by Annual General Meeting	Pastor Ceconi
Feb. 25 2015			6:00 pm German Service 7:00 pm English Service	Pastor Ceconi
March 1 2015	2nd Sunday in Lent / Reminiszere		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi
March 4 2015			6:00 pm German Service 7:00 pm English Service	Pastor Ceconi
March 6 2015	World Day of Prayer		12:00 pm Worship Service Followed by Lunch	Pastor Ceconi
März 8 2015	3rd Sunday in Lent / Okuli		9:45 am English Service 11:00 am German Service	Pastor Ceconi



Sundays with the Sunday School symbol have Sunday School take place at the same time as the worship. The children meet in the Church and have their own program after Children's Time.