

Congregational newsletter



LUTHERAN CHURCH
— Founded 1955 *Geğründet* —

December 2007 and January 2008

Devotion

Dear Members and Friends of Martin Luther Church,

In 1991, my wife and I have seen this Christmas picture for the first time. We were on vacation in the former Czechoslovakia, had visited Prague, Carlsbad and Pilsen, then we wanted to hike in the Bohemian Forest for a few days. During the trip through the impressive mountains, I turned on the radio and said “Let’s just listen to the news, though certainly nothing special is going on.” The first thing we heard was the voice of Volker Rñhe “We do not expect a threat to our borders, but the first alarm phase is to be initiated for the German Armed Forces.” And then we found out that there had been a putsch in Moscow against Gorbatschow; and demonstrations

against a possible invasion by the Soviets in Prag took place on the Wenzel’s Square. – We did not go hiking, but drove rapidly towards the border and home. Suddenly, in the midst of a carefree vacation, we felt that our world was threatened by disorder and war. The Christmas picture we saw in the Castle of Karlstein. It was painted along with eight other

pictures of Christ, commissioned by Peter I. of Rosenberg, the chief minister of Emperor Charles IV. (seen at the right lower corner in the picture), in the 14th century. We could feel that Prague, at that time, was leader of the cultural development in Europe. The intriguing thing of the pictures of the

so-called “Hohenfurther Master” is their two-fold character. They still shine forth in their golden gleam of Byzantine icons, but they are also very human already, uninhibited and playful, created in a manner indicating the modern times.

This is clearly shown in the angel who proclaims the good news (above to the right): “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.” Here, he casually leans

with his right arm on a cloud. The centre of the picture is the birth of the Saviour by Mary. We are witnesses of the first moment of a great happiness, where the young mother holds her newborn tenderly in her arm. In this, both things are shown: That Jesus enters into the poverty and misery of us humans – he is born in a simple stable, almost in the middle of a



wilderness. And at the same time, the brilliance of God's light shines forth from this picture, mainly through the magnificent cloths on the bed in which Jesus was born. In a new Christmas song it says "See, the good times are near, God comes down to earth. Shepherd and king, big and small, poor and rich are invited by him. Rejoice in the hour!" It is seen here exactly like that. In the midst of the realistically and lively painted goats and sheep stands a shepherd and is astonished, he still cannot fathom what is happening here. And below, a rich person is kneeling in adoration; he is likeable, as he is shown as the tiniest in this picture. Very interesting is the conversation between Joseph and the midwife in the foreground to the left; Joseph is helping to prepare the water, in which the newborn is to be washed. In his face, too, helplessness is written. He cannot understand what this mysteriously glowing night is supposed to mean. The midwife, as a woman, is familiar with birth, and she seems to explain it to him and also the meaning of this special birth, this simple maid.

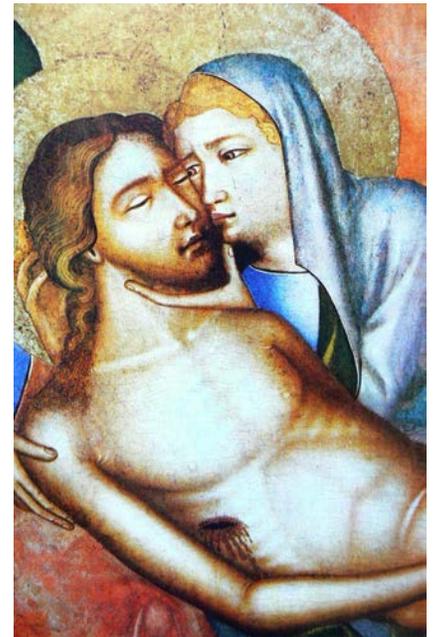
It is a painting from the Middle Ages, and here much of it has a figurative, spiritual meaning. The scene with the bathwater is so important in the paintings of that time, because it points to the baptismal water.



To Jesu baptism in the Jordan, when his public mission was to begin. And it is also pointing to our baptism, in which we are granted Christ's salvation for our life. And the tender embrace of Jesus and his mother means the deep communion which is

possible between Christ and the faithful. One could look at this picture and sing the famous Christmas song of Paul Gerhardt "I stand beside your manger here". And still, in spite of all this golden splendour of this Christmas painting, it is not forgotten, that living in this world and following Christ are connected with deep suffering. Namely, this intense closeness of Mary to Jesus is portrayed a second

time, but in a very sad manner when he is taken off the cross. Again, Mary is tenderly searching in Jesus' face, but this time, she does not find an answer. Jesus' eyes are closed, his facial expression has disappeared into death. Mary experiences here only death and pain. This will



not be the end; the conclusion of the nine-part picture cycle is the portrayal of the resurrected: Christ defeats death and brings life. This is what impresses me and comforts me in these old and wonderful pictures. They describe the great suffering which we have to endure in our life at times; the pain which physical suffering inflicts on us, the sorrow, when loved ones are being taken from us. But they place these experiences of pain into God's light. As Paul Gerhardt says: "I lay in the deepest night of death, you were my sun, the sun that brought me light, life, joy and bliss."

And it is important to me that I and my wife discovered these pictures at a time of the great danger, when in Moscow, Jelzin could courageously but barely avert the relapse into the cold war. Above our world, plagued by misery, hunger and war, shines forth the light of God's love and peace, which we can experience, which can fulfill our life if we trust this message and let our life be marked by faith. And we shall find out that the Christmas message is valid and powerful against all disorder of this world. "Glory to God in the highest and, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased."

I cordially wish you a happy and blessed Advent and Christmas Season and God's merciful guidance in the New Year 2008,

Your Pastor Alexander Mielke

Dear Congregation,

The year 2007 approaches its end, and we want to thank you in the name of the Church Council for the financial support we have received again.

In the last Annual General Meeting, a few projects were considered. For the last phase of the organ renovation, \$ 7,500.00 were budgeted, for a new showcase in front of the church on Lake Shore Blvd., \$4,500.00, and for the years 2007 to 2009, a total of \$16,000.00 – 17,000.00 were/are planned for new windows and doors. Due to the skill in negotiating of one of our very active seniors, Mr. John Schmidt and of our President Edmund Scholz, (many thanks, John and Edmund for your efforts!), the church council was made a very favourable offer for the entire replacement of windows and doors of the parsonage in the amount of \$ 13,000.00, if we have the work done in one single process. As this is a saving of far exceeding \$ 3,000.00, we have therefore postponed the other projects to the year 2008, and were able to complete these renovations to everyone's approval even before the arrival of our new Pastor and his family. In addition, this will also be a marked saving in electricity and heating costs.

It should not be overlooked that we have a very active working group of men who have completed many jobs inside and outside the parsonage, as well as in the church and 5 Superior through their selfless efforts, often they even paid for the material; this way they have saved the congregation at least \$ 15,000.00 this year. A heartfelt Thank-You to these gentlemen, who do not want to be named.

The congregation also decided at the Annual General Meeting to support the mission "Loaves and Fishes" with \$ 2,000.00 this year. As the government adds to every donated Dollar four Dollars, our \$ 2,000.00 will grow into \$10,000.00, and thereby we contribute towards the lessening of world hunger. We also send the money directly to Brazil, which is donated by congregational members specifically for our sisters and brothers of the Sao Paulo congregation without any administration charges. Unfortunately, these donations have declined considerably this year, even though we were informed through reports by Mr. Gunter Gall that the congregation in Brazil is very much dependent on our help, in order to just carry on the programs in their day care centre.

To be able to carry out our mission for the year 2007 as well as our projects for 2008, we enclose in this newsletter an envelope for a special donation and hope for your generous support, so that our work in the vineyard of the Lord can continue.

In the name of the Church Council, we wish you a blessed Christmas Season and may the year 2008 be guided and protected by our Lord.

Your Edmund Scholz, President, and Hans-Joachim Arndt, Finance Secretary

The Christmas Play is just around the corner...

The Sunday School Christmas play is coming quickly on December 16. We will be rehearsing every Sunday until then and we will have a dress rehearsal on Friday December 14 at 6pm at the church. We'll have pizza at 6pm followed by the rehearsal from 6:30 to 8:30pm. Please contact Monika Schmidt at monikakschmidt@gmail.com with any questions about the play or the rehearsal schedule.

MOLL – BERCZY – HOUSE

In the meantime, I could get to know the Moll-Berczy-House. The founding member of our Martin Luther Church, Hildegard Schnick, has lived there for three years and feels very much at home.

Moll-Berczy House offers a special opportunity for German-speaking seniors, is led by the “Organization for German-Canadian Seniors”, of which our congregation is also a member. It is situated in Scarborough, 1020 McNicoll Avenue, in the Tendercare Building, with many green spaces and ample parking. It received its name from Albrecht (Berczy) Moll, who was born in Noerdlingen in 1744 (today on the Romantic Road close to Ulm), who became the founder of Markham and co-founder of Toronto.



Gabriele Papandopoulos from Swabia, the very devoted supervisor, showed me the very beautiful premises. There are 28 newly renovated, bright and friendly rooms, including all meals, cleaning and laundering. Every day, there are opportunities for coffee-hours with German speaking people, cake and music, furthermore, daily activity programs like games, trips, live music, gymnastics, German films, books and magazines. For healthcare and wellbeing, a German nurse is available 24 hours daily. It is connected to a

Canadian nursing home.

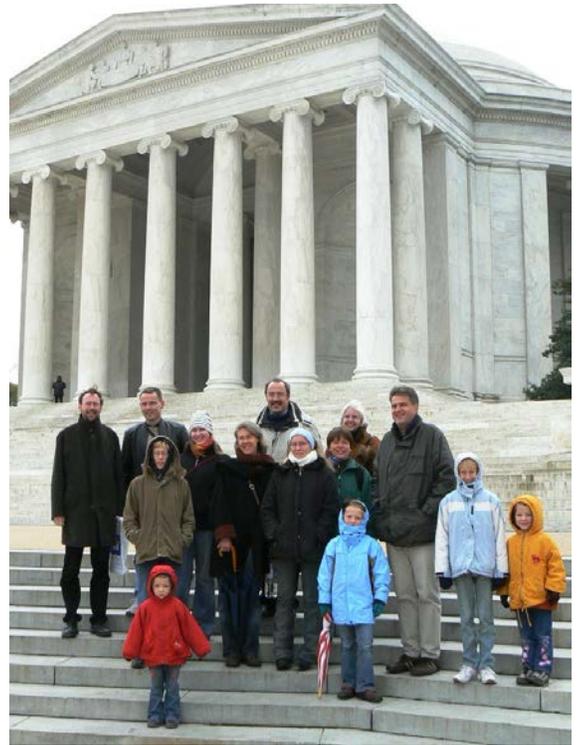
If you are interested, for example to view the home without any obligation, you can contact me, but even better call Gabriele Papadopoulos – Phone: 416-497-3639, Email: mollberczyhaus@yahoo.ca

Your Pastor Alexander Mielke



CONFERENCE OF EKD – PASTORS

The Annual Conference of the North American EKD Pastors took place in Washington this year on the November 11th weekend. Being together with the Pastors' families of Pastor Martin Mencke/Washington, Pastor Wilfried Wassermann/New York and Pastor Christoph Ernst/Ottawa, we were able to exchange thoughts about the very different congregational situations and about new ideas for congregational work. Here I discovered that our Martin Luther Church in this circle is the only congregation which celebrates an English-speaking service every Sunday, a very important step, which our congregation has initiated early on. I realized during the concluding church service, how well we are off with our own church building: The German-speaking congregation in Washington has to rent the American-Lutheran Pilgrim Church for her Sunday Services. On the other side, they can enjoy large, bright rooms for the congregation in a house taken over from the German Military Pastoral Care. It was very interesting for me to gain a quick insight into other German-speaking congregations. The next conferences of the DELKINA and also of the North American EKD-Pastors will take place again in two years.



MILTON SCHWANTES IN SAO PAULO

Gunter Gall reports to us on the Evangelical congregation in Sao Paulo and the very well-known Brazil theologian Milton Schwantes, with whom we are connected through the support of a day care centre founded by him.



On September 26th, the Lutheran congregations in Sao Paulo celebrated the marvellous improvement of the physical condition of Pastor Milton Schwantes. In August of the previous year, another brain surgery had become necessary. After a long wait, he seems to be improving now. His wife Rosie had invited thirty guests to a Thanksgiving Service at home, among them pastors and representatives of universities. During the past years, Pastor Milton Schwantes had very poor vision, in spite of this, he took the city bus time and again to the university. At the close of the Thanksgiving Service, Pastor Schwantes officiated at communion, for the first time after a long pause. He feels strong enough to undertake the former duties. What limitations he is still suffering, is not mentioned in the Brazilian article, yet his will to live is renewed again.

The home service was under the verse from 1. Peter 5, 7: Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you.

A big Thank You to this team, who do a great job by renovating the basement of the pastor's house in order to provide Franziska with an own room: M.Zabel, E.Pahnke, J.Schaefer, R.Peter, E.Horn, E.Scholz and J.Schmidt (unfortunately not on the photo: J.& R.Zungri).



Please note: My day in office will be Tuesday morning in the future, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. You can contact me any time on my cell phone, Nr. 416-567-2487, and, if you like, arrange a meeting with me during the week. Our secretary, Mrs. Anita Ratz, is available in the church office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. respectively.

Starting this December, I will mail a **written birthday greeting** to our church members. Unfortunately, our birthday list is quite incomplete. If you would like to receive a birthday greeting and are unsure whether your birthday is known at the church office, please give your dates to our secretary. In case you notice that someone does, unfortunately, not receive a greeting, please help us and point it out to us immediately. Many thanks.

Special **stamps from the 50-Years-Anniversary of Martin Luther Church** are still available. This might be nice for any letter to relatives and friends. One sheet of stamps contains 40 stamps, value each 52 Cents, and can be bought for 21 \$ in the church office. Please contact our secretary, Mrs. Ratz.

With the church council and the families I have discussed that **our confirmands regularly contribute their help to our church services**. The aim is that they become more familiar with our church, and also during this time provide an important contribution to the church services. Everyone will take on a reading once a month during the church service. Furthermore, they can help to greet the congregational members and hand out songbooks, or help operating the elevator after the service. We wish our confirmands that they experience the time until confirmation as an important, helpful and blessed time! Your Pastor Alexander Mielke



It has been a great pleasure having the role of social director for the Martin Luther Church. Unfortunately due to various reasons I am not able to continue. If anyone would be interested in organising events such as hikes, cultural events, concert groups, etc. please contact Dina Wancar. Thank you!

WE BAPTIZED

Eric Norbert Leupolt

November 4, 2007

In times of trouble you will protect me.
You will hide me in your tent and keep me safe.
Psalm 27,5

BIBLICAL SELECTION FOR THE YEAR 2008

**Jesus Christ says:
Because I live, you also will live.**

John 14:19

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Radio Devotion (in German) every Sunday 9:30 a.m. on AM 530

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MLC E-Mail Distribution List

Please take a moment to fill out a slip of paper with your name and e-mail address to enroll in our MLC Email List and either mail it to us or leave it in the church office next time you attend a service. In this way you will receive up-to-the-minute church news right in your inbox. Please be assured that your email address will be blocked from view to safeguard privacy. Also, please indicate whether you wish to receive the church bulletins by e-mail **only** (and thus save us the cost of mailing it) — otherwise we will still gladly do both.

Please add my name and e-mail to the MLC Email Distribution List:

Name: _____

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Church Newsletter by email only: yes / no .

Return to: Mona Frantzke, List Manager mona.frantzke@rogers.com, or:

Martin Luther Lutheran Church, 2379 Lakeshore Blvd West, Toronto M8V 1B7 416-251-8293

*Herzlich willkommen zu unseren Gottesdiensten
im Dezember & Anfang Januar 2007/2008*

*Welcome to join our Worship in Martin Luther Church
December 2007 & Januar 2008*

2. Advent – December 9

9:45 a.m. English Service
11.00 a.m. Deutscher Gottesdienst
**jeweils Abendmahl/both with Holy
Communion**

**6:00 P.M. Adventskonzert
"Es ist ein Ros entsprungen"
Konzert mit deutschen und
österreichischen Liedern
und besinnlichen Texten zur
Adventszeit**

*gebracht von den gemischten Chören
Edelweiß und Schola Cantorum
unter der Leitung von Manfred Petz*
**Advent Concert With German And
Austrian Songs**
*Edelweiss-Choir & Schola Cantorum,
directed by Manfred Petz*

3. Advent – December 16

**10.00 a.m. Gemeinsamer
Familiengottesdienst mit
Weihnachtsstück des
Kindergottesdienst**

**Joint Family Service with Christmas
Play of Sunday School**

Heiligabend/Christmas Eve – December 24

**5:00 P.M.
Feierlicher Heiligabendgottesdienst in
Deutsch und Englisch
Christmas Service in German and English**

**7:00 P.M.
Christvesper
Christvesper in English**

Christmas – December 25

**11:00 A.M.
Deutscher Gottesdienst**

Altjahresabend/New Year's Eve – December 31

**5:00 P.M.
Deutscher AbendmahlsGD**

Neujahr/New Year's Day – January 1

**4:00 P.M. Gemeinsamer Gottesdienst /
Joint Service**

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Deutsche Radioandacht sonntags 9:30 Uhr auf AM 530*