

Congregational newsletter



February 2007

LUTHERAN CHURCH
— Founded 1955 *Geegründet* —

Devotion on the Verse of the Month for February

*Dear Members and Friends of
Martin Luther Church !*

If there is one thing that constitutes our Lutheran faith, it is this: being made just through faith. That is the focus of the watchword for this month from the letter to the Romans. Those are Paul's words and it is his main topic. But what does "just" really mean?

The text does not speak of something that we can make happen. It speaks of that which God does.

He is the one who makes us just. This making-just through God can also be called "justifying". As humans we "all have sinned", says Paul. Thus we cannot *make* ourselves just, but can only *believe* justly. Martin Luther once declared: "in ordinary life one calls justice the virtue that gives everyone that which is his own; in the scriptures one's faith in Jesus Christ is justice". – This is not as complicated

as it sounds. God made the decision through Christ to love us, regardless of who we are and what we do wrong. That exists nowhere else. Or can you picture that your bank would abate all your debts in advance upon opening a new account? I believe such a financial institution would be immensely popular! – God balances our "account of sins". To wholeheartedly accept that is the basis of our

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Letter to the Romans 5:1

Lutheran faith. But, do you know what? That is not so easy, even for inveterate Lutherans. They are sceptical. "Where is the catch? God must be

asking for something in return!

We probably have to be good Christians!" – Yes, it is good when we love others, when we are fair and true to God: but that is always the second step. God loves us first, without any effort on our part. He makes us just.

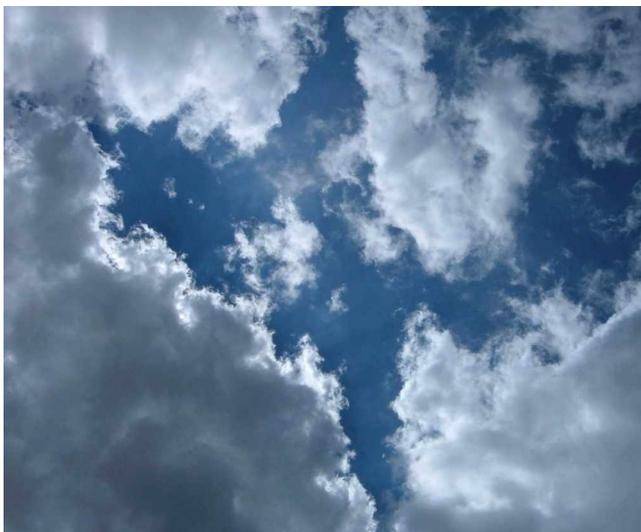
And because of that we are at peace with him – period! As well, we do not need to worry that God could ever cease loving us. We can be calm and

reassured. – Time and time again, I am being asked by a catholic woman, whether God has forgiven her late husband and whether he is indeed in heaven. She is worried that he will remain in purgatory for a long time before his soul will be delivered. I realise what a difference it makes when God's forgiveness and justification of one's sins ranks first in one's faith.

There is no more uncertainty, no purgatory, no waiting for salvation. We are at peace with God and can long for heaven.

With best wishes for the month of February,

Your Pastor
Stefan Wolf



Looking Back On Advent, Christmas And New Year's



A big „thank you“ to those who helped with the organisation of the services around Christmas. The kids and teachers from the Sunday School retold the Christmas story in a really imaginative way. Parking lot attendants instead of shepherds, university professors in place of the three wise men made it clear: the Christmas story is still modern, its message is timeless – Jesus is coming into this world! Young and old, all enjoyed the performance very much. There was quite bit that one could discover in the birth of Jesus. 25 contributors, props, the stable of Bethlehem, a bicycle, a taxi and a stretch limo gave it a professional appearance. We were also more than satisfied with the technical support, which made

possible an unobstructed hearing of the children's voices. The services on Christmas Eve also surpassed all expectations. “We have no more chairs to put up!”, could be heard among the ranks of the Church Council members, who were more than busy distributing programs and seating the app. 400 guests. Straw stars festively adorned the Christmas trees, the windows were lovingly decorated (also refer to “Angels” article), the kids moved in at the end with their lit lanterns and joined the congregation in singing “Silent Night” – all together created a very festive atmosphere. A small chamber choir formed around Andrea Wienecke sang wonderfully in the two services. Four scholarship recipients (Tanya Zielke, Marlene Mueller, Nicole Koo Tze Mew and Jan-Lukas Wolf) were given a monetary award to finance their university studies in part: drawn from the “Eberhard-Schwantes Educational Fund”, an endowment that is dedicated to our late Pastor Eberhard Schwantes and out of which children of our congregation receive an initial aid for their studies. This is meant to be an incentive for high school graduates to get involved in our congregation, just like these four youths. – The English service saw an attendance increase of close to twenty percent. Magnus Hjerpe played classical guitar pieces.



The turn of the year was both full of atmosphere and verve. We had a satisfying attendance at the Holy Communion on New Year's Eve and jazz music the day after.

Angels



Have you noticed? Quietly and unnoticed cute, affectionately crafted angels joined the decoration of our windows. They were well-perceived and appreciated by our congregation. Thanks a lot for this wonderful idea!



Meeting Of The Church Council In The Parsonage

As tradition, the last church council meeting of the year took place in the parsonage in December. Despite numerous key items on the agenda, we ended the meeting on a cozy note. Food was also well provided for. This is our modest 'thank you' for the tireless efforts of the church council members.

Sunday Service Followed By Movie



We cordially invite you to our joint service and the screening of a movie on January 28th at 11:00 o'clock. Please bring along some lunch for yourself! The movie is called "The Straight Story" and is about an old man who starts a journey on his riding mower to visit his sick brother. The leading role is played by Richard Farnsworth ('Matthew' in "Anne of Green Gables"). A tranquil, moving film with lots of wisdom and a quiet, clever humour.

Please Continue To Donate For The Foodbank



Sometimes it is very easy to help. We became aware of that when we delivered the collected items to the Foodbank earlier this month. The boxes of cans, rice, noodles and other non-perishable food items are helping those who have little. And for each one of us it is not much of expenditure to purchase one or two things extra on our shopping trip and take that to church. Please continue to help us fill the baskets near the front entrance of the church.

Adult Retreat To Camp Edgewood

From **Friday to Sunday, February 9th to 11th** our bible retreat to **Camp Edgewood** will be taking place. **Please sign up for it right now!** We will try to arrange for carpools and will, as usual, meet on Friday at 2:00 p.m. at that camp of the Lutheran Church near Guelph and depart again on Sunday after attending the Sunday service and having a lunch together. The topic of this year is:

"We are a beggar, that is right – or: what it means to be a Lutheran."

Seeking A New Pastor

The application process in Germany is under way. As you might know, we will again have the opportunity to receive a pastor from the German Evangelical Church (EKD). It appears that innumerable applications were sent in. After the application deadline on December 28, 2006, 14 submissions were short-listed, of which 7 applicants will be interviewed. The EKD will then present us with a preliminary selection of two to three applications presumably by the end of February. Those candidates will potentially be invited by our church; this however is not certain yet and will also depend on the materials (cassettes, video, written documents) sent to us. We will keep you informed through the usual announcements during the service.

World Day Of Prayer On March 2nd In Our Church!

March 2nd is the date for the Women's World Day of Prayer in our church. To this we cordially invite all other German-speaking congregations as well. The Sunday service starts at 1:00 p.m.! Here is some information about this year's topic and country of the World Day of Prayer, Paraguay.

A precious, delicate lace, called Ñanduti, forms the centre of the picture of the Paraguayan artist María Victoria Servin. This typically Paraguayan piece of art emerged out of the creative fusion of the indigenous and European cultures. The different patterns represent the rich nature of Paraguay and are connected by one thread to form something whole. The circular form of the Ñanduti lace symbolises the omnipresent God. The World Day of Prayer from Paraguay leads us to a rather unknown country in the heart of Latin America. In the program of the service we hear of the paradisiacal beauty of Paraguay, the tight relationship of the people, but also from their pressing economic and social problems. In 1989 the military dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner, which lasted for almost 35 years, found an end. The political and societal transition is lengthy and difficult, especially because of the overshadowing corruption everywhere. The people's poverty grows more acute, consequences of which are migration and child labour. In this situation we are reminded by the program of the promise to Sara (Genesis 18, 1-15) that we can trust God's word even in seemingly hopeless situations and that for God nothing is impossible. Then a text from Ephesians (Chp. 4, 1-16) reveals our calling, tasks and abilities with which we can turn our world to the better. We are also carried and stirred by the beautiful songs from Paraguay and the powerful music from that country. Women from ten different confessions make up the Paraguayan World Day of Prayer Committee and give us, through that ecumenism an encouraging example. The theme is: **"Unified under God's tent"**. It suggests the care, shelter and promises that God offers us. What does it mean as human beings, as mankind, in our colourful and conflicted world, to be united under God's firmament, to be a "living body" that is called "Christian community", the "world church", "children of God"?



Please, let us know !

We need help to prepare coffee on Sundays.
Please register with Mrs. Scholz: 905-625-0548.

Do you need a ride to events and Sunday services?
Call us! Phone: 416-251-8293.

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of our congregation will take place on February 25th, after our joint service. The reports will be available in both English and German one week prior to the meeting.

We Found A Janitor

The search has found its end. Mr. Ali Giladies will be our new janitor and will live in the apartment above the day care. We will introduce him in the next church newsletter.

Passed away...

**Karl Alfred Meyer-Bothling
Ursula Das
Bruno Frost**

**You are mine.
Isaiah 43.1**

We baptized...

**Renée Iris Clutterbuck
Kayla Rae Clutterbuck**

**'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows
me will never walk in darkness but will have
the light of life.'**
John 8:12

Thank You

It was, as always, incredible how many Christmas and New Year's wishes were sent to the parsonage. Quite a few came with a present. As a family, we could like to thank you very much for that. We enjoyed the time that we had together, reading, unpacking and admiring the various gifts a lot. Take a close look – are you able to find your card?

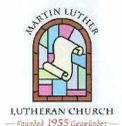


The last Word:

**Each one act
As if God wanted
To fulfill a great deed
Through him.
(Martin Luther)**

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