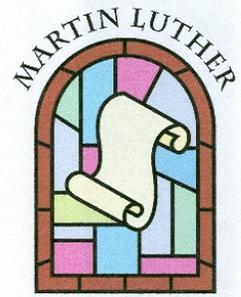


# CONGREGATIONAL NEWSLETTER



LUTHERAN CHURCH  
— Founded 1955 Gegründet —

February 2008

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## DEVOTION

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*Dear Congregational Members  
And Friends of Martin-Luther-Church!*

At the end of January, I was able to attend a moving event on the topic “Steps through Holy Land”. A pilgrim group of Canadian Pastors reported on their experiences in Israel and Palestine, and the music group Inshallah from the Lutherlan Waterloo Seminary inspired with their songs. I remember especially the verse which we all sang: “Yarabba ssalami” – a call of Palestine Christians during their church services: “God of peace, let peace rain down on our land” A cry out of great suffering.



A year ago, I myself could be in Israel with a group of Bavarian Pastors, also a few days in Jerusalem. When I think back what the most impressive place was for me during this trip, I see the Mount of Olives before my eyes. The wide mountain with the countless white stone graves. The garden of Gethsemane with the age old olive trees. They give a strong impression of the place, where Jesus has spent the last hours with his disciples. In the Gospel of Matthew we read: “And he took with him Peter and James and John, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then Jesus said to them: “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here and watch with me. And going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, My Father, if it is possible, let

this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Mt. 26, 37-39).

From the Mount of Olives one looks across to the Temple Mount, where the golden glittering Muslim Rock Dome above the austere Jewish West Wall makes it apparent how great the struggle and fight over this land is. In January, images of the torn-down Ghaza-Wall went around the world. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who streamed into freedom, in search of food and of medicines in Egypt. And matching those images, at the event of Inshallah, the lamentation

formed the centre: “The segregation wall stands in the way of peace!”

I think back to my trip to Israel. I still see before my eyes the countless bullet holes in the Dormitio Church, dating from 1948, at the time, when the Arabic neighbours attacked the newly founded Israel, and the Jordanians burnt down the centuries old Jewish quarter. The Jews, who had escaped the catastrophe, saw themselves threatened by a terrible new one. I still see before me the antiballistic missile defence, directly beside a children’s play ground - a museum item, part of a memorial for the fallen, but also always a sign of the fright of Israeli children, fearing bombardments by Kassem-rockets. I can un-

derstand that the security wall was built; it makes it possible for the Israelis (and all those who come as tourists or pilgrims nowadays), to move around in the land in security, to some extent, after many years of permanent fear of terror.

However, I also remember how shocked I was in view of the enormous Israeli settlements directly besides Bethlehem: the neighbouring hill entirely full of large compact high-rises, everything strongly secured by the military. My impression also is, that Israel has intended for a long time to restrict the Palestinians and to crowd them out. Therefore, I, too, regard the demand as urgent at this point in time, that Israel stops the settlement politics and reverses it, so that a viable Palestinian state has a chance after all.

“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.“ This word of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane lets us sense how much Jesus suffers under the misery of this world. His path leads Jesus to the cross, he becomes a sacrifice of hate and hostility, which devastate this world; he feels the destructive power of sin

on his own body, to the last consequence of an excruciating death. But in exactly this way he overcomes death and the suffering of the world. The resurrected, who bears the stigma of the cross on his body, says: ‘Because I live, you shall live also!’ This word from John 14 shall accompany us as the watchword through this year of 2008. Jerusalem, the place of a fierce battle between the religions, is, through Jesus cross and resurrection, also the place of the greatest hope for our world.

When we trust in Jesus, then we are granted reconciliation with God and with people. The mission of the Church is, therefore, to proclaim this reconciliation, to support justice and peace in the conflicts of this world. To be messengers of reconciliation, for admonition and hope in this feuding and tormented world! With Ash Wednesday, Lent begins. To let the suffering Jesus open our eyes for the suffering of the world, that is part of our path through Lent.

*Wishing you God's blessing and guidance,  
Your Pastor Alexander Mielke*

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## INVITATION TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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Dear Martin Luther Congregation,

The Church Council and Pastor Alexander Mielke wish to invite you cordially to our Annual General Meeting on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, at 12:00 p.m, after we have celebrated a Joint Service at 10:00 a.m.

It is this time again, when we bear witness before the congregation for what we have achieved and what we still want to achieve. Pastor Mielke will certainly present his plans for the future. Please reserve this day for the Annual General Meeting and follow our call, to demonstrate thereby your interest in our congregation.

We are all a part of Christ's body; therefore, it should be our duty to participate in important decisions for the future of our congregation. The life of the congregation and the responsibilities do not solely rest on the shoulders of the Church Council; all of us should contribute our part. Please come to the meeting, we would be very glad, for thereby you give us the support and the proof what the congregation means to you.

Please note down the date on your calendar: March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008, at 12:00 p.m. Annual General Meeting. And please bring your own lunch, this will make preparations easier, thank you!

With best regards, Edmund Scholz, President

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## CHRISTMAS PLAY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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We could enjoy a wonderful Christmas play of the Sunday School. The circumstances of the performance were dramatic at first, for just during the night before the 3. Advent, a snowstorm began to rage over Toronto. The children and their families took the road to Martin Luther Church courageously, but only a few congregational members came. So the performance was repeated on the 4. Advent, and the play, which the children themselves had thought up, (two children are being locked up in a shopping mall, and find the way to the manger with toy animals and Santa Claus) was given enthusiastic applause. A heartfelt Thank You to Monika Schmidt and her team, who have prepared everything with much love and effort. She was especially glad that the Christmas project was successful, and that many donations came in, so that through WorldVision for the sum of \$1,200, in a developing country a stable can be filled with animals, which is a great help for a needy family and an entire village. Many thanks to all who have supported this project!

For the day care centre in Sao Paulo, which the Martin Luther Church has supported for years, \$1,512.92 could be made available. A heartfelt Thank You to Gunter Gall, who keeps in contact faithfully and conscientiously.



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## ADVENT CONCERT

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On December 9th, we could experience a very nice Advent Concert, presented by the Edelweiß-Choir und Schola Cantorum. Commented with knowledgeable and humorous introductions by the choir leader Manfred Petz, numerous songs rang out, mainly from the Austrian and southern German regions. Gunther Kunzelmann, founding member of the "Deutsches Theater Toronto", caused the listeners to reflect through concise and moving texts about the Christmas message. All who attended were invited to a sing along of well-known songs as "Macht hoch die Tür" or "O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf", which sounded particularly nice with the piano accompaniment. A heartfelt Thank You for this successful Advent evening!



### **Singing , Santa, Food and Families**

Martin Luther Church Daycare would like to thank the Ladies of Martin Luther Church who have again made the holidays a little easier for some of our families with a generous gift bag. All children also went home with a gift. Thanks to friends of Deana Tapley, gifts for school-age children were donated. We are all looking forward to a Happy, Safe and Peaceful New Year.

*Marilyn Richardson, Supervisor, Martin Luther Church Day Care*





Pastor Alexander Mielke wrote a book about his six years of living and working with the Maasai in East Africa. The title is "höhle unterstand zelt", containing 184 pages and 10 B/W photos. The German texts are mainly short reflections upon experiences

in every day life. It also includes some essays on e.g. the characteristics of the language Suahili, polygamy in pastoral care, defending of land rights or biographies of Maasai Christians. It costs \$ 10.00, which are to support the Health Centre in Pastor Mielke's former congregation. It is available after the services and in the church office (you also can order it by phone or email). Here three examples:

#### UNGELEGENE BELEHRUNG *jakobusbrief 4, 15*

bei jeder gelegenheit  
- lehren die weißen ratgeber -  
sag:  
ich will  
ich kann  
denn ich bin

die afrikaner sagen  
bei jeder gelegenheit:  
wenn gott will

und lehren mich so:  
dass bei jeder gelegenheit  
ich bin  
ich kann  
nur gilt  
wenn gott will

#### NUR POLYGLOTT

die frau die irgendwo in der steppe lebt

spricht ki-kamba  
ihre muttersprache  
ki-pare  
mit den nachbarn über ackerbau und  
pflanzen  
ki-massai  
mit den hirten über die innereien der rinder  
ki-suahili  
die landessprache braucht sie für radio und  
zeitung  
ki-englisch  
so heißen fahrrad- und autoteile

jede sprache öffnet eine welt  
aber sie weiß noch keine sprache  
für ihre ganze welt

#### UMGEKEHRT

Wenn Erfüllung  
in der Rückkehr zum Ursprung  
zu finden ist, in dem Sich-Binden  
des Vereinzelten hinein in Gottes  
Unendlichkeit,  
dann liegt Urteil und Sinn  
über unserer Zeit  
nicht darin, wohin  
wir gelangt sind, und wie weit -  
sondern dass wir heim gesucht sind  
wie zu Vater und Mutter ein Kind.  
Dann ist das Frühabgeschnittene  
nicht ferner dem Vollendeten  
als das Langgereifte, Weitentwickelte.  
Darum erachte ich das dunkle Dickicht  
von Mensch- und Weltenlos  
von Anfang an nicht  
als hoffnungslos.

An interesting comment in regards to the death of a Pakistani student in Mississauga from the magazine "Faith Today":

# Death in a Muslim Family

By James Beverley



How should we respond to the allegations that the strangling of an Ontario teen by her father was religiously motivated?

**M**uslims in Canada are facing another case of damage control. In 2006 it was the arrest of 17 alleged terrorists. This time it is the murder of Aqsa Parvez, the Ontario teen allegedly killed by her own father in early December. The murder allegedly revolved around the daughter's decision to stop wearing the hijab (traditional Islamic head covering).

Many people rushed to blame Islam in their initial public comments. One Facebook group has for its title: "Aqsa Parvez: Killed by Islam." Michelle Malkin, an American political pundit, wrote on her influential blog: "The nightmare of sharia is alive in Canada. Shame, shame, shame." Moderate Canadian Muslim leaders Tarek Fatah and Farzana Hassan put the blame on extremist Muslim imams who preach that not wearing the hijab leads to rape and illegitimate children.

Most of the country's Muslim leaders have asserted that the Parvez case is not about Islam. "It was, without a doubt, unIslamic," wrote one Muslim blogger, and then added with anger: "Why, *why*, **WHY** is it that whenever someone who is Muslim, or has a Muslim-sounding name, does something . . . it's automatically blamed on Islam?" Mohamed Elmasry of the Canadian Islamic Congress wrote: "I don't want the public to think that this is really an Islamic issue or an immigrant issue. It is a teenager issue." One Muslim group has called for "the strongest possible prosecution" of the girl's killer.

Various websites track her death to cultural divides, immigration issues, patriarchy, western sexual mores and even white feminism. There are also many bloggers who target religion in general. ("Religion is the sole root of all that is wrong with the world.") Numerous pundits blame the father alone. ("I think he did it out of rage and didn't really think about what he was doing.")

Three crucial choices can help us react wisely to this tragedy. First, we should resist the urge to accept one-cause explanations. Her death is more likely the result of many factors, some more significant than others. A multi-causal theory probably makes more sense of the complex forces that shaped her world and her family's world. It is not simply about Islam, the hijab or being a teenager.

Second, again as part of the complexity, let's recognize that the word Islam carries multiple meanings. Is Islam to blame? Well, what do you mean by Islam? If you are talking about the Qur'an, then beware because no Qur'anic text sanctions her death. The four schools of Shariah law condemn this kind of killing. No Muslim organization has tried to justify her death. It would be nice to stop here. However, Islam has other meanings. There is the Islam of the street, the Islam of tribal Pakistan, the Islam of the militants, the Islam that so hates the West and its individualism that a father could kill his own daughter if she . . . what would she have to do?

Third, a redemptive reaction to Aqsa Parvez's death will give her tragic story its only decent ending. There is already enough hate and stupidity. Can we ratchet down the pressure on teens to fit into our over-sexualized culture? Can Muslim imams think more clearly about the unintended impact of sermons? Can there be better social networks for immigrant fathers struggling in a new country? Can critics of Islam stop lumping all Muslims together? Can we work on improving Christian-Muslim dialogue?

On this last point, consider the full-page ad in the *New York Times* (November 18) from Yale Divinity School. This ad, to which I was a signatory, responded positively to an October 13 overture from 138 Muslim leaders calling for better Muslim-Christian relations. "So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill." No, these two Muslim and Christian documents are not perfect. But they represent a great starting place. ■

Most Muslim leaders have asserted that the Parvez case is not about Islam

*James A. Beverley is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary. He is co-editor of Peace, Order, and Extremism: A Canadian Perspective on Moderate and Militant Islam to be published by Wiley later this year.*

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## GREETINGS FROM THE WOLF FAMILY

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Now Christmas can come...“, said Merlin, after he had greeted his brother Jan-Lukas at home on 14.12. Fynn was also joyfully excited and first had to take Jan-Lukas very firmly into his arms. For two weeks, we are now again complete as a family. As we wanted to add to our Christmas mail this year a few domestic impressions, you receive, for once, a uniform letter. And what would pictures be without being able to see all the wolves...

But to be honest, it is really not very easy to write the same thing to all of you. Some live in our area, of these, we see some often, others less often; and again, some of you live further away, and then there are still the many contacts in Canada. All are different people with whom we have different connections. Will we be able to manage general greetings in this case? In August we celebrated our Open House with our friends close by here. We spent a few beautiful hours together and enjoyed the reunion and the eager attendance (96 persons came), and together we collected Euro 1,000.00 for 'World Vision'. The children decided on the following projects: a house customary to the region (Euro 600.00) a harvest starter set (Euro 50.00), a water pump (Euro 160.00), teaching materials and books for one student (Euro 30.00), a bicycle (Euro 90.00) and a survival aid kit for a person in need (Euro 75.00). Right, if you recalculated, you figured out Euro 1,005.00. As the children discussed the individual projects so keenly, they arrived at the joint decision, that the listed projects are the most meaningful. Of course, there are an abundance of other projects worthwhile to be supported, but who knows... perhaps we may have another Open House sometime? However, then without a film team! As a family, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you for attending our Open House. We have truly enjoyed it very much. In the fall we have already written a general letter to all the Canadians. We will enclose it for those who have not received it. This simplifies the writing of this letter enormously.



The settling in and finding our way around in the old homeland gets better from week to week. As somewhat impatient people, we have very clearly felt that we already knew in theory that one must give oneself enough time. The move from Canada to Germany was, on the whole, for the four of us a much greater step than in the year 2000, when we moved from Germany to Canada. As parents, we are once again enthusiastic about our children. How courageously, bravely, with discipline and self-confidence they mastered the change of place, fills us with respect and pride. Certainly, it is not always easy to be children of Mirjam and Stefan Wolf...Jan-Lukas has wonderfully completed his step into independence. Therefore, we had, as parents, more time and opportunities to take care of Merlin and Fynn. With both of them it becomes ever clearer that they settle down in their everyday life. Though in the beginning, they did not touch their instruments, now we can hear them more and more often. Merlin has begun to play soccer again, Fynn has joined a basketball team. In addition, Fynn has also discovered play-acting and has been given a part as an extra in the play "As once in May" in the regional theatre. This gives him unspeakable joy, and, of course, we will try to take Jan-Lukas to the play when his little brother stands on the stage. Even though Jan-Lukas has to do write an assignment, the three of them use the time to play. They make themselves comfortable and spend time together. It is nice to be a family.

This letter will probably reach you too late to convey Christmas greetings. Still, we hope that you can look back on a peaceful holiday. We wish you all, near and far, a blessed year 2008 and remain with kind regards,

Mirjam, Stefan, Jan-Lukas, Merlin & Fynn Wolf

And here good news which we received through Iris Schweiger:

"On January 13, the second child of Pastor Susanne Hofmann was born. His name is Samuel. Everybody is OK, mom, child, husband and baby."

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## IMPORTANT DATES

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Beginning with Ash Wednesday, you are cordially invited to our **German Lent Services**, always on **Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.** in the Martin Luther Church.

We are holding our **annual general meeting of the day care on February 12, 2008**. The meeting will be held in the basement of the Church starting at 18:00. All are welcome to attend. The day care staff will be available to supervise small children.

Regards, Ulrich Karthaus President, Martin Luther Church Day Nursery

From **February 15th to 17th**, the Martin Luther Church invites to an **Adult Retreat at Camp Edgewood**, situated a little over one hour's drive in the direction to Kitchener. Experiencing community, reflecting on Bible verses, singing and joyful exchanges of ideas – that is the reason why we come together.

The **Annual General Meeting** of Martin Luther Church will be held on **March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008**. Please give the reports of the groups of our congregation and their activities to Pastor Mielke or to the church office, now in the beginning of February. Many thanks!

To the joint celebration of the **World Prayer Day, the St. Georg Church** invites on **Friday, March 7th**, at 1:00 p.m. With the topic: "God's Wisdom grants us new Understanding" a prayer liturgy will be celebrated, prepared by women of Guyana.

The **German Contact Circle** meets on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Christ the King/Dietrich Bonhoeffer Church.

A cordial invitation to the **Easter Sunrise Service on March 23<sup>rd</sup>**. As in previous years, we will meet for the sunrise at the shore of Lake Ontario early in the morning of Easter Sunday, to celebrate Easter. Following this, there will be a joint pancake breakfast. Please do not miss this special Easter experience!

The **Ascension Church Service** of the German-speaking congregations of Toronto will be celebrated on May 1<sup>st</sup> in our Martin Luther Church.

### ***Camp Lutherlyn Summer Camp on Golden Lake 2008***

*HELLO CAMP AFICIONADOS. THE DATES ARE SET! Look past the doldrums of winter and set your sights on another glorious SUNRISE 201 at SUMMER CAMP with our NEW PASTOR & family.*

*Martin Luther Lutheran Church has been confirmed for **arrival Sunday, July 27th and departure Friday, August 1st, 2008**. The prices are the same as last year.*

*Dan Sommerfeld  
Camp Counsellor, Martin Luther Church*

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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We cordially invite you to join our **Project Family Choir**. We want to prepare English and German songs for Easter. Parents, children and young people are most welcome. Practicing will be on Sunday after the service. A first meeting will be on Sunday, February 10, after the German service.

The **Sunday School Church Service** during the German Service is now consciously held in **German**, so that the children, who are not so familiar with English, feel comfortable and, as well, the German language can be experienced and practiced by the children. Many thanks to the team who, with great effort, holds practically every Sunday two children's services, during the English as well as during the German service.

The Martin Luther Church participates in the **Food Bank** of Mimico United Church. Good, well-wrapped non-perishable foods are needed. They can be brought to Sunday church service or dropped at the church office during the week. Money donations also help the Mimico United Church in this mission. ***Please do support this important service on a continual basis for the local community and needy people. Many thanks!***

Again, we are looking for a **Social Director**. The task would be to plan and organize nice social activities for the congregation. Please think about this, especially in view of the Annual General Meeting, who might enjoy doing this and who would be eligible. A heartfelt Thank You to Dina Wancar, who has carried this responsibility up to now.

This year, after Easter, I will again begin a **new Course for Confirmands**. Please inform me or the church office, if your child is eligible.

**From February 17th to 20th, I will participate in the Bishop's Retreat of the Eastern Synod.** Bishop Michael Pryse has invited, to study intensively the Letter to the Romans together with him. There will be 71 participants in this seminary in St. Catharines, among them 5 Bishops and 32 Anglican Pastors. During this time, Pastor Knaack will stand in for me; my heartfelt thanks to him for doing so.

**After the services copies of the sermon are now available, on the homepage, time and again, I put in sermons and radio devotions.** Therefore, you can take part in our church services, even when you cannot come to MLC on a Sunday. If you know older or sick congregational members, you can print the text and bring it to them. Thank you for such a service, which can be a joy and strengthening for our congregational members!

Since December, I send out **Greeting cards on birthdays of congregational members**. Please forgive me, in case you have not received a card, our list is very incomplete. Please inform our church office of your birth date and let us also know if someone, who would enjoy a card, did not receive a greeting!

Since last year we have now a **German Songbook with large print**. They are available at the entrance from the church council members. Please return them after the church service.

Beautiful **Flowers in the church service** on the altar are a great joy and a visible part of the praise of God. Please help us out. In the entrance hall, there is a large calendar; you can enter your name there, and take the responsibility for flowers on Sundays. Heartfelt thanks to all of your help and all faithful support!

The Eastern Synod, ELCIC, und die Diocese of Niagara, Anglican Church of Canada, invite lay-persons to attend a **lay spiritual retreat**. This year the spiritual director will be The Rev. Elisabeth Wagschal, Eastern Synod Pastor and experienced retreat leader. Beth will lead us exploring the theme "The Tender Heart: Forgiven and Forgiving". The retreat will be held: Friday, April 4 to Sunday, April 6, 2008 in Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario; Cost: \$ 190.00 per person. If interested, please contact the Retreat Director Dorothy Frook, Telephone 519-881-2798, Email dbfrook@wightman.ca, or the Registrar Prijna Gingrich, Telephone 519-208-5652, Email: anp.gingrich@rogers.com. Information and registration forms are also available on the Eastern Synod Website at: [www.easternsynod.org](http://www.easternsynod.org)

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**WE BAPTIZED ...**

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Thomas Gordon and Samuel Peter George Cmelo  
*on January 13th, 2008*

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

*Romans 12: 2*

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

*John 3: 16*

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**Martin Luther Lutheran Church**  
**2379 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Toronto, ON M8V 1B7**  
**Telephone: 416-251-8293, Fax: 416-259-2889**  
**Pastor Alexander Mielke, Cell Phone: 416-567-2487**  
**Email: [alexander.mielke@rogers.com](mailto:alexander.mielke@rogers.com)**  
**German Radio Devotion, Sundays at 9:30 a.m. on AM 530**  
*Newsletter - Editor: Pastor Alexander Mielke; Translations: Kaethe Kleinau*  
*Website and Email Distribution: Mona Frantzke; Mailing: Anita Ratz*

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