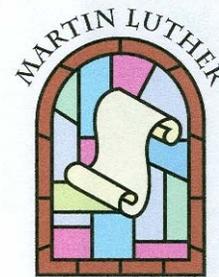


# Congregational newsletter



LUTHERAN CHURCH

— Founded 1955 Gegründet —

March/April 2010

## DEVOTION

*Dear Fellow Christians !*

"Led into the Desert, Fasting for the Kingdom of God" – this is my headline for the understanding of **Matthew 4,1-10 (Temptation of Christ)**. One year ago my colleague, Pastor Christian Schweter, wrote: "Lent Season is a training camp for our faith." This is very true. It's a training camp when we get a work out for our faith! It's focusing on Jesus' way, how he lived faith, how he became willing to suffer and overcome any desert time, until he was able to bear the cross, for us, for you!

Certainly many of you loved to watch the Olympics in Vancouver and Whistler. It's amazing, humans performing these incredible things – and imagine how long, how hard they have been training for this! We need a bit of this kind for your faith too! Lent Season could very well be a training camp for our faith!

The very first answer Jesus gives to the devil is, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' When we meditate Jesus' temptation story, we will be confronted with this deep reaching questions: What do you live from? What do you live for?

In Mt 4 we find this structure: 1.desert – 2.temple – 3.world. The desert means remaining faithful in times of distress and trouble. The pinnacle of the temple means resisting mischief and presumption.

The panorama of the world means resisting our greed for power and easy success.

Here we are confronted with three great temptations  
1.a life without sacrifice; 2.a life without suffering;  
3.a life in power and glory. Jesus refuted these temptations, and if we want to follow Jesus, we will have to fight these temptations again and again also.



Therefore first we see, God wanted Jesus to make a big sacrifice, so he would be open and free to listen and obey to the Word of God. That's why the Spirit led Jesus into the desert, far away from the distractions and pleasures of nice comfortable daily life. The tempter says, "You are the Son of God, aren't you. So it should be easy for you to command these stones to

become loaves of bread. You have this power, this dignity, haven't you. Why should you sacrifice yourself, suffering hunger and thirst now? Just make use of your power and dignity!" But Jesus knows he lives from God's word, in everything he depends upon God, all his power he receives from God his father. So he resists this temptation. He is willing to make this sacrifice, because he knows living the faith is not possible without commitment and dedication, and this means sacrificing our time, skills, money, habits. All this means Fasting for the Kingdom of God.

In the second scene, the devil quotes Psalm 91: 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will

not dash your foot against a stone.' The whispering of the tempter is, "If God is with you, there won't be failures or defeats, you will be strong and safe." This would lead to mischief and presumption: If I am a true believer, I am safe and secure, I am a winner, not a loser, God's blessings are a great promise of wealth and health for my life. But Jesus knows this means putting God to the test. Jesus knows this simple optimism which is found in some parts of the Old Testament is to be negated by his way of suffering until he dies on the cross. Jesus knows his way will be one of suffering, and this will be an assurance: When humans suffer, they are not at all separated from God. On the contrary, suffering is the way of God in this world, and there is no Christian life of faith without the willingness to suffer.

In the third scene the devil shows Jesus all the world, all the many kingdoms on the earth, and he says, "You can have this, now and here, I will give it to you, just fall down and worship me." The devil offers the easy way to power and glory. It must be a great temptation for Jesus, as he knows it is God's plan to give to him all authority in heaven and on earth as we later are told in Mt 28. And this would be the fast and easy way, without suffering, without sacrifice, without the cross. But Jesus knows, this would be the wrong way. And so he gives the tempter the right answer: "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

In the German hymn book there is a very good song, here the first line says, "Selig seid ihr, wenn ihr

einfach lebt. - Blessed are you if you live simply." This can be the meaning of Lent Season, of Fasting. Reflecting upon our daily lifestyle and reducing what we use and consume.

What do we really need? What is a kind of seduction or obsession for us? Here Lent Season is a good time for reducing and fighting this.

In the next chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, Jesus begins his sermon on the Mount with the benedictions, and the very first is: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We talked about this during our Adult Retreat. Often this is understood as a blessing for those who are not so smart. But the words don't say: poor in mind, the words say: poor in spirit, and here the greek words actually can be translated in many different ways. I would say, a better understanding is: "Blessed are those who are poor because of the spirit, those who have become poor because of the guidance of the Holy Spirit".

"Making oneself poor for the Spirit's sake/for Christ's sake" – this way of fasting would be meaningful during the Lent Season. Sacrificing our time, possessions, skills and habits for becoming free for the service of Christ, open for the guidance of the Spirit.

*Kind regards and blessings,  
Your Pastor Alexander Mielke*

*The photo shows the Mount of Temptation in Israel.*

We will continue the series of photo presentations which Pastor Mielke has begun on his journey to Israel. On **Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>**, we will visit a Synagogue in Mississauga; the **Shabbat Service** there begins at 10:00 a.m.

The **Solel Congregation** is located in Mississauga on 2399 Folkway Dr. (easily accessible from Highway 403, at the corner of Erin Mills Pkwy). This is a congregation that is very open for discussion and exchange; they have repeatedly invited the MLK (and other Toronto churches) to their annual quarterly events, "Meet Your Neighbours". Now there is an opportunity to visit this congregation. Please help with car-pooling. If you need transportation, please contact Pastor Mielke (Cellphone 416-567-2487). Arrive at the Synagogue at 9:40 a.m. at the latest, please, so that we can enter the Synagogue together without any delay. Prayers during the service are often in English; therefore, we will be able to follow the order easily. Afterwards, a representative of the Synagogue will be available for a discussion. In order to give us an idea of how a Shabbat Service is conducted, and how we, as guests, should conduct ourselves, I will, as preparation, hand out

**Information for the Understanding of the Jewish Faith on March 7<sup>th</sup>** after the joint service, which begins, as always, at 11:00 a.m. This service will be celebrated a **Family Service, prepared by the Sunday School**, giving a vivid picture of Christianity in **Cameroon** (as a follow up to the World Day of Prayer). A warm welcome!

This year, too, we want to begin our **Easter celebration on the shore of Lake Ontario**, with the great experience of the rising sun above the silhouette of Toronto. Our **Easter Sunrise Service begins at 6:15 a.m. near the last parking lot of Humber Bay Park West**. Afterwards, we meet for Easter breakfast of pancakes and maple syrup at the church. Celebrate with us the Easter Message in this way and invite your friends too! After that, at **10:00 a.m.**, the **Festive Joint Service** will take place in the church.



During the month of March and in the beginning of April, Nancy Rahn, a student of Protestant Theology from Tuebingen, will do her internship with us. We are glad that she will be with us until Easter and wish her a good and blessed time here with us!

The Seniors' Circle is meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Nancy Rahn will present pictures and stories from Tuebingen.

Please note that during the **night from March 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>**, we are changing over to **Daylight Saving Time**.

You are cordially invited to the **Annual General Meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup>**, after the joint service. At the annual meeting we take a look back through the reports on the different work areas. And we will focus on the New Year concerning new plans and projects. Please take the time to be part of the planning and decision-making. And bring along sandwiches or something to eat during the short break between the service and the meeting.

The concert of the men's choir "**Harfentoene**" was well received a year ago. We are glad that this year, too, we will have them as guests on **Palm Sunday in the service at 11:00 a.m.** (English translations for German texts will be provided), this time under the direction of Richard Heinzle, whom we have already met at the Advent Concert.



The **Congregational Picnic** is planned for **June 6**.

On **June 13**, we can celebrate the **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Kindergarten and Day Care**. We are glad that **Bishop Michael Pryse** has confirmed his attendance at the Special Sunday Service.

## **GOOD NEWS ABOUT CAMP LUTHERLYN: WE'VE ADDED A DAY!**

*Our annual summer camp at beautiful Golden Lake will begin Saturday evening JULY 24th till Friday morning JULY 30th.*

*Our Camper rate will be \$255. Qualify for our Group rate with 3 family members and save \$100.*

*Ask about our Family rates if you are staying with kids 7 and under, and save even more! The Family rooms fill up fast so book early to avoid disappointment.*

*We also offer a Senior's rate with the best accommodations.*

*Please pay by June 1st and guarantee your place in our amazing space! BUS transportation is also available, we like to thank Bruno and Trott Transit for making this a safe and affordable option.*

*NOTE: Final Camp & Bus rates are subject to the implementation of the HST on July 1, 2010.*

*We have not yet received information on how the HST will affect our week at Camp.*

*We apologize for any inconvenience this might cause, and endeavor to inform as soon as this information becomes available.*

*Contact Dan Sommerfeld at 905 274-6602*

### **Attention Parents:**

*Has your child attended Camp Lutherlyn and loved it?*

*Is your child at least 15 years old and responsible? Do you believe your child can be a caring and positive role model?*

*If you think you're child is qualified to be a Counsellor-in-training, please call me to discuss his/her role in this years camp!*

We are looking forward to having **Pastor Edilson Tetzner** from Brazil as a **guest of Martin Luther Church from April 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>**. He will have much to report from our Lutheran partner congregation in Sao Paulo and the work among children. On **April 18th**, we will have a joyous **Joint Service** at 11:00 a.m. A detailed program will be announced to the congregation in time.

On February 9<sup>th</sup> 2010, our long-time and very faithful congregational member Edward Lischewski could celebrate his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Pastor Mielke visited him at Leisure World Caregiving Centre on this day and congratulated him cordially to this festive day, which is a special mercy of God. The photo shows Edward Lischewski in his family circle (together with his younger sister Lydia Schlag). On behalf of the family, his daughter Lydia Berg invited to a celebration on Saturday afternoon, February 13<sup>th</sup>. Here, Pastor Heike Block-Mielke presented him, in the name of the congregation, with a festive certificate in which God is praised with verses from Psalm 100 for this 100<sup>th</sup> birthday – the first time that we could observe this special day in the Martin Luther Church! On this special jubilee, we extend to Mr. Lischewski and to his family our heartfelt wishes for God's lifelong blessing and guidance!





In mid-February, our confirmands' group undertook a weekend trip to Ottawa and had a lot of fun. A heartfelt Thank-You goes to the German congregation in Ottawa of the same name, Martin Luther Church, who offered us uncomplicated sleeping-bag sleep-over. And many thanks to Tanya Zielke, who came along as assistant, as well as Iris & Peter, Larissa & John, who drove us there in their cars!

Photos from the Adult Retreat in Mount Alverno Centre (with its director Brother David)



From **June 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>**, the **Biennial Convention of the Eastern Synod** takes place in Toronto (Double Tree Hilton Hotel). The congregations of Toronto have a special responsibility in preparing for it. **Our congregation, too, is asked for two-fold assistance.** First of all, many **volunteers** are needed for this event (Stewards, Ballot Counters, Hosts, Greeters, Hospitality Desk & Transportation Volunteers). On the other side, the Synod is asking for **sponsorship** (for instance, for 5 breakfasts @ \$ 1,000 each). Please assist and support this meeting of many church delegates from all parts of the large Eastern Synod!

*Sermon of Pastor Mielke at the Funeral Service for Else Weigelin on Feb 2, 2010*

Two big losses in such a short time! Only half a year ago we had to bid farewell to Olaf who left us so fast too. I remember how, when we celebrated confirmation here in our Martin Luther Church on Pentecost Sunday, we worried so much because Olaf was collapsing during the service. And only two weeks later, Olaf was taken out of our midst. This time nobody would have expected anything. On Sunday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of January, we congratulated Else to her 79<sup>th</sup> birthday here in the service, but now we have to gather for her funeral.

Let us be strengthened in this moment by Else's example. Her confirmation verse was Nehemiah 8:10 – Die Freude am Herrn ist eure Stärke. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Throughout all her life, Else always trusted in God's guidance. However difficult a situation might be, she never gave up faith, she always believed that nothing could separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let your faith be strengthened by Else's example, even at this very sad and difficult time.

Let us have a look at her long and exciting life. Else Weigelin, née von Lieven, was born on January 24, 1931, in Riga, Latvia.

Her brother Herbert von Lieven is with us today. In Riga they lived in a beautiful family house, a very old historic building, but later on in the war it would be completely destroyed, a sign of the bitter fact that through WWII Else and her family would lose their home country Latvia for ever. In autumn 1939, following the agreement between Hitler and Stalin, the family had to leave the Baltikum and was settled in Posen. Only 1 ½ years later the father was drafted to be a soldier and sent to the East front. Else wrote in her memories: "It was God's grace that Father was spared falling in Russians' hands and returned from the front into an American POW-camp. My mother, brother and I left Posen on January 20,

1945, and after horrible weeks of travel we found refuge in Wriedel in the 'Lueneburger Heide'. Here we experienced the great miracle that our father had received our address and now ended up in Munster-POW -Lager, which was only about 20 km away from where we lived."

Learning was not easy for now 14 years old Else and her brother who was four years younger. The one room public school was in the village 2 km far away. And the church was in Wriedel, 6 km far away. There Else was confirmed on April 14, 1946. She says: "My confirmation verse was Nehemiah 8:10 which made a big impression on

me." She enjoyed the parish girls group, and later on while working on a farm, she could stay with the pastor's family during the winter months. So she grew in the understanding of the Christian faith, and in 1951 she started an education at the "Gemeindehelferinnen-Seminar" in Hermannsburg. So she was preparing for the responsibility of assisting a pastor in the parish work, doing work with children, youths, confirmation class etc.

Then she writes: "In April 1951 I started my 2 years in Hermannsburg which included 6 months practical work in a rural congregation, to be followed after

the examination by one year full time work in a congregation in Northern Germany. But in January 1951 Olaf – a longtime acquaintance and friend of mine – asked me to marry him. Since I still felt too young for that and had the wish to first start and finish my education, he had to leave for Canada and wait there for three years for me to come April 1954."

So we see: There were similar roots in Else's and Olaf's lives: she from Latvia, he from Estonia. This, their love and their Lutheran faith would be very strong links between them. But nevertheless, Else had her own plans, education would be her passion throughout all her life, and she wouldn't



let go of this. So Olaf would have to wait for her for three long years before she was willing to follow him and come to Canada too! They were married on August 20, 1955, in Toronto at Trinity Lutheran Church by Pastor M.J. Michael. Their Biblical motto for the wedding ceremony was Hebr 13:9 - Es ist ein köstlich Ding, dass das Herz fest werde, welches geschieht durch Gnade. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace.

They always would be thankful to the Canadian Baltic Immigrant Aid Society, which helped them to come to Canada, and hold fast to its motto: In Treue fest.

They had five children: Birgit, Martin, Christine, Susan and Erik. Nowadays they were so happy because of their 11 grandchildren. Olaf worked as a very skillful craftsman and artist, you will never forget his Puppentheater, the handpuppets he had carved and the wonderful plays he created. Else was involved in the "Home and School Association" and the "Heritage Language Program". She worked as a teacher till her retirement in 1996. Else herself wrote: "I had a busy, but very satisfying life with my family and in the church." And so we will remember her.

You always will remember her as a loving and caring mom and Oma. She loved having the family with her, and you can cherish so many wonderful memories of her and Opa at the cottage in Georgian bay. But I am certain whenever you think of her you will remember her faith also. As I was sitting together with you, Birgit, Martin and Susan, on Sunday evening for preparing the funeral, you told me verses of Psalm 119 would characterize Else so well: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

Now there are so many who say: "The Martin Luther Church - that was Else for me. She always was here, she always cared for so many things. I can't imagine our Church without her." It is a terrible loss for our Martin Luther Church. We

remember what she has done for the Ladies' Group where she took special responsibility. But there are so many little and big things which we can be thankful for. First of all we will miss her smile, her friendliness and helpfulness, her never ending commitment and dedication.

And it's not only the Martin Luther Church, right at this moment Else was busy preparing the World Day of Prayer. There are so many people in so many churches in Toronto and Ontario who remember Else and what she did, with love and thankfulness.

I am sure she wouldn't like us saying so. She would say: It's not me, it's God's grace accepting me in spite of my shortcomings, it's God's gracing helping me and working through me.

I think as terrible her so sudden passing away may seem to be for us, it still tells lots about her character: Else was strong and active throughout all her life, and she was active until the very last day and the last minute of her life. This way she didn't have to suffer a long illness or weakness. And she missed Olaf so much! Now, we can trust, they are united again, seeing together the light of God's love, which they had trusted in and hoped for throughout their lives.

At the retreat last weekend we read the paragraph in Mt 5, right after that: You are the light of the world. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. And at the retreat someone said: That's exactly how we experienced Else. She wouldn't boast or dominate, she would just do what she saw was needed. She was open to God's light, and God's light shone through her.

As I am closing this sermon, let me just tell you the story of "The Church of the Burning Lamps". By this name, a small Protestant church in France is called. Every Sunday evening, the members gather there for worshipping. Each one brings an oil lamp. First the lamps are lighted, then they are

placed upon the broad backrests of the benches. So the entire room is illuminated brightly. It was in the year 1550 when this tradition was established. Since then, each member of the congregation always has been given his or her own lamp, under the obligation to keep it through all their life and bring it to every service. For more than 400 years, these lamps have been passed on from one generation to the next. So every one by their coming to the service, helps to make the church brighter. Every one is well aware that – whenever he or she does not take part in the worship – the church will be a little darker.

Our church will be darker now, without Else. She was a warm, brightly shining light in our church, in your family, in the lives of so many.

But let that be an obligation for us. Else would have wanted that we keep watch over the light of faith in our lives. So each one of us, let us rekindle the lamps of our hope. Each of us, let us be a burning lamp in this church, in your family, so that there be still enough of warm and bright light.

Remember Else's light, and follow her guidance: Look at Jesus Christ who is the Light of the World, and let your hope and confidence be rekindled by this eternally powerful light. Amen.

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## FUNERAL

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Else Weigelin, née von Lieven, at the age of 79 years  
*February 2, 2010*

The joy of the Lord is your strength.  
*Nehemiah 8:10*

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