

WELS Canada Newsletter

JOB OPPORTUNITY

WELS-CANADA TREASURER'S POSITION. ANY INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD CONTACT WELSCANADA.TREASURER@GMAIL.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

"A voice of one calling: In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it."
Isaiah 40:3-5

Dear WELS-Canada newsletter reader,

I want to use this opportunity to highlight some of the recent changes made to WELS-Canada's website.

Pastors, I draw your attention to the *Resources* page. Every important document received from our President or a member of the Board of Directors will be available on this page. You will also find a copy of this newsletter there. Our next AGM is still some time down the road, but as the time nears, this *Resources* page should also be the "one stop shop" for any special announcements you, your delegate(s), and the members of your congregation will want to review as we prepare to meet.

Members of WELS-Canada, please take a look around the entire site. Notice that the homepage contains some

basic information about our church body. Read about W-C stories that appear in WELS publications. Take a look at the pages that document W-C's history or list the board of directors. I also plan to spotlight one church periodically on the homepage using its newsletter article so look for that in the near future. It is also my hope that you use the *Find a Church* page to refer family members or friends who might be looking for one of our churches in their area.

To conclude, please let me know if you see any ways to improve the site, as well as any spelling mistakes, corrections, etc. One of the suggestions I have already received and implemented was to add two additional domain names that are easier to remember and share. Those two domain names are **welscanada.com** and **welscanada.ca**.



God's blessings,
Pastor Brad Taylor
Mountain View Lutheran Church, Calgary
pastortaylor@platinum.ca



DID YOU KNOW?

WELS-CANADA OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO THOSE ATTENDING EITHER OF OUR PREP SCHOOLS, MLC OR SEM OR FOR ANYONE ENROLLED IN THE PSI PROGRAM. CURRENTLY THE GRANTS ARE 1,500 PER YEAR FOR THE PREP SCHOOLS, 3,000 PER YEAR FOR MLC AND SEM AND 2,000 FOR ANYONE IN THE PSI PROGRAM. ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SOURCES SO THOSE CONSIDERING STUDYING FOR THE TEACHING OR PREACHING MINISTRY SHOULDN'T LET FINANCES BE A BARRIER.

MOUNTAIN VIEW –CALGARY, AB

This Christmas Mountain View is excited to continue what is becoming a Christmas tradition for many of our members and friends, caroling. But we're not going

door to door in the cold. Instead, the past couple years a group of carollers met at The Lodge, a retirement community nearby, to sing fireside in their chapel. Last year we

sang to around 40 of its residents. The residents have always appreciated our visit and look forward to our visit again this month.

ST. PAUL—OTTAWA, ON

On July 31st we said farewell to Pastor Jacob Hanneman and his wife Elizabeth. In the spring of 2011 it was determined that WELS-Canada president Pastor Goetzinger would not be needing continued pastoral assistance and so Pastor Hanneman was re-assigned to serve as pastor of a tri-parish in Montana.

St. Paul had decided to ask the Seminary for a Vicar for the coming year. That was not in the Lord's plans, but finding a Canadian location for a seminary graduate was. And so, we are thrilled to announce that Pastor Peter Hagen was installed as the second pastor at St. Paul on Sunday, August 14. In light of the amazing news regarding the Hallmark Foundation gift to WELS-Canada, we are thankful to the Lord of the Church for providing pastoral assis-

tance to our congregation. Pastor Hagen will serve as an assistant pastor with Pastor Goetzinger who is once again very busy with WELS-Canada matters.

Pastor Hagen's wife Desiree was born and raised in Mississauga, Ontario. Pastor and Mrs. Hagen have moved into the renovated Ring Lane parsonage and are quickly transforming it from house to home. We welcome the Hagens to Ottawa and pray for our Lord's richest blessings upon Pastor's ministry among us and their new life together as husband and wife.

In other news, Advent by Candlelight was attended by over 65 ladies on Dec. 3rd. This number is down from the 90 women who attended in 2010, but as organizer Karen Goetzinger noted, "We had a bit more room to move about this

year and enjoy the fellowship of one another."

In mid-November the St. Paul choir, The Singers of Praise, had a special celebration of thanksgiving after one of their Thursday night practices. They extended a heartfelt "Thank You!" to Ruth Livingston for her dedication to the St. Paul choir over many generations. Ruth's willingness to serve her Lord with voice and song for over 80 years was a powerful expression of her love for her Lord and for her family in Christ. As Ruth put it, "In the last couple of years the light has been getting dimmer, the notes getting smaller, and music seems to have gotten faster!" From all of us at St. Paul, "Thank you Ruth! You are dearly loved. May God continue to bless and keep you."

SAVIOUR OF THE NATIONS—VANCOUVER, BC

A joyous Advent to all from everyone here in Vancouver! This season has been full of blessings for our church. We've just settled into a new worship space and preparations for our upcoming Christmas service on December 11th are in full swing. This fall we've enjoyed longer monthly visits from Pastor Cortright that last up to four

days. This means he can visit more members and prospects as well as conduct a monthly bible study with several new Chinese immigrants to Canada. Probably the most exciting thing for us is that we have had so many new visitors. We are connecting with so many new people from right around the corner to around the globe who are inter-

ested in a confessional Lutheran church. Many are just looking for a WELS worship service during a short visit to the coast; others are planning to make a more permanent move and are wanting to find a WELS church they can call home. Please pray that God will continue to bless us and will lead more people to us who want to learn about their Lord.



St. Paul Calgary—Renovation Complete!

ST. PAUL—CALGARY, AB

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow! St Paul's recently finished a new addition to our church, including a new sanctuary, 3 classrooms, a pastor's office, and a renovated fellowship hall. We worshiped in our new sanctuary for the first time on Reformation Sunday, and celebrated a dedication service with our fellow Alberta congregations on Saturday, December 10. We have had visitors to our new church every Sunday, and are excited about the op-

portunities the Lord is providing us to share the love of Christ. "



OUR SHEPHERD- VAL-DES-MONTS, QC

We have many reasons to praise God in our Quebec flock! First of all - God sent His son, the Greatest Gift of All - to save us from our sins and bring us eternal life! God has also been adding to our numbers, one at a time. We have

a couple new babies in our congregation, and a couple more on the way! We received a new adult confirmand into fellowship at the end of November, and her son is in youth confirmation, along with a couple of other students.

A MESSAGE FROM WELS CANADA PRESIDENT

A baby has come that has changed everything.

The most popular verse of the longest of the Psalms (119) is verse 105: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." It's been said that the opposite of light is darkness. The truth is, darkness is the absence of light.

Darkness: Some are afraid of it. Children sleep with night lights to drive away fear. Darkness can injure. Black ice, in the dark, can send a hip to the hospital. We don't see well in darkness.

Ever go to a sing-along around the campfire at dusk, and then try to find your way back to your bunk. . . having forgotten your flashlight? Amazing how dark the woods can get, isn't it? Tree roots, and rocks, and little dips in the path that are so easy to spot during the day become lethal weapons in the darkness.

So, darkness: Friend or foe? On the "like/dislike" scale, most of us would consider it some where between "inconvenience" and down right "hazardous." When the Bible talks about spiritual hazard, it uses the pic-

ture of darkness to describe our "lostness": The death of sin that we're in and we don't even know it. The hazard of hell that we can't even see. The Italian phrase "Daré Allalucé" means "to give birth." The literal translation means "to give to the light." God the Holy Spirit has "given you to the light" through the Word of God. "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2). A baby is coming that will change everything. A light so bright that it has the power to vaporize darkness, and illuminate the hearts of all people with THE truth about God's Son: "In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

This Christmas season, we Canadian Confessional Lutherans have so much to be thankful to our gracious Lord for:

An economy that has remained relatively solid during a time of much global turmoil. A generous gift through the Hallmark Foundation that has pledged \$350,000 per year to WELS-

We also have another wedding coming up in June 2012, and the groom-to-be has agreed to begin taking our BIC course. In a province of dying congregations, our little flock is thriving, young (either physically, or "at heart" ;-)) and vibrant - Jesus alone deserves the credit for this, HE preserved the truth among us, and HE is blessing it.

Canada to help us carry out more gospel ministry. Shepherds that continue to faithfully feed our souls with Word and Sacrament.

Our greatest gift? A baby has come, and that has changed absolutely everything for us. A shoot from the stump of Jess. Forgiver of sinners. Restorer of hope. Life-giver to the dead. The Sun of righteousness. Prince of peace. Son of God.

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, My
hope, my heart's delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be a lamp
to light my way,
To show me how to please you, To
guide me every day. (CW 18,19)

Our Lord's richest blessings upon your celebration of the birth of our Saviour, God's Son, Jesus the Christ.
Pastor Harland Goetzinger
President, WELS-Canada

ST. JOHN- WETASKIWAN, AB



Pastor Boettcher & family

St. John's has a lot to be thankful for! In the past few months, God has richly blessed our new joint ministry plan with Mighty Fortress, Red Deer, and Savior of the Nations, Vancouver. In mid-October, we installed Pastor David Boettcher and welcomed his family. We have

also decided to move ahead with remodelling (instead of demolishing and rebuilding) our church building, which was damaged in a fire in 2009. Work has already begun in sandblasting and performing demolition on the building interior. What great and exciting blessings! St.

John's now has its own website: stjohnswetaskiwin.com, where we will begin tracking the progress of our building project in the near future. We are working on plans for a new effort in community outreach in the new year. May God bless our new beginning in ministry!

MORNING STAR– CARSTAIRS, AB

Summertime! a beautiful day for a picnic. Fine food, great day, fine premises at a member's home and lots of sprinklers and water for the kids. Games, visitors and Bible Class under the trees, great fellowship -- a fine day.

On October 9, 16 and 23 we opened our doors to the St Paul Calgary congregation to worship with us while their church was in the throes of their building project. Their presence on October 9 was celebrated after worship with a Thanksgiving turkey dinner. How nice to have all those guests. Then on Oct. 30 Morning Star went en-masse to Calgary for the initial worship

in St. Paul's new sanctuary. How nice to see such a sanctuary full, praise God for this fine addition.

November again saw the annual ladies' Christmas tea and craft party. This was the sixth annual, and instead of the decoration theme this year they made a culinary gift in a jar. Ask for that mystery to be explained.

December gave the SS staff and others a chance to have a Christmas for kids day. There must have been too much else going on in town because attendance, in spite of advertizing and invitations, was down this year. The attendance was a disappointment but those who came enjoyed the day.

So much for the events, Sunday worship is still conducted at the local seniors lodge. One Sunday a month our regular worship service is lay led with various duties rotated among 6 or more lay leaders. Sunday and midweek Bible Class also is in the hands of the designated members, with the duties rotated giving each of them the opportunity to help. November 30 was the beginning of Advent Services, lay led in a member's home. They will continue until Christmas Eve. Christmas day worship? Of course!!

We thank God for the blessings of 2011. God has indeed been gracious to us.

ABIDING WORD– ORLEANS, ON

Greetings to all our fellow brothers and sisters across Canada!

We thought we'd share with you a couple of activities that provide us with the means to deliver on our two-fold mission of growing our faith and sharing His word.

Abiding Word has a very active Girl Pioneer program, with upwards of 20 children and parents participating on a weekly basis. Recently, we had one of our Canadian military officers (Captain Kevin Smallshaw) visit with the Girl Pioneers to give them a sense of what it's like to serve in the military. Captain Smallshaw spent approximately 8

months in Afghanistan on the front lines as part of Canada's mission there and kept the girls spellbound with "life" over there. The girls saw firsthand some of the equipment, clothing and food that our military troops utilize while "on mission" in locations such as Afghanistan. Our thanks and prayers continue to go out to those men and women serving around the world. With Christmas fast approaching, the ladies of our congregation are planning the 2nd of what is hoped will be an annual event called Advent by Candlelight. This evening is an opportunity for women of all ages to set aside the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and focus their minds and hearts on the birth of Christ. Volunteer "hostesses" are encouraged to invite 8-10 ladies to "their table", each of which is decorated by the hostess who also provides a dessert and coffee for the buffet table. The ladies then enjoy a devotion of the Christmas story and music by candlelight. In 2010, over 60 women attended the 1st Advent by Candlelight evening. This year's event is scheduled for Sunday, December 4th and we hope and pray that our Lord will allow us to use this opportunity to grow in our faith

and share His word with those guests attending.

With many of us focusing our attention on planning for 2012, it is truly exciting times for WELS Canada and our collective efforts to advance the cause of finding new and exciting ways to share God's word across our great country. We pray that God continues to bless all our efforts – both individually as congregations but also collectively as partners in WELS Canada.



Trying out the military gear



Hope Lutheran

MIGHTY FORTRESS– RED DEER, AB

“‘If you can?’” said Jesus. ‘Everything is possible for him who believes.’ “(Mark 9:23) This passage reflects the attitude our congregation is taking to heart as we move forward in our ministry, setting no limits on what God can do and praying that he richly blesses our plans and ideas. One such plan that our congregation worked toward over the past year and a half was calling a second pastor to work together with Pastor Cortright to jointly serve the congregations in Red Deer, Wetaskiwin, and Vancouver. We rejoiced when our prayers were answered and Pastor David Boettcher and his family arrived in Red Deer in early October.

It has been wonderful to have them here and we give thanks for the blessing of having two pastors to shepherd our congregation and reach out in our community. We also had the chance to dream big at a recent mission breakfast to discuss our vision for Mighty Fortress in 2020. We discussed a number of different ideas with the focus of being a church in God’s Word, a strong church, and a sharing church. We’re looking forward to fleshing out and prioritizing the fruit of our brainstorming in the weeks ahead to shape a vision and strategic plan. Knowing that God has the power to bless our efforts abundantly, we are also continuing to



reach out in our community with lots of advertising for our upcoming Christmas for Kids and Christmas Eve worship. We pray that the Lord has great things in store not just for our congregation, but also for all of our fellow WELS-Canada congregations as you seek to share the good news of our newborn king in your communities.

DIVINE WORD– NEPEAN, ON

Life at Divine Word has certainly been busy over the past months! Our summer wound down with a VBS program that was filled to capacity, and gave us the chance to share Jesus with many people in our community. We’ve been wrestling with our vision and long range goals - so we had a mission counsellor and our BHM representative come and spend some time with us following the WELS Canada historic

AGM. We decided that calling a staff minister to serve Divine Word in the short term, while having a long range vision of one day daughtering (or perhaps satellite ministry) in the town of Kemptville (20 minutes outside of Ottawa). We’re praying that God would bless these plans as we work toward them and continue to reach out to our community. Our church location is excellent, but space is getting a bit tight, and expand-

ing isn't really an option since we're now surrounded by retail and a medical clinic. Recently we've had major expenses that came up - our roof was in bad need of repair - and, God sent a storm to blow the shingles off and the insurance covered it! Our parking lot was in horrible shape, but by God's grace we were able to get it paved - and it looks great! We're working now toward renovating our kitchen - all to glorify God and share the Gospel with more souls.

HOPE– TORONTO, ON

All Nations On Our Doorstep

Like many major urban areas today, Toronto is a complete mixture of nationalities and cultures. What’s true of the city as a whole is also true of our congregation here at Hope, and what’s true of our congregation is also true of our Bible Basics membership class. We continue to have the privilege of sharing God’s truth with people from every corner of the globe. This past Sunday (November 13) we were privileged to receive into membership 15 new souls from a total of 7 different countries! Although they hail from climates and cultures as

diverse as Grenada, Greece, Namibia and Poland, all these people have come together for the same reason. By God’s grace the Holy Spirit has planted faith in Jesus in their hearts, and that faith is now showing itself with a desire to join us in spreading the Gospel message to all nations, starting here in Canada. We thank God for these gifts of his grace to our congregation. The harvest in Toronto continues to be plentiful! Pray to our gracious Lord for continued blessings and for zeal to pursue each opportunity he gives us.

In other news, many of you may be familiar with the vibrant music program here at Hope. The steel band accompanies worship on most Sundays and performs concerts at various times

throughout the year, culminating when they join with the choir to put on a big Christmas concert. This year’s concert, featuring both choir and steel band, is scheduled for December 11 @ 5:00 PM. The doors are open to all, but we would specifically like to invite any and all lay members in Canada. Join us in celebrating the wonderful news of Jesus’ birth! Available for purchase at the concert will be copies of our latest professional steel band CD, “Christmas With Hope.” The CD is now available to anyone for purchase at nph.com, but we offer a discounted rate here at 14 Centre St. God’s blessings on your Christmas celebrations. Christ, our Saviour, is here!

CROSS OF LIFE– MISSISSAUGA, ON

The celebration of our Saviour's birth is right around the corner. A record number of children in the congregation and a few non-member children are practicing and rehearsing for the annual Children's Christmas Service on December 18. We are seeing many budding public speakers, singers, and musicians come out of the woodwork each year. It is so wonderful to see and hear the children joyfully sing our Lord's praises and tell this most important message of salvation coming to earth. Following the service, everyone is invited to the annual Christmas Party and potluck brunch where everyone can sit and enjoy food and entertainment. Word has it that we are going to have another talent show!

TREE OF LIFE– CALGARY, AB

Blessings to our brothers and sisters in Christ across Canada!

In the news at Tree of Life: We've partnered with Pastor Cortright and Mighty Fortress in Red Deer to develop and offer weekly Online Bible Classes. So far we've had members attending from as far as the coast of New Brunswick to Pender Island in BC. Our hope and prayer is that this new way of reaching out "online" with the Gospel will serve families that do not otherwise have an opportunity to attend an interactive pastor led Bible Study, if you happen to know of anyone that would benefit from this weekly study, please send their email address to [tol-](mailto:tol@church.org)

ST. PETER-ST. ALBERT, AB

In September we rented a 3-storey inflatable screen and showed *Cars 2* for free to our community. About 400 people attended this event. Pre-show activities included a couple of jumpy castles for the kids and live music provided by our members. We also put on demonstrations of our Sunday School, cheerleading camp, and *Grow with Me* playgroup. We hope to host a similar event in the future, as it is a relatively

The Women's Advent by Candlelight on December 3 was yet another great event for all the ladies who attended. This year's theme of "Preparation" helped them focus on the real meaning of Christmas (Jesus' first coming) and getting them ready for his second coming. All at this event were cordially invited to join us again for our candlelight worship service on Christmas Eve (one of our most well-attended events of the year). The New Year seems very optimistic. We start off in January with our annual Men's Retreat and then head into spring with our yearly Great March Break Adventure Camp. Sandwiched in between these two, however, we are going to try something new. We're calling it "No Excuse Sunday." It will be a part of our three part stewardship series on the Sundays of February 5, 12, and 19. The

church.org@gmail.com and we'll forward them an invitation/link to the online meetings.

This fall we've started a chess club for kids with 10 families registered for weekly lessons including a devotion time. We're hoping to promote the Scriptural virtues of patience, discipline, perseverance and wisdom as we study chess with the children and reflect on God's Word.

Our ESL conversation classes are also off to a great start. So far we've had folks attending from as far away as Russia, Columbia, Peru and Mexico. What a blessing it has been to share common challenges faced in communicating with those around us and to show Christ's

easy way to publicize our name in the community and actually get on-site visitors. One challenge of this event is meeting those moviegoers who come at the last minute. We offered a free draw to entice such people to our registration table, but not everyone "took the bait."

In October we received funding from WELS-Canada that allowed us to call our staff minister, Dave Stuh, full time. In addition to focusing on outreach, Dave will help get our Pioneer

actual "No Excuse Sunday" will be on February 12. Our thought behind this was: "Wouldn't it be great to have everyone in our congregation at church on one day?" The answer, of course, is a resounding "yes!" And so, we are challenging our members to make this date a priority. In fact, we are going one step further, we are accepting no excuses. "Are you planning a trip? Cancel it. Do you have to work? Call your boss. Are you sick or hurt, bring your stretcher." It is a lofty goal, but one that we are taking with all seriousness and optimism. We are looking forward to a wonderful turnout and a great day to rejoice in the body of Christ around the Word of God. Advent and Christmas Blessings to you all from Cross of Life. May your New Year be one that is filled with Christ's love and peace as you share his saving message with the people in your neck of the woods in Canada!

love in reaching out to support those in our community that are looking for ways to improve their English skills. Our Sunday Bible study time will take the form of a Bible Information Class immediately after worship on Sundays. Several of our regular visitors will have an opportunity to consider joining our congregation after completing the course, and the Bible studies will also serve as a great refresher for our current members. We look forward to all the opportunities to share the Good news of our Saviour this coming year and take comfort in the sure hope found only in Christ and His resurrection as we strive to show our love for God and for one another. Please keep the believers at Tree of Life in your thoughts and prayers, as you all remain in ours.

and Youth programs going again.

We continue to save up for our building program. By the end of October we had about \$110,000 in the bank. Our goal is to collect \$200,000 and then apply for a matching grant from the WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF). We'll still probably have to sell some of our land, however, so that we can build without taking on a crippling mortgage. Please keep us in your prayers, as this has been a slow process!