

WELS CANADA NEWSLETTER



Tree Of Life

Calgary, Alberta

In this massive and growing harvest field, God desires that none perish, but all repent and come to the knowledge of the truth. The Means of Grace are powerful and effective. Lord, open a door to us here and through our land.

The ongoing opportunity to interface with our community continues at Tree of Life via Caffe Crema. We are beginning to see some cross-over into worship and fellowship activities.

Presently our emphasis is on internal leadership, increasing congregational involvement and improving administrative structure. In the month ahead we are hosting numerous musical events including Blue Harvest. We are now in the process of rolling out a church web page, seminars, classes and youth events including, Lord willing, our first Summer Soccer Camp.

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not

Hope Lutheran

Toronto, Ontario

Easter this year brought with it a welcome change, no frost rather sunshine. It's amazing what a little sunlight can do to your attitude and church attendance. Our Holy Week was filled with preaching, praising, learning, fellowship & people. Good Friday and Easter Sunday services each brought us around 125 people. In addition to our worship our Easter 4 Kids program gave us the opportunity to teach 25 children about their Lord and his resurrection.

The season was filled with joy. Easter Sunday contained choirs singing, steel pans playing, a children's lesson, skits, and people worshipping their Lord...yet for as wonderful a Sunday as it was the highlight was not manmade, arranged or conceived...We began the worship of our Lord with something so simple, pure, and life giving that



from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." The plans, tasks, opportunities and challenges seem overwhelming to us but the work is His. We pray for you. Please pray for us. Our new worship home and Coffee house is located at 2525 Bridlecrest Way in South West Calgary. Come by for a coffee or find out more at tolchurch.org [coming soon] or cremacalgary.com



even a baby could understand it. We were able to witness God's pure grace poured out in Baptism as newborn Joel Dalton Paul was baptized to start our morning. Someone asked if a baptism would "fit in on a packed Sunday morning." Yet what better way to begin Easter Sunday morning than to simply stand back and witness, not man's promise, praise or commitments to him...but rather God's promise, and commitment to us in Baptism. After all that's what Easter was all about, God's promise made and kept. Christ is Risen.

Mighty Fortress

Red Deer, Alberta

The congregation at Mighty Fortress has been enjoying lots of opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth these past few months. We recently celebrated our first ever Christian Passover meal, hosted by our Women's Circle group. Everyone enjoyed the chance to learn about the symbolism of the seder meal and to try preparing and eating some new foods. On Easter morning, we had the privilege of being served breakfast by the teens from Red Deer and Wetaskiwin as a fundraising project for their mission trip to Toronto this summer. This weekend we are looking forward to our second annual Chili Cook-off, where our reigning chili champions will seek to defend their title against some fierce competition. Our Women's Circle has also enjoyed its regular meetings and a few fellowship activities like going to see a movie and checking out a Fijian restaurant in town. As a congregation, we are working on finalizing our

Morning Star

Carstairs, Alberta

Where could you find a Maundy Thursday service on Wednesday? In Carstairs of course! Our midweek Lenten services, held in a Carstairs home included Maundy Thursday on Wednesday, Pastor included, with communion. That was an extra blessing of the season.

The activities of Lent brought us to the annual Easter Sunrise service. Held outdoors at a members' residence on a high point in the country, with the mild weather and with many guests from Calgary and locally, the good news of the resurrection was enjoyed along with the spectacular scene.

Meanwhile the local community hall was being readied for the returning members. An Easter breakfast was about to be prepared by the men of the congregation. Again favored with guests the following worship was another blessing. Sunday Bible classes are lay led as well as Wednesday night Bible class, and one worship service a month is lay led. To some in other areas this may seem like a problem along with having to still rent the community hall every Sunday, but it provides opportunity in service to the members involved in lay activity. We have no refurbishing or repair to do, no church cleaning, no lawn mowing, no snow shoveling, and a big paved parking lot. Our community obligations are fulfilled by two congregation members who are on the local board of directors. No we aren't whistling in the dark, these blessings make it possible to help in other ways within our larger church family. Easter for kids again was on the calendar with



Molli and Jassmin Macaulay, the newly crowned chili champions of Mighty Fortress

mission statement and prayerfully considering our ministry plans for the future. We've also been trying to make preparations for our two main summer projects coming up – researching the feasibility of doing an early childhood ministry program and hosting a Soccer Bible Camp. We will have two MLC students coming to Red Deer to assist us this summer, so we're looking forward to working together with them. God's blessings to our fellow Canadian congregations and thank you for all of your prayers!

*Easter For Kids
at Morning Star*



increased attendance, a worthwhile outreach and another blessing both to us and to those who attended.

One of our members is a fire-fighter in Calgary with duties in public relations. He brought his talent to an evening arranged to promote the use of smoke alarms, extinguishers etc. and along with that the local fire chief filled in on recent innovations on the homebuilding scene. No charge to the public and free lunch with only sponsorship mentioned. Much information was well received as were door prizes and fellowship.

Guess Who's Coming for Dinner was another congregational happening with some signing in as hosts and some as guests. The list was stirred up and the date set. No host knew who was coming, just how many and the guests only knew at the last minute where they were going. Great fun was had by all. Finally all that coupled with the pure word of God we have so many blessings. May God bless you all. We look forward to hearing from you in this newsletter.

St. Paul

Calgary, Alberta

Over the past few months, our building project has taken significant strides. After some tug-of-war with the city, we finally had our development permit approved. With the help of handymen from Mountain View Lutheran, our trailers that have served us faithfully for the past 20 years have been dismantled this past month. It's the first sign that our building project this summer is underway.

As we pondered our Savior's death and resurrection once more, St. Paul's was blessed to have our largest Easter attendance in recent memory, with barely an empty seat. May the risen Lord move us to continue to work for him, knowing that our labor is not in vain!



The removal of the trailers at St. Paul

Apostles

Regina, Saskatchewan

Greetings from Apostles Lutheran Church. What a Saviour we have who loved us so much that he became like one of us – a human brother. He went to the cross and rose again to save us from hell and open heaven to all who believe in him. The LORD did this, not that we should live for ourselves any longer, but for him who died and rose again for us.

With solemn joy I can speak of a great victory the LORD gave two of our members, since our last update. On December 24th, our dear sister Sandra joined her husband (who passed away only 11 months earlier) in celebrating Christmas with Christ in heaven. On February 10, our brother Vaughn Gattinger was also welcomed to his Saviour's side.

I want to talk a little about Vaughn. In the emergency room, he most definitely shared his faith. Like a mighty champion, he bellowed out hymns loudly for all to hear. In the short time I have known him, he exemplified what it means to faithfully come to Church. If there was one man who had an excuse to be a shut in, it was Vaughn. He was in a wheel chair and lived in a provincially run nursing home. But he made sure to arrange a bus to pick him up almost every Sunday to take him to Church. And on certain days when he forgot to arrange the bus? With the little money he had he paid a private cab company to bring him to Church: over \$40 each time! He knew the importance of meeting together. He lamented to me privately when others were not in Church. He didn't understand why they didn't come. The presence of his fellow brothers and sisters was very important to him. Their simple presence in Church strengthened him, just as his

determination to come to Church no matter what the difficulty or cost strengthened me. Vaughn loved the Gospel in Word and Sacraments. He knew that only these things gave him peace in this life, and kept him safe for the life to come. May the LORD grant in all of us a zeal for gathering around Word and Sacrament like he gave Vaughn.

In other news we are slowly starting a Moms and Children playgroup. We only have one family outside the congregation coming at the moment, but she is coming faithfully. Her main reason for joining our program was that we promised to teach the Bible and, even though she is unchurched at the moment, she wanted both her and her children to learn about God's love for us in Christ.

The LORD also gave us two other non-member families who have been attending service rather faithfully. We rejoice that the LORD has led them to us, and pray that He will move in their hearts to take BIC classes and become communicant members of Apostles.

Last update I mentioned the possibility of Apostles starting a Christian daycare. We are still waiting on the government to decide about grants. The Saskatchewan government released its budget March 26th, and part of that budget was funding for only 258 new daycare slots for the entire province (a far cry from what is needed, however the government has been hit with a big deficit this year and wanted to control spending). We have requested funding for 50 slots. By God's grace, we are still under consideration. We should receive a letter in the middle of May advising us as to what is available. Even if we do not receive an invitation to apply at this time, we will be placed on a waiting list to apply for funding when it becomes available. (The way it works is that the government has a letter of intent

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from us on file. They determine where new daycares are needed based on available funding. If we are in an area prioritized for a daycare (which from my understanding, we are) and funding is available, they send us an application which we need to fill out in a predetermined time. Upon approval, a consultant is assigned to us to help us build and start the daycare.) Please keep this matter in your prayers: that we receive funding if it is His will for us to pursue opening a Christian Daycare in Regina.

Our Shepherd

Poltimore, Quebec

Over the past four years we've had a wedding every summer at Our Shepherd, and this year is no exception!! God is blessing our little flock, we've been reaching out to people (young and old), teaching classes in English and French, and working hard to get our congregation recognized by the Quebec government so I can actually perform a marriage in Quebec. As you might imagine, it's been quite a long and frustrating process. VBS is coming up this summer again, and the flock is excited about reaching our community through this event. Your brothers and sisters in Quebec wish you all the best!

Mountain View

Calgary, Alberta

Hello from Mountain View!

After Christmas, Mountain View focused its attention on this year's Pastoral Conference. As the host congregation, our responsibility was to provide one dinner for the 45 attending pastors and about 10 of their families. The conference was held 55 minutes away in Canmore which posed a unique challenge for providing food for the dinner, but the members of Mountain View did a nice job organizing and carrying out the event. We hope that your pastor enjoyed his time in Canmore and returned home refreshed and ready to serve you.

This month Mountain View held its first ever "Friday Fun Night." Around 25 people converged on the Chinook Bowladrome. After a few strikes, spares, and many gutter balls, we headed home with sore throwing arms. We are hoping to plan a "Friday Fun Night" once a month. Next month we may be go-kart racing!

God bless you and your ministries!

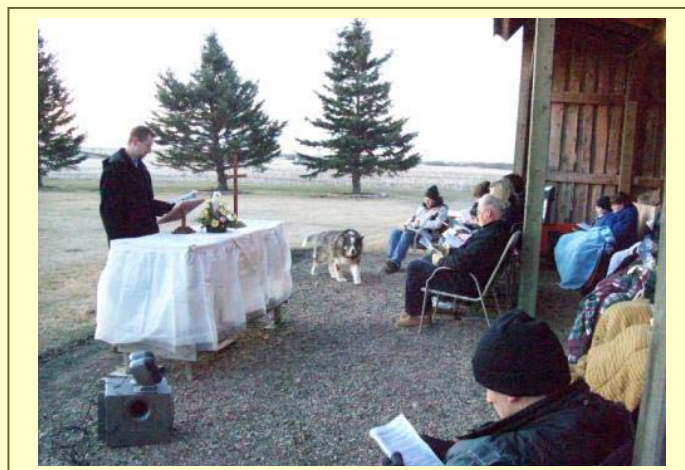
There are also other challenges facing the Church, challenges that are not necessarily unique. The devil is working hard with all the worries of life and glitter of materialism, to keep all of us from gathering together regularly. We need prayers that the LORD instill in all of us a love for his Word, that we do not fall out of the habit of meeting together, but that we encourage each other all the more as we see the LORD's great Day approaching.

Thank you for all your offerings, prayers and support. May the LORD bless all of you richly.

Divine Word

Ottawa, Ontario

Food, food, food, food . . . it seems all our news recently has to do with food! We've started a new outreach event called "Community Cuisine" where members or friends showcase recipes and/or cook a dish - it's been great for inviting friends and family that don't normally come to church related events. We've included a "grill the pastor" session at the beginning so people can put forth all their questions about God. Our Chinese group has started having potluck fellowships once a month; it's like coming to a free Chinese buffet! People invite family and friends, and we get to share the Gospel and make new contacts. Every week the group meets for fellowship, and we have a Bible class and a couple Foundations classes aimed just at the Chinese community. We're looking forward to another busy summer with VBS and other activities going on, please keep us in your prayers, and we'll keep you in ours!!



Pastor Vogel leading a chilly Easter Sunrise Service @ Chris & Shannon Scattergood's (members of Morning Star)

St. Peter

St. Albert, Alberta

We hosted an afternoon seminar on baptism in January and had six non-members in attendance. Out of those six, one requested baptism for her baby. Pastor Habben continues to study the Bible with this family. Our congregation also recently hosted two art camps. The first was focused on children ages 10 and up while the second camp, led by St. Peter's member Doug Shoults, was for children ages 5-9. There were 20 children in attendance at this camp and we found out that while all of these children knew about Jesus' death, some of them didn't know he has risen! What a joy it was to share that truth with them.

The women of our congregation have just hosted Women's Day.

L.O.V.E. Love, That's Why! Why does a holy God bother with us sinners? Love, that's why! This past weekend ladies from across Alberta gathered for a time of fellowship and devotion. The focus was on God's hands-on love, and learning some tangible ways to share this love with others.

WELS Canada Scholarship

The money from WELS Canada for scholarships is making a wonderful difference for people like Jim Cai and his family. A few years back Jim was an atheist who came with his family here from China. They met Jesus through a VBS program a number of years ago. Jim had serious difficulties / problems at school and adjusting to life in Canada speaking English. Now, by God's grace, he's doing well at MLS. The following is a letter from Jim Cai

My school day at MLS is fine, there are "the good times", and "the bad times... First thing off, I begin the day with waking up at 6:00am, feeling all sloppy, hurrying to the large public bathroom. Then I have to walk three stairs down to the cafeteria to get breakfast. Comparing that with when you are at your own house, it's much farther, and I have to wait in line for my turn. After climbing the stairs back to my dorm it's time for (drum roll)... classes! (Not supposed to be exciting, it is much harder than my middle school, and I would say about 5 times harder!) My brain can barely keep up with it; I have to try so hard to just get B's or C's in my grades. After a very long time... all my classes are over for the day, than I get a very short break. (Comparing to the past when I was in Canada & China) I usually use this time to do home work anyways, since the homework here is such a great amount; therefore: "I hardly get any break time!" Could this get any worse? Some nights at bed time, especially when I just had a bad day, I have to pull myself together from not thinking about my family, or I would be in tears silently. But, there is the positive side too! I really like the cafeteria food, it's almost the same as my dad's cooking (my dad is a high level chef!) I also enjoyed talking and having fun with all my friends at the food table.

Our football game on Friday didn't go so well, we lost big time, but I am sure we will win next time. (Which we did) The classes are very hard, but I know this is good for me, training me to be a useful person for my future. And the teachers here are very nice and helpful; they relieve me from troubles and struggles. My favorite part is that... I can be closer with the Lord (comparing with all the previous public schools that I went to) Just because of that, it can wipe out all of those negative sides above. The Lord gives me eternal life, anything is worth it!

My first week was just like what I had expected, no matter how hard it gets, everything will be fine, because good is on my side! I love this school.

Jim Cai

Thanks for reading this edition of the WELS Canada Newsletter.
Look for the next issue in late August. God Bless!