

Unanimous Vote to Call Co-pastor

The vote was unanimous.

The vote, held at a special congregational meeting December 14, was to consider calling Rev. Krister Ulmanis as Mount Zion's new co-pastor.

Prior to the vote, Church Council President, Chris Kosomovic told the congregation that it has been a long year but a year of learning; a year of stepping up; a year of passion; a year of growth. "With a lot of help, a lot of effort, a great deal of coordination, and surely – God's own Grace - our congregation stretched, learned, and served," she said.

Jim Widdecombe, who acted as the chair of the call committee told the gathering that Pastor Krister was the committee's unanimous choice and gave the congregation Pastor Krister's bio. The following is an edited version of what Jim shared with the congregation.

Pastor Krister is a 17-year veteran of parish ministry, and is currently pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Belleville, Ontario, where he has served since 2005.

Previously, he was pastor at Zion Lutheran in Sault Ste. Marie for five years. Prior to that he served Faith Lutheran in St. Catharines for seven years. Additionally, during the period between 1993 and 2005, he was pastor for the Latvian-speaking parishes in St. Catharines/Niagara Falls and Sault Ste. Marie. These small congregations usually meet once a month and are part of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America. Pastor Krister has also preached in the Swedish Lutheran congregation in Toronto.

He was born in Sweden. He came to Canada and Waterloo with his family in 1974 and initially studied at WLU as a sociology major (1977-80). However, his professional career did not begin in

sociology, or in ministry for that matter, but in branch banking where he became an assistant manager. He decided banking was not the career for him, and worked for a period at St. Joseph's Health Centre detox treatment unit for alcoholics in Toronto.

It was after these experiences that he answered a call to ordained ministry – beginning studies at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in 1986. His internship was at St. James Lutheran in Elmira.

Following his internship, Pastor Krister devoted one year to traveling and preaching in Latvia.

Returning to Canada in 1991, he completed seminary and accepted his first call as assistant Pastor at St. Matthew's, Hanover – where he also gained experience with team ministry – another asset he will bring to our multi-faceted staff at Mount Zion.

In sum, he has served a variety of congregations in varied settings. Indeed, it was this depth of experience, and his demonstrated strengths in worship leadership, preaching, spiritual discipline, administration and interpersonal relationships, that were among the key attributes that led the Call Committee to see Pastor Krister as a match for ministry at Mount Zion.

That impression was borne out in our interview with him, as well in comments from references – both clergy and lay – who spoke of his humility and humanity, and of his determination to help make the Gospel meaningful to everyday life and living. His natural rapport with people and generous sense of humour were also referenced – and experienced by our own committee in dealing with him.

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Taking Stock of Mount Zion

By Jeff Harris

Perhaps it's because these things garner a good deal of my professional attention, I cannot help myself but see parallels between the equity markets, investor behavior, and the life of our community at Mount Zion. Kindly indulge me and I'll try to explain.

With a clear Mission to guide us, Mount Zion has steadily advanced and grown in recent years. We've been the beneficiary of strong and talented leadership. Add to this the investment of time, talent, and yes, money, from our members; and the outcome has been impressive positive returns - growth in membership, financial stability, prolific outreach and benevolence, and a celebration of 50 years in mission.

During periods of extended growth and stability in the equity markets, it is easy for investors to grow accustomed to steady performance and positive returns. Some will become complacent, paying little attention to their portfolio, taking growth for granted. Some will lose sight of risks that may lurk around the corner. This is when they are most vulnerable.

Conventional wisdom says that equity markets don't like uncertainty, and will react negatively when faced with a lack of clarity. When uncertainty rears its head in what has become a complacent market, the results can get rather ugly - and fast. Witness the events of recent months. As markets turn bearish, investors tend to withdraw their capital out of fear for what might become of their hard earned assets. Understandably, they become focused on preserving what they have, rather than looking at what could be.

Just about one year ago, the status quo at Mount Zion was shaken (no elaboration required, I assume), and a great deal of uncertainty about our future took hold. It would be an

exaggeration to suggest Mount Zion has been "gripped by panic", or that our members have been "fleeing for the exits". However, it is my personal observation that like the markets of late, we have not escaped negative consequences stemming from this uncertainty in our congregation. By appearances at least, attendance at worship this past year has fallen; I can say without question that our income has declined; and I believe little attention has been given to a number of longer-term, strategic matters while our sights have been focused on the here and now.

Some commentators have described the state of the equity markets as "broken". Mount Zion is not broken, in my mind; but like markets and economies around the globe, I believe we face some serious challenges - a search for new clergy, physical space that may not ideally suit our current (and future) needs, aging premises in need of repairs and capital investment (in particular, our rental properties), grappling with social issues that face the wider church - to name a few.

Like investors, we may be afraid; we worry about how to find our way forward. We wonder how we will continue to advance our Mission, and whether the positive returns we've experienced in the past will ever come back.

There has been considerable talk and debate about government bailouts and stimulus packages to restore confidence and proper functioning in the financial markets. While these big brother initiatives play a role, the ultimate cure lies in the sentiments and actions of individuals. At some point during a bear market, forward looking (and, yes, courageous) investors regain a focus on the long-term and recognize the opportunities that have surfaced. They seek to exploit volatility and seize the potential that periods of change can present.

Supporting our Ministry

AS AT: Nov 30, 2008

No doubt we are in the throes of change at Mount Zion. We have lost some of what we once had, but so much of the capital that got us to where we are remains. Having spoken with you during the course of this year about our future, I know there are many here who see this as a time of opportunity for our congregation. Instead of leaving things to chance, hoping for and waiting for help from outside, many in our midst have stepped up and kept Mount Zion functioning during the year; and are presently working hard to steer us into the future.

As a community, we are responsible for and accountable to ourselves. There will be difficult decisions to be made; but they must be made to move forward. There will be a need to reach consensus and take action; we must be courageous, accept certain risks, and act. Without forgetting where we've come from, we will have to let go of some of what had become familiar and comfortable.

A few weeks ago, the membership of Mount Zion agreed to extend a call to a new co-pastor. This should begin to remove a great deal of the uncertainty that has lingered over us this past year. Clearly, this is an important step towards restoring stability. While I am not about to make any calls on the equity markets, I have to believe this development is a signal that Mount Zion is poised for a rebound. It is time to deploy our capital once again, to be fully invested. It is my hope that everyone in our community will embrace the potential that lies ahead of us, will participate, and will be rewarded accordingly.

<u>CURRENT</u>	2008	2007
Income	236,923	266,443
Expense	204,772	281,005
Balance	32,151	-14,562

<u>BENEVOLENCE</u>		
Synod	34,193	35,325
Global Hunger	8,796	9,353
Open Sesame	8,875	9,265
Other	13,678	15,510

<u>CAPITAL</u>		
Income	14,120	19,687
Expense	5,231	18,481
Mortgage Income	15,773	18,304
Mortgage Interest	1,103	2,024

Unanimous Vote

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Pastor Krister's commitment to our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada has also been visible over the years through his service on a variety of local and synodical committees. Outside the church, he has served on school councils and library boards in Sault Ste. Marie and St. Catharines and is a board member of the Wilfrid Laurier Alumni Association.

He admits to a passion for sports – especially soccer – and also enjoys skiing and curling. His interests include political science and philosophy, while his hobbies include reading, travel, history, theatre and music – ranging from classical to punk rock.

Pastor Krister is the father of a teen-aged son, Niklas, who is completing his last year in high school and preparing for university.

Pastor Ulmanis remarried just this past October. His wife, the Reverend Heidi Wachowiak, is pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran in Cambridge (Preston).

Taking Stock of our Time and Talents

By Gerry Roeder

I have never been the type of person to make New Year's resolutions, but I do try to evaluate the previous year, and then make adjustments so that the next year will flow as smoothly as possible.

Many people will begin the year saying, "This year I will get in shape, once and for all", or "I'll stop spending beyond my means". Some of us want to lose weight or quit smoking. Others want to find a sense of purpose, more work versus lifestyle balance. This may even involve considering leaving an unfulfilling job and starting over. However eventually most of these good intentions wear off, and we find ourselves back in the same old routines and life goes on.

As I look back at this past year, the economic downturn is something that had a large impact on everything and everybody. With this weighing heavy on everyone's mind most of us have taken another look at our finances and probably our budget as well.

Establishing a budget is also an exercise in establishing priorities. The bills at the top of the list are the most essential; those at the bottom are the extras we might or might not be able to afford. Where we put our giving to the Church, says much (as Jesus taught) about our hearts. Investment advisors teach us to "pay yourself first". The Bible, with its assumptions of "first fruits" giving, would argue that giving to the Church comes first. Each of us, when setting up our family budgets (in and of itself is a crucial aspect of faithful stewardship and wise money management) must make up our minds about the amount you will give.

In 1 Timothy 6, verse 17 to 19 it says: "Command those who are rich in the things of this life (this doesn't mean really rich, it means people like us that have an income, houses, cars and such) not to be proud, and put your faith in wealth which is so uncertain" (haven't we seen that?) "but put your hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command (the affluent) to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share with

others. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age". Life that is truly life amounts to more than just trading dollars and buying stuff.

1 Timothy 6, also talks about being "rich in good deeds". As we take stock on how we've been handling our spare time over the past year. Have we truly been rich in good deeds? This includes not just the Church but also with our neighbours. The need for volunteers has never been greater, and is such an important reason why our community continues to be such great place to live.

Sacrificing to give, is what makes it holy as it connects with the sacrificial love of Jesus who sacrificed himself for us. The "joyful" aspect of giving goes back to the basic foundation of our Christian faith. Do you struggle in faith to follow a God who scarcely provides barely enough to get by, or does your faith follow a God who provides more than what we need so that there is always something to give and share?

Our Church and Community need your assistance now more than ever as challenges continue to increase. Take stock on what you did last year and consider doing more, as we all try to become a true disciple of Jesus.

Dear Lord: Fill our hearts with joy, and gratitude for all the gifts you've given us to share, today and every day. In Jesus' name. Amen

35th Anniversary of Lutheran Campus Ministry

Come and celebrate 35 years of Lutheran Campus Ministry in Waterloo on Sat. March 21, 2009. We will meet at 5:00 at Mt Zion Lutheran Church for supper, fellowship, reminiscing and entertainment.

For more info contact Anne Woolner @ annewoolner@hotmail.com.

Cough and Cold Medicines Important Recommendations

Canada's priority is the health and safety of Canadians and thus, Health Canada is in the process of examining cough and cold medicines in Canada to make recommendations regarding their safe use in children under 12. Health Canada will post all the relevant information related to this file as soon as the evaluation process is completed. Other regulatory agencies are also performing similar assessment for the cough and cold products used in children.

In the interim, please review the information that is available in the public domain (e.g., the Health Canada Public Advisory of 2007

[see], the recent US FDA Public Advisory, etc.) so that you can further familiarize yourself with the issue surrounding this file.

Open Sesame Update

Open Sesame's Christmas Party was held on Monday, Dec. 8th and was another "Big Success".

Santa (Jim Millar) presented each child with a package of goodies from his sack. One of their gifts had been made by their parents under the guidance of our former teacher Rachelle Swayze.

Parents and children enjoyed their lunch of sandwiches, vegies and drinks prepared by Ruth Stromberg, Karin Packull, Mayda Scoins, Ann Crossman and Carol Ziegler.

A Big Thank You to Helen Krueger, a former Open Sesame volunteer and a member of St. Stephens, for her financial contribution towards the Christmas Party.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed 2009 to each of you from our teachers, families and volunteers at Open Sesame Headstart Preschool.

submitted by Carol Ziegler

Join the Mountaineer for Coffee



When the editorial committee of *The Mountaineer* meets, we have great discussions over coffee. Once a month, we meet to discuss ideas for articles for the next edition.

If you have an interest in communications, theology and Mount Zion, consider joining us. Give Dennis Eaton a call at 884 3421 The coffee is on us.

The Mountaineer

is the newsletter of:

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Please send your comments, ideas and updates to

gastmeier@rogers.com

Deadline for February Issue:

January 15, 2009

Women of Mount Zion

Thursday, January 29, 7:15 pm

The "Women of Mt. Zion" are invited to see & taste a cooking demonstration in our own Mt. Zion kitchen.

Chef Mia MacPherson
will demonstrate using ideas from the book
"The Hundred Mile Diet.....
a Year of Local Eating"

by
Alisa Smith & J.B. MacKinnon.

**Join us at 7:15 for some light
sampling.**

April 24 - 26 - Women's Retreat
Leader - Pastor Bonnie Schelter-Brown

Friday, May 29
Girl's Night Out
(At the home of Anne Woolner)

45 *Plus*

Tuesday, January 24th 2009 1:30pm

A member of the Waterloo Region Police Fraud Squad will be our guest speaker. He will discuss the unscrupulous methods aimed at seniors to defraud them of their savings.



Mount Zion's Cabaret Night And Silent Auction

Mount Zion is a proud founding member of
SHOW (Supportive Housing of Waterloo)

What?

Cabaret evening with a variety of entertainers from singers to magicians.

Where?

Mount Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church,
29 Westmount Rd. South, Waterloo

When?

Saturday, February 14, 2009 at 8 pm

Why?

To raise funds in support of SHOW
(Supportive Housing of Waterloo) who
hope to raise \$1 million dollars in order to
complete a building project for homeless
and hard-to-house individuals

**Tickets will be on sale in the narthex
in mid January. Cost per ticket is \$30.**