

The

Mountaineer

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Can we be certain? I doubt it.

by Tim Ehrlich

Easter and the resurrection with its message of hope and salvation are also accompanied by the well-recognized story of Thomas and his moment of doubt. It is often portrayed in a negative light as if it were a flaw or crisis of faith. Is doubt a bad thing?

A recent movie entitled "Doubt" powerfully addressed the notion of doubt versus certainty. It stars Phillip Seymour-Hoffman as Father Flynn, a charismatic parish priest who is trying to upend some of the strict customs of St. Nicholas Church in the Bronx of New York. These strict customs have been fiercely guarded by Sister Aloysius, portrayed by Meryl Streep. St. Nicholas has just admitted Donald Miller, its first black student. When one of the new teachers, Sister James, shares her suspicion with sister Aloysius that Father Flynn is paying too much attention to Donald, the stage is set for a confrontation between Father Flynn and Sister Aloysius. Father Flynn denies any wrong-doing and is bound by the confidentiality of his office and Sister Aloysius is driven by her notions of moral certainty without any evidence. It is a powerful and thought-provoking movie which has garnered many awards. Is certainty better than doubt? This movie will not provide an answer but it does cause one to think about the question.

It is tempting to equate certainty with the notion of faith. It is our nature to want to "know" things. We have confidence in a world that we can see and touch, and experience first-hand. If we see something with our own eyes we are more likely to believe it than hearing it from someone else, just like Thomas. Is it always good to be certain? I'm not so sure. Ask any magician and he'll tell you that certainty is one of his best allies. "But I'm sure you put the ball under the middle cup."

Many tragedies have occurred in the name of moral certainty. The witch trials of Salem spring immediately to mind. Certainty is not necessarily a bad thing unless it is accompanied by a closed mind or narrow point of view.

Doubt has long carried a negative connotation. It should not, however, be confused with scepticism. Doubt, if it is honest should lead us to search for that which is true and real; to where we can give our intellectual assent, but more importantly, to where we can entrust our lives to faith when certainty fails. Thomas said, "Unless I can see with my own eyes and put my fingers in the wounds, I will not believe." When Jesus invited him to do both, it is worth observing he did not need to touch. Seeing was indeed believing and much more. Perhaps Thomas' doubt was because he dared not hope. Ask any person of deep faith and they will likely admit to also having great doubts. Doubt requires some daring. Questioning the conventions of the day has led to many of the important discoveries that make up our world today. Yet we need certainty too. We have to have confidence in what we know in order to go forward. It is experience and certainty that gives us the confidence to cross the street when the light says walk but it is doubt that makes us look both ways.

Christian Commitment in another way

Last Sunday a parishioner mentioned to me that she had a significant birthday coming up, you know a 30th, 40th, 65th or 75th, that kind of significant. Anyway, she said that there was nothing material she needed nor couldn't go without, so she had emailed all her family and asked that in lieu of gifts, to please contribute to Supported Housing Of Waterloo (SHOW) a new venture in this city.

In the midst of fund raising right now, the project is described as a "Housing First" approach that moves chronically homeless individuals, like those who are currently using the area's Out of the Cold emergency shelters, off the street and into permanent apartments with affordable rent and support services. An on-site professional support staff (24 hours a day, seven days a week) will provide programming and services such as: mental health services, addiction and alcohol recovery programs, counselling services, food bank, literacy and academic upgrading programs and job search and employment training.

I was impressed by this parishioner's commitment to the project and the resolve to forgo all those fancy gifts. Clearly, this is an expression of Christian concern and love in yet another way.

How about you? There must be many similar stories in this congregation, stories we'd love to print. They are all printed anonymously and serve as an aid to others as they think about new ways to express their faith. Call anyone on the editorial board for more information.

A Letter and Invitation from Pastor Krister

Dear friends in Christ,

This past year two very joyous transitions have taken place in my life. One were the Call to Mount Zion and the other took place on October 24, 2008 when I married Heidi Wachowiak, pastor at St. Peter's, Preston (I will learn eventually to say Cambridge) in a very small and private service.

The marriage was the culmination of a relationship that began 5 years earlier at the Bishop's Annual Retreat for Clergy and Church Staff, held every year at Mount Carmel retreat centre in Niagara Falls. What began as a long distance friendship turned into a long distance relationship and then a long distance marriage until July 2009, when we will be living together in Cambridge.

Because the first service was for family and a few friends only we have decided to celebrate our marriage with a second service. On May 8 @ 7:00 p.m. at St. Peter's, (810 King St E, Cambridge, ON) we will reaffirm our wedding vows in a service of Holy Communion (pr. Tanya officiating) – and you and yours are very much invited to join us for this celebration. On the bulletin board in the narthex there is an open invitation which we ask you sign by **April 26, 2009** so that we have some idea of how many are coming

As with any Lutheran gathering there will be food – a finger-food reception will follow in the fellowship. There is also a group photo to be taken at 6:45 p.m. and if you are coming, please make sure you are part of that photo as well.

Everyone is welcome! Come, celebrate with us!

Get To Know Your Committees

One in a continuing series by Tim Ehrlich

Community Garden

The community garden of Mount Zion has been an active “green ministry” for seven years. Fourteen carefully tended plots are maintained by members, friends and neighbours. The majority of these are tended by non-members and in some cases provide a welcome supplemental food source. Gardeners compost their organic waste and no extra compost or mulch is required. Our Sunday School children have contributed seedlings for a Blessing of Seed and Soil. The garden continues to contribute to the carrying out of our mission statement by welcoming gardeners to learn about caring for ourselves, our community, and the environment. This past year, Mount Zion served as host for the Waterloo Community Garden Cycle Tour. In addition we received an award from Region of Waterloo Community Garden Council for our contribution to the community over the past 7 years and the benefits that the garden provides to the surrounding neighbourhood.

Where Are They Now

A brief update about past seminarians who have served at Mount Zion

Rev. Christie Morrow served as a Field Placement Student at Mount Zion in 2000-2001, under Pastors Mark Harris and Judi Williams. Her first call, after ordination was to St. Peter’s in Milverton, ON. She resigned this call last fall to receive the call to Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Owen Sound, ON. Christie is currently working as chairperson, on the National Planning Committee for the National Youth Gathering in London, ON in 2010.

Women's Auxiliary Of Waterloo

The Women's Auxiliary of Waterloo Lutheran Seminary are very appreciative of the help you have given them in the past. Without your contribution the Auxiliary would not be able to assist Seminarians.

Soon students, after finishing their year will be taking their Supervised Pastoral Training. Since this takes place during the summer when students usually have jobs, the Auxiliary is able to give help where needed.

Other Auxiliary projects include the painting of the Seminary kitchen and lounge as well as supplying some new kitchen dishes and a microwave.

The Women's Auxiliary Executive are kept very busy in the Spring working in the flower beds around the Seminary building and purchasing plants where needed.

A reminder: the Annual Meeting will be on Sept 23rd - so mark your calendar to attend St. John's Lutheran Church. An envelope is enclosed for your donation which will be of great help with the Auxiliary's projects.

Rose Moore & Pat Edwards

Supporting our Ministries

AS AT: Mar 31, 2009

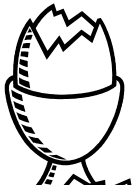
<u>CURRENT</u>	2009	2008
Income	59,139	72,509
Expense	66,319	62,811
Balance	-7,180	9,698

<u>BENEVOLENCE</u>		
Synod	8,517	8,570
Global Hunger	1,628	1,428
Open Sesame	2,760	1,690
Other	9,557	5,391

<u>CAPITAL</u>		
Income	4,201	4,014
Expense	13,496	0
Mortgage Income	4,085	4,371
Mortgage Interest	164	368



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.



Men's Breakfast

45Plus



MAY BOAT CRUISE

May 25

Boat Cruise and luncheon aboard the
DUC D, ORLEANS

*Travel from Sarnia to Monro Honey and Winery,
Alviston on the St Clair River*

Total cost is \$61.

Sign up sheet in narthex.
More info: Burt Huehn 519-743-8292

Women of Mount Zion

GIRL'S NIGHT OUT

FRIDAY, MAY 29 - 6:30

At the home of Anne Woolner
282 Stoke Dr. Kitchener

Sign up sheet on the bulletin board
or

Phone Anne at 743-2277

RSVP by Sunday, May 24 so Chinese
food can be ordered

Cost - \$10.00

Bring an interesting story or joke
to share

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Mount Zion Lutheran Church

29 Westmount Road, South Waterloo, On N2L 2K4

Phone/Fax (519) 886-5820 e-mail: mtzion@mzlc.ca

www.mzlc.ca

Pastors: Rev Rev. Tanya Ramer.

Rev. Everett Mossman, Interim

Editorial Committee: Dennis Eaton, Karen Gastmeier, Jim
Widdecombe, Tim Ehrlich

Please send your comments, ideas and updates to
gastmeier@rogers.com

Deadline for May issue:

April 10, 2009