

The Changing Church?

By Pastor Mark Harris

I love the church. I want to begin by establishing that as an indisputable assertion. Since I was a child, the rhythm of Sundays and holy days have shaped the pattern of my life. As a young man, when it was time to choose my vocation, I dedicated my life to the church, to her people, and to the gospel ministry. For the past thirty years I have sought to serve the church, as a pastor in three different congregations and through the work of the wider-institution. I have been challenged, enriched, and infinitely blessed by the community of faith, such that, even on my worst days, I can unreservedly claim, "I love the church."

Nevertheless, I am becoming increasingly convinced that there is something deeply amiss in our life together. The most tangible evidence of this is found in a struggle which is shared across denominational lines and which is evident in church after church. I see evidence of this problem in the vast majority of congregations that I visit. There are few if any children, youth, or young families in

many of our congregations. In fact, it is not at all uncommon for me, when visiting a church, to discover that I am the youngest person present... at 55 years of age!

While there are settings in which this is not the case, congregations which continue to offer vibrant ministries for families and youth, this is the exception rather than the norm. When I make this observation, the somewhat defensive response is nearly always the same. "Families and young people simply aren't as committed to the church as they used to be," someone will offer. While few of us would dispute that contention, what we fail to consider is why this is the case. Far too often, we – of the church – see the difficulty as "their" problem, "their" lack of interest or commitment. The "blame", dare I use that word, is seen to lie with families and youth who are more committed to other activities, like hockey or soccer or gymnastics, then to the nurturing and practice of faith.

That may be the case. But I am becoming increasingly aware that there may be another way of understanding this dilemma. While it is a perspective which may be difficult for those of us who love the church to consider, I believe that it is our love for the church which compels us to consider it nonetheless.

It is true that there are fewer families and youth in our congregations than was the case, twenty or thirty years ago. But maybe a part of that is because we, of the church, have failed them. We have been unwilling to consider that a lot of the time-tested, traditional ways of nurturing and expressing faith, which have been so meaningful to many of us, simply have not served the differing needs of the next generations. Or to put it in different terms, our understanding and practice of what it means to be "the church" and our desire to maintain the status quo has unintentionally rendered us passé to many in the younger generations.

Is it any wonder that there are so many who are not in our pews or involved in our ministries? As the church, our reluctance to be flexible and daring, and our unwillingness to be led by the lively promptings of the spirit and the needs of our whole community, has borne a dire consequence. It is not what we intended. It is not the kind of faithfulness with which most of us are familiar or, perhaps, even comfortable, but if the church is to flourish, this may be just the sort of possibilities that we are called to consider.

So, the title of this article, “The Changing Church,” is really an open-ended question. The church is changing as it always has and always will. There is nothing that we can do to alter that fact. But what

God – who alone is unchanging - has given into our hands is the opportunity to influence the direction of that change. Given the average age of members, in many of our congregations, it has been estimated that as many as 30% of our congregations, in the Eastern Synod, will be unsustainable within ten years. If nothing changes in the near future, if we continue to be unable or unwilling to re-engage with youth and families, the decline of these congregations will be the inevitable result.

On the other hand, if we – of the church – are willing to take seriously the call withhold nothing, in our efforts to share the good news that has been entrusted to us, the church may end up looking much

different than the one that we have known and loved. That is another sort of change. But maybe, that is precisely what Christ is calling forth and the Spirit is empowering from among us. Maybe, in this generation, we are being called to become a renewed community of faith, willing to take risks, step outside of our comfort zones, and even make mistakes for the sake of the gospel.

So, change is inevitable. The question for each of us and for each congregation in our church is this: which kind of a changing church are we going to be?

2010 Eastern Synod Convention

By Tim Ehrlich

I've never been to a Synod Convention before. Oh, I've been to other conventions and I sort of expected a lot of sitting, reports droning on endlessly, debating over minutiae. I guess the only part that lived up to my expectations was the sitting. It took place in Toronto June 24-27 near the airport – thankfully nowhere near the disruption that was the G20. There were 170 clergy delegates, 122 lay delegates and with visitors and volunteers, 406 in total.

The theme of the convention was a dual one - “In Mission for Others”, “Signs of Hope.” Bishop Pryse gave a stirring address which used the 8 rules for white water rafting as a model for navigating church ministry. I was particularly drawn to the last one which read “Everyone paddles furiously to get somewhere but it is the current that carries us downstream.” The current in this case is God’s will and grace. Our National Bishop, Susan Johnson addressed the assembly emphasizing some of

the important work our national church has done especially in partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). Support for CLWR has gone up primarily in response to the crisis in Haiti. To date they have received 1.1 million dollars, mostly from the ELCIC. Our Eastern Synod has raised \$125,000 which has resulted in matching funds from CIDA of \$53,000. CLWR has also reached an agreement with the retail store Ten Thousand Villages which results in some proceeds from sales going to

CLWR. Just shopping there can help someone! The National Church has also encountered some financial challenges. Like the rest of us, when the recession hit revenues took a dive. Now, however, while the economy is rebounding, Benevolence offering continue to flatline. Perhaps the problem is one of terminology. For me benevolence is a vague term. It helps me to think of it as support ministry. Our Synod and the National Church are completely dependent on the rest of us meeting our commitments. Their budgets are predicated on that faith. More and more congregations are falling short of those commitments, some significantly. I can tell you without reservation that they are being very creative in cutting corners and finding new efficiencies (we even recycle name tags for next year.) There is only so far we can trim before programming is adversely affected. Synod operations cover many things from pastoral support to seminary support, youth support, outdoor ministries and congregational support. These are all things we have identified as important. It is up to us to support them and I urge each one of us to do our best to reach those commitments.

One of the significant things addressed at this convention is a task force of the ELCIC concerning structural renewal. We were presented with some hard

facts. Since its creation in 1986, ELCIC baptized membership is down 23%. In 1987 benevolence income was 9.13% of congregational receipts but in 2007 that dropped to just 6%. Over that period of time, congregational receipts have increased while the amount passed on to synods has decreased. This prompts the task force to ask the question, "If we did not do things the way we do now, what is the best way to do them." Every option is on the table. There were three opportunities to do some brainstorming to throw out ideas and express concerns. This input will be digested and come back in a more formal way for discussion at the National Convention in 2011.

Another significant motion which came forward was to commend to the National Church the ELCIC Task Force's April 2010 draft social statement on human sexuality and in particular, to urge taking the steps necessary to "permit ELCIC clergy to perform marriages regardless of sexual orientation and opening the ordination and rostering to qualified candidates regardless of sexual orientation." There was spirited and respectful statements made on both sides of the motion which passed by a margin of more than 2 to 1. I encourage everyone to read the draft report which can be found on the ELCIC website.

An important part of these conventions is elections. Bishop Michael Pryse was re-

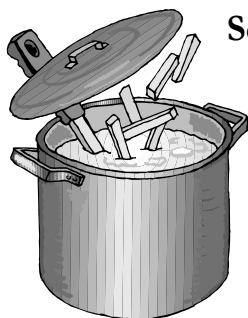
elected on the first ballot for another four year term as were secretary, Rev. Wendell Grahlman and treasurer Keith Myra. Vice President Dorothy Froom chose not to run again and was replaced by Linda Grainger.

We welcomed two new congregations. St. David's in Orillia and Good Shepherd in Barrhaven were welcomed as joint Lutheran/Anglican congregation to the Eastern Synod. We also celebrated what I believe is a marvel of faith and ministry, Redeemer Evangelical Church in Toronto was organized in 1947. In 1960, the congregation voted to mortgage their property in order to help the establishment of three other congregations: Emmanuel in Scarborough, Good Shepherd of North York and St. Phillip's in Etobicoke. The whole convention celebrated this remarkable act of faith and vision.

In conclusion, I found this to be a very rewarding and informative process to take part in. If any of you get a chance, I strongly encourage you to consider taking part. Our church has successes and setbacks and many challenges ahead but a quote I heard more than once keeps me grounded and hopeful. "As long as we have the Book, a loaf, a cup and some water, we're in business." Peace.

So what's going on this fall?

The answer is that there is a lot going on here at Mount Zion this fall ... opportunities for fellowship, crafts and learning.



September 12 **Soup-er Sunday**

We hope you will join us on September 12 following the worship service for our fantastic SOUP luncheon. This annual event encourages us as a congregation to share our time (enjoying one another's company) our talents (making super homemade soups) and the gift of friendship toward one another.

There is still time to contribute soups, veggie platters, bread and butter or to volunteer to help set-up and/clean up.

Please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex. A free-will offering benefits the Alzheimer's Society of Kitchener-Waterloo.

Tuesday September 21, 7:15 p.m.

Women of Mount Zion

Craft Project for SHOW

Students from Elizabeth Ziegler and Southbridge Public Schools have generously donated pieces of their art work for the SHOW Building. Our job will be to have some fun framing, mounting and decorating these cherished masterpieces.

Barb Barnes will lead us in different methods of creating one of a kind works of art. All materials will be supplied. If you have some of the tools listed below, please bring them along.

Tools: Scissors (to cut material or paper)
Eileens Tacky White Glue (dries clear)
Heavy Duty Staple Gun
Office Stapler

A small donation toward the cost of material would be appreciated

Oct 6 and ongoing

Adult Ed Returns

"Uncovering" the Bible in four sessions:

- exploring the history of the Bible itself

Come and explore the history of how the Bible came to be our Bible

- who really wrote the books?
- why are these books the ones in Bible and not others?
- who decided and what was behind the decision?



Pr. Krister will lead a four part session exploring these and other questions around the history of our Bible

Some will be lecture style, some discussion. Everyone's opinion matters.

The same topic will be offered both in the daytime and evening

**Daytime: Thursday October 7, 14, 21, 28
3:30 - 5:00**

**Evening: Wednesday October 6, 13, 20, 27
7:00 - 8:30**

Brite Lites

Thanks to Robert Zilles and John Poole for taking on leadership duties for the Confirmation Age Youth Group.

October 15, 6:00 p.m.

Brubacher, Brenda Wynosky, Barbara Barnes, Scott Knarr, Gerry Roeder, Robb Wilson, John White



better than Oktoberfest

It's Mount Zion's ThanksGivingF est

Come enjoy

- a sauerkraut 'n sausage supper served by- served by past-congregational presidents no less
- Live oooompah music for listening or dancing (settles the sauerkraut!)
- free polka lessons
- Cash Bar

**Friday October 15, 6:00 p.m.
Mount Zion's Auditorium**

100 Free tickets for this fun-filled evening will be available starting on Sept 12 (The tickets will help us keep track)

What's the catch?? There will be a free-will offering with all proceeds going towards Mount Zion's deficit.

More information is available from your ThanksGivingFest team, Karen Gastmeier, Susan


October 30, 8:00 p.m.
Organ Recital promises a few surprises

Last February Mount Zion celebrated the Sunday of the Transfiguration with a new composition by local composer Joanne Bender in honour of the 10th anniversary of the installation of the Guilbault-Thérien organ. We would like to continue to highlight this milestone with an evening organ recital which will allow us to enjoy the many colours of this beautiful instrument. Please join us on Saturday, October 30, 2010 at 8 pm for a memorable recital by local artist Alison Clark.

Alison Clark is a native of New Zealand where she completed her Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

Celebrating 10 years with the Guilbault-Thérien Organ

Alison Clark, organ



Mount Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waterloo
October 30, 2010 at 8pm
Tickets: \$20 call 519-886-5820
www.mzlc.ca

Alison moved to Canada in 1981 and completed a Master of Music degree in Organ Performance at McGill University in Montreal. She has also attained the Fellowship diploma of Trinity College, London, England. Alison has competed in international organ competitions in Chartres (France), Bruges (Belgium), Manchester (England), and Michigan and has recorded for Radio New Zealand and the CBC. Her teachers

have included prominent organists Dame Gillian Weir, John Grew, Gerald Wheeler, David Sanger, Daniel Roth, Guy Bovet, Lionel Rogg, and Harald Vogel. A busy recitalist, Alison is a regular at St. Paul's Cathedral in London (Ontario) and throughout Southern Ontario and beyond. She is currently the Music Director at St. Mark's Anglican Church in Brantford where she oversees three choirs, a handbell choir and hosts an Advent and Lenten concert series.

While the congregation can enjoy the strength and power of the organ each and every Sunday morning, this concert promises to enliven and entertain with music from many different periods and styles. As a special bonus, Mount Zion Music Director Scott Knarr will join Alison for an organ duet by Canadian composer Denis Bedard. An evening of surprises with something for everyone!

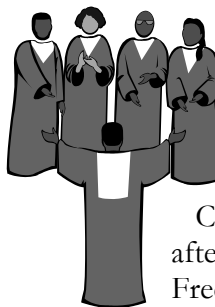
November 16

Women of Mount Zion



Book Study
More info to follow

November 21



Gloryland Chorus benefit concert for SHOW

Mark your calendars for a concert by the Gloryland Chorus at Mount Zion on the afternoon of Sunday, November 21. Free will contributions to SHOW will be requested. Barb Barnes is collecting unique or "one of a kind" craft and needlework items for a silent auction. More details later!

Pastor Tanya Update

It's a Girl, Welcome Emma

After a summer break we have this great opportunity to share good news with you, as Emma Sophia joined the Ramer family on Saturday, July 17 very late in the night. She weighed in at 2lbs 3ozs. She is doing well and continues to gain weight and develop, but remains at McMaster Hospital until she is healthy enough to come home. The family continues to commute to Hamilton daily to be with, and nurture, Emma and monitor the progress. At some point it is anticipated that baby Emma will be strong enough to be transferred to Grand River Hospital.

As you know Pr. Tanya was on sick leave as of May 1. As her sick leave time ran out she has used her vacation time to cover the time she herself was in hospital at McMaster, as well as when she came home. Maternity leave will not begin until, at the earliest, September 1 as this is determined by the Employment Insurance. She anticipates taking a full year of maternity leave, which she is entitled to do in accordance with Government and Synod guidelines.

In Pr. Tanya's own words from the worship guide announcing baby Emma's birth; "Thank you to everyone for your thoughts and prayers; your support has meant a great deal to us."

Youth Ministry

Meet and Greet

for all confirmation class members

(Parents are welcome too)

September 11, 2 – 4 p.m.

Betty Behm's Cottage, Conestoga Lake

Bring your favourite snack

**Contact Rob Zilles for more info @ 519
743 6472 or robert@printessential.ca**

Caring Connections

September is Arthritis Month

Arthritis is among the top three most common chronic illnesses in Canada.

Arthritis and related conditions can lead to death (2 per 100,000 die from arthritis).

Juvenile arthritis (JA) is one of the most common chronic illnesses in Canada, affecting 1 in 1000 boys and girls under the age of 16.

Arthritis affects more adults than cancer, heart disease, respiratory conditions and spinal cord trauma, and has a serious impact on quality of life.

Aboriginal Canadians are harder hit by arthritis, especially older women. (Aboriginal women are affected the most, 70% aged 65 and older live with the disease, compared to 50% of non-Aboriginal women in the same age group.)

The direct cost of arthritis in Canada is estimated at \$4.4 billion each year.

Long-term disability accounts for almost 80% of the economic cost of arthritis. People aged 35-64 incurred 70% of these costs.

Life at the SHOW two months later

By Barb Barnes

Two months in operation and all kinds of good things are happening at the SHOW Building. June was chaotic, getting all the rooms ready, while the construction workers were still on site, but we did it.

We scrubbed each unit, moved the furniture from various storage sites into the units, made beds, put away dishes, pots and pans and linens. We hung shower curtains, placed towels, toothpaste, and tooth brushes. It took a team of volunteers, nine days to get it done.

At the June 16th Open House, many persons in attendance were surprised when they saw regular

apartments with fully equipped kitchens and baths, full living rooms, and bedrooms with brand new beds. Two future tenants attended the Open House, and were give a sneak preview of where they were going to live. More hugs and tears.

Move in day was very special for me. A team of volunteer drivers picked up our new tenants. There were lots of hugs and tears as they opened the doors and saw their new homes for the first time. At the end of the move in day SHOW Board members held a BBQ for all tenants and staff on the patio. That was when one of the ladies came downstairs and said "I am in heaven, I just had a bath in my own bathtub".

Since then we have been getting settled. Not everything has been perfect, but the wrinkles have been offset by a number of success stories. The tenants have formed their own community within the building, and are now looking to the wider community to seek out employment and do some volunteering themselves. Families have been reunited.

Some tenants are repairing used bicycles and using them to get around town. Many of the tenants are cooking up a storm.

On August 17th, as Volunteer Coordinator working with the YWCA Staff, I will be working out some in-house programs. These will range from basic cooking lessons, to craft sessions, year end BBQ and Sing Along, etc.

Many of the tenants are taking on little jobs within the building like caring for the recycling and mowing the lawn.

This work is so rewarding, and even through some very hectic times, I still walk into that building, and the hair on my arms stands at attention, and I need to know what we are doing next. I am excited to keep moving forward. I enjoy getting the chance to chat with tenants and learn of their progress.

Mount Zion has provided outstanding support through fundraising, donations, and volunteering. I figure that we have contributed at least \$10,000.00. Yes, the SHOW Building is up and running, but please keep in mind that we have a mortgage, and that your continued financial support is very much appreciated.

Brite Lites

Thanks to Art Schelter for building new flower containers for the front entrance.