

The

Mountaineer

A Publication of Mount Zion Lutheran Church

Volume 5 No. 7

Summer 2009

Preparing to “hit our stride”

Pastor Tanya Ramer

The excitement and anticipation are building. In just a few weeks, we will be welcoming Pastor Krister Ulmanis as he joins us (July 13 officially) in full-time ministry here at Mount Zion.

But I wouldn't want you to be fooled by that “start date.” Pastor Krister has already been working with me in ministry. In fact, from the day he accepted the call to Mount Zion he has been with us: his mental presence and work ethic have made themselves felt behind the scenes, working with us and learning about Mount Zion.

Pastor Krister and I speak to each other almost daily, via e-mail and telephone. We confer on worship matters, from sermons to music. We talk about upcoming events, activities and meetings, about ongoing ministry and much more. We have been working very hard at building our relationship as co-pastors by discussing our work ethic with each other, how we will make decisions as a team and how we see our ministry coming together to serve you and be in ministry with you at Mount Zion.

We have also been discussing his official Installation service, which is scheduled for September 20th, 2009. (Circle the date on your calendar. What a celebration that will be!) We have also been working on worship services and schedules for the summer and fall, and discussing ministry portfolios and priorities.

I envision Pastor Krister and I meeting on a daily basis, to touch base with each other, support each other, discuss concerns in the congregation and how we will work on a day-to-day basis providing pastoral care to the congregation – as well as handling various administrative duties.

But this is not our ministry only. Pastor Krister and I are one part of a much larger team. It includes Parish Nurse Betty Behm, Director of Music Scott Knarr and Church Secretary Muriel

and to discuss upcoming ministry opportunities that we will all be involved in as we work together for the common goals of the congregation.

Also working daily with this group is Church Council and the many committees and service groups committed to achieving Mount Zion's ministry mission. And all of these are encompassed by Mount Zion's larger ministry team, which includes everyone in the congregation serving and worshipping in so many varied roles.

It is this larger multi-dimensional congregational team, this congregational family, that will help our co-pastoral team develop as we work with and among you to serve one another, but also to envision how we are called to serve outside the walls of Mount Zion. God is out there in the world, calling us to follow in the coming months and years.

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Pastor Krister officially joins Mount Zion's team ministry on July 13

Circle the Date

Pastor Krister's Installation Service is scheduled for September 20th at 3:00 p.m.

Inside the Mountaineer

It is nearly summer when our pace slows just a little, but this month's Mountaineer is indicative of the past few busy months at Mount Zion.

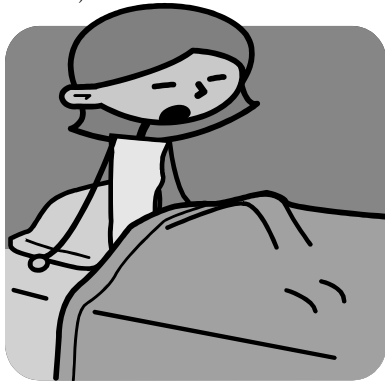
First we are welcoming Pastor Krister this month. There is an update from our Planning Task Group and we welcome new writer Ryan Ehrlich to our pages. Jeff Harris gives the congregation a passing grade on our finances and for fun there is an article by Bill and Karen Gastmeier about their study trip to the Holy Land.

Why Some Teens Avoid Church

By Ryan Ehrlich,

Ryan will be 18 this month and is completing Grade 12 at Cameron Heights Collegiate.

Most of you reading this are probably far past your teenage years, a time perhaps with nostalgia for you. I find myself in the midst of those years, some of the most difficult digits I'll ever touch. The culmination of school, chores, work, friends and some good old relaxation often overshadows our much discounted spirituality. The question I'm here to answer is why the third of our Ten Commandments proves the most difficult to follow for myself, and other teens. It's not that spirituality is not important but rather we're just a little overwhelmed.



As a teen, it becomes easy for us to group people together, in cliques and what-not.

Spending over 6 hours a day at a school filled with different people gives us a lot of

practice. We're surrounded by different ethnicities, heights, shapes, styles and ages, the most despised being the eldest. By some freak coincidence, it is common for teens to associate their mandatory attendance at school with the authority figures at the dreaded institute.

After being bossed around for 6 hours a day, for years, it's not surprising that these wonderful teachers still may be associated with negative feelings. When it becomes so easy to group people together, associating this negative feeling with all adults becomes like second nature. Why in the world would any teen, thinking that, want to go to church with all of the adults there? The presence of an authority figure isn't the only thing that combats the teen's quest for free-time.

You see, as we enter and progress through our teen years, the importance of money becomes increasingly apparent. When you are younger, chores are the path to money. The same applies in the teenage years, but the same money you were making and saving when you were seven isn't

going to buy the new video game you want so passionately. There are only so many chores around the house that you can do, and only so much allowance to be earned. It seems that a part-time job is the only way to increase the cash flow, but also decrease the free-time.

As we are getting older, our need for income increases, but the notion of having to put in all that time to earn said income can be a turn-off. For those who are willing to put in the extra time, this will only take away from their much beloved free-time. When there isn't enough free-time, you have to make some in the easiest slot possible, and it often ends up being Sunday morning.

Usually when teenagers have free-time they want to do one of two things; Hang with their friends, or just relax on their own. During the teenage years our priorities continue to fluctuate, but it's safe to say that basically anything beats getting up early on a weekend. Having to get up early all week, for school, can often leave teens with a less-than-desirable amount of sleep. Often times I have yet to awaken from my deep slumber, when my parents are returning from church.

Now, some of these reasons can't be fixed as they are completely tied to do with a person's personality. There are, however, some things that can be adjusted to help re-spark your teen's interest in their spirituality. I'm not going to offer any solutions to these dilemmas because each person is different, but I'm confident that it won't be hard now that you know why some teens don't go to church.

Whatever happened to the physical space planning process?

By Paul Stolee

Some of you may be wondering what became of the physical space planning process that began in the early part of 2007. With the resignation of Pastor Mark, Pastor Tanya's parental leave, the search for an interim pastor, and the call process for Pastor Krister, this got pushed to the backburner for a while. But it's never been completely off the stove, and it's now getting brought back closer to the front burner.

The "Dreaming about Mount Zion" process that we went through as a congregation was prompted in large part by the need to look at options to address the crowding and congestion we often have in the church narthex. There are a number of other limitations and challenges associated with the physical space at Mount Zion, and the process considered the entire physical space of the church.

To recap, we initially went through a process to generate ideas, and suggestions were received from eight church committees or groups, and from 15 individual members. Thirty-nine potential priorities were identified and organized into a questionnaire so that congregation members could rate the importance of each priority. Ninety-two questionnaires were completed. The resulting priorities were discussed at a planning luncheon held on June 3, 2007, attended by approximately 30 members of the congregation. The aim of this meeting was to build consensus on the most important priorities, and to identify specific suggestions on how to move forward. The results of this discussion are summarized below:

Short Term

- Architecture study on how to better utilize current space to address these priorities and to explore options for redevelopment related to longer-term objectives.
- Finish the lounge
- Accessible washrooms
- Better signage for washrooms, fellowship, sanctuary, office, outside
- Assess lighting and electronics

Longer Term

- Sacristy
- Choir room
- Reorganize offices
- Addition on Westmount side
- more welcoming, larger narthex/fellowship space, utilize courtyard
- (Nave – not identified as a priority for redesign, but will be impacted by other possible changes)

Separate Process

- Houses assess requirements for upkeep and renovations, possibilities for sale or alternative uses

It is nice to see that there has already been some progress on this list. The lounge has been thoughtfully and tastefully furnished, the choir/music area has been updated, new microphones and stands were purchased and the loudspeaker was adjusted. Other priorities, such as office reorganization, may now be more pressing concerns.

The key recommendation of the planning luncheon was to engage an architect to continue the planning process and develop specific options for consideration by the congregation for changes/additions to our physical space.

Earlier this year, members of the planning task group – Bill Gastmeier, Anne Woolner, and Paul Stolee (other members of the group are Pastor Tanya Ramer, and Council Liaison Jeremy Van Hemmen) – met with representatives of three architecture firms to discuss our needs and the approach the firms would take. Subsequently, each firm submitted a written proposal.

These proposals have been reviewed by the task group who brought their recommendations to church council for consideration at their meeting on June 23, 2009.

You can look forward to hearing more about this process in the months ahead.

Holy Surprise! That sums up the Holy Land

By Bill and Karen Gastmeier

Almost nothing in the Holy Land was what we were expecting when we accompanied our Waterloo seminary's faculty and students on a trip to the Holy Land in April. This trip of a life time was mind boggling, confusing, tiring but most of all astonishing and full of surprises.

There is so much to tell. But space is limited in Mountaineer, so we'll narrow our focus to those biggest surprises.

Surprise #1: Define Holiday Please

This really was no holiday. Breakfast most mornings was at six and by seven we were on the bus. By the second week we were referring to ourselves as the "People of the Bus". The reason for the early starts and the late evenings was that our itinerary covered close to 100 sites and visits with local groups and dignitaries. The trip was billed both as a study tour and a peace delegation, as well as a credit course for the students who were with us.

Surprise #2: The Holy Land is Small.

On the first day in Jerusalem, our tour guide Glenn Witmer, took us to an overlook of the city. Directly in front of us was the Temple Mount housing the rock where Israel almost sacrificed Isaac and the Lamb became the symbol of salvation. We thought it was somewhere out in the desert! And then he directed our attention just to the right where in short order was the Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives, with the City of Bethlehem only a few miles down the road. This was a reminder that in Christ's Day, everyone walked where they had to go.

Surprise #3: Jesus Was Probably Not Born in a Stable.

Glenn and seminary professor Timothy Hegedus told us it was unlikely that Jesus was born in a stable but was almost certainly born in a multi-roomed cave which was the preferred housing of the day. Several of our daily worship sessions were held in similar caves. Glenn explained that there were no inns at the time (tourism is a fairly modern invention). Requiring Joseph and Mary to

travel to Bethlehem was a disruptive imperial order from a foreign ruler and they likely stayed with friends and relatives along the way. Most people were poor and raised a few cattle for sustenance. They had no barns so they brought the cattle inside the cave for security from inevitable poaching. The people slept in the front and the animals were housed further inside. Scholars now believe that it was in this animal space that Jesus was born since a "spare room" was a luxury most could not afford. Many years later, during the translation process, the idea of a European stable and manger were introduced to our Bible. (This helped us to remember not to be distracted by details, but to look for the real meaning in the Bible, which has been rewritten - as accurately as possible of course - many times, but always with a bit of the translators' context slipping in. Being there, seeing the places and the people, really helped us focus.)

Surprise #4: There are Many Fewer Christians living in the Holy Land today.

This was two surprises. First, that there is a Christian Church in Palestine and Israel which is perhaps the most original of all Christian churches. As Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, the Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christian Church in Bethlehem said, "my Great great great great great great great great grandmother likely babysat Jesus!" Unfortunately there is currently a huge exodus of Christians from Israel and Palestine where only a few percent of the population is still Christian, down from more than 10 percent historically."

It was a surprise to learn that Christians are leaving in such numbers. But there are many reasons for this. First, Israeli Christian children who marry from outside the country lose their rights as citizens.

Secondly, Palestine is economically far behind Israel, not in small part because of the billions of dollars in yearly aid to Israel from the US. Things seem to be getting worse, not better. Thirdly, many Palestinian Christians working in Israel now have a very difficult time getting to work because

of the walls and checkpoints. Fourthly, there is the issue of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land which interfere with life and work and are a source of continued friction. (The National Geographic's lead article in June explores this topic, see <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/06/ara-b-christians/belt-text>.)

Fifthly, Palestinian Christians have traditionally assumed positions of leadership in their society, and have always been proud of acting as peacemakers. However, the recent hard line polarized positions taken by Israelis and Arabs, and the resulting troubles are making that (peacemaking) a hard row to hoe.

Surprise #5: Refugee Camps with apartment buildings?

Apparently the camps, which came into existence in Palestine in 1948 to house the 650,000 Palestinian refugees created when Arab armies attacked the new state of Israel, are still there and now resemble ghettos of not so elegant apartment buildings. They house the landless rural peasants, the disenfranchised and the unemployed and are supported at a subsistence level by international aid. Why are people still living there over 60 years later? We got no single clear answer for that: but you can bet any answer is complicated and involves the ongoing lack of economic opportunities in Palestine, continued refugee generating events such as the Six Day War, the Intifadas and the current war in the Gaza Strip.

Surprise #6: Settlements look like subdivisions

The Israelis are very afraid of the Arab world. We had to remind ourselves that several Arab countries remain fully committed to the destruction of the Israeli State. That makes the issue of illegal Israeli settlements inside Palestine all the harder to understand. Before we left, our picture of an illegal settlement was a couple of crumbling buildings atop a hill. However, the reality is that some are good looking, modern well-planned, very large subdivisions. People live there for a number of reasons. Some believe their residency to be a political statement. Still others are just looking for affordable new housing.

Our bus took us to a new settlement area far inside Palestine away from the city. We were stunned to hear of how the settlers had poisoned the entire goat herd of the nearby Palestinian farmers. Two young



peacekeepers gave us an unscheduled chat about how they were dealing with the problem. All went well, until an Israel army jeep pulled up and encouraged us to get back on the bus and be on our way. Ironically, the Israelis are responsible for security inside much of Palestine, and for allowing the settlements to continue. We felt helpless as we pulled away leaving the two youngsters to take care of a problem much bigger than all of us.

No surprise was the fun we had along the way. We sang. We sang everywhere, in caves, in churches, mountaintops and even on the bus. Worship was a twice daily affair and although we were travelling with over 20 ordained people, Bill and I took our turn designing and leading a service. The experience stretched us.

The Holy Land is a land of surprises and a land of problems, but it was the Bishop of Jordan who best summarized what we were feeling while we were there.

He said that a visitor to the Holy Land after two weeks feels as if he or she has all the answers and would be able to write an entire book about the fix to all the problems. However, if that same visitor were to stay for six months, he would be too confused to even write a 500 word article.

Well, this article turned out to be more than 500 words, but we admit we remain confused – and fascinated by that amazing land. If you would like to learn more about the trip, or have some question, please corner one of us after service!

Open Sesame

By Carol Ziegler

Open Sesame Headstart Preschool has completed another successful year, our 39th in fact! We are already talking about how we should “Celebrate” our 40th next May.

There are many reluctant goodbyes the last day of school, especially on the part of the parents. We received heartfelt thank you letters and I chose this letter to share with you because it gives you a clear picture of what we do at Open Sesame.

“Our family would like to acknowledge a wonderful facility, Open Sesame. Jett was born at just over 3 pounds with numerous complications that would prove to be a challenge. We were apprehensive about him entering preschool due to his petite stature and possible difficulties. After meeting Ms. Cote, Mrs. DeCoppel and numerous volunteers we soon felt at ease. Jett began to talk frequently of his day, telling us many rules such as “we don’t pick our noses or the tulips”, to singing wash our hand song and hold the rail. We were so overjoyed with his progress, learning skills, important to everyday.

Jett has continued to advance with speech, running, climbing, understanding, developing patience, - through waiting turns, following directions, a love of painting, circle time, recognizing his name and helping him prepare for a larger classroom setting come September. Jett has spoken lovingly of Ms. Cote, Mrs. DeCoppel and the caring volunteers that make Open Sesame an amazing place for children to grow, learn, make friendships and develop an excitement for school.

I want to say thank you for a wonderful opportunity in being a part of the weekly parent group. We have developed a bond and friendships that will continue after leaving Nursery School. Kathleen Cote has always provided us with informative Monday mornings, humour, fun, learning of new skills and the opportunity to discuss freely, related issues. Most often it shows that we, as parents, are not alone in some of our daily challenges.

We want to say thank you, not just from Jett but our entire family. You have made us feel secure knowing our little man is safe, happy and in such a caring environment full of such special people. Jett will continue to remind us each time we are at the corner of Erb and Westmount, “There’s my Nursery School” – what wonderful memories. Thank you to everyone!”

Next September we have two volunteers who will not be returning to work on Tuesdays. Vera Thomas is moving and Hope Eaton has decided to semi-retire. Thankfully, Hope has agreed to be a spare for us on Tuesdays. Hope has been a faithful volunteer, in various roles, for the past 39 years and we thank her for her dedication and continuous service to Open Sesame.

If you know someone who enjoys working with pre-schoolers or even someone who would be willing to work every other Tuesday, please have them contact me at 886-6675. We could also use help on Wednesdays, if this suited better.

In closing, I wish to thank each of you who continue to support Open Sesame financially, or with the purchase of Zehrs or Sobey’s grocery cards from Ann Crossman or Mayda Scoins and also with your gift of time. We could not continue to be Mount Zion’s Outreach Mission to our community without your help.

Supporting our Ministry

As of May 31, 2009

<u>CURRENT</u>	2009	2008
Income	107,092	113,144
Expense	105,278	106,985
Balance	1,814	6,159

<u>BENEVOLENCE</u>		
Synod	13,457	14,346
Global Hunger	2,530	2,588
Open Sesame	7,225	3,265
Other	12,948	7,356

<u>CAPITAL</u>		
Income	6,240	6,641
Expense	15,993	0
Mortgage Income	6,744	7,038
Mortgage Interest	245	586

Supporting Our Ministry – A Passing Grade

by Jeff Harris, Finance Committee

At the time of writing, those of us with school aged children are about to experience the annual ritual of having year-end report cards brought home by our young charges with emotions ranging from fear to confidence. The contents of the report can be cause for celebration, relief, disappointment and reflection. So to, might the results of a review of Mount Zion's recent financial performance.

This writer is hoping that a report card of Mount Zion's finances will serve for the congregation a purpose similar to that which its academic equivalent does for parents and child – a tool for identifying areas of success, worthy of celebration; a means of bringing to light those areas where there is room for improvement; and a basis upon which to set out objectives for the next academic year.

Envelope Receipts: B

To this point in the year, the congregation's income has been sufficient to meet its expenses. The Current Account recently emerged, just marginally, from a deficit position; but the summer months ahead traditionally prove to be the most difficult in this area. Of concern right now, income has fallen behind last year's level, and remains short of budget. Historically, there has been a pattern of underperformance throughout a good part of the year, followed by a couple months of cramming at year end, usually leading to a passing grade. One has to wonder whether Mount Zion is a bit of an underachiever in this area.

Benevolence: A –

Yes, Mount Zion contributes regularly in class and plays well with others. Our Benevolence giving remains solid and on track. If Synod had an honor roll, Mount Zion would be on it.

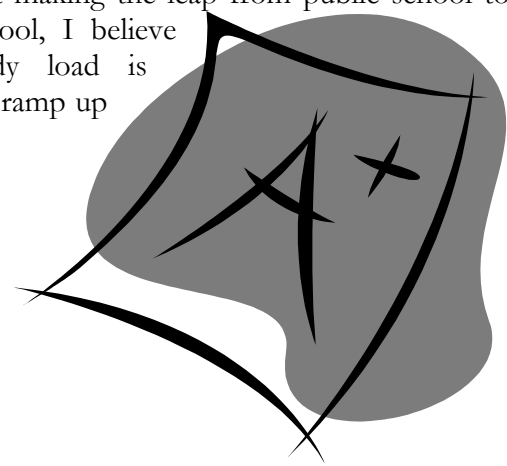
Expense Management: A –

The congregation has demonstrated an aptitude in this area, from planning through to execution. The administration and all committees have shown an ability to deliver excellent programs and ministry within the budgets allocated to them. It must be noted, however, that results have been aided by a reduced workload – operating with only one (or less) full time pastor for 18 months has made things pretty easy in this area – perhaps leading to an artificially high grade.

Debt Reduction: A

A consistently strong performer in this area, having shown considerable ability to achieve a goal once set. Mount Zion is on track to achieve its greatest challenge to date, that of eliminating its only major debt, the kitchen and organ mortgage in October of this year. A gold star is warranted.

This is a report that I expect many parents would be pleased to receive. As a congregation, I think we too should be proud of what we have achieved and satisfied with our performance. However, like a student making the leap from public school to high school, I believe the study load is about to ramp up notably.



SHOW Project “Shovel-Ready” but short on funds

By Barb Barnes, Mount Zion Representative to Supportive Housing of Waterloo

Supportive Housing of Waterloo is indeed “Shovel-Ready” but not “Money-Ready” for a June/July groundbreaking. That could change with your support. SHOW needs to raise a further \$700,000. To date the organization has raised \$300,000.00. There are other committed funds to come but SHOW needs the cash now in order to meet our start date.

This could all change quickly with your support. I believe that it is going to be the smaller, but consistent donations from our community that are going to get this building up on time.

One way you can help is by having a “Feast from the Heart” in your home or business. It could be a gathering – dinner, lunch, a coffee or cocktail party, a summer barbeque, a birthday party, Canada Day Celebration. Invite your friends, family, neighbours, business colleagues to join you for a Feast from the Heart and ask those who attend to make a donation to help the less fortunate. All donations over \$10.00 are eligible for a full charitable tax receipt.

These events can take place any time between April 8 and September 1, 2009. To receive your Host Kit for a “Feast from the Heart” event call the campaign office 519-571-9408 or contact Barb Barnes at 519-886-3263, or email b.barnes@roger.com.

In a recent Record article Nancy Croth a member of SHOW’s Fundraising team stated “It’s easier to raise money for a homeless puppy than a homeless man”.

See <http://www.supportivehousingofwaterloo.org>

Mount Zion’s April Food Drive Results

Wendy Patrick

There were 165 pounds of food donated during our April Food Drive. It's always so nice to see the food accumulating in the Narthex during our Food Drive. Now the really big news! A total of \$959 was donated during the April Food Bank Drive! Along with some other offerings collected before April, we were able to send the Food Bank of Waterloo Region a total of \$1,214.00! That's a new record! Remember, that equates to \$9,712.00 in buying power for the Food Bank of Waterloo Region! Sincere thanks to all of you for your outreach to those members in our community who need a hand during these difficult economic times.

Summer Birthdays

I bet there are more than these, but this is all our records show for birthdays of our over 80’s for the next two months. To everyone who has a birthday coming up – have a great time.

For July - **Alma Janke, Pastor Norman Lange, Audrey Emslie** and, August - **Norman Stromberg, Lorraine Munn**

Wanted Soup Makers



If your soup is something to rave about, make it a star at this year’s Souper Sunday on September 13.

Call Betty Behm 896-2245 to make arrangements for your debut as soup chef.

Preparing to “hit our stride”

Continued from Page 1

There are truly exciting days ahead. But Pastor Krister and I are also aware there will likely be bumps along the way, particularly in these first few months as we work to find and “hit our stride” as a co-pastoring team.

We know creating solid and fruitful working relationships requires patience, support and understanding from all involved.

Mount Zion’s members have been truly supportive as the congregation has prepared for this new stage of co-pastor ministry. Now, Pastor Krister and I look forward to your continued prayerful support, your encouragement and enthusiasm, and your active involvement, as this congregational family begins this new phase of ministry in service to our Lord.

May God’s blessings be with us all!

For Men Only!

Do you have a 2-3 hours spare time each month? The Friendly Visitor’s are in need of some male visitors to minister to our homebound men. Currently we have 3-4 men whose lives would be enriched by your commitment.

Skills required: A desire to serve, a commitment to caring, a listening ear, and a compassionate heart. Please call me if you feel moved to share your time in this way. Betty 519-896-2245

The Mountaineer

Mount Zion Lutheran Church

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Please send your comments, ideas and updates to

gastmeier@rogers.com

***Deadline for September Issue
August 15, 2009***

Council Briefs

At Church Council’s June meeting, council took the following notable actions.

Approved a recommendation from the Finance Committee that Mount Zion engage the services of the Evangelical Lutheran Foundation of Eastern Canada (ELFEC) for the management of Mount Zion’s Endowment Fund.

The ELFEC is a new Endowment Fund managed by the Eastern Synod.

Mount Zion’s Endowment fund would be pooled with those of the foundation which would result in cost savings and a reduced administrative burden for the congregation.

Approved a recommendation from the Planning Task Group that Mount Zion approve funds of up to \$10,000 to retain an architecture firm to develop specific options for redesign of the physical space at Mount Zion,

Council exec will strike a Planning Committee of five to seven people to work with the architect on this process, and to liaise as needed with members of the congregation.

Supported the recommendation that Pastoral Coverage for August 10 – 16th, be covered by Rev. Bryan Porter. Bryan is the son-in-law of Emily Dolbeer and is rostered with the Anglican Church of Canada.

Youth Worker Position

We are looking to hire a Youth Worker (aged 20-35) to facilitate youth fellowship in the congregation. The position is for 15 hours a month @ \$15/hour. The Youth Worker will be responsible for organizing 1-2 events per month (Events include fellowship, spiritual growth, service & outreach, fundraising and leadership skills). For more information or to apply for the position, please contact Mount Zion @ 519-886-5820 or 29 Westmount Rd. South, Waterloo, ON, N2L 2K4 Attn: Pastor Tanya Ramer. **Application Deadline is September 10th, 2009**