

Points of Connection

Northwest Mennonite Conference Newsletter

June 2008

Featuring...

West Zion Mennonite Church

They've come a long way!

West Zion in Carstairs, AB is our oldest church. Begun by Mennonite settlers who came from Ontario in the 1890's when land became available along the newly completed railway, it was officially organized in 1901—four years before Alberta became a province of Canada! Two other NWMC churches were organized at the same time, but West Zion is the only one that has renewed itself over the years and lived to serve today's world.

Its first minister was Israel Shantz and initially they met in the storeroom of Allen Shantz's lumber and supplies store. They completed their first building in 1902 on land purchased from the railway on a site chosen for its proximity to the Mennonite settlers. It was built with lumber and hardware provided by Allen Shantz for the grand total of \$400! There were 12 founding members.

Twenty-five years later they faced a difficult time. They needed to rebuild. In a strong wind the building shook!



They made the decision to rebuild in 1929. The hole was dug for the basement and the superstructure erected, but there were no funds to complete the building during the Depression. In early December they met in the basement and a year later they were still there. It took until 1934 and the incentive of hosting the Annual Convention to complete it. Its third building was completed in 2001 with the incentive of their Centennial Celebration to motivate them.

The church has made the necessary adjustments as time has progressed. It is a lively, active, church filled with many young families, youth and children. In the last year they called an Associate Pastor, Tyler Braun who assists Pastor Trevor Kiriaka with youth and children's ministries. Recent years have seen continuing growth and the Lord's blessing on this thriving, diverse group of believers.



West
Zion
Men-
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Trevor and
Phyllis
Kiriaka

Pastor Trevor Kiriaka of the West Zion Church in Carstairs, AB grew up in the town of Redwater, north of Edmonton. Attending Bible Camp as a child and counseling at camp as a teen were instrumental in his spiritual walk. After High School he attended Miller College of the Bible, interspersing his education with work at Blessings Bookstore in Calgary to earn his way, and then took Seminary at Prairie Graduate School. He returned to Miller to do a teaching internship. This led to 6 years of teaching at the College.

Phyllis grew up in Taber, attended Miller College of the Bible where she met Trevor, but it wasn't until seven years later when her sister attended Miller and encouraged a relationship between the two that they connected! Meanwhile Phyllis had worked with Venture Teams International, spent a year doing mission work in Japan, and worked in a bank in Calgary. They reconnected and married, and then Trevor went to Seminary.

Pastor Trevor and Phyllis have been at West Zion for six years now. They have three children: a daughter and two sons. And no, his last name is not Japanese. It is Ukrainian with Greek roots! He is appreciated for the depth of his biblical teaching, his story-telling and sense of humour.

Newspoint

Did you know...

*Points of Connection is now also being published in Spanish. Many thanks to Hilda Grajeda of Lethbridge for her translating skills!

*Congratulations to Joe and Connie Grove of Medicine Hat on the birth of their daughter, Alexa Marie on May 14th.

*Congratulations to Josh and Brittany Gelleny, son of our NWMC secretary Carol (Dan) Gelleny, on their May 31st wedding.

*Cornerstone Christian School donated a 36-passenger bus to our Hispanic Church in Medicine Hat. They plan to use it to transport new immigrants from Brooks to their services.

*Don and Donna Tiedeman of Smith are sharing their musical gifts throughout Alberta this month. They were in Bluesky June 6-8.

*The Edson youth made it into their local newspaper for their help with the May 3 Ditch Clean Up.

*Don't forget the MCC Relief Sale at Millenium Place in Sherwood Park on July 4, 5.

*The next newsletter will be issued in September.

Have a great summer!

Correction

It is the Love In Action group that is planning a trip to El Salvador in January/09, not the Coaldale Mennonite Church as stated in last month's newsletter. Interested people may contact Marg Humphrey at 403-634-9646.

