

# In The Way

June 2023



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## Where There's Smoke, There's Fire

The forest fire season started in spectacular fashion in Quebec, with fires consuming more trees in a month than normally burn over an entire ten year period. The smoke from these fires has extended deep into the United States, blanketing major US cities from Chicago to New York.

The old saying says that where there's smoke, there's fire. The reverse is also often true: where there's fire, there's often smoke. The cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit brings the smoke of new Christian life into the world: a sweet smelling incense that brings the scent of Jesus.

This month we heard the confession of faith of two young men who have been studying the Scriptures and the Small Catechism with me for many months. We also had a baptism and heard the confirmation of Parisa, wife of our member Vahid, who felt the heat of the Spirit drawing her to Christ. Where the Word is being shared, the Spirit is at work. Where the fire of the Spirit is at work, we see the smoke of his presence.

We also concluded another term of English outreach classes, with several dozen students completing our beginners' English class and a couple dozen more completing our advanced English class. Kudos to Ruth Stone who led the teaching for both classes, and to Deaconess Emilie who assisted Ruth and me by keeping track of attendance and generating letters and certificates for all participants. Thanks, as well, to all our volunteers both near and far!

On Sunday, June 11, I was in St. Louis participating in the floor committee meetings for our upcoming Synod convention. It was my privilege to help draft resolutions dealing with the Church and Culture. Pastor Walta Clercius, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti and also of the Lutheran Church – Canada, preached in French and then in English at Ascension before travelling on to Quebec City to preach there in the afternoon. The fire of the Spirit moved through the Word of Christ which he shared. We will be happy to welcome him back in late July.

Where there is smoke, there is fire. And where there is the Word of Christ, his salvation and life, there is the Holy Spirit.

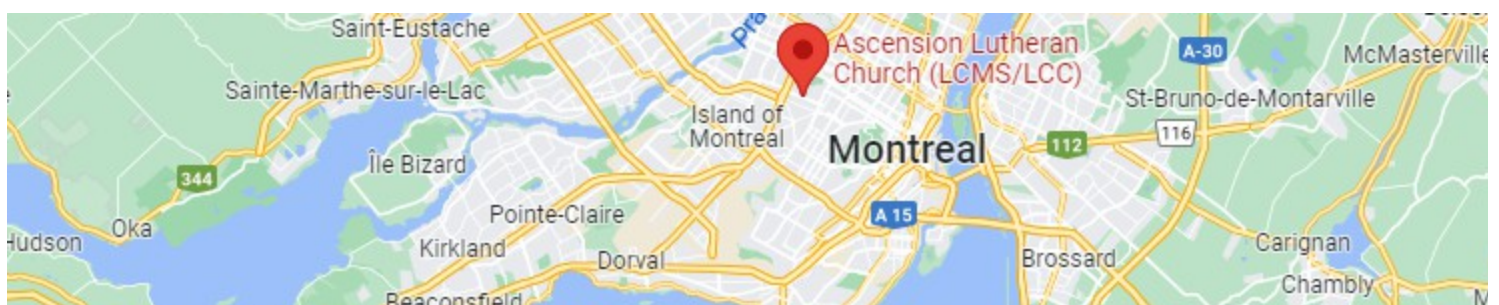
## Mission Moments

Very early in June all of us had dinner with a family from the west island of Montreal exploring the Lutheran faith. The father is very interested in Ascension, while the mother is a committed Roman Catholic. Their two girls are around the same age as Olivia and Sophia.

Over pasta and pizza we talked about the differences between "Roman" and "Evangelical" Catholics. Over the years the church of Rome has modified its liturgy to look more Lutheran, and their worship is now not so foreign to our Lutheran ears. But the one thing that remains very different is our preaching.

So we talked about the Gospel, salvation in Christ alone, the place of Mary and the saints in our lives, and the importance of the sacraments. The girls got to talk about teen things, and what they had in common living in Montreal.

We hope the family will try Ascension again soon. We pray for unity in the family, especially unity in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May our Lord be seen by them as not merely a help to salvation, but salvation itself.



## A Picture's Worth of Words



***Clockwise from Top Left:*** The Lord receives Parisa as his own in the waters of Holy Baptism; Pastor Clercius distributes the Lord's Supper to some of the members of Ascension – Haitian, Quebecois, Chinese, Costa Rican, Malagasy, and Iranian at one altar!; the spring 2023 advanced English class, in which Deborah participated each Thursday as Pastor St-Onge worked with the beginners on Tuesday; Olivia receives her Diploma of Collegial Studies from Marianopolis College (CEGEP). She starts at Concordia, Montreal in September.

## Prayer Concerns

For those suffering from the worst wildfire season in Canadian history, with more yet to come, that those who are displaced and those who are welcoming them may find comfort in Christ Jesus our Lord;

For Anna and Kayla as they prepare to join us in our work, and for the Prozenkos as they prepare for their move to Halifax;

For our family, who have returned home (finally) and are unpacking and restoring their house into their home.

## Support this Work

Support can be sent care of "ST-ONGE FAMILY" at Mission Central or "MONTREAL MISSION" at the LCMS:

Mission Central  
40718 Highway E16  
Mapleton, IA 51034

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
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