

In The Way

April 2024

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April has been a very busy month in Montreal. Some of it has been spectacular – enjoying a solar eclipse for the first time with members and colleagues in the Eastern Townships. Some of it was challenging – dealing with so many cultures and languages comes with lots of opportunities for misunderstandings. Some of it was daunting – dealing, for the first time, with Canada's "hate crime" laws (although thankfully only at a remove). And some of it was joyfully fulfilling – seeing new people brought to Christ in Baptism. April reminds us of all the challenges and rewards of being part of the mission of Christ in the world.



We had almost eighty people attend our open house with the "SPVM," the Montreal police service. Our city councillor, Mary Deros, also attended. A wide range of issues were discussed including the fact that the Montreal police look after all residents of the city, whether they are citizens, immigrants, or refugees. Everyone who comes to our open houses receives a participation letter.

We regularly invite those who attend our English classes and open houses to worship at Ascension. Faith comes by hearing, after all, and hearing by the Word of God. In March many of them came to worship and stayed to hear more about what it means to be a Christian. Some were not quite ready. But two men from India kept coming back and, after Easter, asked to receive Holy Baptism. Rajesh and Sonu, whose religious background was Hindu, were received as sons of God in Christ on April 28. Thanks to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation both have Small Catechisms in Hindi to study.



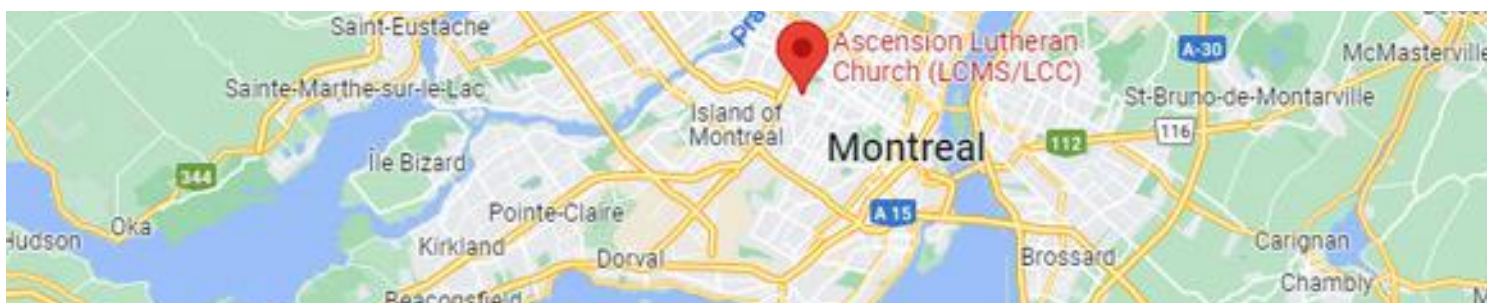
Mission Moment

I'm sometimes asked when visiting the United States whether we are adversely impacted by Canada's "hate crime" laws. I tell people that these are only a problem for those advocating physical violence against people of a certain culture, nationality, belief, or sexual orientation. Canada is a very diverse country and there is a desire to keep the peace.

We have had synagogues attacked in Montreal in recent months. One imam who called for the "extermination" of "Zionist aggressors" last November is under investigation.

A pastor known to Ascension is now also being investigated for making similar charges online about Palestinians. This was brought to my attention by our city councillor, and I ended up having a conversation with her and with Montreal police about our church's views on this matter.

What do we believe? That our God's reaction to sin was not to "hate" it, but to deal with it himself. He allowed our hatred of his Son to be the very means of our salvation – his crucifixion. By his wounds our hatreds are healed.



A Picture's Worth of Words



Top Left: We had so many people come to our April open house on Montreal's police services that we had to turn people away. **Top Right:** Pastor St-Onge and Deborah with Baldev, who has been attending our worship services regularly since Christmas. He is not yet a Christian, but says that being in our church "brings him joy." **Middle Right:** Is that a small fried egg on a giant black plate? No, that's our moon passing in front of the sun for three and a half minutes! **Bottom Right:** We had our annual spring volunteer day and got our windows and flower beds cleaned up after our (very strange and warm) winter. **Bottom Left:** Jason (2nd from left) and Kun (2nd from right) invited us to their home in the townships to view the solar eclipse. Jason is our congregational president and Kun serves on our altar guild. From left to right, Sophia St-Onge, Jason, Olivia St-Onge, Anna Benter, Kayla Gundermann, Kun, and Deborah St-Onge. We had our eclipse glasses on!

Prayer Concerns

For Sonu and Rajesh who have been received by Christ in Holy Baptism, that he who has begun a good work in them would bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ,

For Soma, Raj, and Mona who help bring the Word in Hindi, Urdu and Bengali to the guests attending our services,

For Olivia, who begins a three month internship in Ohio in May, her first time living away from home and her first full-time job!

For the St-Onges, Anna and Kayla as they prepare for reconnect trips this summer and fall.

Support this Work

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

Mission Central
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