



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Participating in the 130th anniversary service at St. Matthew's were from left, Rev. Thomas Arth, First Lutheran, Port Colborne; Rev. Jukka Saarinen, pastor of St. Matthew's; Rev. Keith Crouse, former pastor and guest preacher; Rev. Susan Johnson, assistant to Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Canada Synod.



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Handcrafted crosses made from the church's old oaken doors were presented to guests and members at the 130th anniversary dinner. Craftsmen were, from left, Cliff Shantz, Morley Yungblut, Norm McLeod and Brian Speck.

Lutheran church marks 130 years of ministry

FOR THE TRIBUNE
WELLAND

On Feb. 24, 1876 a group of 12 zealous Lutherans pooled their resources and bought a corner lot on Griffith Street for \$75. On May 7, 1876, the cornerstone was laid and the church was completed later that year at a cost of \$650.

Last Friday, Feb. 24, St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church began a weekend of celebration marking 130 years of ministry in Welland with a Meet and Mingle event, well-attended by members and guests. Then, on Sunday afternoon the celebration continued with a special anniversary service of Holy Communion.

Presiding Minister, Rev. Jukka Saarinen welcomed members and guests, including Rev. Susan Johnson, assistant to Bishop Michael Pryse of the Eastern Canada Synod, who read the Gospel Lesson. Rev. Keith Crouse, former pastor of St. Matthew's from 1982 to 1996 was guest preacher at the service and Rev. Thomas Arth, of First Lutheran Port Colborne, read the Lessons.

The choir, under the direction of organist Mary Anne Christoff presented a special anthem, This is the Day the Lord Hath Made, and at the end of the service sang God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again.

Following the service a dinner was held in the Fellowship Hall during which congratulatory greetings were delivered by Rev. Lori Pilatzke of St. Luke's Lutheran, Ridgeway; former pastor Kevin McLeod of Faith Lutheran, Hamilton; Rev. Arth, First Lutheran, Port Colborne; and Isobel Mitchener, representing Holy Trinity Anglican, Welland.

A unique feature of the occasion was the presentation to everyone present of hand-made wooden crosses which were crafted from the former oaken doors of the church replaced in 2001.

A member of the congregation, Morley Yungblut, came up with the idea of making the crosses, using the wood from the former doors, to give as mementoes of the church's anniversary.

Three other members, Norm McLeod, Cliff Schultz and Brian Speck, volunteered their talents to make the project a true labour of love for their church.

For 130 years, the church has endeavoured to live out the words of its Mission Statement: *In response to God's love, St. Matthew's is a faith community welcoming all to grow in faith to worship Christ, and to reach out to others* – and hopes to continue its faith journey in Welland for many years to come.