

AN INCLUSIVE
CONGREGATION
MINISTERING TO
MULTICULTURAL TORONTO

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Togogo Grannies at the Grandmothers' Gathering

Six of Bloor St. Church's 20 Togogo Grannies participated in the "Grandmothers Gathering" in August at the international AIDS conference in Toronto. The Gathering was organized by the Grandmothers-to-Grandmothers Campaign of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Bloor St. participants were: Bridget Hough, Diane Johnson, Shirley Farlinger, Ruth Mechanicus and (on Sunday) Ann Morwood and Gaye Frances Alexander. To meet with African grandmothers and hear first hand their moving and sometimes superhuman stories of their caring for their orphaned grandchildren has given great impetus to our wish to do as much as possible for them. Please write in your date books: Fund raising concert on **Saturday, December 9, at 7:30 @ BSUC.**



Advent Reflection

by Paul Fairley, Minister of Worship, Christian Development & Community Life

And several other things I know: that we humans are basically good and so too is the world; that we and the world, like our Sacred Source, are badly broken by evil; and that we need one another's help to heal. Socially and politically, spiritually and morally, this is our life's work — to be healers and liberators of and with one another.

It is an ongoing life-project, one that is never fully accomplished, and it has as much to do with other creatures, with stars and snails, eucalyptus and elephants, as with you and me. (From Saving Jesus from those who are right: rethinking what it means to be Christian by Carter Heyward)

I have always liked the fact that the calendar of the church is out of synch with the secular calendar. I generally don't engage in making "new year's resolutions". The exercise of self-examination and re-commitment to my own deepest sense of who I am called to become just seems so Lenten; doing it in the week after Christmas feels strangely "too soon."

As November winds down, our journey through the Gospel comes to a crescendo as we cry out, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come!" To our call, God echoes back with the ancient promise that came first through the prophets of ancient Israel, then to Mary, and then in Jesus: soon comes the day when God will dwell with us as our Emmanuel.

We turn the page to a new year as the season of Advent begins. We celebrate the birth of light among us. We who have been hearers of a promise, see the promise born, and become bearers of the promise to the world. The challenge of Advent is to each of us: will we let God's presence be born in us anew? How is God waiting to be born in our lives? Celebrate the season of Advent in community and know that you are not alone—hear the promise of the angels as a promise to you alone: God is with you.

Congratulations to Edna & Peter Barg who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in August. Congratulations as well to **Edith & Glenn Gardiner** who are celebrating their 60th anniversary in December. Both couples are long-time members of BSUC.

Congratulations to Suzanne Bradshaw, named to the Order of Canada in the Arts/Music Category. Suzanne sang for 13 years with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir under Elmer Iseler. She was Manager of the Can. Children's Opera Chorus and then the first woman Chair of the Corporation of Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall. She was Chair of the "Joy of Singing" Festival under Niki Goldschmidt. Suzanne now sits on several committees at Roy Thomson Hall, on the Mendelssohn Choir Foundation Bd, the Aldeburgh Connection Bd. and the Maureen Forrester Fund Bd. at Wilfrid Laurier Univ.

Paul Chambers is the new Manager of Artistic Operations of Alberta Ballet in Calgary. Paul has danced in a number of Sunday services at Bloor St. He was one of the outstanding performers at our Homecoming Celebration in Nov. 2005 and was a member of the Renewal Committee. His talents will be missed at BSUC.

Congratulations to Mary Macdonald who was recently received an award from the Retired Teachers Assn. of Ontario. She first taught in Bruce County near her childhood home and then moved to Toronto where she taught for the York Board of Education (now part of the Toronto School Board). In 1967 she was appointed only the second woman principal in the Board. Her first school as principal was in an area where many of the recent Italian immigrants had settled. Mary studied Italian for teachers in order to communicate better with the parents. After six years she moved to a larger school within the York Board. When she started at this school the percentage of black students was 16%. When she retired after six years, the percentage was 60%. She says that her staff at this school was marvellous and coped extremely well with the sudden changes in the student population. Mary was one of three sisters who all became teachers, encouraged and supported by their parents.

Welcome to our new bass/baritone choir soloist **Geoff Keating**.

We welcome our new flower coordinator **Bonnie Reid**. If you'd like to donate an arrangement please call Bonnie. A big thank-you to **Ellen Schwartzel**, our flower coordinator for the past 7 years.

Garnet & Isabel Ward have just returned from a two month car journey across Canada & the United States. They drove through Canada to Saskatchewan where they visited family and friends. The road then led to Calgary, Victoria, Saltspring Island & Vancouver for more visits. Then the road turned south as far as Seattle & San Francisco. After California, they drove through Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois (with a stop in Chicago) and Michigan before arriving home. En route they experienced an amazing variety of rich scenery.

STUDENT UPDATES

Janelle Artis, now in her third year of a B.A. program at York Univ., is pursuing her studies in history & anthropology. After graduation she intends to take a one year teacher's college certification program. Eventually she hopes to study for her Ph.D. in anthropology. Janelle has begun her 5th year of teaching the Primary Class in our church school. She enjoys the lively boys she is teaching this year.

Chris Bartlett has completed his degree in law at the Univ. of Toronto. He is now articling with the Cassells Brock & Blackwell law firm.

Emily Gordon is now in her fourth year at Mt. Allison Univ. in Sackville, NB, working on her thesis for Honours English. This term she is a student intern and has given her first fifty-minute lecture! She is also thinking about applications for a Masters' Degree in English.

Jennifer Gordon has begun studies at the Univ. of Toronto, Scarborough College, in the Environmental Sciences program. She has joined the campus choir, and is worshipping at West Hill United in Scarborough while living in residence.

Autumn Reflections *by Ann Morwood, Minister of Pastoral Care & Worship*

Three months ago I began ministry at Bloor Street again. That day it felt so right to be back here – as if I'd never left – for as I continued to be part of this congregation, I never had.

These past months have been wonderful for me. It has been so good to work with Paul Fairley and to get to know him, and good to work again with David, Kate, Tina and Susan. The custodial staff are so congenial and willing to help. And the congregation! As well you know, you are indeed special.

On All Saints Day, I was reminded of the community of Saints which has gone before us, passing on their faith and wisdom to us. Now we are the community of Saints. What we believe and what we do will have a great influence on the community of Saints which will follow.

Who we call as ministers next year will have a decided impact on the life and mission of this congregation and Bloor Street's place within our city and our world. So too will our decision regarding the redevelopment of this building and property. Will the community of Saints who will be Bloor 75 or 100 years from now celebrate the decisions we make now or will they wonder how and why we made them? We, as the present community of Saints, can be a blessing for that community of Saints which will follow.

As we continue to work and grow together, may we open ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit for this time and for the days and years to come.

Blessings on this day and always.



BLOOR PEOPLE cont'd.

Adam Hanley started worshipping at BSUC two years ago, as he began his M.Sc. program at the Univ. of Toronto in the Dept. of Medical Biophysics. His thesis is based on a research project in basic cancer biology. His research is part of investigations into new technologies to distinguish differences in cellular activity between normal and cancerous cells. He plans to defend his thesis by the end of 2006. He is also beginning studies at Emmanuel College. Adam is the co-ordinator of Bloor St.'s Young Adults group.

Iain McCauley is continuing his studies at Wilfrid Laurier Univ. in Waterloo where he is in his second year of the B.A. program. His church school years at BSUC influenced him to take a course in World Religions this year.

Carmen Palmer worked for Scarborough Presbytery this summer as one of two staff people doing a "travelling road show" Vacation Bible Adventure. The theme for the curriculum was "Walking with Jesus". The program included daily storytelling of the life of Jesus, and time to walk a small, portable, labyrinth that the staff had made. At the end of the summer, she wrote a short theological reflection based on a few key captions that stood out from the experience. Carmen is in her third and final year of the Master of Divinity program at Emmanuel College and is an Inquirer for ministry in the United Church.

Ian Ward is completing his Journalism Degree at Concordia Univ. in Montreal. His geography minor studies dealt with the human environment with a focus on sustainable development. He is applying for internships and to work in short-term international development projects. He continues to sing with the St. Lawrence Choir, the choir of the Montreal Symphony.

Watch for more news of our many university students in the next issue.

Mexico Youth Experience Returns With Memories

by Ken McGuffin

The planning took a year. The trip lasted for only 10 days. But the memories will last a lifetime for the ten members of Youth on Bloor and the three leaders who accompanied them on a trip to Chiapas, Mexico in August. From climbing the ancient Mayan ruins at Tonina to hearing how a current day Mayan community survived being driven from their land, the Mexico Youth Experience (MYE) provided the youth with first hand knowledge of the problems facing Mexicans today, especially the majority indigenous population of Chiapas. The group was hosted by INESIN, an institution formed by Mexican Protestants and Catholics to establish

a space where people from different cultures and religions of Chiapas could work together to overcome conflict by joining theological reflection with community action. Our group also left a legacy. Part of the funds raised by MYE were designated as a tithe. While on an overnight visit to Nuevo Yibeljoj, a rural community, the group heard about the need to purchase land to build a high school. On the spot, the youth decided to donate \$1,000 to buy the land. Gifts were also given to INESIN and two other groups. The youth spent their last day painting a wall mural at INESIN, representing Canada (wheat fields, snow capped mountains) and Chiapas (Mayan

temples, corn fields). Jennifer Gordon, Ken McGuffin, and Youth On Bloor coordinator Shannon Neufeldt were participants from Bloor Street Church. We hope to continue to work with the people of Chiapas. Possibilities include selling fair trade coffee from Chiapas, holding movie nights or hosting a visit from one of the organizations the group met.



The Miraculous Adventures of Bloor Streeters in the Holy Land

by Karin Brothers

Last spring, a contingent from Bloor St. went to Israel to visit Chris and Susan Ferguson, who were working with the World Council of Churches in Jerusalem. This was a fact-finding trip, with meetings scheduled with dozens of NGOs and leaders, Palestinian and Israeli. Miraculous adventures and eye-witness education on the Israeli/Palestinian situation started soon after our arrival and continued until the day we left. We got into “closed military zones” of Jenin and Nablus as well as the forbidden Gaza which seemed to be rejecting everyone except the “Canadian Christians visiting churches.” We met world-famous whistleblower Mordecai Vanunu, the Hamas representative for Bethlehem (where we stayed), the current mayor of Nablus (our meeting made a major

Arab newspaper!), the patriotic ex-mayor of Nablus who made international news when his legs were blown off by an Israeli car bomb 20 years ago, and friends and neighbors of young men assassinated by Israeli forces. We were privileged to experience the kindness and witness the courage of Palestinians trying to survive efforts to make their lives unbearable. We all look forward to speaking about our experiences. There may be individual reports at the Information Table from George and Emily Bartlett, Karin Brothers, Angus and Gillian Müller, and Joanne Waddington; Rev. Vicki Obedkoff was another of the participants with Bloor St. connections. We hope to have programming through the year in which we can share what we learned about this critically-important subject.

Rummage Rules

by Dan Benson

I've lost count, but I think September 16 was the 10th BSUC rummage sale. Like the many before it, this one was a resounding success. From lamps and pictures, to stereos and games, there was an astonishing amount of 'stuff'. Bargain hunters were lined up to get in more than an hour before opening. And when they did get in, well, let's just say that the closest biblical image that came to mind was that of Moses' curse of the locusts on Egypt! The first rummage sale that I helped coordinate was a fund-raiser for our 100th anniversary in 1987. Other veterans are still doing the rummage-shuffle: Brian and Marjorie Fox, Kent Jackson, and Velma and Bill Davis. If you were there back in 1987 remind me; a lot of rummage has passed through BSUC since then, so it's difficult to keep it all straight! One of the curious things about doing rummage is the insight it gives into our consumer culture. In 1987, there were lots of record players, 8-tracks, curling irons, waffle irons and Tupperware. Now, 19 years later, there are CD and DVD players, cellphones, Nintendo, curling irons, waffle irons and Tupperware. At the end, we raised a few dollars (actually, close to \$5,000 with the book sale added in), gave people some bargains, and spared the landfill. Every little bit helps. Events like this succeed because of the involvement of many people. Kudos to the dozens of Bloor Streeters that made this happen. Donations, uplifting, sorting, pricing, selling, and cleaning up, all happened because people gave generously of their time and energy. And that's what helps create community.



Photos by Harold Durnford

Winter *in* Karatu

by Val Lem

Late August found me settled in the small town of Karatu in northeastern Tanzania with 11 other Canadians participating in a CPAR study tour. Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief has only been active in this east African country for a few years, but already the NGO has helped to improve the quality of life for many in the district villages.

We visited several rural primary schools where rainwater harvesting tanks provide clean drinking water for students and staff during the long dry “season.” Water is also used for hand-washing and waste water is used for cultivation. Incidence of waterborne illness, absenteeism, conflict between parents and children who would otherwise have to carry precious household water to school, and potential for harassment of girls fetching water from district water sources have all decreased. The technology is very simple, yet the impact on lives is tremendous.

The tour included visits to a farmer field school, women entrepreneurs engaged in chicken husbandry and beekeeping, local medical facilities, a meeting with UMATU,

an amazing group of women who are living with HIV/AIDS, and a visit to the monthly market where we saw a CPAR demonstration on sexual health and where our pale skin attracted the attention of the jewellery and basket merchants among others.

For more photos and text, visit Claire Holloway’s blog of the trip at www.cparstudytour.blogspot.com



Nurse’s *Corner* by Nancy Gordon

This fall the Parish Nursing educational event is interesting and different. A group of about a dozen people are taking a course on Therapeutic Touch (TT). TT is a complementary therapy based on the assumption that humans are open, complex energy systems, and that, in a state of health, life energy flows freely through us in a balanced symmetrical manner. “We do not end at our skins”. How many times have you been aware of someone being near you when you haven’t heard or seen them come up to you? Or, have you ever “felt” the anger or anxiety that someone near you is experiencing? TT assumes that if you are experiencing pain, anxiety or illness, there is a disruption or blockage in the flow of energy through you.

TT attempts to restore evenness and balance to the energy field, thus enabling the body heal itself. Begun in 1972, the development of TT has been based on modern research findings. It has been studied so extensively and with proper scientific methods, that now it is accepted, taught and practiced in many hospitals and universities around the world. TT has been shown to at least produce a deep relaxation response. As well, it has been shown to reduce or eliminate pain, accelerate healing, boost the immune system, reduce anxiety, and affect blood pressure. Hopefully, when we learn how to do TT, our group will be able to offer our services as part of the healing ministry of our church.

Chris & Susan Ferguson have returned to North America. After two years in Jerusalem with the World Council of Churches, Chris and Susan were transferred to New York City this fall. Chris is the new representative for the World Council of Churches at the United Nations. Susan will work with the national office of the United Church of Can. in the Justice, Global & Ecumenical Relations Group. Both will live in NY. Susan will work electronically from home with occasional visits to UCC offices in Toronto. Susan says: "Stay tuned for further developments."

Out of the Cold for 2006 – 2007 has begun at Trinity St. Paul's Church. Every Tuesday night, during the 24 coldest weeks of the year, the Out of the Cold program serves a sit-down meal for men and women, provides showers, clean clothes, basic nursing

care and recreational facilities. People sleep overnight, eat a full breakfast and take along a bagged lunch. Financial Contributions can be made to Bloor St. United Church (write "Out of the Cold" on the memo line of the cheque). Place your cheque on the offering plate, mail it or drop it off at the church. Donations of winter clothing, baking and bagged lunches are also needed. Please check the Sunday bulletin for details or call 416-410-6458 or email infobloorwest@yahoo.ca

The Refugee Outreach Project (ROP) recently received a donation of \$2,500 from Eglinton-St. George's United Church toward the 2006 budget. The ROP Steering Committee will coordinate with the Outreach Committee of Eglinton-St. George's to develop this new partnership (*Sue Kaiser*).

Wells in El Salvador. In the spring and fall of 2005, four small enjoyable dinner parties were held at my home with the intention of raising funds for a well in San Juan, El Salvador. Guadalupe Calderon advised me on Sept. 12 that: "Yesterday they installed the pump and we only need to connect the electrical energy for the people of San Juan to have water. We remain ready to make the tank where the water can be stored." We sent \$480.00 US to this project. Although progress has been "slow" (compared to what we're used to), I know that Guadalupe (who is based in El Salvador) is on top of things and will see it through to the end. I met her when I visited in March of '05 (*Marie Marsellus*).



Young Adults by Adam Hanley

Since March of 2005 when Council identified a need for a cohesive group for university students and other young adults, the group has emerged as another part of our faith community. There are about 15-20 people who are apart of this 'collection of individuals.' We try to connect every month at the congregational lunches. This year, we have had a dinner in September and plan on holding another gathering this fall. As well, there are opportunities to participate in the events with the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto. We are also thinking of a small justice project for the group and potentially a pilgrimage to a Taizé weekend in Montreal in the spring. With the help of the congregation

and Toronto Conference, I attended a conference on ministry with young adults last May. I learned a lot about building community and connecting with young adults. I am using many of the ideas gained from this conference for the group this year.

As the co-coordinator, I am very grateful for the help of the whole congregation. This fall there have been a large number of new young adults coming to worship with us, especially university students. The congregation has been very welcoming to new young adults. This is a great culture of hospitality and welcoming and I appreciate the effort to connect these new folks with me.

An Update *on Redevelopment*

by Michael Hillard

By now many of you will have heard that in response to our Request for Proposals the church received two submissions. One proposed a condominium development, but expressed the desire to discuss the possibility of a purchase of the property rather than a long term lease. The second proposed a senior living residence. Both were sparse on details.

It is fair to say that many members of the redevelopment committee were disappointed. We knew the long term lease requirement would not be popular with developers but based on feedback from the congregation and Presbytery we felt it an important condition to include in the RFP. As well, there are many educational facilities, office buildings and hotels that have been built on leased land.

Although disappointed the committee is not deterred. Our plan is to follow up with a select group of developers to get a better understanding for the lack of responses. We will then devise a new plan of action to be shared with the congregation.

The redevelopment project in which we are engaged is a long and complicated one. It began almost 10 years ago and was discussed many times in the decades preceding. We now know so much more about the value of the property, the constraints and our dreams for it. We should not be discouraged by this bump in the road. We are on a wonderful and exciting journey which we will continue to travel together. We will not be deterred.



Good News

ON BLOOR is edited and published 4 times a year by the Communications Committee. All articles are copyright and may not be used without permission of the author. **250 words maximum** is the standard length for unsolicited articles. All articles may be edited. Photos will only be used if space permits and if suitable for publication. Please ask for our new photo policy at the Information Table on Sundays.

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Ministers and Staff may be reached by contacting the Church Office at (416) 924-7439

**Deadline for the Winter Issue:
Sunday, January 7, 2007**

Layout: Apropos Advertising Design

COMING EVENTS

Friday, December 8 at 7:30pm

Reel Activism

Sunday, December 10 following the service

Speaker event on "acoustics" hosted by Renewal Committee

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, December 3

First Sunday of Advent

Theme of Hope

Sunday, December 10

Theme of Love

Sunday, December 17

Theme of Joy

The Christmas tree will be decorated

Sunday, December 24

Theme of Peace

Christmas Sunday Service at 10:30 am

Cross-generational Service at 7:00pm

Communion by Candle Light at 10:00pm

Christmas Cantata for choir, brass and organ

Sunday, December 31

Christmas continues

Wednesdays, January 10 – February 14, 2007

Wednesday Night Study Group – more details to follow

Friday, January 12 at 7:30pm

Reel Activism

Sunday, January 28 following the service

Speaker event hosted by Social Justice Committee

Mondays, January 29 – April 2 at 7:00pm

Exploration of Faith

Friday, February 9 at 7:30pm

Reel Activism

Wednesday February 21 at 7:00pm

Ash Wednesday Service

Tuesday, February 27

Congregational Meeting: AGM Part I

Dinner at 6:00pm. Meeting at 7:00pm

Wednesdays, February 28 – April 4

Wednesday Night Study Group – details to follow



Visit our website at: www.bloorstreetunited.org