

AN INCLUSIVE
CONGREGATION
MINISTERING TO
MULTICULTURAL TORONTO

INSIDE

Ministers' Messages
page 3

Redevelopment
page 4

Departures & Arrivals
page 5

Quick Sketches
page 7

Lights at Christmas

All over the world Christmas means Christmas lights, whether on a tree, in church, or decorating a house or public building, and whether as a candle, bonfire, or electric bulb. They are symbols of Jesus as the Light of the World, and of the hope, expressed in every midwinter festival, that the long nights will soon end and the sun and springtime will return.

(from: *The World Encyclopedia of Christmas* by Gerry Bowler)



Good News ON BLOOR

Notes on a Sabbatical

by David Passmore

Heeding the advice that to have a “real” sabbatical one needs to “get out of town” I planned my four-month sabbatical to take me away to Cuba for 10 days, England for seven weeks, and Germany for two weeks.

In Cuba I attended a large choral conference with choirs mostly from Latin America, but also some from further afield. I was fortunate to be able to hang out with two Chilean women (one a retired professor of choral music) who happened to be staying in my hotel. My culture shock moment came when I realized that much of this new, exotic, exciting music was to them old hat, even to the point of ennui. Each day was filled with workshops in the morning and early afternoon and concerts in the late afternoon and evening in various venues in Havana. Sheet music for purchase was scarce, but the score for the Prelude and Postlude for the covenanting service of Alydia and Martha was bought there.

London can be overwhelming: the hordes of people, the prices, and of course the cultural richness. Arlene



David playing the 1745 Wagner organ at Angermuende (complete with angels playing kettle drums).

(who was also on sabbatical from the ROM) and I attended opera, a concert of funeral music in a crypt-turned-art gallery, a brilliant master class by esteemed conductor Sir Roger Norrington for the Royal College of Music orchestra, and several organ recitals and services in famous churches; we also made pilgrimages to various world class galleries and museums. And the odd pub. I enrolled for sessions

continues on page 6

Michael Blair, our guest preacher for Anniversary Sunday, is new to our congregation. Michael is moving from his role as Executive Director of the Toronto Christian Resource Centre to the position of Executive Minister of Ethnic Ministries at the United Church of Canada. He takes up the position on January 1, 2008. Welcome, Michael.

Ann Cooper recently joined the Honorary Board of Directors of the Toronto Christian Resource Centre.

Don Cooper is also a member.

Congratulations to **Sandra Cruickshanks** and **Tom McCauley** who celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with an early fall trip to Paris. Sandra recently received a Lieutenant Governor in Council appointment for another three year term to the McMaster University Foundation

Congratulations to **Kent Jackson** who celebrated his 80th birthday on Sept. 5. Kent celebrated with a train journey through the Rockies and a cruise along Pacific Coast to Alaska.

Congratulations also to **Roxana Müller** and **James Arbuthnott** who were married at Bloor St. Church on Oct. 19. Former ministers Linda Butler and Warren McDougall officiated.

Arthur Smith has been promoted to Head, Library & Archives at the Royal Ontario Museum. Arthur is one of the experts who will be speaking on Charles Rennie Mackintosh at the ROM on Nov. 21. He has built up a substantial library on Mackintosh at the ROM and spoke about his portfolio “House for an Art Lover” at a ROM Research Colloquium.

Connie Sword celebrated her 95th birthday on Oct. 13. Congratulations, Connie.

Congratulations to **Elena Voronejskaia** and **Greg Peacock** on the birth of **Benjamin** on Sept. 6.

CHOIR NEWS: **Erin Bardua**, our soprano soloist, is studying at the Univ. of Toronto for her Master’s degree in Vocal Performance. **Cindy Won**, our alto soloist, was a chorus member for the Canadian Opera Co. fall production of the Verdi opera “Don Carlos”.

Jill Mingo is our new Silvester Kirby Organ Scholar. Jill is pursuing a Master’s degree in Organ Performance at U of T. Before coming to Toronto, Jill was assistant organist at St.

Mary’s Cathedral in Kingston, Ont. Jill was brought up in Lusaka, Zambia, and gained a B. Sc. (Social Science) from Edinburgh University. She has been in Canada for 30 years, is married to a Professor of Mathematics at Queens and has two children attending university at McGill and Oxford. She is thrilled to be part of our music program, and we are thrilled too! Welcome, Jill.

STUDENT UPDATES:

Janelle Artis, our Primary Class Church School teacher, says that this is her 6th year of teaching, “which is a long time, but it hasn’t felt like it.” She is in her 4th year of history and anthropology studies at York Univ. and hopes to travel after receiving her degree.

Emily Gordon has moved to Vancouver where she has begun her Master’s program at Simon Fraser Univ. Her field is English with a specialization in Print Culture. She received a SSHRC Master’s scholarship for this year.

Jennifer Gordon is continuing her studies in Environmental science at the Univ. of Toronto, Scarborough College. Her specialty is biology with a co-op program. She is in the campus choir and also active with the residence environment club, named “Green Wizards”.

Iain McCauley is now in the third year of his B.A. program at Wilfrid Laurier Univ. in Waterloo.

Lauren McCauley is in her first year of studies at McMaster University, representing the fourth generation of her family to have studied or worked at the University. She is studying the Humanities.

Carmen Palmer has started a Doctor of Theology program at Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, in the Biblical Department, specializing in the Old Testament. She brushed-up on her Hebrew language skills over the summer.

David Shulman is in his final year studies at Emmanuel College in the Theological Studies program. His area of concentration is community ministries

Sarah Ward has returned to school, pursuing part-time studies towards a desk-top publishing certificate in graphic arts. She continues to work as a sock designer.

Pictures *at a Church* by Martha ter Kuile

When I first visited Peru, a friend said to me, ‘Take your pictures the first week — after that you won’t find things so striking.’ What pictures would I snap in these first few weeks at Bloor Street United? First picture: you. Bloor Streeters. You are more various than I expected — more of a mixture of ages and outlooks and interests. You are more connected to each other across some differences, more patient with one another in difficulty, than you may realize. A motley crew that is a community of faith. Second picture: the space — what a wonderful crazy old building you dwell in. Lovely space that has held the sound of singing and

prayer and praise and lament through the years, walls that have offered shelter and a moment’s quiet to those who seek it, staircases that lead madly up and around, from one centre of activity to another. Third picture: your address. You are on Bloor Street, in the heart of one of the world’s great cities, virtually touching an exceptional university. Standing in the courtyard waiting for a friend the other day I marvelled as the world sauntered past- is there anyone or anything that you don’t see on Bloor Street? As we listen for God’s voice together, what a pleasure it is, and what a blessing — to be here, to be in this holy space, to be among you.



Greetings *from Alydia* by Alydia Smith

“Behold, I will do a new thing ...”

Isaiah 43:19

I have learnt that God is always doing something new, resulting in a life of constant growth and experience (if I chose to follow). Not long ago, I took a huge leap of faith by leaving a career in higher education for one in ministry. I trusted the call of God to lead me

where needed and I will never look back! Now, the journey has led me to enter into a new ministry with Bloor Street United Church. I am excited for the opportunity to serve God together! I have received such a warm welcome from everyone at Bloor Street United;

please accept my heartfelt thanks.

We are all pilgrims on an incredibly journey of faith. In our time together I pray that we will faithfully live out our mission to explore faith, seek justice and live with respect for creation.

Alydia Smith is our new Minister of Christian Development, Community Life & Pastoral Care. Martha ter Kuile is our new Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care.

Waiting for Godot?

Recently it was said to me, “I get the sense the momentum for redevelopment is dissipating”. The person speaking was a newcomer to our church community which gave me a chance to provide an overview of the last 10 years (the nine different options, the discernment, the discussions with U of T, the RFI and RFP ...). “It’s a big complex project which takes time” I said. I went on to suggest that I thought momentum ebbed and flowed but that on balance I was pleased with the progress we had made. In

truth I too worry that the excitement and enthusiasm for redevelopment is evaporating.

At the time of writing we hope to, after several delays, get a proposal from a developer of seniors’ residences. It will give us a concrete proposal by which we can assess the value of the property, the opportunity for a long-term lease and the importance of the frontage on Bloor Street. It will also give us a chance to see how the developer addresses our interest in environmental design. The proposal will provide a benchmark by which we

could consider offers from others who have expressed interest in the property. Finally, we could begin to reignite the committee’s and the congregation’s interest and energy in redevelopment.

So while it may at times feel that we are waiting for something that will never arrive, I continue to be committed to the redevelopment project and confident that it would soon be the cause of excitement and energy in the congregation. I just wish at times it was more like a two act play than a decade long adventure.



Getting to Maybe

review by Ellen Schwartzel

Getting to Maybe is a must-read for those interested in how to change the world. The book had an unusual genesis; Dupont Canada wanted to make a significant social contribution and challenged the authors to examine and lay bare the dynamics of social innovation. The result is compellingly written, and built on fascinating and inspiring case studies, with many Canadian examples, such as the acclaimed Roots of Empathy program, and OP2000, a poverty-fighting coalition in Waterloo. The authors include the story of the economist Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh –

winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize – who developed the concept of micro-credit to help local women out of seemingly hopeless poverty. Other examples are drawn from fields as varied as wildlife conservation, health care and urban renewal. The authors emphasize that social innovation begins with deep reflection about underlying causes of a problem. Patterns must be recognized and examined. But there are often also tipping points in society that cannot be predicted; nonlinear dynamics that flow in surprising ways. Innovators who



take the leap to action may find themselves caught up in the centre of a new social movement, with all doors suddenly opening for them. As success grows, innovators are wise to carry out ongoing, unflinching reality checks, and to keep asking not only “are we doing things right”, but “are we doing the right things?” When innovations harden into formulaic programs, it may be time for new approaches to emerge. This book is an invaluable guide along the journey. (*Getting to Maybe* by Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman and Michael Q. Patton. 2006)

Arrivals & Departures



Our new ministers: Martha ter Kuile & Alydia Smith
(Harold Durnford photo)



Farewell to Gary Redcliffe, Ann Morwood, Kieren MacMillan & Ed Connell (Don Payne photo)

and David Passmore's Return



The Bloor St. Quilters created a “welcome home” vest for David as he returned to our church after his sabbatical. Many of the prints used in the quilted black & white vest include musical notes. David has promised to frequently wear his vest during services and special events. (Don Payne photos)

Notes on a Sabbatical continued from page 1

on organ playing; linguistics, neurology and music (both in Cambridge); singing and the Alexander technique; and choral conducting. I spent a number of days in music stores hunting out new choral repertoire for our choir.

The north German organ tour, planned by well-known Toronto organists William and Patricia Wright principally for their students past and present, was a great way to end off my sabbatical. Everything was beautifully organized for us, including wonderful meals and accommodation. We were given introductions by the resident organists, and then got to play, and listen to our companions play, these amazingly idiosyncratic historical instruments. But there was also time to experience the cities and towns as well, and on our bus to benefit from the running historical commentary given by Rolf, a friendly German pastor and old friend of William. We all play and sing so much music from the likes of Bach and Buxtehude, it's invaluable to gain some sense of the original context and sound.

I'd like to thank everyone who helped me "get out of town" including Ruth Evans, Alcris Limongi, my Sabbatical

Committee (Nancy Williamson, Bill Mowat, Bridget Hough) and Arlene for her organizational wizardry and loving companionship. Also thanks to those who kept music happening while I was gone, especially Kieren MacMillan, Ed Connell and the Choir. I now have hours of recordings to listen to, pages of notes to transcribe, lists of resources to order, and hundreds of photos to process. Hopefully I, and Bloor Street, will continue to benefit from my sabbatical for years to come.



And finally, thanks to the quilting group for the "welcome home" vest. It is great to finally "be back in town."

David playing the 1743 Hildebrandt organ under the watchful eye of William Wright. J.S. Bach was a consultant on the building of the organ.



Nurse's Corner by Nancy Gordon

InterChurch Health Ministries

Our Parish Nurse ministry here at Bloor Street is a joint ministry with Bathurst United Church. Together, Bloor and Bathurst are members of an association called InterChurch Health Ministries (ICHM). I would like to let people know about ICHM. "ICHM is a group of Christian congregations who share the belief that in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ we have a unique responsibility and contribution to make in the health of the community" (from the website). Begun as a pilot project in five congregations in 1995, it has grown

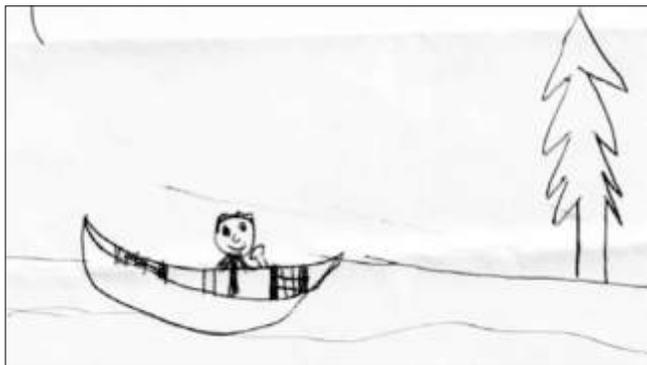
to over 60 congregations, representing 20 different denominations served by 70 Parish Nurses throughout Ontario. It is starting to "catch on" in both Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. ICHM in association with Emmanuel College, provides Registered Nurses with training in parish nursing. Members of their clergy and Health Committees are also invited to the training sessions on the premise that Parish Nurse Ministry should be congregationally driven and supported. ICHM has played a leading role

setting standards for Parish Nurses that are recognized by the College of Nurses. Even after the training, ICHM continues to support its Parish Nurses by offering ongoing educational workshops, an annual three-day retreat, monthly peer-support meetings, resources and materials. The Central Toronto support group that I attend has 9 Parish nurses from 7 denominations. I feel that the ecumenical nature of ICHM is one of its strengths. We learn so much from each other.

Quick Sketches

United Church Camps are great! Three moms and 7 kids spent some time this summer at Camp Big Canoe or Camp Scugog, thanks to your generous donations to the Refugee Outreach Project “summer camp” fund. Camping was a new ROP activity this year, and it has been a great way to share God’s gift of nature and friendship, and ensure some families had a memorable vacation. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the effort — you made a real difference!

(Sue Kaiser)



Camp Big Canoe by Estaban, age 9

Book Sale. Nearly \$1000 was raised from the sale of books on a chilly and grey Saturday, Oct. 13. Customers were invited to our warm, book-filled basement to choose from hundreds of books, magazines, CDs, LPs and cassettes. Organizer Dianne Johnson and her crew of dedicated book lovers sorted and sold donations from church members and friends. Proceeds of the semi-annual sale go to the work of the church’s Social Justice Committee.

The Congregational Directory for 2007-08 is now available. Pick one up at the Information Table after the service or call the church office. A charge of \$4 helps to offset photocopying costs.

Bulletin announcements appear on the church’s web site exactly as they appear in the bulletin. If you do not wish your phone number and/or email address to appear on the web site, please provide alternative contact information .

YouthonBloor Exposure Trip 2008. The 2008 trip will be to Cuba. Tentative plans are for travel at the end of August. The trip is now open to interested high school students who are friends and neighbours of Bloor St., Trinity-St.Paul’s and Bathurst Churches. Please contact Shannon at shannon@bloorstreetunited.org.

120 Years at Bloor & Huron. Guest speaker for the anniversary service on Sunday, November 4 was Rev. Michael Blair (see Bloor People on page 2). His sermon title was “Saints Alive!”. The early saints of the Bloor Street congregation began Sunday services at Knox College in June 1887. Sunday School classes had been offered since October 1886. The cornerstone was laid on December 6, 1886, but strikes and other delays meant the building was not ready for worship until 1888. This first building quickly became too small for the growing congregation and in 1889 the cornerstone was laid for the large addition. This cornerstone can still be seen at eye level at the base of the tower at the corner of Bloor and Huron. In 1908 a further addition was made to the building to accommodate a new organ and an expanded Sunday school. “A commodious lecture room” (likely McClure Hall) was also part of the new addition. Another significant change to the building occurred in 1922 when Bloor Street was widened and the impressive front steps leading up from the Bloor St. entrance were removed to create space for a sidewalk. (historical details from *Seventy Years at Bloor Street United Church, Toronto. 1887-1957*)

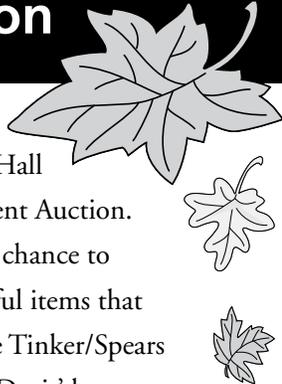
Good News on Bloor has a new layout artist. Sandra Damiani of Apropos Advertising Design was our layout artist for over 10 years. Our new layout artist is Janice Krangle, who has worked with Sandra. Janice designed one issue for us in 2006 and worked with Sandra on at least one other. As well as graphic design training at George

Brown College, she has an Honours English degree from the University of Toronto and also graduated from Ontario College of Art and Design. She has over 20 years of business experience and has also worked as an artist and jeweller. Anyone interested in her design work can contact her at: krangle@sympatico.ca or 416.513.1396

The Great Bloor Street Talent Auction

There was excitement in the air on Saturday, October 20, as McClure Hall filled for the Great Bloor Street Talent Auction. Almost 50 bidders turned out for a chance to win one of the unique and wonderful items that were offered, including a sail on the Tinker/Spears yacht, a film fest at Velma and Bill Davis' home and a singing telegram from Alydia, Martha and David. Auctioneer Olivia Chow kept the things lively, and sometimes the bidding reached astronomical heights. A spirit of community prevailed, as when Chuck Baker spontaneously volunteered to open his home, so that a dozen bidders would be able to share the evening of entertainment offered by Randi Helmers and Rob Clutton.

This was Bloor Street's first "people's auction", where every bidder was on an equal footing. Instead of paying cash for the items bid on, the bidders made a donation before the auction, and received play money with which to bid. Regardless of the amount donated, each bidder received \$200 in "Bloor Bucks". So everyone won something, and all had a great time. A thanks to the generosity of all who participated, \$4,000 was raised for the work of the church. (*Laurie Gordon*)



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.

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COMING EVENTS

Wednesdays, November 21 – December 19

Advent Study "Saving Jesus" – Part I

Sunday, November 25 following the service

Speaker event hosted by Social Justice Committee

Tuesday, November 27

Congregational meeting with discussion of several important issues

Pot luck supper at 6:00 pm, meeting at 7:00 pm

Sunday, December 2

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 9

Christmas tree. Intergenerational Service

Gifts received for refugee families

Friday, December 14

Reel Activism

Saturday, December 15

"Cookies & Carols" party for refugee families

All welcome

Sunday, December 23

Christmas Sunday service

Following the service: Speaker event hosted by Social Justice Committee

Monday, December 24

Christmas Eve Services:

Cross-generational Service at 7:00pm

(at Trinity-St. Paul's Church)

Communion by Candle Light at 10:00pm

Sunday, December 30

Christmas continues

Sunday, January 6

Epiphany



Friday, January 11

Reel Activism

Wednesday, February 6

Lent Study "Saving Jesus" – Part 11

Sunday, February 10

Lent 1: Guest Preacher Eleanor Scarlett

BENEFIT CONCERT

On behalf of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers
Campaign of the Stephen Lewis Foundation

Saturday, November 24 at 7:30 pm.

Bloor St. Church

**The Nathaniel Dett Chorale &
The University of Toronto Gospel Choir**

Tickets \$25 at 416-766-6481

grannieconcert@gmail.com or at the door

Organized by

The Togogo Grannies of Bloor St. Church
& the Old Orchard Blossoms
of St. Timothy's Anglican Church.

Visit our website at: www.bloorstreetunited.org