

INSIDE

Zoom Church
page 2Elizabeth May Visits
page 3Building Photos
page 4 & 5Gibimishkaadimin Reunion
page 6

Easter Sunday Bouquet 2019

Photo by Harold Durnford

Good News ON BLOOR

Connection

by Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile

As I write this we are in the midst of the COVID-19 response. Public gatherings like church services have been halted for a couple of weeks. The children have not gone back to school after March break. The playgrounds and dog-parks have been declared off limits. Restaurants are offering only takeout, and most stores are closed. When you venture out to the grocery store, there are staff members controlling the rate of entry into the store, and ensuring that you keep your distance in the line at the cashiers, who are now protected by large plastic screens. Workers in businesses and government offices have been ordered to go home and stay home. People are still taking walks, but with great care to stay 6 feet apart from one another. Keep your distance and wash your hands – these are our mantras as we go forward.

We are at the mercy of a global crisis which affects every person on earth. The only place they haven't got it (yet) is Antarctica. And right now, we have no idea what going forward is going to involve. Will it be over soon, and seem like a bad dream by the summer? Or will it persist and become an ongoing part of our reality? Or will it get worse? By the time *Good News on Bloor* is published, we may look back and see that it was obvious. But right now, we really do not know. What we do know is that we need to stay connected through all this. Connected in families and friendships, connected in all the various communities we take part in. There are many ways to do this – I have waved outside the window of my parents' dining room at Christie Gardens, and had FaceTime picnics with my grandchildren. At church, we have been trying to call people regularly, and to get together for meetings and even for worship on ZOOM. What a beautiful sight to see all the faces on a Sunday morning! And to hear the familiar voices through the phone. You can tell from the expressions that we are all longing for a few more connections in our days, a few more smiles.

The stories of Easter are all about connection. After the bitterness and radical disconnection of the cross, we hear the good news. Relationships may be changed, but they are not broken. At Easter the followers suddenly understand that the deep connection to God in Jesus will go on. They learn that there are new ways to be touched by the risen Christ, and to be connected with him. They discover that fear and uncertainty is conquered in the presence of one another. May it be so.

Zoom Church *by Garnet Ward*

From the midst of the loneliness imposed by the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerged suddenly a bright gleam. Amongst the flood of emails announcing ever-tighter restrictions on our connections to others, there was one little “invitation” in old-fashioned command-line type to a “Zoom Church”. Martha ter Kuile and David Passmore had come up with a way of letting us come together online where we could see the cross in our sanctuary, watch the Christ candle be lit, hear the accompaniment for all the hymns, and, best of all perhaps, see each other as we worshipped together! This video-conferencing tool, common for business meetings, has become an uplifting means of social congregating. We even have pre-service chatter in a virtual narthex and coffee-hour bedlam in a virtual Assembly Hall, and all of us are able to

call welcomes and farewells as individuals arrive and leave in small groups. And initially there were audible gasps as we saw friends who now live far away joining in from Hamilton, Muskoka, Calgary, Gambier Island, Halifax and even Marburg, Germany – so many overall that we had to up-grade the Zoom licence to accommodate more participants.

Martha claimed that her reflections are not real sermons, but they are poignant, re-assuring, full of imagery, and spiritual – riveting in their timeliness. As usual, congregation members do scripture readings, offer prayers, and lead responses. The shuttered church has actually renewed the heart-warming hum of Sunday morning activity and spiritual focus that we need in a strangely-changed, but wonderfully-broader world.

B L O O R P E O P L E

Congratulations to **Chloë** and **Dean Glazier-Forsyth** and big brother **Parker** on the birth of **Tate Stewart Glazier-Forsyth** on March 22. Tate weighed 8 lbs and 15.5 oz! Chloë sent Martha ter Kuile photos of Tate, “in all his chunky glory. We are all recovering very well and trying to be thankful of social isolation as a reminder to slow down and be present in this special time.”



Don Cooper with
Garnet Ward
Photo by Harold Durnford

Congratulations to **Don Cooper** who has achieved 50 years of exemplary service as a member of the Endowment Fund Committee. Don will continue to serve on the committee. His son, **Doug Cooper** is now an advisor to the committee.

Congratulations also to **Jim Hunter** who retired on Feb. 23 after 32 years on the Endowment Fund

Committee. **Bill Davis**, who retired from the Endowment Fund Committee in 2006, is the second longest serving member after Don. Bill served for 34 years. Many thanks to Don, Jim and Bill for reaching these incredible milestones.

The Quilters’ Group created a Lenten stole for **Stephen Milton**, a former member of our congregation who is now an ordained minister. Stephen visited the church in Feb. to receive the stole. The dark purple of Lent formed the background which was enlivened with colourful images.



Stephen Milton wearing his new stole with quilters Nancy Gordon, Mary Louise Work, Irene Hunter, Heather Hilliard & Bridget Hough.
Photo by Benoit Boutet

Harold Durnford, for many years our church webmaster, wandered the church with his phone from Jan. to late Feb. searching for interesting photos of our building. See the results on pages 4 and 5. More images will be seen in future issues of this newsletter. Most of these sites will be lost during demolition.

Elizabeth May Visits *by Mary Louise Work*

The 2020 Craddock Lecture was held on March 1.

During time with the children, Elizabeth May, former leader of Canada's Green Party, explained that her interest in the environment was evident from when she was only three. She told her mother she didn't like airplanes because they "scratched the sky". Ms. May delivered her lecture to over 300 people in the sanctuary and managed to inspire and amuse us with her wit and extensive knowledge of everything from the oil sands to e-vehicles to the importance of cities in addressing climate change. Prior to receiving her law degree in British Columbia, Ms. May studied theology. She provided us with her take on the Genesis story emphasizing the covenant God

made was not just with Noah and his descendants but with every living creature (Gen 9:8); we are "sisters and brothers" to all beings – including rocks – and so we have a sacred relationship with all of God's creation that family ties imply. She urged us not to let mega-corporations make us feel guilty about the state of the environment; as Christians we must act and not just pray. In the Q&A following a quick refreshment break, Ms. May responded to a range of technical and philosophical questions. We were very grateful and blessed to have shared this time with Ms. May and to have benefited from her expertise and passion.



Elizabeth speaking from the pulpit
Photo by Don Payne



Our crowded sanctuary during Elizabeth's visit
Photo by Harold Durnford



Elizabeth May with Martha ter Kuile
Photo by Harold Durnford



Martha ter Kuile & Elizabeth May
Photo by Harold Durnford



Elizabeth May at
Question & Answer Session
Photo by Don Payne

Exceptional Corners



Old chapel on second floor of church
Photo by Harold Durnford



Mary & Infant Jesus window over
unused west doors to courtyard
Photo by Harold Durnford



Stained glass lamb window over Huron St. doors
Photo by Harold Durnford



Great South Window
Photo by Harold Durnford



View of Huron St. entrance from narthex
Photo by Harold Durnford



Old lamp & leaded glass window
Photo by Harold Durnford



Overview of sanctuary from west balcony
Photo by Harold Durnford



Third floor corridor with old Sunday School rooms
Photo by Harold Durnford



Oldest wing of church (first sanctuary)
Photo by Harold Durnford



Upper Club Room leaded glass window in oldest part of church
Photo by Isabel Ward



Post of shamrock railing to balcony
Photo by Harold Durnford



Spring in the courtyard
Photo by Susan Jennings



May blossoms in the courtyard
Photo by Lisa Water

Nurse's Corner *by Nancy Gordon*



It is difficult writing this *Nurse's Corner* at this time when things are changing day to day. I have no idea what things will be like or how they will have changed by the time *Good News* is published. However, no matter what conditions are like, or how many hardships abound, I do know that one of God's many blessings to help us cope is humour. Look for humour. Find the funny side of things. Laughing has so often been shown to increase our ability to resist illness, relieve depression, and help us see things from a new perspective. Somewhere I read that a good belly laugh a day significantly contributes to our health, both physical and mental. So as much as possible, try to laugh. Think of those old jokes that tickle the funny bone. Watch a comedy. Read

the comics or a joke book. Chat with friends and deliberately set out to remember the funny things that have happened to you both. Watch a kitten play with a ball of yarn, or a dog chase its tail.

Thank God for our ability to see the beauty and humour in life. Let us not let our worries and fears deprive us of our enjoyment of the gift of life.



Anne Farquharson &
Russell Baker Dancing
& Laughing
Photo by Harold Durnford

Gibimishkaadimin Reunion *by Beth Symes*

Youth, Leaders-in-Training, Program Leaders and Tripping Guides from coast to coast to coast in Canada gathered in Toronto March 6–8 for the 2019 canoe trip Reunion. Indigenous youth began to arrive on Thursday night but the last person was delayed until Saturday morning. Everyone slept and had breakfasts at Rosedale United, one of the three partnership congregations for Gibimishkaadimin.

On Saturday volunteers accompanied the youth on a tour of Toronto guided by Randi Helmers. The tour included skating at Nathan Philips Centre, visiting the CN Tower and viewing the night shark show at Ripley's Aquarium. On Sunday the youth took part in the Sunday Service at Rosedale. Will Miller, now a Program Leader, who has been on all three canoe trips, presented Rosedale with a beautiful paddle that he had carved from ambrosia wood. After lunch the group tested their leadership skills in the Escape Room at Casa Loma. Dispatches report that they were only one clue away from escape. After an early dinner at Bloor Street, the group headed home by planes, trains, TTC and vehicles. Many of the Indigenous youth had overnights enroute, but blizzard conditions in Iqaluit delayed Kobe Killiktee's arrival in Pond Inlet until the evening of March 11.

Everyone had an amazing time during the Reunion. Not only did they explore Toronto, but they reconnected with

each other. Social media is a poor substitute for in-person hugs. There were lots of tears on Sunday evening and lots of posts on FaceBook and Instagram.



Many thanks to Lisa Walter, our Leader, for her superb organizational skills. Thanks to the Program Leaders, Leaders-in-Training and Tripping Guides who took time from their work and studies to lead during the Reunion. Thanks to families who hosted youth. Finally, thanks to the many volunteers from Bloor Street, Fairlawn and Rosedale who planned, accompanied, chaperoned overnights and cooked for the youth. Without you, Gibimishkaadimin would never happen.



Canoe Trip Youth, Leaders, Guides & Volunteers at the Reunion. Bloor Streeters are India Madsen (centre) & Lisa Walter (right front)

Quick Sketches

Black History Month featured lively African-focused music and guest speakers Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne from Vancouver's east side and Rev. Michael Blair from our congregation.



Music Director David Passmore & Percussionist Marcus Chonsky

Our annual Pancake Supper on Feb. 25 was very well attended by our congregation and many visitors from outside our church community. We fed 135 hungry people. Thanks to the Gordon family for organizing the event. Many hands helped in the kitchen.



Pancake Supper Kitchen Crew

Photos by Harold Durnford



Our sponsored newcomer Seydou Sow helping at the Pancake Supper



Former BSUC intern Maya Douglas (now ordained) with Michael Blair

Photos by Harold Durnford

Lenten Reflections 2020.

Beginning on March 16 when the building closed and continuing through Lent, Susan or Martha sent out the reflection for the day as printed in the book. The reflections suddenly became an important daily message from the church. Authors reflected on our church and its personal significance. Many thanks to Ruth Evans, Heather Hilliard and Bridget Hough for encouraging our writers and for organizing the book in time for the beginning of Lent.



Jennifer Gordon & Bridget Hough with Lenten Reflections 2020

Photo by Harold Durnford

Refugee Outreach Program – Continuing the Welcome

These extraordinary times call on all of us to find new ways of being community. For our Refugee Outreach Program, Martha Hupendo is now hosting virtual gatherings in Spanish on Wednesdays at 7 pm. This gives program participants a chance to share experiences and come together for spiritual support. Our English conversation groups are suspended for now. Martha is working from home and continues to help families access resources and find ways to feel welcome and thrive in their new country. *(Sue Kaiser)*

Summer is just around the corner

We don't know what the summer will hold for our camper sponsorships at Scugog Camp. Right now we are continuing to register campers, hoping camp can go ahead as usual. You can help with this activity through your financial donations to Bloor Street United Church, directed to ROP camping fund. In the event that Scugog Camp is not open, funds will be held for future years, or used for alternate activities for children and families during the summer months. *(SK)*



Bloor Street's Last Gala in Olde McClure Hall

6:30 PM SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26

Come join us for *Christmas in September*, the banquet where we will be trading in the Maypole for the Yule log! Why Christmas? It's because, as was Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, we will be visited by spirits of our past, present and future!

ADMISSION ONLY \$20. This covers a delicious dinner, a glass of wine, entertainment and all the trimmings! Fund-raising will be through donation. *Christmas in September* donations will be dedicated to a specific goal. Donations will support a Syrian refugee family with four young girls, which is expected to arrive this year. The sponsorship needs \$40,000, so please be generous. Family and friends are most welcome.

If you have questions, or would like to help, please contact Laurie Gordon at 416-537-0967.



COMING EVENTS

Sunday April 12

Easter Sunday Zoom Service

10:30 am

Sunday May 24

Congregational Meeting

12:00-1:00 pm Pot Luck Lunch

1:00 pm Meeting

Sunday June 7

Congregational Lunch

Tuesday June 9

Feeding the Spirit Community Supper

6:00pm Doors Open

6:30pm Dinner

Saturday September 26

Christmas in September Gala

Editor's Note

The Communications Committee decided months ago that this issue of *Good News on Bloor* would be a short issue of only 4 pages, instead of the usual 8 pages. However, due to the current health crisis, it became clear that an eight page issue would be an important communications tool. We include news, messages of hope from Martha and Nancy, and an abundance of photos of our late winter events and of our people. These events and photos of the January to early March life of the church all seem so long ago but are good reminders of the many aspects of our church life.



Butterflies in Flight
Drawing by Sarah Ward

Deadline for the Summer Issue: Sunday May 17

Good News on Bloor is edited and published 4 times a year by the Communications Committee of Bloor St. United Church. All submissions may be edited. All articles and photos are only for church use. Please ask permission of the author or photographer for any other use. All submissions should be concise. There may not be room for last minute submissions so please inform the editor ahead of the deadline if you have news or a short item to include in this issue. **Editor:** Isabel Ward: booksleuth28@gmail.com, **Ministers and Staff** may be reached by contacting the Church Office at (416) 924-7439. Layout: JANICE KRANGLE jkrangle1@me.com



Nikhil Joshi at Pancake Supper
Photo by Harold Durnford



Spring Planting in Ian Ward's Greenhouse
Photo by Sarah Rennie