

BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



Volume XXX, Issue 6

Minister's Message

When John the Baptist was still lying in the womb of his mother Elizabeth, and while he was a little more than a twinkle in his father's eye but still far from being a fact, a special meeting occurred. Elizabeth had welcomed her kinswoman Mary on a visit from Galilee, and their meeting had been ecstatic with the expectation of new life. Then they had parted, each to their own home. Their sons had grown up in the sharply different environments of Judea and Galilee. One had encountered a religious world polarized between a strong and entrenched institutionalism and a number of radical and intense grassroots movements. The other had experienced the loveliness of the Galilean countryside, with its corresponding openness and gentleness of spirit.

Thirty years later, the two men met on the bank of the Jordan river somewhere near the spot where the river enters the Dead Sea. Around them gathered a cosmopolitan crowd, attracted to this arid, sunken valley by a mixture of curiosity, anxiety and hope. Jesus had come south from Nazareth, drawn by John's message, yet seeing something beyond it. With his hand in that of John's, he entered the warm salt water ...

Thus began a period of about three years which changed all subsequent history. For people of faith these are sacred years, outlining the Christian seasons of our life together in the rhythms of worship. Those years are recorded in the Gospels, a mode of writing formed and executed expressly to proclaim this sacredness. These writings are both more than history and more than biography. For followers of Jesus they are not only to be read as past event, but also to be experienced in present personal life and the life of the church. As with a play the believer must be more than simply observer or even admirer, and is called to become the stage upon which the play is acted, a participant in the drama.

On the front edge of a new Christian year, in a new sacred season of Advent, Bloordale stands on the edge of new life, with the promise of new hope, peace, joy, and love before us. Having been through much preparation, we stand now pregnant with possibility, seeking to move forward together with God's Spirit working among us, bearing our grace-filled responsibility with both anxiety and excitement as Elizabeth did, as Mary did. We, too, are woven together as one people from diverse backgrounds, histories, traditions, and circumstances - long time and new, a few more young ones than before, with a new Youth Minister - wading into faith-forming baptismal waters, trusting that Christ will both lead and be beside us. The future sacredness of Bloordale's story, both personally and collectively, will be a gift of the God of promise, given to us as we take up our vision and mission with both passion and patience, readying ourselves for, not only Christ's but our own rebirth.

Continued on page 3

Bloordale United Church

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Minister	Rev. Brian W. McIntosh
Honorary Pastoral Associate	Rev. Robert G. Trimble
Pastoral Care Minister	Rev. Nelsona Dundas
Christian Development Co-ordinator	Lisa Mazzariol
Youth Leader	Vacant
Administrative Assistant	Juanita Eldridge
Organist & Choir Director	Mervin Fick
Custodian	Jim Spalding

Church Council

Chair	Julia Stavreff
Church Council Secretary	Pat Nelson
Congregational Meeting Secretary	Pat Nelson
Board of Trustees	Jack Lovatt
Ministry and Personnel	Connie Drummond
Nominations	Pat Nelson
Treasurer	Norman Dundas
Presbytery Representative	Norman Dundas
Minister	Rev. Brian W. McIntosh

Committee Chairs

Communications	John Pauksens
Congregational Life (co-chairs)	Shirley Scott Ameena Ramsahai
Finance & Stewardship	Jack Lovatt
Outreach (co-chairs)	Jill Donaghy Shirley Scott
Pastoral Care	Sylvia Williams
Planned Gift Fund	Bob Hitchcock
Property	Bruce Jackson
Social and Fund Raising	Vanessa Ramsahai
United Church Women	Jo-Em Bettridge
Worship	Sharron Le Blanc
Member-at-Large	Joan Hollowell

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Column</i>	<i>Page</i>
Minister's Message	1
Dates to Remember	2
Occupy Movements: A Faith-Based Perspective	3
Upcoming Concerts Sing 360 Children's Choir Concert	4
Sanctuary Dreams	4
Stewardship Spot	5
Peanut Allergy Alert	5
Christmas Pageant	6
Rafiki Bracelets	6
Poinsettia Fund.	6
Social Committee Update	6
Children's Craft Night	6
Elmer Iseler Singers in Concert	6
Outreach News	7
Terry Tan	7
Ushers Needed	7
Congregational Dinner	7
Holly Tea	7
Flu Season is Here	7
Calling all Drivers	7
Pastoral Care Request	7
Guess Who's Coming to Dinner	8
Semi-annual Congregational Meeting	8
Choir News	10
Ongoing Activities	10
Soulpepper Production	10

LOOKING AT THE WEEKS AHEAD

- Sunday, November 27 - Advent 1
- Saturday, December 3 - Holly Tea - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Sing 360 Children's Choir Concert - 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, December 4 - Advent 2 - White Gift Sunday
- Tuesday, December 6 - Congregational Potluck Dinner - 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday, December 11 - Advent 3 - Christmas Pageant following Worship
- Sunday, December 18 - Advent 4 - Choir Christmas Cantata
- Saturday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Services
- Family Service - 5:00 p.m.
- Candlelight Service and Communion - 9:00 p.m.
- Sunday, December 25 - Christmas Day - Service at 9:30 a.m.
- Thursday, December 29 - Soulpepper Theatre Outing - 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 1 - Second Sunday of Christmas
- Sunday, January 8 - Baptism of Jesus - Covenanting with Staff
- Sunday, January 15 - 2nd after Epiphany

Worship Services are at 10:30 a. m.

NOTE: Christmas Day at 9:30 a.m.

Continued from page 1

There are numerous ways to do this during December, such as the Mitten Tree collection of gifts for those in need and White Gift Sunday Dec. 4th, the Congregational Dinner on the 6th, the always special Christmas Pageant from the young ones after church on the 11th, the beautiful Christmas Cantata service from our choir on the 18th, and our two Christmas Eve services – for children at 5 pm, and candles and communion at 9 pm. Since Christmas is a Sunday this year, we're moving the morning service to 9:30 am, to accommodate the desire to release most of the day for family celebrations. There are also other possibilities to be entranced by joy, including various Christmas concerts being offered by Mervin's Choirs and by Sing 360 Children's Choir.

I know I speak for our entire staff – Lisa, Hanna, Mervin, Nelsona, Juanita, Jim and I – when I express the hope that these holy days become for each of you more than biography, more than history – that they become gospel, full of grace and truth. May God bless us all, in Bloordale and far beyond its walls, at Christmas and in 2012!

Brian

OCCUPY MOVEMENTS: A FAITH-BASED PERSPECTIVE

(Reprinted from Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition)

The Occupy Wall Street Movements have been gaining remarkable momentum, drawing attention to the savage economic inequalities that increasingly threaten our social fabric. The Occupy Movements' main concern is the growing gap between the wealthiest 1% and everyone else in society. Earlier this fall, the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition launched its 'Faith To End Poverty Campaign' just as the Conference Board of Canada added its voice to the growing chorus of concern about poverty and inequality. (Brian's note: We participated in this campaign at Bloordale.) It reported that Canada had experienced a significant increase in income inequality between 2000 and 2006.

People of faith are taking the Occupy Wall Street movement seriously. Its concerns are at the heart of religious belief, reflected in the core of the world's faith traditions.

The Torah is written from the perspective of people in exile, marginalized in the deserts by Empire. Martin Luther King's message to Christians was that their God requires people not simply to support charity but also to work for

justice. Islamic teachings on social justice speak of freedom of conscience, social interdependence and the equality of all. In the East, Mahatma Gandhi led an independence movement, with his critique of modern civilization inspired by the Law of Manu, Bhagavad Gita and other inspirational Vedic writings. And today leaders like Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma and His Holiness The Dalai Lama of Tibet embody the Buddha's teachings of nonviolent action for social justice and compassion as they struggle to return their people from exile.

The presence of people of faith at the Occupy Movements' encampments brings the holy words of our religious founders, prophets and leaders to life as they instruct us to speak up in solidarity with the growing chorus calling for social justice, peace and harmony. The Occupy Movements demonstrate the prophetic vocation of speaking truth to power. In California, Catholic Bishop Stephen Blaire reflects that work is not merely an accompaniment to profit but "the centre of economic and social life." The 'inherent dignity' of work helps us not only to provide for our families and contribute to the common good, but also to share in the experience of the sacredness of all life. The cause of the Occupy Movement has much in common with people who take their faith to heart.

In the Christian tradition, the gospels tell a story of Jesus walking into the Temple and throwing out the money changers. Over many generations, the spirituality of the Temple had been replaced with materialism. In the same way, in our society, casino capitalism prevails in lockstep with an inexorable rise of poverty and inequality. Wall Street and Bay Street have become vehicles for the takeover of the state and the public square by corporations whose sole loyalty is increasing profits. What social responsibility does a corporation have to workers? To families? To the commonwealth? To the Earth?

Our faith traditions call on their followers to place the most vulnerable – the homeless, the widow, the orphan, the unemployed, and the stranger – at the centre of our living concern. All religious scriptures implore the faithful to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and work for justice in a peace-filled world. Buddhist and Hindu mystics speak of Indra's Web, a profound metaphor representing the interconnectedness and interdependency of all things. Similar to this intricate balance, the Occupy Movements call for an intentional harmonizing of the economic systems that control the structures of a global society.

We have not structured our lives to reflect this reality.

The 1% have amassed too much of our collective wealth, at times with the blessing of religion and at other times with the religious turning a blind eye. But do the wealthy contribute to the common good in proportion to what they own? The other 99% of humanity worry about jobs, housing, health care, education and a future for their children and grandchildren. But the formal structures of power appear to be tone deaf.

An unholy trinity – the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization – have helped to create a corporate state whose politicians dutifully respond to their every dictate.

What we owe each other, and the needs of strangers, are priorities that must replace selfish individualism. Sustaining life and enriching community must supplant narrow-minded profit-taking as our world's central order of business.

The Occupy Movements are trying to awaken the call for a sustaining life for all. People of faith are invited to respond to the call. For here is our natural home.

UPCOMING CONCERTS UNDER MERVIN'S DIRECTION

Toronto Beach Chorale presents "*Sounds of Yule*" on Saturday, November 26th at 7:30 pm at Kingston Road United Church, 975 Kingston Road. This Concert features music from the hit movie "*Home Alone*", the lyrical ***The World at The Manger - A Christmas Cantata*** by Malcolm Williamson, and a suite of timeless and charming carols by John Rutter. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for Youth 7 – 18, and kids 6 & under free. Season subscriptions tickets for all three concerts in the 2011-2012 season are also available at \$50 for adults, \$20 for youth 7 – 18.

The Mississauga Choral Society presents their traditional "*Messiah*" Concert on Sunday Nov. 27th at 3 pm at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 921 Flagship Drive in Mississauga. Tickets are \$28 for adults, \$22 for seniors, \$16 for youth.

Peel Choral Society's Christmas presentation is "*This is Christmas ... Sung by a Choir*" and there are two performances – Saturday Dec. 3rd at 2 pm or Sunday Dec. 4th at 7:30 pm. Tickets are: Adults \$20, Seniors/Students \$15, Children under 10 \$5, VIP \$25 (guaranteed prime seating so you don't have to leave home early & goodies during intermission).

More information about all these Concerts can be obtained from Juanita in the office.

SING 360 CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONCERT

A project affiliated with and supported by our church, the Sing 360 Children's Choir, is slowly growing, and will be showcasing their budding talents at their inaugural Concert here at Bloordale on **Saturday, December 3rd at 7:30 pm.**

Some of the children who attend our Sunday children's programs are in this choir, and would love to sing for you that night!

There are no tickets, and no set price for this first Concert, but we will accept donations after the 45 – 60 minute program.

SANCTUARY DREAMS AND FINANCIAL FORECASTING

At the Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting October 23rd John Pauksens gave a comprehensive presentation of project proposals from the Sanctuary Dreams Task Group, which had been discussed but not yet approved by Council. The Sound System upgrade already has the financing, and the approval of Council, and we thank the donors who made that possible. That work will hopefully be completed by the end of March 2012.

Three additional potential projects were discussed, and two of them - the refinishing of the floor in the centre of the Sanctuary with polished concrete, including the removal of the step (but not the table); and the flattening and enlarging of the Chancel area at and behind the pulpit - seemed to receive the support of those present, at least as the Council interpreted the meeting. The third project proposal - the removal of the central suspended speaker cabinet - seemed to draw the concern of enough people that the Council has decided to delay any more immediate consideration on that item.

It was agreed at Council that if and when sufficient funds are donated/collected for either of the first two proposals referred to above, then the projects would be brought before the Congregation and approval for them obtained. This would be similar to the sound system update, funded entirely by special donations specifically for that purpose. There was concern expressed by the Council, however, regarding various upcoming financial needs of the Congregation for 2012, beyond these specific proposals for the sanctuary. Council will be considering how to address the overall financial needs of the congregation as part of its 2012 budgeting process, and will make more specific proposals about our entire financial picture at the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on February 19th, 2012.

STEWARDSHIP SPOT

"Stewardship is everything I do after I say 'I believe'."

What Gift Can We Bring?

If spring is the season of romance, and midwinter chills us with the thought of taxes, then this month is surely the time when almost everyone is thinking about gifts. We ponder, plan and plot about gifts, about what to give and to whom we are going to give. We consider many factors: whether to create or buy, whether to be fun or serious, practical or more frivolous, how to give the gift. All ages get into the act, and cupboards and closets become hiding places for secrets yet to be revealed.

Parents, children and spouses are always considered first for the gift-receiving process. But the joy of this circle is that the gift of relationship always accompanies the receipt of tangible things, underlining every exchange with devotion and commitment. The laughter and love that a gift brings from a grandchild is worth far more than money can buy, and this cuts across all economic circumstances. Friends and extended family also are worthy of our attention, and gift-giving in this wider circle carries a similar, though perhaps less pronounced, sentiment.

If we step back for a moment, as we're urged to do in Advent, we think beyond family and friends to the faith relationships we know and nurture. There's an account of someone asking a child if she had received everything she wanted for Christmas. "No," the child replied, "but then, it wasn't my birthday."

A simple search of references in scripture to the word 'give' is revealing, and the list is long. God gave Jesus as "a ransom for many." We are to ask for the gift of our daily bread. The gifts of the magi are widely celebrated on Epiphany, which ends the twelve-day season of Christmas. We've been entrusted with abilities, skills and spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit is given to us as a gift. The list is seemingly endless, and reads like a litany of God's generosity.

That we ought to reciprocate in significant ways is a major component of what this season of giving is all about. What gifts can we bring to God's Son when he is the source, centre and sum of all the gifts we know? The gift of money, though it sounds crass and commercial, is important to the Church at this time of year – and our Council would appreciate it! – but the material support is always secondary to the spiritual gifts of our worship, devotion and adoration, on the one hand, and our personal participation in the life and witness, mission and ministry of the Church on the other.

Money, friends, has always and will always flow in proportion to that to which we are committed, and the Advent call has and always will be to a deeper discipleship in the footsteps of the One who is God's greatest gift, born in a manger. If our heart is truly for giving, our wallet will go where it leads, and when Jesus talked about money, he related giving to our measure of loyalty to the purposes of God in the world.

So, what gift do we have to offer as we anticipate God's coming again and remember this special birthday? What gift conveys our true relationship, our underlying gratitude, our love for the recipient? Christina Rossetti wrote words that capture well the priority of our Christian stewardship, in the last verse of her beautiful carol in Voices United, #55:

*"What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him – give my heart."*

Brian

PEANUT ALLERGY ALERT

Please be reminded that we have a number of people, including children in our congregation that have peanut or nut allergies.

We are all aware that these are life threatening allergies and we need to be extremely diligent when it comes to the snacks that are provided at coffee time and other fellowship gatherings.

Even foods that do not appear to contain nuts might be made in a facility that has nuts and therefore can contaminate other food. Please be extremely careful about cross contamination if you are baking and read the labels when providing snacks. Most labels will say "May Contain Traces of Nuts" in which case they are not safe.

Thank you for considering the safety of all our congregation.

*Wishing You a
Very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year
From the Bloorbeat Team*

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Every year, we seem to lose ourselves and the real meaning of Christmas in the whirlwind of shopping, baking, wrapping and visiting.

We are warmly inviting you to pause for a few minutes and let our children and youth recapture for you, the true simple message of Christmas.

Join us on Sunday, Dec. 11th, following service, for lunch and another truly moving version of the Nativity Story. Family, friends and neighbours are all welcome so please support the young people who will be working so hard to prepare this special production for all.

Just a reminder, you might want to bring your tissues!

RAFIKI BRACELETS

On behalf of the youth, I'd like to thank everyone who purchased Rafiki Bracelets. Your support has been overwhelming!

We have sold more than 150 bracelets which means we are feeding more than 150 children for a month.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Special thanks to Darryl Hobbs for sourcing and delivering the bracelets for us. You have been a gift to this congregation, Darryl.

*With gratitude
Lisa*

POINSETTIA FUND

We will once again be collecting money for poinsettias on the following Sundays during coffee hour, November 20th, November. 27th and December 4th.

The poinsettias will decorate the sanctuary and will then be distributed to homebound members of our congregation.

If you would like to dedicate your donation to family or friends, we will put their name on a silver star and insert it in the poinsettia. The stars will be removed when the poinsettias are to be delivered.

Thank you for your support.

UPDATE FROM THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Here is a listing of our upcoming Social outings. All are at cost.

- Thursday, Dec 29, 2011, 7:30 pm, Parfumerie (see ad in this issue of Bloorbeat)
- Tuesday, Jan 24, 2012, 12 to 1 pm, Free lunchtime concert at The Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts, featuring the Humber Latin Jazz Mexican Project.
- Saturday, Feb 25, 2012, 8:00 pm, Soweto Gospel Choir at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts.
- Monday, April 9, 2012, 7:00 pm Toronto Blue Jays home opener vs Boston Red Sox.
- Saturday, May 12, 2012, 1:30 pm, TSO for Kids, The Hockey Sweater at Roy Thompson Hall; especially for kids 5 to 12 years old.

Please check your calendars and talk to Julia Stavreff for information and/or tickets: 416-622-6309 (H) or 416-621-8050 (W)

CHILDREN'S CRAFT NIGHT RETURNING TO BLOORDALE

Craft night is returning to Bloordale, Friday evenings for 5 weeks, February 3rd to March 2nd, 2012, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., ideal for ages 4 to 10, minimal cost. Attend all or just some classes.

Volunteers welcome for one, some, or all sessions. Craft ideas provided or come up with you own.

For information or to volunteer, call Julia Stavreff at 416-622-6309.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday April 29th, 2012

4:00 p.m.

at Bloordale United Church

The Social and Fundraising Committee present:

**The Elmer Iseler Singers in
Concert at Bloordale**

Enjoy the beautiful sounds of Canada's most illustrious Choral Choir, conducted by Lydia Adams.

OUTREACH NEWS

Mitten Tree

It may seem early but we would like to remind you knitters or shoppers that the Advent tree will be up on **November 27** waiting for you to decorate it with mitts, gloves, scarves, new socks for teenage boys and girls, new clothing items and toys. So get busy!!

The items we collect will be taken to the shelters about the 15th of December to be there before Christmas. We will also be looking for toiletry items, items for the Outreach basket for Ernestine's and Women's Habitat and YWS - all toiletry items (toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, deodorants, shampoo, combs, brushes etc).

Don't forget all those things you bring back from trips and never use!. Just think of the items you use - they can use them also.

Food items are also welcome and are taken to St James' Food Basket on a regular basis on Wednesdays.

TERRY TAN

One of the new mandates for childcare under the Full Day Kindergarten initiative is to increase our interactions with other community partners in the area.

So, we are wondering if there might be some folks in the congregation (young or older young!) who may have a skill or desire to come into the centre and share some interests, interactions with the children.

This might be something like reading a story to the Toddler children, playing a board game with an older child or sharing an interest (like when Pat came in to talk with the kids about sorting the garbage into recyclables and organic waste).

Any ideas or help you would be hugely appreciated!

USHERS ARE NEEDED

We need a volunteer ushering captain for one of our three teams, and a few more ushers to serve on those teams. Please speak to Sharron Le Blanc, our Worship Committee chairperson, or Jack Lovatt or Ed Jankus, our current captains, if you are willing and able to volunteer. Teams serve every three months.

CONGREGATIONAL DINNER ON DEC. 6TH

THE FOUR MEN AND GUESTS

Welcome to the fine old tradition of the United Church Christmas Potluck Congregational Dinner! On Tuesday December 6th at 6 p.m. we'd like to have our entire congregation bring their families and some food and come for dinner among our church's circle of friends, as we celebrate the promise and joy of Christmas!

Special guests "The Four Men" will perform, as well as another group making their debut that night.

So come and join in the food and fun!

Holly Tea

Saturday December 3rd

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Warm scones, whipped cream and jam - \$4.00.

No time to bake - stock up on Christmas cookies, choose what you love for \$5.00 a dozen.

Hosted by UCW

FLU SEASON IS HERE

The flu season is here once again let's protect ourselves by:

- a. getting a flu shot
- b. practice frequent hand washing
- c. when appropriate, use hand sanitizer
- d. avoid contact with others, in the presence of flu symptoms

CALLING ALL DRIVERS

We have some members who would come out to church if they had a ride. The Pastoral Care Committee is trying to update a list of able bodied drivers, who would be willing to offer a ride either occasionally or on a regular basis.

If you are willing to participate, please contact Helen Hitchcock at: hhelenh@sympatico.ca or 416 -626-7365

PASTORAL CARE

Would the woman, who spoke to Sylvia Williams a few weeks ago about having some children's furniture to donate, please call her at 416-622-1928.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

HOW ABOUT OVER 25000 PERSONS?

AND NEARLY HALF OF THEM ARE CHILDREN!

Submitted by Joan Hollowell

Written by Barb Hayworth of Graceview Presbyterian Church

That is the number of persons for whom the St. James Food Basket has provided food during both 2009 and 2010---an incredible number of hungry people all of whom come from Central Etobicoke. Of course many of them come week after week as they attempt to cope with the situation in which they find themselves, often through no fault of their own. Most live here, some go to school here (most notably Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Adult Program), and all are interviewed to assess the degree of need with which they are coping, to ensure they are in this catchment area and qualify financially for the help they are being given. Each participant is reassessed annually. Most weeks (Wednesday afternoon) we help between 180 and 200 families; they are given a hot and cold meal and then food in the amount that is adequate for the size and composition of their family. Food for a hot and a cold buffet is prepared by volunteers in the kitchen on Wednesday mornings. In the summer the produce for salads is grown by volunteers and participants in garden space donated by St. James; in the colder weather produce is purchased wholesale with financial donations as received.

No one church could cope with this volume of people in need; this is an ecumenical program operated by 13 churches, 3 mosques and a group of Tse Chu Buddhists. Several years ago the major "overseeing" Food Banks (e.g. Daily Bread) divided up the entire of Etobicoke so that each local Food Bank would receive help from the churches etc. in their area. The idea was to reduce duplication of requests for assistance. This is NOT a St. James United Church program, they donate the use of their auditorium, kitchen, parking lot and caretaking staff as well as financial support. The name of the Food Basket was chosen because of the location of the program. The staff is all volunteers from the 13 churches and 3 mosques and Tse Chu; food donations come from these organizations as well as directly from Daily Bread and Second Harvest Food Banks. There is also a free Income Tax Preparation Clinic for the participants, a free legal clinic, and a Metro Social Services worker comes every second week. Bloordale is one of the 13 churches involved; we provide food, financial donations, volunteers in the kitchen, in the actual giving out of food (this is a "shopping" food bank where participants select their foods according to their tastes and the amount allotted according to the size of their families) and in the Income Tax Clinic. Our reputation among the churches of the community is excellent as it is among the participants.

More volunteers are always welcome.

The Food Basket is open every Wednesday afternoon from 2 to 6 and anyone who wishes can visit and see the operation! A sizable grant from The Trillium Foundation has been awarded to the Food Basket and renovations to allow increased space for food storage as well as increased refrigeration and freezer capacity are now occurring.. These renovations will increase the ability to more adequately meet the needs of our community. Plans are for the Food Basket to reopen on Wednesday April 20; it was necessary to close for 2 weeks to allow the contractor to do the job. Recipients were referred to Daily Bread Food Bank for emergency help during this time period. They have been unable to complete some of their kitchen renovations – still short about \$40,000. If you can help, mark your envelope for the Food Basket and we will forward it.

Given the amount of support outlined above it is hard to believe that there could be a shortage of food. But we have run out of food several times recently. That means no bread, no cereal, no rice, not flour, no beans/peas, no meat, no eggs, no milk, no juice, no fruits and vegetables, no soup, no toilet paper, no soap etc. etc. The need is great and certainly hasn't lessened. Your generosity and faithfulness are greatly appreciated and all the volunteers and participants thank you very much for caring.

Please come and visit the Food Basket any Wednesday afternoon and see the scope of the program that is working so hard to help your neighbours. There but for the Grace of God go I, and perhaps you too; the participants are there because of misfortunes, accidents, downsizing, etc. and they are our neighbours.

Jesus taught us....FEED MY SHEEPwe have listened and we have obeyed.

SEMI ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our 2011 semi annual congregational meeting was held after the church service on October 23rd.

Chair Julia Stavreff briefly touched on some of the activities over the summer:

- Repairs to the parking lot
- Making the handicapped washroom more accessible
- Changing the lighting in the hallways in the Christian Education Building (in large part with the help of a government grant)
- Brian and Julia were at the Markland Wood Fun Fair in August, for Bloordale exposure to the community,

We have wonderful staff, and a new youth leader, Hanna Lyle

Chair of Finance, Jack Lovatt presented the Treasurer's update for the nine months ended September 30th: expenses are right on, but revenues are down from budget by approximately \$9,000, resulting in an excess deficit of \$9,000. This stems mainly from a shortfall in general givings relative to budget. Overall, we had expected to break even for the year 2011 and presently we are behind. Jack asked all to keep their givings current, or to give more, as able, in order to reach our 2011 needs.

We are soon to have electrical wiring repairs done (mandatory, not originally planned) costing \$ 10,000, with only \$ 2,000 available in the Capital and Contingency Fund. We have a dilemma.

In contrast with the general and capital givings, both M&S and Outreach contributions are very nicely above expectations.

John Pauksens presented an update, (with handouts), on what is happening with the new sound system. You may recall that \$30,000 was donated last year from Harold Goss's estate and from an anonymous donor for the specific purpose of upgrading the sound system. Based on recommendations from a sound system consultant, John and Kashi Ramsahai purchased and (with the help of other volunteers) installed transparent polycarbonate sound diffuser panels in the Sanctuary windows. Unless one looks closely, one cannot see that they are there, but they considerably improve the room acoustics of the sanctuary. A schematic diagram of the overall new sound system and a detailed equipment list, with costs, have also been prepared. These items will be purchased and installed over the next few months. The total cost is expected to be very close to the budgeted amount of \$30,000, with completion by the end of March.

Next there was an update from Sanctuary Dreams, regarding three of their wishes for the sanctuary. John Pauksens (with handouts) went over the three proposals. The handout is available from the church office. Here is a brief summary:

Proposal to Remove Raised Platform and Refinish Floor in centre of sanctuary with a Polished Concrete Finish

aWhy:

- (a) for safety: someone may stumble and fall on the step of the platform, and
 - (b) for greater flexibility with the piano and choir and other performances in the sanctuary.
- Approximate cost \$5,000

Proposal to Remove the Present Suspended Speaker Cabinet in the Centre of the Sanctuary, and Relocate the Speakers to other Locations in the Sanctuary.

Why: visual aesthetics: I

t was felt by the proponents that that the present speaker cabinets were unsightly, and limited natural light coming in from the skylight dome above.

Approximate cost \$5,000

Proposal to Flatten and Enlarge the Chancel Area, and Relocate the Organ.

Why:

- (a) for safety: risk of falling and hurting oneself on the raised platforms at the back of this area, and at the steps of the organ pit, and
- (b) for better flexibility in the use of that area for special church services, and other special events. Approximate cost \$20,000

There was excellent discussion amongst the congregation; proposals 1 and 3 were positively received, proposal 2 drew the concern of a number of people.

Chair Julia informed all present that there was no funding for these Sanctuary Dreams projects at this time, but that if anyone wished to donate towards one of the projects, to please do so, (similar to donations made for the sanctuary sound system). If funding for a specific project were received, a short congregational meeting would be necessary to approve the sanctuary changes.

At the end of the meeting, a number of people stayed back for informal discussions about the projects.

Subsequent Developments and Finances

At it's meeting on November 15th, Council decided to delay any more immediate consideration on project 2 (removal of suspended speaker cabinet), as there were concerns about it from a number of people. It was also agreed that if and when sufficient funds are donated/collected for either of the other two proposals, then the projects would be brought before the Congregation for approval. This would be similar to the sound system update, funded entirely by special donations specifically for that purpose.

Also discussed at this Council Meeting were concerns regarding various upcoming financial needs of the Congregation for 2012, well above and beyond these proposals for the sanctuary. Council will be considering how to address the overall financial needs of the congregation as part of its 2012 budgeting process, and will make more specific proposals about our entire financial picture at the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on February 19th, 2012.

Julia Stavreff, Chair of Council

CHOIR NEWS

On Thursday November 10th the Bloordale choir joined three other United churches and four synagogues to present an Interfaith concert at Temple Sinai. Our choir sang "In Flanders Fields" and "The New 23rd" and received many compliments.

Our Maestro Mervin conducted the massed choirs in Oscar Peterson's "Hymn to Freedom" to begin the concert and the combined group closed the concert by singing "Amen Shem Nora" in Hebrew. We look forward to next year's event.

On Sunday December 18th the choir will perform a Christmas cantata "The Wondrous Story" during the regular service. We have hired a flautist and pianist to accompany us so that Mervin can direct. Alun Morgan will be our narrator.

The choir will place a "choir appreciation" envelope in the bulletin on that day. This will replace our annual fund raising activity.

The choir thanks you in advance for your donations & appreciates your ongoing support throughout the year.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Weekly

Seniors Cards (Euchre/Bridge)

Monday 12:00 noon

New members welcome, call Bev Moher 416-251-9983

Badminton Club

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Yoga

Tuesday 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Men's basketball

Tuesday evening 8:30 p.m. - 10:45 p.m.

The group would welcome newcomers. Call Darryl at 416-760-8669.

Choir Practice

Thursday evening

Music instruction and camaraderie; wonderful choir. Call Grace Everett 416-621-8862.

Healthy Bodz Boot Camp

Wednesday & Friday 9:15 a.m.-10:15 a.m.

Zumba Dance

Friday evening 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Saturday 9:30 a.m.-11:15 a.m.

Scouts, Beavers, Cubs, Guides, Sparks

Contact Church office for times

Monthly

U.C.W.

4th Tuesday 12:00 noon - -2:30 p.m.

Bring a sandwich. All are welcome

Come with us to see
The Soulpepper Production of
Parfumerie

at the Young Centre
for the Performing Arts,
in the Distillery District
(at Mill Street and Cherry Street)



www.soulpepper.ca

Thursday December 29, 2011, 7:30 pm

Tickets: Premium seats \$64
Regular seats \$49

A charming Christmas show based on the
1937 Hungarian play, (later adapted for
cinema as "The Shop Around the Corner" and
"You've Got Mail")

A Bloordale and Friends Event
Carpooling Available

For further information and tickets contact
Julia 416-622-6309 (h) / 416-621-8050 (w)

BLOORBEAT PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Following is the publication schedule and the deadlines for submissions for upcoming issues through May 2012.

Publication Date	Submission Deadline
January 15 th	January 6 th
February 12 th	February 3 rd
March 18 nd	March 9 th
May 20 rd	May 11 th

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