

BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



Volume XXXIII, Issue 1

Minister's Message

As this Bloorbeat is published, we begin the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on January 19th. I am uncertain, though, that the topic of Christian unity can be presumed to be dear to the heart of most people who call the United Church home. During the last week of January every year we pause, in Canada and elsewhere, get off our denominational high horse, and consider how we are gladly bound, in time and beyond, with our brothers and sisters in the global church. And while we haven't had many unions such as the one between the Canadian Methodists, about two thirds of the Presbyterians, and a large number of Congregational Churches which came together to form The United Church of Canada in 1925 – though the Uniting Church in Australia is another example of this kind of organic union – and haven't added a single new partner to our union since 1968 when the Evangelical Brethren in Canada joined our fold, we continue to welcome people from all Christian backgrounds and seek to break down barriers that divide the body of Christ.

The United Church is known, actually, for striving vigorously, at all levels of wider church life – locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally – for a passionate unity of purpose and witness among we who find ourselves in the far flung Christian circle that spans the globe. We are active, in large numbers, in local Councils of Churches and ministerial groups, within the Canadian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, and we value and fund the participation of representatives from global partner churches in our policy formation and decision making at the national level. We also have worked passionately for social justice alongside colleagues from other churches in Canada and around the world through Kairos Canada, the national Executive Director of which, Anglican Jennifer Henry, has preached at Bloordale, and other coalitions such as Project Ploughshares, who since 1976 have undertaken well respected research and policy analysis on issues of development and peace.

Of course the unity of creation, this single and indivisible planet home, is more important than even the worldwide unity of the church. After all, the Greek word "oikoumene," from which the word ecumenical derives, has as its root meaning "the whole household," ie. God's creational impulse and breath which animates all life from the beginning of time. If we as people of common faith who attach ourselves to the vision of Jesus do not give witness to this, God's original ecumenical vision, our public voice is, to quote Saint Paul, as a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Yet one of the most important forms of witness we can mutually offer, across all denominational lines, is that which speaks of, and practically shows, the unity of the church, linking us by God's Spirit across geographical, political, racial, ethnic, gender, and income lines of division.

Continued on page 4

Bloordale United Church

4258 Bloor Street West
Etobicoke, ON M9C 1Z7
(416) 621-1710

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	Hanna Lyle
Administrative Assistant	Juanita Eldridge
Organist & Choir Director	Mervin Fick
Custodian	Victor Nguyen

Church Council

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

Committee Chairs

Communications	John Pauksens
Congregational Life (co-chairs)	Helen Hitchcock
	Gladys Lewis
Christian Development	Verena von Stritsky
Finance & Stewardship	Jack Lovatt
Outreach	Vacant
Pastoral Care	Sylvia Williams
Planned Gift Fund	Bob Hitchcock
Property	Bruce Jackson
Social and Fund Raising	Vanessa Mitchell
United Church Women	Joan Hollowell
Worship	Sharron Le Blanc
Members-at-Large	Jim Bell
	Frank Sword

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LOOKING AT THE WEEKS AHEAD

- Saturday, January 18 - TSO for Kids - "Once Upon a Time" - Roy Thomson Hall - 3:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 19 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins - COMMUNION
- Sunday, January 26 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ends.
- Sunday, February 2 - 4th after Epiphany
- Sunday, February 9 - 5th after Epiphany
- Saturday, February 15 - "Michael Downie in Concert" - 7:30 p.m. Emmanuel United Church, Brampton
- Sunday, February 16 - 6th after Epiphany
- Sunday, February 23 - 7th after Epiphany
- Sunday, March 2 - Transfiguration - COMMUNION
- Tuesday, March 4 - Pancake Supper - 5:15 p.m. & 7:00 p.m
- Wednesday, March 5 - Ash Wednesday (location to be announced)
- Sunday, March 9 - Lent 1
- 56th Anniversary Dinner and Silent Auction
- Sunday, March 16 - Lent 2
- Sunday, March 23 - Lent 3
- Sunday, March 30 - Lent 4
- Sunday, April 6 - Lent 5

Worship Services at 10:30 a.m.

UPDATE FROM THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Here is a list of our confirmed future social outings. Tickets are available, at cost.

- Saturday, February 15, 2014 - 7:30 p.m., our own 'Michael Downie in Concert' at Emmanuel United Church, in Brampton (see ad in this issue of Bloorbeat)
- Sunday March 9, 2014, 5:00 p.m., 56th Anniversary dinner, at Bloordale, with Silent Auction. (See ad in this issue of Bloorbeat)
- Friday, April 4, 2014, - 7:00 p.m., Toronto Blue Jays home opener, vs New York Yankees, third baseline seats - \$52
- Saturday, May 3rd, 2014, afternoon 'High Tea at Bloordale'. Watch for more details.

Please check your calendars and talk to Julia Stavreff for information and/or tickets (416-622-6309).

Car pooling available

OUTREACH COMMITTEE GIVES THANKS FOR MITTEN TREE GIFTS!

Your Outreach Committee wants to offer a big THANK YOU to each and every donor who gave gifts, toys, food, clothing, money, and other things for the Mitten Tree drive in December!

We sent numerous boxes of gifts for those who find themselves at Women's Habitat, Ernestine's Women's Shelter, and Youth In Transition.

Your generosity went a long way in making a better Christmas for the recipients of your gifts, so we again say thank you!

BULLETIN AND MUSIC DEDICATIONS

Weekly Sunday bulletins can be dedicated, with a note about why, by any member for \$15. This both helps defray our paper and printing costs and provides opportunity for special remembrances to be observed.

Music can also be dedicated in someone's memory, or in honour of someone's faithful living. A new anthem can be purchased for \$75, so please speak to Sharron or Mervin about your wish to support the music program in this way.

We all live under the same sky, but we all do not have the same horizon

Konrad Adenauer (1867-1967)

Consider a Planned Gift to Bloordale United Church

A planned gift to Bloordale through your Estate plan is a way of saying "I care about my church and its future." It is a way of saying how much you appreciate the personal, family programs and religious and psychological benefits you derive from your church and the other members of the congregation.

A message from your Planned Gift Fund Committee

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Bloordale United's Youth Group, through sale of Christmas Cards, raised \$132. These proceeds have been donated to three different gifts with vision; entitled "Support Education for Orphans" "Give a New Start" and "Stock an Agricultural School". The details of these three donations can be seen at www.giftswithvision.ca. Thank you to all who purchased cards and support the youth group!

PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE (PAR)

One of the ways that people who care about Bloordale act to secure its future is through the PAR program. Brochures that outline how to do this are available in the display case near the office, or speak to Brian, Norm Dundas or Jack Lovatt if you'd like more information. PAR does offer the church your consistent support, and helps with budget planning.

OUTREACH AND SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES

Connecting With the Community Makes Interim Report

The Connecting With the Community Interim Report, a brief one-page summary, is available for the congregation to read. Copies are available on the Outreach table in the sanctuary, or you can be in touch with Brian to receive one electronically.

Continued from page 1

The church may be one of the few global institutions left, in fact, which pays more attention to forming common global bonds, among all kinds of people, rather than entrenching boundary lines across which people are not welcome to walk. To do otherwise would be a scandal to the gospel of the one, common, global Lord, Jesus the Christ, and I've personally benefitted from so many ecumenical relationships throughout my ministry, having been a part of Kairos Canada's shared justice-seeking, and having attended World Council events and being re-inspired, for instance, in recent years, in Kingston, Jamaica, in Bethlehem, and in Nairobi, Kenya, that I can't imagine who I would be apart from them.

In times such as ours, amid a long-standing overall decline in church attendance, influence, and financial sustainability at all levels, we might see the churches around us, as some people undoubtedly do, looking through presumably common, everyday capitalist lenses, as competitors in a limited Christian market share. When every church, of virtually every denomination, is in decline, and we've poured blood, sweat and tears into our church in efforts over the last few decades to grow again, it's an understandable perspective – but it's flawed to the core, and does not ring true of Christ! The common ecumenical symbol of the church is the boat, as seen in the World Council of Churches logo, and in this regard it's true that *"a rising tide lifts all boats."*

So as we consider our future vision and mission at Bloordale, as we begin a new year, let us consider how we might be called to work alongside, and not in competition with, our brother and sister Christians in local justice, outreach and community development initiatives, in youth and young adult work, in pastoral care and seniors ministries, and in various other ways. Let us be attentive to opportunities to gather together and learn from others, such as from Jennifer Henry again at the Kairos 40th Anniversary Worship Celebration at St. Matthew's Anglican Church, 3962 Bloor Street West, at 7 pm on Sunday January 19th. Let us continue to pray for and reach out to our sibling United Churches, Richview and St. James, as we forge a common future among committed United Church people no matter our individual flavor tastes. And let us do these things, and more, in the Spirit of God's one ecumenical impulse to breathe life and new life into all creation, an impulse which we have come to know best in the life and teachings of Jesus.

And to God be the glory! Amen.
Brian

SOUTH WEST PRESBYTERY CORNER

One of the items highlighted in the SWP Corner of the last Bloorbeat issue was the projected budgetary shortfall for both Jane/Finch and Davenport/Perth Ministries for 2014. The work being done by these ministries is an integral part of the community's development without which many, both youth & adults, would be left adrift. My own awakening not only to the need but the positive role played by these two Ministries came from visits to the respective communities, and conversations with the residents who avail themselves of the services of the ministries. This is truly the church/Christianity in action.

Here is a brief 2013 report from Dr. Barry Rieder:

"The Jane Finch Community Ministry continues to provide a ministry of presence in the Jane Finch community, due to the support from the South West Presbytery, Mission and Service Fund, congregations like yours and many other partners. A few community development highlights for the year include:

- 7 micro credit loans for starting up small businesses,
- 1,000 back packs filled with school supplies given out in Sept. and a
- festive season celebration with over 250 attending and small gifts given out to 165 children.

Although there have been many good things taking place in the community it has been overshadowed this year by the loss of 4 youth under the age of 16 due to gun violence: 3 this summer and the 15 year old who was shot in February, by accident, by his best friend. The ministry was heavily involved, with other partners, in providing grief support, community vigils, funerals and pastoral care resulting from these tragedies.

As we move into 2014, we thank you for your continued financial and prayer support for this Ministry. May it be a hope filled year for the residents of Jane and Finch."

A similar report from the Davenport/Perth Community Ministry will be highlighted in a future edition of SWP Corner.

Paul Rose, representative of Bloordale to South West Presbytery and Community Ministries Commission Member

OUTREACH AND SOCIAL ACTION CHAIR OR CO-CHAIRS NEEDED

After quite a number of years in faithful leadership, for which we owe them a debt of thanks, Shirley Scott and Jill Donaghy have stepped down from Co-chairing the Outreach & Social Action Cte.

We therefore wish to direct your prayers and discernment to who among us might be called to such an important ministry as Chair or Co-Chair of Outreach.

Consider your gifts and willingness, and speak to Brian if you would like to know more about the work of this Committee.

401ST SCOUTS DONATION

The 401st Scout Troop kindly donated the Christmas trees at the front entrance.

We thank them for their ongoing support.

FRIDAY MOVIE NIGHTS

Brian's Movie Nights are held one Friday, usually the third, a month, and all are welcome. We view a movie, complete with popcorn and snacks, and then chat briefly about the movie's themes following the viewing. Check with Brian, or with Juanita in the office, for the next Movie Night date, and what the featured film is!

ENVELOPES FOR 2014 ARE READY!

Please note that your envelopes for 2014 are ready for pick-up. If you don't yet have yours, they are available from Juanita in the church office.

RALPH DOES IT AGAIN!

If you happened to notice a humungous bag on the table to the right of the front door Sunday, January 5th, it was another contribution of tabs from Ralph, Brian's brother. I counted at least **26** individual bags of various sizes altogether weighing **24.25 lbs.!!!** Wow! It would seem Ralph has all and sundry in Sudbury contributing to the cause for which we, the Legion, the Veterans and others who benefit, are most appreciative. "To you, Ralph, and all your helpers...*Thank you very much!*" Thanks also to Victor for helping me to get them from the sanctuary into my car! - Nelsona Dundas

CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY OPTIONS CONVERSATION

Please come to our Property Options conversation on January 26th, after the church service.

At our semi-annual meeting last October, a presentation was made by consultant Michael Wright and architect Robert Murphy re options available to us regarding Bloordale property.

In the last few years, Bloordale has been taking \$ 8,000 per year from the memorial and the planned gift funds in order to cover expenses, and this 'taking' of funds will not be available for 2014 and future years. We began to look at ways to generate additional revenue while allowing Bloordale to fulfill its' Mission and Vision, which resulted in the formation of the Property Options Task Group.

We would like to discuss further the consultants' report and also to hear other thoughts and ideas about how we can overcome our anticipated \$ 8,000 shortfall.

If you have not already done so, please ask me, or Juanita in the church office, for either a paper or an electronic copy of the consultants' report to read. Then join us on January 26th as we meet to discuss these matters further.

Julia Stavreff, Chair of Council

YOUTH GROUP - ROOM 13

Did you know? Bloordale United has an active and awesome youth group! And at the moment, we are seeking a few things for room 13, the room used by our youth! Please get in contact with Hanna or Juanita if you are able to contribute the following things;

- Modern board games (cranium, apples to apples, clue, pictinary, balderdash etc)
- Youth geared DVD's and books
- projector screen or flat screen TV
- an old laptop that still works
- a simple but new or gently used area rug, at least 8 ft x 10 ft

We are also looking for someone that might be willing to sew simple basic covers for the furniture in room 13 to give the room a more unified, modern feel.

Thank you!

Hanna, Bloordale United's Youth Leader,

hklyle@gmail.com, 647-381-9345

Come with us to see and hear

FEELINGS:
Michael Downie in
Concert

**Peel Choral Society's favourite
bass/baritone soloist accompanied
by a jazz trio.**



*Michael performs songs from
"The Great American Songbook" legacy at*

**Emmanuel United Church
420 Balmoral Drive, Brampton, ON**

Saturday, Feb. 15, 2014, 7:30 pm,

Tickets \$20

**A Bloordale and Friends Event
Carpooling Available**

*For further information and tickets contact
Pat 416-622-5274 or Juanita at the church office
416-621-1710*

SILENT AUCTION RETURNING TO BLOORDALE

In conjunction with our 56th Anniversary dinner on March 9th, we will be holding a repeat Silent Auction. Please think about what you would like to contribute. Some suggestions include:

- Theatre tickets
- Sports tickets
- Original artwork
- Baking
- Baby sitting
- Cottage rentals
- Bed and breakfast
- Gift certificates

Proceeds from the Silent Auction will go towards Bloordale programmes.

For further information, please talk to Vanessa Mitchell or any other member of the Social and Fundraising Committee.

BRRR! IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!

Huddled near a warm grate, wearing what he owns, wrapped in a blanket, the grizzled man can barely lift his head. His arms are clasped around his knees as he tries to retain body heat. This is an image we have all read about or perhaps witnessed. We are experiencing a harsh winter. Already at least one homeless person has died on the street.

According to the web site, the "Out of the Cold" program was initiated in 1987 by the students of St. Michael's School with the support and guidance of Sister Susan Moran of the Order of Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow. The program was established after a group of students befriended a homeless man who had frequented the area near the school. In 1986, the homeless man named George died on the street. The knowledge that someone could die of cold on a street in Toronto brought people together to take action. Sister Susan Moran, Father John Murphy and Rev. Canon John Erb, with the help of St. Michael's High School made arrangements to provide for a location, food and volunteers for the homeless. A small storefront on St. Clair Avenue was opened on January 15, 1987.

Sister Susan began connecting with various faith groups across the City of Toronto to discuss the opportunity of having the faith groups organize groups of volunteers at each church and synagogue to provide a safe refuge for homeless members of society on cold winter nights, a temporary solution at best. The plan was simply that the faith group volunteers would open their doors one day a week for a period of approximately 23 weeks as well as provide food and hospitality to the homeless who are considered Guests of the program. The idea quickly caught on and, to date, there are now 19 various faith groups in our city that provide this much needed service. From this humble beginning, the Out of the Cold program has spread throughout the City and many other cities across Canada.

Bloordale United Church has supported this program at All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church for many years and will continue this service on Friday February 21. We provide the dinner, packed lunches and subway tokens and our group of volunteers cook and serve the meal in the evening.

Please consider a donation of money for food and subway tokens, or, your time for preparation, delivery, or service at the church on Feb. 21. Thank you.

*Dana Bach (416-626-3584.
dbachtoronto@gmail.com)*

Out of the Cold Coordinator for Outreach.

STEWARDSHIP SPOT

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

Giving Thanks

It's easy to thank God for life when things are going well, but life is almost always bigger than we give it credit for, and much of the time it's harder than we would like. We and life, both, are spectacularly flawed and complex. Often we don't get our way, but in our saner moments we remember that if we did, we'd usually shortchange ourselves. Sometimes circumstances conspire to remind us or let us glimpse how thin the membrane is between here and there, between birth and the grave, between the human and the divine, and we can't help but think, "*There but by the grace of God go I.*"

Gratitude runs the gamut from shaking your head and saying, "*Thanks, wow,*" for an amazing sunset or a flock of birds dipping in unison, to saying, "*Thanks, what a relief,*" when it's not the transmission or an abscess. "*Thanks*" can be the recognition that you've been blessed mildly, or it can be a feeling as intense as despair at the miracle of having been spared, as in a car accident. Things could have been much worse, but they weren't. Of course, gratitude can be for everything in between, from the daily break of good luck or money found in a pocket, to the magical, mystical magnetic force of quiet or exuberant relief, when you know that something – God, perhaps, or fate, if you're not so committed to faith – has smiled on you big-time.

A lot of faithful folk go around saying "*Thank you*" to God when we find a good parking space, or locate the house keys or the wandering phone, or finally get a good night's sleep. And while that may be annoying to those around us at times, it's important because if we're lucky, gratitude becomes a habit. Then maybe you know what to do when an "Aha" moment comes and you say "*Thank you, God*" for lifting a corner of the curtain so you can see the truth, maybe for just a moment, but in a way that might change your life forever.

Revelation, friends, is not for the faint of heart, and often the deepest gratitude follows what is first the deepest grief. God sometimes shows us things by the Spirit that are miserable but, with just a little trust, turn out to be something we may be able to sidestep; or that are miserable but might yet be found a way through by prayer and friends to stand by us; or that are both painful and beautiful in ways that make your heart ache, that draw you closer forever to the company of family and church who have walked with you thus far.

Without revelation and reframing, life can seem like an endless desert of danger with scratchy sand in your shoes, and yet if we remember or are reminded to pay attention, we find so many sources of hidden water and are shown so many ways to sweep the sand off our feet.

Gratitude begins in our hearts and then dovetails into behavior – thanksgiving becomes thanksgiving. Being thankful almost always makes you willing to be of service, which is where the joy of life resides. When you become more fully aware of all that has been given to you, in your lifetime and in the past few days – the sun, your breath, this good earth, the people you love and who love you, your body and brain, another day to live, and countless more – it's hard not to be humbled, and pleased to give back.

The truth is that "*from everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be asked,*" if Jesus is to be believed. He meant us, not just the rich and famous – us, to whom unnumbered exquisite gifts, tangible and intangible, have been given. In the face of God's unlimited and unending grace, we mysteriously find ourselves willing to pick up litter in the street, shovel or snowplow our ailing neighbor's driveway, let others go first in traffic (yes, it does happen!), or give a little more of our material resources to the good company we keep called church, reminded as we are that much has been given us, and much has been asked as a result – and our thanksgiving awaits!

Brian

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

I just wanted to extend my thanks to all those who helped with this year's Christmas Pageant, "God's Good Gifts". It was quite an undertaking for the children and youth as they led the entire service! A special thank you to Edna and Jim for driving all the way to Lorne Park and back to pick up and deliver our delicious luncheon sandwiches and to Joan for preparing the vegetable trays. I certainly wouldn't want to forget to thank John for all the microphone set up and all our wonderful kitchen elves! Thank you to Hanna for being such an amazing director and to Brian for preparing an absolutely perfect reflection! To anyone I might have forgotten to thank, you know I love you too. Now for the most important thank you of all.... our outstanding cast. From Mary and Joseph, our shepherds, our Wise Men, right down to our littlest Angel, a huge hug and thank you for being such a joy to watch!

With love, Lisa

Children's Craft Night 2014



Classes at:
Bloordale United
Church
4258 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON M9C 1Z7
(416) 621-1710
Please call to register



Who: Children Ages 4-10 welcome
When: Friday February 7th, 21st, 28th
and Friday March 7th, 2014
(No class on Valentine's Day Feb 14)

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Cost: \$3.00 per Friday or
\$10.00 for all 4 classes



CRAFT NIGHT RETURNING TO BLOORDALE

Bloordale's popular Craft Night for Kids is returning Friday evenings, February 7th, and February 21st to March 7th, (4 weeks), 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

If you would like to volunteer for any evening(s), talk to Julia at 416-622-6309.

Come up with your own craft ideas, or we will provide one for you.

Perfect for high school volunteer credits.

In Memoriam

William J. (Bill) McDermott

December 5, 1944 - January 4, 2014

pancake Supper

The Pancake Supper returns to
Bloordale United Church on

**Shrove Tuesday
March 4, 2014**



Come any time between
5:15 pm and 7:00 pm

\$7.00 / \$4.00 for Children under 12

A Bloordale Community Event

**All are welcome,
bring your friends and
neighbours**

For further information / tickets
call Susan 416-524-9281 (h) or 416-621-8050 (w)
or Julia 416-622-6309 (h).

PANCAKE SUPPER

**Pancake supper returns to
Bloordale on Shrove Tuesday, Mach
4th, 2014.**

Come any time between 5:15 and 7:00
p.m.

\$7.00 (\$4.00 for children under 12).

I would like to set up two crews this year, one for cooking and set up and one to assist with clean up and break down.

To volunteer or for information call Susan Prentice, 416-524-9281.

Bloordale United Church 56th Anniversary Dinner and Silent Auction

Sunday March 9, 2014
at Bloordale United Church

Reception at 5:00 pm

Fully catered sit-down dinner starting at 5:30 pm



Salad, Rolls, Choice of:
Chicken, Salmon, or Vegetarian entree
Tea or Coffee and Cookies
Cash Bar : beer, wine, soft drinks

Friends and Family welcome

Tickets: \$35.00 (includes tax and tip)
Special rates available for children

Free Parking, Wheelchair Accessible,
call if you need a ride

For further information / tickets
call Julia 416-621-8050 (w)
or 416-622-6309 (h).

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS! PART 2.

Since the last "Bloorbeat", we have experienced some really extreme weather which has highlighted both Nature's power and splendour, its raw destruction and stunning beauty.

On the Monday following the ice storm, the grey world was suddenly transformed into a sparkling wonderland as the sun dipped below the heavy cloud cover minutes before setting. Driving home from the grocery store, I turned up Elmcrest toward the Conservatory. So had a few others. And all for the same reason... to take some photographs! They obviously knew something I didn't! (*Etoibicoke Camera Club?*) To see the sun glistening through the ice covered branches was a once-in-a-lifetime experience! Did you get any photographs?

In preparation for a special Sunday during the "Season of Creation" next September, Rev. Brian is planning a service with "fewer words", but "full of images"! If you are a photographer and would like to share some of your best nature photos, John Pauksens will be happy to receive them not only for this service, but for the Image Archive he is building up for use at the church.

John advises that the images should be submitted in fairly high resolution (~2 Megapixels or better) and, for best visual effect, should be composed for display on our widescreen TV monitors (i.e. landscape mode with a 16:9 aspect ratio). If your camera supports widescreen mode, this is very easy to accomplish when taking the photograph. If not, that is OK too, but please try to compose your photo so that the top and bottom can be cropped off to get a full screen 16:9 image.

I know others have taken pictures of the ice storm and I hear a photo has been submitted of a midnight sunset in Russia! We don't have to go *that* far to take a picture, but we do need **many** more! Already January is half over (*Yeah!*) and the days for winter photography are slipping by. Let's see what a great service we can create! You may send your pictures to John at: pauksenj@rogers.com, or give them to him on a USB stick or CD. - Nelsona Dundas

SHARING OUR GIFTS THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Staff are important, but the Nominations Committee seeks lay people to volunteer their gifts and service in various areas of mission and ministry. This opportunity for growth in the Spirit calls out from us prayerful discernment about our God-given gifts and skills, and a faith commitment to support the ministry we have together in Christ's name. Your Nominations Committee encourages everyone to consider in which ministry or Committee you might like to serve, and let Pat Nelson know at 416-622-5274 by **January 26th**. All hands and hearts in this body of Christ are needed to enable us to fulfill God's call to us, so find your passion and speak to Pat.

FAITH QUESTIONS 101

Do you have questions about God, the Bible, our life in faith, or anything else? Brian would like to know the topics about which you'd like to learn, and will hold occasional brief seminars after church based on your questions. Speak to Brian, or put some questions in writing and give them to him, and then stay tuned for when a session will be held.

IF YOU TAKE TIME

Look, I am making all things new!

Even me, God?
 Even me?
 I'm so tired
 overworked
 underappreciated.
 My heavy winter busy-ness
 my burdensome winter responsibilities
 weigh me down
 down
 down.
 Making me new is a monumental task, God.
 Even **you** might give up.

Consider the caterpillar.

Do I have to? I don't like caterpillars.

Do you like butterflies?

Oh, yes!

Well, butterflies are just caterpillars made new!

**If you let me,
 if you live
 in summertime slowness,
 in holiday openness,
 if you take time
 rather than letting time take you,
 I can make even you
 new.**

Thank you.

- Marie G. Esdon

The
 Season
 of
 Lent



REMEMBERING MANDELA

The following is a prayer that a staff person within the United Church of Canada wrote and shared across the country just days after the death of Nelson Mandela.

For us, in our being, Mandela is gone:
 We will no longer dance and march with him.
 We will no longer hear him speak of justice,
 freedom, and peace.

For us, in our knowing, Mandela is changing:
 He can no longer speak to us, but he can still
 be heard.
 He can no longer touch us, but he can still be
 felt.

For us, in our thoughts, Mandela is alive:
 We dance and march with him when we work
 for human dignity and rights.
 We speak with him when we work for a world
 where one does not oppress another.

For us, in our actions, Mandela is here.
 So as we journey with our siblings imprisoned by
 poverty, slavery,
 and all forms of created suffering,
 we will remember Mandela's belief that we are
 all imprisoned until we are all free.

As we encounter forces of resistance that feel
 overwhelmingly insurmountable,
 we will remember the integrity and grace with
 which Mandela held to his convictions
 while he was imprisoned for 27 years.

And as we give thanks to our Creator for the life of
 Mandela,
 we will continue to pray for your comfort to
 surround the family, friends, and nation
 that mourn the loss of Madiba;
 we will celebrate a life that perpetually worked
 for the good of all;
 and we will affirm that his legacy will continue
 in our memories and actions.

As we entrust him into your loving care, O God,
 may we commend him to our hearts. Amen.

ATHANASIUS DEFINES THE NEW TESTAMENT

367 AD

Athanasius (295-373), bishop of Alexandria, Egypt, devoted his life to defending orthodoxy against Arianism. The church's struggle with heresy increased the urgency to distinguish between truly inspired writings and questionable ones. The canon (Greek for "standard") was generally identified as writings of apostolic origin and those writings used in the churches.

By the end of the second century most churches recognized the four Gospels, Acts, and Paul's epistles. The disputed books were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. In his widely circulated Easter Letter of 367, Bishop Athanasius named the twenty-seven books that make up the New Testament as we know it, stating that those were the only books to be regarded as Christian Scripture.

Al-though his proclamation was not immediately adopted universally, over time the church gradually came to accept the books on Athanasius's list.

WHEN & WHERE

THE RESULTS OF A LONG-AGO DECISION

September 30, 420

Why do Roman Catholic Bibles have more books than Protestant Bibles?

The answer comes from the work of a man who died on September 30, 420. His name was Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus, but history knows him as Jerome. Born of Christian parents in northeastern Italy, at the age of twelve he went to Rome to study. He was baptized there at nineteen.

Jerome became attracted to monasticism and lived as a monk near the ancient Syrian town of Chalchis. During this time he began mastering Hebrew and perfecting his Greek. He was ordained in Antioch and became a bishop without pastoral responsibilities. He next studied under Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the Cappadocian Fathers who had a profound influence on Christian theology.

In 386, Jerome moved to Bethlehem, where he spent the rest of his life. He served as the overseer of a monastery and the spiritual advisor to a local convent.

Jerome spent most of his time writing. His linguistic ability and scholarship were unsurpassed in the early church. His greatest contribution to the Christian world was his translation of the Bible. In 382, Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome, then no more than thirty-five years old, to produce a uniform text of the Latin Bible. He was to standardize the texts then in circulation.

Between 390 and 404, Jerome translated the Old Testament into Latin. In addition to the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Old Testament, Jerome also translated fourteen Jewish religious books that the translators of the Septuagint had included. These fourteen books were never part of the Jewish Bible and were called the Apocrypha, which came to mean "spurious" or "not genuine." Even though Jerome included the Apocrypha with the Old Testament because the Septuagint had done so, in speaking of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, he wrote, "anything outside of these must be placed within the Apocrypha," the non-canonical books. In other words, Jerome saw a definite distinction between the thirty-nine inspired books and the Apocrypha.

Jerome's translation became known as the Vulgate. At the time of the Reformation, the Pope called the Council of Trent to attempt to stem the tide of Protestantism. There, in an attempt to differentiate the Roman Catholic Church from the Reformers, the council declared the Latin Vulgate, including the Apocrypha, to be the authoritative Bible, whereas the Reformers recognized only the original thirty-nine books of the Old Testament.

Although Jerome had included the Apocrypha in the Vulgate as uninspired books, the Council of Trent declared them to be inspired. Thus was born the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Bibles.

THE UNITED CHURCH

OBSERVER

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THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

A sincere and grateful thank you is extended from the Finance Committee to the congregation of Bloordale United Church for their generosity in 2013.

When the 2013 budget was approved by the congregation last February, it was with some hesitation and trepidation that we recommended local contributions (envelope and PAR) of \$150,000.

We exceeded our best hopes because of your generosity, we surpassed our budget.

Local contributions for 2013 were \$151,293.



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