

# BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



Volume XXXII, Issue 5

## Minister's Message

Well, it's Advent again, the start of a new Christian calendar year – though it feels like the beginning of the frantic end of the secular calendar year, with December just crazy busy for most of us, even if we try and put on a brave front for relatives! Stepping into Advent is actually a leap of counter-cultural faith, for as the world gears up for a whirlwind of consumerism, we are called to the kind of calm, considered waiting that will make space for God to break through, once and for you.

Advent is a time to help our daring hopes about God take shape in our lives:

- Listening in silence and hearing a baby kick in a womb;
- Pausing long enough to hear angels clear their throats;
- Halting for a moment to become part of a universe expectantly holding its breath;
- Standing still and feeling the heartbeat of a yet-to-be-born child;
- Closing your eyes to the madness and seeing the arrival of God in a tiny baby;

Humming carol tunes to yourself and realizing you're singing the angels' song.

The Advent waiting game is a potentially powerful spiritual pilgrimage that struggles for recognition in our fast-paced December lives, held in complete contrast to a mad, rushing, quick-to-celebrate, consumer-driven world. To do the secular pre-Christmas consumer dash and the Advent sacred slow walk simultaneously, in parallel, could indicate that we have to choose between two very different worlds in December, OR it could be a profound witness to God's very earthy, real, conflicted arrival as the Incarnate One who comes, not from some distant heaven, but from within the very heart of life; as the Emergent and Embodied One who bears even our pre-Christmas burdens as the God-Child of solidarity.

Advent, friends, is the moment before the first twinges of the world's birthpangs of transformation; the moments of heightened anticipation before the curtain of the rest of our lives goes up; the pause of the held breath after the profoundly human question and before the divine answer. It's not to be missed! Don't let it slip by so swiftly as to miss the message of the stars, especially those child stars of our Christmas Pageant on December 15<sup>th</sup> and the Choir stars of our Cantata Service on Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>.

Advent blessings to one and all, from our entire staff – Juanita, Victor, Nelsona, Hanna, Lisa, Mervin, and me, Brian.

## 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

## IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Column</i>	<i>Page</i>
Minister's Message	1
Dates to Remember	2
Editor's Comment	3
Pastoral Care	3
Annual Christmas Pageant	3
NAVIDAD	3
TSO for Kids	4
Craft Night Returns	4
Social Committee Update	4
South West Presbytery Corner	4
Stewardship Spot	5
Calling All Photographers	5
Lunch Bunch	6
Outreach and Social Action	6
Financial Update	6
In Memoriam	6
Semi-annual Meeting Report	7
Outreach and Social Action Initiatives	8
Holly Tea	8
Mitten Tree	8
The Star of Bethlehem	9
Christmas Eve Worship Service	9
Pot Luck Supper	9

## LOOKING AT THE WEEKS AHEAD

- Sunday, November 24 - Reign of Christ - COMMUNION  
Lunch Bunch - Pete's on Eglinton - 1035 Eglinton Ave. East, Mississauga
- Sunday, December 1 - Advent 1
- Saturday, December 7 - Holly Tea - 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.
- Sunday, December 8 - Advent 2 - Choir Cantata
- Tuesday, December 10 - Pot Luck Supper with "The 4 Men" - 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, December 13 - Toronto Consort's NAVIDAD -Trinity St. Paul's Centre - 8:00 p.m.
- Sunday, December 15 - Advent 3 - Children's Pageant - White Gift Sunday
- Sunday, December 22 - Advent 4
- Tuesday, December 24 - *Christmas Eve Family Service* - Candles and COMMUNION - 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday, December 29 - Christmas 1
- Sunday, January 5 - Epiphany
- Sunday, January 12 - Baptism of Jesus
- 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

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

When I was a young boy in elementary school a long, long time ago, it was drilled into our heads about the use of "me" and "I".

To me, I believe our teachers who have been entrusted with teaching students in the correct use of the English Language have, in large part, failed.

The following article is an excerpt from a book entitled "Between You and I, A Little Book of Bad English" by James Cochrane.

### Between You and I

*Between*, *from* and *to* are prepositions and take the accusative form of the noun.

Even the many people who are unaware of this basic grammatical rule would not dream of saying 'The distance *between* we *and* that hill' or 'From I *to* you' or 'To I *and* my wife'. Yet all too often nowadays we find people saying, or even writing, 'Between you *and* I' or 'From the wife *and* I' or 'To Maggie *and* I'.

This oddity, which is sometimes referred to as 'the toffs error', was noted as long ago as the 1930s but seems to have become much more common in the last twenty or so years.

Presumably it arises from a feeling of discomfort about using the word *me*, a sense that it is somehow impolite or 'uneducated'. It may be that this has arisen from hearing other people saying 'Me and Bill went down the pub'.

Whatever the reason, This is such a major misapprehension, and an egregious example of Bad English being used under the impression that it is somehow better than the English one would naturally speak and write.

## PASTORAL CARE

The Canadian Bible Society collects used stamps and sells them to collectors. They use the proceeds from their sales to purchase Bibles for those in need. To donate the stamps from your holiday mail please cut a border of approx. 1/4" around the stamp and put them in the box provided on the table west of the Bloor Street entrance door.

Ever get stuck wondering which Bible passage to read for the day? Well here comes some help. Copies of the daily devotional booklet "OUR DAILY BREAD" for the months of Dec, Jan and Feb are available on the ledge outside Brian's office, please help yourself

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT "GOD'S GOOD GIFTS"

This year's pageant is actually going to be a full service, and we're very excited for it!

On December 15th, White Gift Sunday, please bring your wonder and delight, along with your white gifts, for a truly unique pageant.

Volunteers are also greatly appreciated, please speak to Lisa or Hanna if you are willing to assist.

We look forward to having you join us on December 15th!

*Hanna and Lisa*

*Come with us to see and hear*  
The **TORONTO CONSORT'S** performance  
**"NAVIDAD"**  
Christmas Music from Latin America and Spain  
*"The liveliest Christmas Concert in Town"*



[www.torontoconsort.org](http://www.torontoconsort.org)

*at the Newly Renovated*  
**Trinity-St. Paul's Centre**  
**427 Bloor Street West, Toronto (at Spadina)**

**Friday, Dec. 13, 2013, 8:00 pm,**

**Orchestra seats, \$54**  
*balcony seats possibly available at \$39 and \$26*

**A Bloordale and Friends Event**

*Ultimately, politics in a democracy reflects values much more than it shapes them.*

*Arnold Rogow*  
*U.S. Political Scientist 11924-2006*

*Come with your grandchildren, children, or other young people  
to see and hear*

*TSO for KIDS*

## **“Once Upon a Time”**

*Fairy Tales will Spring to Life  
through Music and Dance*

*Especially for audience members ages 5-12*



**Saturday, January 18, 2014, 3:30 pm  
at Roy Thomson Hall  
60 Simcoe Street, Toronto  
(at King Street West and Simcoe)**

*Tickets are \$20 for seniors, students and children,  
\$26 for others, seats in section C1, rows P and R*

***Come half an hour early for a special  
pre-concert performance in the lobby***

*A Bloordale and Friends Event*

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

### **CRAFT NIGHT RETURNING TO BLOORDALE**

Bloordale's popular Craft Night for Kids is returning Friday evenings, February 7<sup>th</sup>, and February 21<sup>st</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup>, (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.**

### **UPDATE FROM THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

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

- Friday, December 13, 2013, 8:00 p.m. - Toronto Consort performs Navidad; Christmas Music from Latin America and Spain (see ad in this issue of Bloorbeat)
- Saturday, January 18, 2014 - 3:30 p.m., TSO for kids, Once Upon a Time at Roy Thomson Hall, especially for kids 5 to 12 years old (See ad in this issue of Bloorbeat)
- Saturday, February 15, 2014 - 7:30 p.m., our own 'Michael Downie in Concert' at Emmanuel United Church, in Brampton
- Friday, April 4, 2014, - 7:00 p.m., Toronto Blue Jays home opener, vs New York Yankees, third baseline seats - \$52

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

### **SOUTH WEST PRESBYTERY CORNER**

Each year the United Church General Council distributes a portion of your Mission and Service donations to all Conferences for local Mission support.

On November 5<sup>th</sup> representatives from the four presbytery in Toronto Conference met to mutually and in a congenial and Christian environment to distribute \$327,756 to pastoral charges and outreach ministries. The total requests from these applicants totaled \$482,750 so it was a very difficult decision for each presbytery to yield in funding their "preferred" programs. In South West Presbytery, both Davenport-Perth and Jane-Finch community Ministries received \$21,250.

But the Community Ministries are left with a significant shortfall in their funding requirements for 2014. Davenport-Perth will be seeking an additional \$5,971 and Jane-Finch will require \$5,087 to meet their budgets. You can help support these critical and essential ministries through designating a one-time donation to Community Ministries.

In addition, the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation provides funding for community outreach programs. This year, South West Presbytery will be distributing over \$66,000 for pastoral charge outreach programs at Grace Place Brampton, Wesley-Mimico, Emmanuel-Howard Park, Rnnymede, St. James Food Basket and Cummer United Church to mention a few.

*Norman Dundas, Chair, SWP Mission Support and Finance Committee*

## STEWARDSHIP SPOT

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

### ***Falling in Love with the Earth***

When I say the word "stewardship," I suspect the first thing you think about is money, fundraising and financial giving – right?! The thing is, theologians and environmentalists have teamed up in the last thirty or so years to move swiftly in a different direction, recapturing the word "stewardship" to deepen our embrace of creation. Global awareness of climate change has increased significantly, as have its dramatic effects, including whipsaw-like weather swings, increased desertification and species extinction, global warming, rising sea levels, and the emergence of what some term "climate chaos." In response, rather than seeing ourselves as domineering but benevolent land managers of a planet that has been entrusted to us (as the steward model has suggested to some), there is a growing sense that we as humans are not managers but co-inhabitants of the larger community of evolutionary life.

As such, we are called to a deeper ecological conscience, in which our sense of community is expanding and evolving beyond the human family to embrace all of life, including the life of Earth and the wider ecosphere of space. Realizing our deep interconnection with all of creation, we are sensing that we are both potent shapers of the unfolding of creation, and yet at the same time entirely dependent upon creation for our very survival.

Stewardship training as creation care thus helps people of faith to move away from the suggestion that humans are lords, masters, and conquerors of nature. The interpretations of the Genesis story that enable a human-centered pride, based on the divine invitation to "fill the earth" and "subdue" it, to have "dominion" over all other creatures, were given a great boost by the birth of modernity, with its emphasis on scientific prowess and technological manipulation and control of nature.

Creation care, on the other hand, helps move us from such an "anthropocentric" vantage point to a more "anthropo-harmonic" perspective. We humans ought to strive, not for domination over but harmony alongside the rest of the created world, as participants rather than masters within the whole fabric of creation. We can only be fully human, we're beginning to learn, and fully true to our Christian calling, when the individual and communal elements of our social concerns are integrated to sustain all of creation. In this way social justice, ecological integrity, and the awe, joy, and wonder of the universe itself are all

woven into the one seamless garment of our post-modern faith journey.

Our aboriginal and/or indigenous brothers and sisters have helped in calling us to this sense of deep integration of our ethical and ecological lives. It was aboriginal United Church members, for instance, who initiated the movement to update our Affirmation of Faith in 1992 to add the line that we are "to live with respect in creation."

Along with St. Francis of Assisi, who wrote the Canticle of the Sun, we are invited anew not to a mere fine-tuning of our ethical and theological reflection; we are being invited to a new and deep relationship with all of creation that involves affection, compassion, celebration, and awesome joy.

We are invited, in fact of faith, to fall in love again – this time with the Earth! May it be so!

Brian

---

## CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS!

In preparation for a special Sunday during the "Season of Creation", i.e. September 2014, 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 for the Bloordale United Church Image Archive he is building up.

The Image Archive will be used as a source of photographs for the "Season of Creation" service, and some of the photos may also be used as background images at our regular church services, or may be displayed in the on-line image archive that John will be including in a new version of the church website. You may send them to John at: [pauksenj@rogers.com](mailto:pauksenj@rogers.com), or give them to John on a USB stick or a CD.

John has advised 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 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.

So, why am **I** writing this? Recently, I have been taking pictures of our sanctuary, decorated for the "Season of Creation" and Thanksgiving, to show, on my iPad, to those I visit who never get out.

While the pictures were very well received, the one time I showed the photo of a sunrise, it elicited a spontaneous reaction from someone unable to converse!

Learning of my growing interest in photography as part of my ministry, friends drew my attention to New Brunswick photographer and author, Freeman Patterson. Turning the pages of the books they had loaned me, I became aware how deeply these photographs were engaging me. Reading his biography, I learned that not only had Patterson studied for his Master's Degree in Divinity, but his thesis was entitled, "Still Photography as a Medium of Religious Expression"! Was this how 'my' sunrise was being experienced? I am a photography 'newbie'. Yet, having glimpsed the joy one photo can bring, I am inspired to take more and better pictures.

I'm sure you have taken photos you will always remember. If you already have some digital images of Creation that you would like to share, John would be happy to receive them. If not, you and I are going to be busy taking photographs! For the "Season of Creation" service, the deadline for submitting photos is August 1<sup>st</sup>, but please send the photos in sooner if at all possible. We will remind you again when that time comes closer, but meanwhile, there should be some nice winter scenes to be photographed in the coming months. Happy 'shooting'!

*Nelsona Dundas*

### 'LUNCH BUNCH' LUNCH

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, after the church service, and after coffee time, 17 Bloordale family and friends went for lunch.

Our venue this time was the St. James Gate Irish Pub, on Dundas Street, just east of Kipling (the old Miller's Restaurant).

Primarily a pub, the St. James serves breakfast on weekends, although there seemed to be some hang up in the kitchen with getting them out. Seven of us ordered breakfast; all served later than the other eaters, but it was good. Pub food was the fastest to come out, with seven of us ordering that kind of meal.

The rest of us had sandwiches and salads. Jack L. ordered 'Irish Stew', which was just like his mother used to make, and it looked and tasted wonderful.

Our next lunch will be on Sunday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, just before the December rush. We will be going to Pete's on Eglinton, 1035 Eglinton Avenue East, in Mississauga at Eglinton and Tomken. We order from the menu; breakfast, lunch or dinner, and pay individually.

Car-pooling is always provided. For information, or to sign up, talk to Gord Moore - 289-232-4389 or Julia Stavreff - 416-622-6309.

*All are welcome, and a good time is had by all.*

### 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.

### FINANCIAL UPDATE as of October 31 Local Contributions

<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$123,000</b>
<b>Actual</b>	<b>\$111,973</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ -11.027</b>

**Please help, as best you can, to cover our shortfall.**

### In Memoriam

Barbara Brown

October 5, 1927 - October 13, 2013

## OUR SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

Our semi-annual meeting was held in the sanctuary, after the church service on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Chair Julia Stavreff spoke about some of our happenings at Bloordale since the last AGM in February:

- A number of new members and friends joining Bloordale
- Sadly, the loss of a few longtime members
- Many fellowship opportunities
- Wonderful, dedicated and energetic staff
- A super choir, that not only sings for us, but also at Wesburn Manor on a regular basis
- Two fundraising concerts, and a third in a few weeks
- New door opener upstairs
- Many volunteers who keep things going
- We have been enjoying our new Chancel in the sanctuary
- We have been looking at two new initiatives: Connecting with the Community and Property Options, both to follow on the Agenda

Treasurer Norm Dundas briefly explained our finances; for the nine months ended September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 we are at a break-even (\$26 loss actually), although our budgeted expectation was to be in a \$7,100 surplus at this time. Givings are below budget by \$8,800, but well over our givings for the same time period in 2012 (over by \$5,300). We thank you for stepping up in this way. Norm asked that we keep Bloordale in mind over the rest of the year, so that we will stay in a positive position during the winter months when expenses are higher.

Norm also mentioned that our budget for 2013 includes an \$8,000 contribution from the Memorial fund. In prior years, this \$8,000 was also contributed by the Planned gift fund. Neither fund will be in a position to supplement expenses in 2014.

Brian McIntosh briefly gave an overview of Connecting with the Community: a subgroup of the outreach committee has been formed, and is canvassing the nearby community, to see what social needs are not being met. Watch for more developments from this group.

John Pauksens gave a brief overview of The Sanctuary Centre Floor Options. Sanctuary Dreams had presented a proposal previously to remove the raised platform in the centre of the sanctuary, to remove the carpeting and to refinish the floor, leaving a flat polished concrete finish.

This was for safety, and for greater flexibility re the choir, the piano and other sanctuary performances.

At the time, the estimated cost to refinish the floor was \$5,500. A second option is to replace the area, not with polished concrete, but with a wooden floor. A preliminary estimate for this is \$10,000. A third option is to remove the platform, and recarpet (approximate \$3,000 price).

If anyone wishes to donate to this specific project, please tell Brian or Julia as work will not proceed until funds are received - similarly to our Chancel renovation. Before work starts, the congregation will also have to vote on this sanctuary change renovation.

The last item on the agenda was an update by the Property Options Task Group. The seed for this group was planted last year by Bob Hitchcock. He was concerned that we are always short \$8 - \$10,000 per year in our operations, and that the Planned Gift Fund and the Memorial Fund had been supplementing activities. He thought, if we sold a parcel of land to the west of the Church, we could earn \$8,000 - \$10,000 per year in investment income to balance things.

The United Church has a network for Ministry Development called EDGE, and two consultants from this group presented our Bloordale task group with some options. These options were presented to the congregation at our October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting by, Michael Wright - consultant, and Robert Murphy - architect.

Here is a brief summary of their presentation:

- Other faith groups are examining their mission and vision
- They are looking at making their space more versatile, to reduce operating expenses, including age related renovations
- They are looking at options to generate revenues that will allow the Church to fulfill their mission and vision.
- Some options are closure, consolidation, selling excess land, developing and building land, with a development partner
- Bloordale is on a flood plain and cannot build residential in the back nor the west side of the property
- Potential exists for demolishing the sanctuary and subdividing the front and selling lots to build 2 detached homes, or some townhomes, or a small condo complex

*Continued on next page*

- These approaches would yield a financial infusion of about \$500,000 to \$900,000, but we would lose our sanctuary and have to use the money to rebuild in the back, at not much gain over doing nothing
- The church could enter into a joint venture with a developer, keeping the land, and leasing the residential units
- One option is to build residential over the existing sanctuary, but the profit from this is anticipated to be too low for a partner developer and therefore a no go
- A second option is to demolish the sanctuary, build residential condos in its place, build a third story over the CD building, and have a new sanctuary there, as well as additional rental space
- This second option is projected to net about \$830,000 to \$1,200,000 for Bloordale ( plus additional rental income annually)

All of the above are just ideas and preliminary estimates; the option of doing nothing still exists. Nothing will be done without a congregational vote. If you would like an email copy or a printed copy of the presentation made by the consultants on October 27<sup>th</sup>, please ask Julia or Juanita in the church office for a copy or an email.

The meeting closed with Julia handing out an 'Upcoming Events' list, prepared by the Social and Fundraising committee. This can also be obtained from the church office or downloaded from Bloordale's website.

The meeting closed with a 'Close of Meeting Prayer', and the congregation went off, with too many things to think about.

Julia Stavreff  
Chair of Council

---

## 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.

---

# Holly Tea



## and Bake Sale

4258 Bloor St. West  
416-621-1710

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

1 :00 - 3:30 pm

Invite a friend and enjoy tea or coffee and scones with whipped cream and jam!

YUMMY!!!!

\$5.00 per person

At \$5.00 per dozen, you can also choose your Christmas Cookies at our delectable Cookie Corner



Much help is needed. The sign-up sheet is outside Room 15. We have need of bakers, waitresses, kitchen staff and set-up and clean-up volunteers.

**Let's make it a success.**

---

## MITTEN TREE - OUTREACH



It may seem early but we would like to remind you knitters or shoppers that the Advent tree will be up on Sunday **December 1<sup>st</sup>** waiting for you to decorate it with mitts, gloves, scarves, 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 17th of Dec to be there before Christmas. We will also be looking for items for the Outreach basket for Ernestine's, 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! Ask your Doctor or Dentist if they have any items to contribute. 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. So start decorating on Sunday Dec 1<sup>st</sup> until Dec 15<sup>th</sup>.

We are very grateful for all the support you give us in these endeavors. Thank you.

---

## **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.

---

### **THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM**

They followed the star.

Ancient Persia had a priestly caste called magi. Astrology was very popular in the ancient Near East, and the magi were both astrologers and astronomers.

Early Jews also were interested in astrology. One of their messianic prophecies said, "A star will rise from Jacob" (Numbers 24:17). To them, Jupiter was "the King's planet" and Saturn was Israel's "defender." An old Jewish proverb said, "God created Saturn to shield Israel."

Early astrologers observed that planets move in a belt in the heavens that they termed the zodiac. They divided the zodiac into twelve equal blocks or signs. According to Chaldean astrology, each sign represented a different nation. Pisces, the sign of the fish, represented Amurru, which included Syria and Palestine. To Jewish astrologers, Pisces represented Judea. They predicted that the Messiah would appear when Saturn, their "defender," would meet Jupiter, "the King's planet," in Pisces. Since many of the Jews did not return from the Babylonian captivity and continued to live in Persia, the magi would have been familiar with Jewish astrological beliefs.

In 7 BC, for the first time in 853 years, Jupiter and Saturn came together in Pisces, with three conjunctions between April and December, the third occurring on December 4, 7 BC. The magi would have tried to understand the significance of what they had seen. Could it be the Jewish Messiah's birth in Judea?

In February of 6 BC, Mars, which had been far away in the sky a few months earlier, joined Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces. Mars was thought to represent war. Could this indicate that the Messiah, the defender of Israel, was about to arise and defeat his enemy? That theory would be in line with the final prophecy of Balaam: "A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel. It will crush the foreheads of Moab's people, cracking the skulls of the people of Sheth" (Numbers 24:17).

One year later in late winter, blazing across the sky from the East came a nova, a star that suddenly explodes, becoming ten to one hundred thousand times brighter than it had been. The nova was heading toward Judea, and the magi decided to follow it. The nova was visible for more than ten weeks. If the magi left Persia shortly after it appeared, they would have been able to reach Bethlehem while it was still visible.

When the magi reached Jerusalem, they apparently had lost sight of the star because they asked where the king of the Jews was to be born. This was no doubt because once a month the moon would hide the nova.

When the nova reappeared, at dawn it would have been fifty degrees high due south of Jerusalem—directly over Bethlehem! When the magi saw the star, they were filled with joy and followed it to the house where Jesus and Mary were. There they fell down before him and worshiped him (Matthew 2:1-11).

---

## **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE**

**Join us at Bloordale United Church  
4258 Bloor Street West**

**For a candlelight Christmas Eve Service  
at**

**5::00 p.m.**

**On December 24<sup>th</sup>.**

---

### **Pot Luck Supper**

**Tuesday, December 10th**

**6:00 p.m.**

Bring your favourite food to share, casseroles, salads, desserts and more.

Between 6:00 and 6:30, the Four Men (including Brian, Mervin and Michael) will entertain us in aid of the Mission and Service fund.

At 6:30, enjoy food and friendship.

Everyone welcome !



Sales Representative

# ANNE KARDA

client focus | personal service | corporate strength



3031 Bloor St. W. • The Kingsway Branch

Bus.(416) 236-1871

Alt.(416) 231-3000

akarda@sympatico.ca

www.annekarda.ca

Seniors Real Estate Specialist • Complimentary, Confidential Real Estate Consultations

## BLOORBEAT ADVERTISING

Would you like to advertise your business in Bloorbeat? Prices per issue of Bloorbeat are :

- Business card size \$ 20
- ¼ page size \$ 40
- ½ page size \$ 70

To advertise, please call John Pauksens, 416-622-6309  
or email [pauksenj@rogers.com](mailto:pauksenj@rogers.com)

*To all a Merry Christmas*



### BLOORBEAT PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Following is the publication schedule and the deadlines for submissions for upcoming issues through May 2014.

Publication Date	Submission Deadline
<b>2014</b>	
January 19	January 11
March 23	March 15
May 11	May 3

Bloorbeat is published 5 times a year by the Communications Committee of

Bloordale United Church  
4258 Bloor St. W.  
Etobicoke ON M9C 1Z7  
(416) 621-1710

Email: [bloordale@bellnet.ca](mailto:bloordale@bellnet.ca)  
Website: [www.bloordale.ca](http://www.bloordale.ca)

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Committee Chair           | John Pauksens                   |
| Editor                    | Norman Dundas                   |
| Distribution Coordinators | Joan Hollowell<br>Shirley Scott |