

BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



Volume XXXIII, Issue 3

Minister's Message

To an extent much more than many realize, the great rhythm of our lives is from dying to new life, from Lent and Good Friday to Easter. Taken not literally but rather as a metaphor for how we interpret the circumstances of our lives, there are many examples of this rhythm. Each night we die into sleep, losing consciousness, only to wake each morning and rise into new life. In hundreds of ways we experience little deaths: the debilitating death of fear before some unavoidable obstacle we must face; the numbing death of prolonged depression, real if not clinical, which exacts a cost – did you know that the word “despair” comes from a root latin word that means “without hope”?; the brittle death of daily disappointments or defeats; the grip of panic when the doctor speaks the words “cancer” or “terminal” to you; the slow or sudden approach of our literal dying. If we confront these realities with confidence, which literally means “with faith (trust),” then we often find that new and risen life awaits us on the other side of the dilemma.

We are in the Easter season as I write, a full 50 days or seven weeks, and when we speak of the resurrection of Jesus, we are naming the mystery that is at the heart of the Christian faith. But, we must admit, we are also naming something that many Christians in western culture find difficult to believe, at least as historical fact. We ask “How did it happen?” or “What really happened?”, or we go to a movie which depicts things rather literally, such as the recent Son of God, and doubt the resurrection’s authenticity and truth. Such questions are, of course, not unreasonable or invalid, and both the Bible and the church acknowledge this, placing the story of “doubting” Thomas second in the Sundays of the Easter season every year in the cycle of prescribed readings, thus encouraging such ponderings. Questioning is never a betrayal of Christian faith, and is actually the chief means of how our faith deepens and grows, but questions about the resurrection can never be satisfactorily answered, at least scientifically.

Although we search the various biblical accounts and endlessly mull over the record of their inconsistencies, the mystery of the resurrection remains undiminished, and its awe-inspiring power affects the thinking and living of millions of people the world over. Even in the earliest days of the Christian church, believers were not thinking merely in terms of a resuscitated body – for even then, a second death would have occurred, as in the case of Lazarus (John 11). In all accounts of the risen Jesus, we are made aware by the witnesses who later wrote about their experience that his presence was both palpable, utterly real and immediate, on the one hand, yet consistently mysterious, inexplicably different in kind. The gospel writers were clutching at ways to pin down the wind when they tried to formulate words that would describe their experience, for while he seemed fully present, he also occupied a different dimension of reality than you and I.

Continued on page 4

Bloordale United Church

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

Church Council

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Church Council Secretary	Dana Bach
Congregational Meeting Secretary	Pat Nelson
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Presbytery Representatives	Norman Dundas
	Paul Rose
Minister	Rev. Brian W. McIntosh

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Communications	John Pauksens
Congregational Life (co-chairs)	Helen Hitchcock
	Gladys Lewis
Christian Development	Vacant
Finance & Stewardship	Jack Lovatt
Outreach	Roy Harvey
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>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
Minister's Message	1
Looking at the Weeks Ahead	2
Afternoon Tea and Art	3
Bulletin & Music Dedication	3
Planned Gift	3
Summer Picnic June 8	3
Upcoming Events	4
CE Committee Chair Needed	4
Hats Off—Bloordale Youth	4
Stewardship Spot	5
In Memoriam—Rev Bob Trimble	5
Calling All Photographers	6
Congregational Meeting	6
South West Presbytery Corner	7
Hats Off —Afternoon Tea & Art	8
Hats Off—Spring Cleanup Team	8

LOOKING AT THE WEEKS AHEAD

- Sunday, May 11 -Easter 4 / Good Shepherd Sunday / COMMUNION
- Sunday , May 18 -Easter 5
- Sunday, May 25 -Easter 6
- Sunday, June 1 -Easter 7 / Ascension / BAPTISMS & CONFIRMATION
- Sunday, June 8 -Pentecost / COMMUNION / Congregational Picnic outside
- Sunday, June 15 -Trinity Sunday / Brian Away
- Sunday, June 22 -2nd after Pentecost / Aboriginal Day
- Sunday, June 29 -3rd after Pentecost
- Sunday, July 6, 13, 20 -Richview UC
- Sunday, July 27, Aug 3, 10 -Bloordale UC
- Sunday, Aug 17, 24, 31 -St. James UC
- Sunday, Sept 7, -Season of Creation 1 / Labour Day Sunday
- Sunday, Sept 14 -Season of Creation 2 / Welcoming Sunday **worship services revert to 10:30**
- Sunday, Sept 21 -Season of Creation 3
- Sunday, Sept 28 -Season of Creation 4
- Sunday, Oct 5 -Worldwide Communion / Earth Mass Music Sunday

Summer Services at 10:00 am

Afternoon Tea & Art at Bloordale

On Saturday May 3rd, Bloordale's Social & Fundraising Committee held their 1st Afternoon Tea & Art Show, featuring pieces by 11 local artists from the Etobicoke area and across the GTA, including Bev Morgan, who sold one of her original pieces at the event and a sale for Catherine de Montmorency as well.



The tea took place from 2:30 - 4:30pm with approximately 75 attendees who enjoyed a variety of specialty teas & appetizers. Serving the crowd would not have been possible without the generous donations of so many elegant teacups and teapots from a number of Bloordale members and their family & friends.

Popular tea flavours were the well known Orange Pekoe and Earl Grey, as well as some more "spring-inspired" teas such as Strawberry & Vanilla Almond and Orange Spice.

A lovely plated appetizer selection was served, consisting of mini quiche florentine, a dessert square, a variety of finger sandwiches including egg salad (made by Joan Hollowell), salmon (made by Shirley Scott), cucumber & cream cheese (made by Roxanne Titus & husband) and olive pinwheels (made by Jo-Em Bettridge), along with mini currant scones, baked fresh on the spot by Gord Moore & Evelyn Relyea, served with butter & strawberry jam.

Special thanks to Rob Craft for his piano accompaniment that gave the event a true "springtime" feel, as well as the grandsons of Jim & Edna Bell, who were a huge help to the committee in setting up and cleaning up.

The event was a great success, with \$1000 raised for Bloordale programmes. The S&F committee plans to make this an annual spring event, so we hope to see you in attendance next spring!

Vanessa Mitchell

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

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.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Summer Picnic, Sunday June 8

Mark your calendars for this year's Summer Picnic. As always, it promises to be a wonderful service followed by a BBQ lunch and games for the young and young at heart (we always appreciate a good cheering squad, as well). This year should be extra special because it is also Pentecost and Communion Sunday. Besides, who doesn't enjoy seeing Merv and Brian wrapped up like mummies, in toilet paper!

See you there! Lisa Mazzariol

"If anyone tells you that a certain person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you but answer, "He was ignorant of my other faults, else he would not have mentioned these alone."
— *Epictetus*

Continued from page 1

Even trying to say this much is to seek vainly for adequate language. Mary of Magdala is the very first human being to realize that, while she is in the presence of the risen Christ, he is with her in a way that she can neither explain nor fully understand. She even tries, literally, to hold him, and cannot, and Jesus names such attempts as unnecessary (see John 20). In the same way, an intellectual grasp of the resurrected Jesus is also impossible. We are called by God to question, yes, yet we also are called to accept the wisdom and insight given in this teaching. Some through the centuries have called this kind of questioning yet accepting faith the *Via Negativa*, for while our questions about the resurrection will often lead to clarity about what it is not, it will not necessarily provide full clarity about what it is. When it comes to the resurrection, we get closer to what it is – though we never arrive! – only by knowing more fully about what it is not. That's why faith is a metaphor for trust, and can never be made into a fact.

The Easter message still deeply affects those who have come to Christian faith, for people are enlivened and re-energized, their sense of purpose and mission renewed, their discipleship invigorated and deepened. The church itself through the ages has come to be known as the risen body of Christ, mysteriously becoming the Easter people Christ has called us to be. We can see this transformation in the lives of the early disciples, including Mary and the apostle Peter, and even in Thomas, who came to exclaim to Jesus "My Lord and my God!" and who served as a resurrection witness ever since.

Christian faith promises that this can be true for us as well. The resurrection of Jesus is never merely a past, historic event to be recounted through the collective memory of his followers. It is a continuing reality among those who trust in the Easter truth of the risen Christ's eternal presence. May we, also, come to such Easter faith, that we might be given new life beyond the little deaths we face, now and in time to come, individually and as a circle of friends.

Brian

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, May 14th The Group 7:30 pm

The Ladies of Bloordale have a new group called "The Group" for fellowship ,chit-chat, and who knows what else. Join us for our next get together on May 14th , 7:30 pm, room 15.

Thursday May 15th Geranium Sale

Contact the church office or Grace at 416-621-8862 if you want to order some Geraniums.

Friday May 16th Movie Night 7 pm

Join Brian and friends in room 15 for a movie and treats. The selected movie is Rain Man starring Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise

Sunday May 18th Service at Wesburn Manor

Bloordale hosts the service at Wesburn Manor at 2:30 pm, and the Bloordale choir will sing

Sunday May 25th Congregational Meeting

immediately after the worship service, to discuss and vote on proposed sanctuary floor alterations

Monday May 26th UCW Meeting

at 7:30 pm in room 15

Tuesday June 3rd UCW hosted Potluck

UCW hosted Spring potluck dinner at 6:30 pm. All are welcome.

Sunday June 22nd Lunch Bunch Lunch

After the church service and coffee time we will be going for lunch, at a venue to be decided. Sign up with Gord Moore.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR OR CO-CHAIRS NEEDED

We have been blessed with an outstanding Christian Education team whose work is much appreciated by everyone at Bloordale. But we have a vacancy for the volunteer position of Committee Chair.

We therefore wish to direct your prayers and discernment to who among us might be called to this important ministry.

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

Hats Off!



to our **Bloordale Youth, Volunteers** at the Out of the Cold Dinner at All Saints Anglican, who were complimented for their enthusiasm, attention to their tasks, courtesy and general appropriate and respectful behavior. Hats off to **Catherine, Yvonne, Adrian, Laura, MacKenzie** and **Quinn**, along with their leaders **Hanna** and **Lisa**

Stewardship Spot

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

Prayer 101

I've been in the ministry for 26 years by the end of June, and while I still don't know much – for certain, anyway! – about God, and even less about prayer, I have come to believe that our stewardship of prayer should follow the KISS principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid! Help, Thanks, and Wow are about as simple as anyone can say, though the nuances of each are about as endless as there are seconds in a day and lives to live them on this good earth.

What does "prayer" mean anyway? It's not what TV Christians seem to mean by it most of the time, offering prayer for display purposes, like plastic flowers or neon. Let's say that prayer is communication from one's heart to the God who surpasses understanding. Or if that's too theological for you, let's say communication to the transcendent Good that's beyond our comprehension, but that in our pain or relief or supplication we don't need to define or have proof of. Let's say it's a cry from deep within to Life or Love, both deliberately with capital L's.

Some of us were taught by parents to pray at bedtime, and many of us were taught these terrifying words: "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake ..." Wait, what!? I could die in my sleep? But I'm only seven years old! "I pray the Lord my soul to take." That prayer, plainly said, just doesn't work anymore. I don't believe God has any interest in stealing children's souls out from under their pillows at night. And even if you've still got a soul in the morning, what you've also got is a fear of the dark, which is why we spend so much of our time filling our lives with artificial light. This prayer does not make the sacred mystery a merciful reality, but simply a scary undertaker whose best work is done after death.

Sometimes the first time we pray, we cry out in deep desperation, "God help me." This is a great prayer, as we're at our lowest and most isolated, which means we're past our best self-sufficient problem-solving and therefore possibly teachable. Or you may have shouted at the top of your lungs, when you were young and something went horribly wrong for you, "I hate you, God." That's a prayer too, because it's true, and raw, and as sincere as Jesus' prayer on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." attention, and, one way or another, turn toward the Light.

Notice that in Jesus' prayer, even when he felt completely abandoned by God, he still turned to God.

We can pray for things ("God, help me make my first million before I'm thirty."), or we can pray for people ("Please heal her cancer." "Please help me not be such a nutcase."), or we can pray for having a shot at a life in which we're awake most of the time, paying attention much of that time, and being kind to ourselves and to others. Prayer can begin with stopping in our tracks, or with our backs against the wall, or when we're going under the waves, or when we're just so sick and tired of being sick and tired that we surrender, or when we finally stop running away and at long last walk or lurch or lean toward something.

Prayer is taking a chance that against all odds and past history, we're loved and chosen, and don't have to get it all together before we show up. The opposite may also be true: we may not be able to get it together until after we show up in miserable shape. Prayer is us – humans merely being, as poet e.e. cummings put it – reaching out from our mortality to the eternal beyond, even when we're at our most cynical or skeptical. God can handle honesty, friends, and honest prayer at least begins an honest conversation, as opposed to a charade.

Remember what I said earlier about our seeking an artificially illumined life most of the time, to keep us out of the dark? Well, true light, or Light, real and far from artificial, reveals us to ourselves, which is why it takes a little courage to be honest, since it's not always so great to see yourself as you really are, especially if you're in a big mess of your own creation. But in this true Light, we can see beyond shadow and illusion to what is both way beyond us and way down deep inside us at the same time.

Most if not all prayers are just variations on Help, Thanks, Wow. That's all you really need to know to start being a good steward of prayer, a good pray-er, besides the silence, the pain, the wonder, and the pause sufficient to stop, pay close .

Brian

In Memoriam

Rev. Robert George (Bob) Trimble

December 30, 1927– March 29, 2014

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS! (... for the last time!!)

Did you know there is a website dedicated to tracking the progress of the Cherry Blossoms in High Park? Known as the "Sakura Watch", it is an on-going, up-to-date, almost twice weekly report - complete with photographs! - on the forming buds. The latest up-date (April 26th) reports bloom is only a couple of weeks away.



The Sakura (Cherry Blossom) trees show slightly different rates of development at the three main areas of the park: Playground/Zoo; Grenadier Pond/Hillside Gardens; and the Sports Field. Here is the link to help you track the buds and plan a trip to see them: www.sakurainhighpark.com And don't forget to take your camera!

Remember that special service Brian said he was planning during the "Season of Creation" next September? The one with "fewer words" and "full of images"? It's still on! If you 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. (I don't know about you, but I find images enhance my worship.)

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 various aspect ratios, this is very easy. If not, please try to compose your photo so that the top and bottom can be cropped off to get a full-screen 16:9 ratio image. You may send your pictures to John at: pauksenj@rogers.com, or give them to him on a USB stick or CD. By August 17 please!

Cherry Blossoms! Wild Flowers! The greening of Earth! Warm sunny days! Ahhh... Spring!! Images of Hope for the 'taking'! See you by the Sakura!

Nelsona Dundas

P.S. Check out the FREE Nikon Lecture Series featuring four professional photographers at St. Paul's Anglican Church (one and a half blocks from the Bloor/Yonge subway stop). Limited seating. Registration required. See: <https://contactfestivalnikon.ca/nikon-lecture-series.html> You can even get the sensor of your Nikon camera cleaned... FREE!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MAY 25th re SANCTUARY FLOOR

At our annual congregational meeting last February 16th, there was discussion regarding the centre floor renovation for the sanctuary. You may recall that the Sanctuary Dreams group had presented a proposal in October 2011, to remove the raised platform in the centre of the sanctuary, to remove the carpeting in the area, and to re-finish the floor, leaving a flat polished concrete finish. This was for safety; (someone may stumble and fall on the step of the platform), and for greater flexibility re the choir, the piano and other performances in the sanctuary.

Since then, a number of people have indicated a preference for a wooden floor in that area, to match our chancel. A third option is to remove the platform and to just replace with carpet. Of course, the option to do nothing also exists.

Regardless of what option is chosen, it is imperative that the grated opening in the floor be maintained (for heating and air conditioning airflow).

The polished concrete option had a preliminary quote in 2011 of \$ 6,500 (including grate work); a new quote is in the works. The hardwood floor option had a quote in 2013 of \$ 10,600, and the removal of the step, with re-carpeting , was estimated at \$ 3,000.

Last December, an anonymous donor contributed \$ 6,000 to our already existing \$ 500; (\$ 6,500 received in total). The \$ 6,000 donation was specifically designated for the polished concrete option.

Changes in the appearance of the sanctuary require a congregational vote. We will have a brief meeting to discuss this matter, and to decide upon a course of action , after worship on Sunday May 25th. Please plan on attending this brief meeting.

Julia Stavreff, Chair of Council

South West Presbytery Corner

South West Presbytery has a number of Committees, structured into three circles called Leadership, Program and Engagement. Leaders among each of these Committees work toward the implementation of various mission goals, most of which are primarily focused on supporting congregations in a) renewing their vision and mission activities, and b) implementing United Church policies which have changed. I'd like to tell you about just a few of those activities.

The Effective Leadership project is the result of significant changes to the Pastoral Relations process which were made by the General Council in 2012. It's being implemented by three different teams in South West Presbytery, under the guidance of the Mission and Leadership Support Commission, and will hopefully help congregations simplify the process by which they oversee and/or call (hire) a minister, among other things. The three teams are working on Mission Articulation, Nurturing Healthy Pastoral Relationships, and Supporting and Nurturing Ministry Personnel.

These changes have affected Bloordale in the following ways. First, over the past three months the Council and our various Committees have filled out a form that helps us look at our various Mission goals, through the lens of eight categories, such as Worship, Outreach, Leadership, Pastoral Care, Christian Development/Discipleship and Stewardship. Each group has completed a mission articulation and goal setting exercise, and then the Council will put those each together, and choose perhaps two or three goals, as we develop our Ministry and Mission Profile. This Profile is meant to replace the Joint Needs Assessment process, and will enable a more nimble search for new ministry personnel in the future. We'll submit our local goals to South West Presbytery as our means of accountability, as all congregations are expected to do, and our Profile will be posted on a secure website. Because of the diversity of ministries which are undertaken in the United Church these days, we're going to be called a Local Ministry Unit (LMU) instead of a congregation.

Second, the ministry staff of Bloordale, which includes Nelsona, Hanna, Lisa, Mervin and I, have participated in a self-evaluation and goal-setting process over the past few months that also conforms to the eight categories of mission and ministry outlined above, though in the case of

staff other than I, only those categories pertinent to their work have been completed. The Ministry & Personnel Committee, under the leadership of Connie Drummond, will also do an evaluation of staff under the same categories, and then evaluation and goal-setting interviews will be conducted, and brief reports submitted to South West Presbytery, again as a means of accountability. This is to ensure that LMU's are giving appropriate oversight and support to all staff, and encourages more intentional goal-setting and evaluation procedures.

The next aspect of Presbytery work I'd like to mention is the Cultivating the Urban Forest process, which is a mission articulation process for the Presbytery as a whole which will see priorities named. Currently the primary goal focuses on the revitalization of congregations and community ministries, as well as supporting the various ethnic and immigrant congregations which have been formed, either historically or more recently.

Lastly, the national United Church Comprehensive Review Task Group has come out with a report which makes general recommendations about four key mission themes: Property, Oversight of Communities of Faith, Oversight of Ministers, and Connectional Space. Under this model, Conferences and Presbyteries will be eliminated, Congregations will elect a Commissioner to General Council every 5 years possibly, and the Connectional Space between Congregations and General Council will be more elastic and voluntary, thus creating more independence for LMUs, which has positive and negative aspects to it. In addition, two new forums for the oversight and support of ministers will be created, namely a College to do licensing, conditions of employment, and discipline, etc., and an Association to do support, continuing education, advocacy, etc.

These and other aspects of South West Presbytery's work affect Bloordale's mission and ministry in multiple ways, and the Council and Congregation are kept informed through various means. Don't hesitate to ask Norm Dundas, Paul Rose, or myself if you have any questions about Presbytery's mission.

Brian McIntosh

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing."
— *Albert Einstein*



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Hats Off!



to **Bloordale Property Committee and their helpers** for their spring cleanup work on Saturday May 3. In addition to the extensive outdoor work there was also much needed interior cleanup, particularly in the south sump room located at the bottom of the CE building stairwell !

BLOORBEAT PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Following is the publication schedule and the deadlines for submissions for upcoming issues through May 2015

Publication Date		Submission Deadline
2014		
Sept	21	Sept 12
Nov	16	Nov 8
2015		
Jan	18	Jan 9
Mar	22	Mar 13
May	10	May 1

Hats Off!



to **Vanessa Mitchell and her Social and Fundraising Committee** for coming up with a new fundraising idea, namely the very successful "Afternoon Tea and Art" event .

The event was carried out with impeccable taste and outstanding execution!

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

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