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BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



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Minister's Message

The End of Empathy?

In a recent book I read one of my favourite Bible scholars, Walter Brueggemann, shared insights on an interesting book by John Compton called The End of Empathy: Why White Protestants Stopped Loving Their Neighbors. The book is a carefully researched study about the way in which mainline churches have dramatically lost members and public influence. Compton's research suggests that younger church members have fallen away from the social mandates of the gospel and have become preoccupied with individualized matters of self-actualization and therefore somewhat indifferent to the consistent pursuit of love of neighbour.

In making this claim Compton dismisses the idea, more prevalent in the United States than here in Canada, that churches have been depleted because they have become "too liberal," showing instead that they were always liberal over time concerning public issues of justice. In actual fact that passion for public issues of justice was largely shared by clergy and lay people alike, until the embrace of individualized goals led to a basic indifference to the fate of our less-privileged neighbours and therefore to a "departure" from the commitments of the mostly liberal churches. What was once a widely shared perspective and commitment has now come to be seen as too radical, too "political" for people who have come to crave church as a private haven from the world's troubles.

Compton also observes that the "departure" of the church has led to and is matched by a more general "departure" in society as a whole from the same neighbourly values and commitments. As many studies have shown, the gradual loss of empathy for one's neighbours in need is a striking and widespread social reality among us, and has led, along with various other factors, to numerous challenges, including emotional distress, the blatant public expression of hatred and rage, the clawing back or inadequate funding of social programs, a reduction in charitable givings, the division of communities into "camps," the vitriol on social media, and the like.

The word "empathy" has an equivalent meaning to the word "compassion" that occurs frequently in the Bible. Both words mean "feeling with," and to lose either means to lose

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Church Council

Chair	Pat Conway-Willis
Church Council Secretary	Beth Jazvac
Congregational Meeting Secretary	Beth Jazvac
Board of Trustees	Julia Stavreff
Ministry and Personnel Co-Chairs	Melody Klassen Pat Conway-Willis
Nominations	Pat Nelson
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Presbytery Representatives	Norman Dundas Paul Rose
Minister	Rev. Brian W. McIntosh

Committee Chairs

Congregational Life (co-chairs)	Pat Conway-Willis
Communications	Julia Stavreff
Finance, Stewardship, Planned Gift	Norm Dundas
Outreach and Christian Development	Lynn Lawrence
Pastoral Care	Vacant
Property	Pat Conway-Willis
Social and Fund Raising	Vacant
Worship	Melody Klassen
Member-at-Large	Joan Hollowell

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WORSHIP SERVICES IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

Mar.	26	Lent 5
April	2	Palm / Passion Sunday / COMMUNION
	6	Maundy Thursday – 7 pm (Bloordale UC hosting)
	7	Good Friday – 10:30 am (St. James UC hosting)
	9	Easter Sunday
	16	Easter 2
	23	Easter 3
	30	Easter 4 / Good Shepherd Sunday / COMMUNION
<i>(Note: Brian is on Sabbatical for May/June)</i>		
May	7	Easter 5 (Robin Wardlaw)
	14	Easter 6 / Christian Family Sunday (LeeAnn McKenna)
	21	Easter 7 (LeeAnn McKenna)
	28	Pentecost / Communion (Robin Wardlaw)
June	4	Trinity Sunday - Lay Leaders Offering Worship
	11	2nd after Pentecost / United Church 98th Anniv. Sunday (Robin Wardlaw)
	18	3rd after Pentecost / Indigenous Right Relations Sunday? (LeeAnn McKenna)
	25	4th after Pentecost (LeeAnn McKenna)

All Services at 10:30 am except as indicated

Minister's Message

(continued from Page 1)

the ability or willingness, or both, to “feel with” those who count as neighbours in the gospel’s horizon. Compassion is also frequently attributed to the God in the Bible, one of a triad of terms to describe God’s character and disposition toward us, the other two being “steadfast love” and “faithfulness.” What marks the God of Israel and Jesus as different from other gods and idols spoken of in scripture, in fact, is God’s capacity to “feel with” and “feel for” God’s covenant chosen people. This largely-ignored maternal instinct of God is often compared to a mother’s compassion for a child, the Hebrew word for “compassion” linked to the term “womb,” and is a key characteristic and disposition of the divine, who is stirred to solidarity at all times with those who are in pain or need.

Compassion is and ought to be, therefore, a defining characteristic and disposition of God’s people in the world, a community fully committed to the practice of empathy. This is not, to be clear, simply a good idea or an ethically dutiful resolve alone, but an inward stirring that brings forth a bodily response, within the body of Christ, to the pain, hurt, or need of others. Our ethical energies are not determined by rational thought alone, but are shaped by the sensibilities to which we have become predisposed as human beings, the ways of being which have been nurtured in us and have become habitual. When our sensibilities are consistently open to our neighbours in need, we can and will act in solidarity. But if our sensibilities, predisposed in current generations due in part to the decline in religion, are numbed or hollowed out, we will mostly fail to act in solidarity with our neighbours in need and will instead primarily embrace, not a hatred or dislike of them, but rather a kind of mild or passive indifference.

When we attend to the God of the gospel, we see the consistent compassion of which Jesus is the ultimate agent, and as his followers we feel the urge to engage the world’s pain in transformative ways. This is even the case with regard to this one earth upon which we

walk and by which we are sustained, for it is no accident that many theologians have called God the Earth-Mother who feels deeply for the creation’s groaning. It is for this reason that people of faith speak of creation care rather than simply of the environment or of the climate crisis, for we know that at root the earth “groans in travail” (Romans 8: 22) due to our modern preoccupation with self, and we lack a compassionate spirituality. Those who have such living empathy are a true remnant of the faithful, a company that remains capable of empathy and are prepared to enact compassion, no matter the amount of “departures” that have taken place from the church in recent decades. May we hold true to the practices of our faith that nurture such inward leanings and outward action, as we seek to live in sync with the God who gives us life, with no guarantees, and who entrusts us to feel for the pain of others rather than be numbed by the false idols of our time and times.

Brian

Pastoral Coverage for May-June

May 1st - 3rd – LeeAnn McKenna

May 4th - 8th – Robin Wardlaw

May 9th - 24th – LeeAnn McKenna

May 24th - June 16th – Robin Wardlaw

June 17th - June 30th – LeeAnn McKenna

June 30th: Brian’s Sabbatical ends

Stewardship Spot

“Stewardship is everything I do after I say ‘I believe.’”

Serving the Gospel or the Church

In the midst of our difficult conversations about the future of Bloordale United Church, I bring up the fact that the latest census from

Statistics Canada shows that over one-third of Canadians now have no religious affiliation, and that the number who identify as atheist or secular has more than doubled in 20 years. While religions such as Islam and Hinduism are growing in Canada, in 2021 53% of the population considered themselves Christian, down from 67% in 2011 and 77% in 2001.

This strong and seemingly irreversible trend has led to shock and concern among Christian leaders, but I often wonder why, given the endless stories of clergy abuse and hypocrisy, revealed tales of historic oppression, celibate priests telling women what to do with their bodies or condemning people for their God-given sexuality, and the like across the Christian landscape. More recent anti-vaccination sentiment, with convoys and mobs taking over streets and leaning hard to the right, has been linked to a conservative brand of Christianity, and think tanks and colleges describing themselves as Christian seem more concerned with Conservatives getting elected than with witnessing to the Jesus of the New Testament.

All this is as far from the church I know and love as possible. I see sacrifice, compassionate care, and dedicated hard work for the poor and marginalized. I see among leaders in the church circles I keep a genuine commitment to the teachings of a first-century Jewish man who was born in poverty to parents who were refugees; who owned nothing and lived among the rejected and powerless; who warned and criticized the imperial rich and rigid, and who preached a permanent revolution of love, grace, and forgiveness. When I speak or write among newcomers to this brand of Christianity about this man whom I believe was the Son of God, I sometimes hear not only a positive reaction but often a kind of shock. *"That's not what I was taught in my tradition,"* I'll hear people say, even some of you who may be reading this. Sadly, it seems that too many churches are promoting a kind of politically conservative religion rather than the Jesus of the Gospels. Jesus called for an imperial-powered world to be turned upside down, yet many of his so-called followers seem intent on keeping the imperial world just as it is – or

used to be, wallowing in sentimentality for the past.

But this should be seen as a newfound opportunity to live the way of the real Jesus, rather than an inescapable fate that holds the future church in its grip. If we are to evangelize – a word we United Church folks don't like, perhaps a lesser reason for our radical downsizing?! – we'll need to learn how to speak and live the gospel of the rebel Jesus again, though never with aggression. Gandhi once said the following: "The rose doesn't have to propagate its perfume. It just gives it forth, and people are drawn to it. Live it, and people will come to see the source of your power." In other words, this is the evangelism of the rose.

So it's no wonder people identify as atheists, or have left churches. What I hope for in our current social landscape is not a conservative revival, but that the disappointed, secular, and indifferent ones give Jesus, rather than the institutional church, another chance. Our role is to live in virtue rather than vestments, to give rather than to look to gain, and to become part of a prophetic liberation movement that dreams and prays for the freedom and fulfillment of us all, including this one planet home upon which we walk.

Jesus was crucified because he offered and lived a vision that terrified those who had moral, political, financial and religious investments in a stale, failed imperial world. That world is still with us, and unless Christ's followers present the joyous alternative, the next census will show further and deeper decline. While we can read the writing on the wall, and even see reasons for our failures as churches and as clergy, we're still called to be like the rose, to be like Jesus, even when it seems the church is crumbling around us. Let's be stewards of his gospel again, and not just caretakers of his church

Brian



HAPPY EASTER

Outreach News

Affordable Housing Workshop Feb. 1st

Co-sponsored by ECULINKS Etobicoke and KAIROS Toronto West, Brian was part of the leadership and planning group for an Everybody Needs a Home Workshop held at All Saints Kingsway Anglican Church at 7 pm. There was a great deal of information regarding both homelessness and the lack of affordable housing in Etobicoke, and included a call to action for mobilizing to work together to advocate for solutions.

A month later, in the March 2nd edition of The Etobicoke Guardian the leaders of this workshop were interviewed and an article published. This article is now posted on the bulletin board at the top of the stairs in the sanctuary, and we urge you to read it and take whatever actions you feel are needed.

If you'd like to be connected to the Etobicoke-wide advocacy efforts, let Brian know.

Annual Report and Outreach Givings

The Annual Report published on Feb. 26th shares the news of our amazing outreach-related generosity as a congregation, as we supported various local, regional, and national organizations with \$7,300, not including United Church special appeals. The Education, Outreach and Advocacy Cte. thanks all those who support the Outreach Fund of Bloordale UC, to enable this support to happen.

Chats with Brian After Worship

Over the past month we've had a few special events after worship, so Brian hasn't hosted a chat. The plan is to hold one for about 30 minutes or so after worship in Room 15 on March 26th, and then again on April 16th. Why not grab a coffee or goodie and join the conversation? There's no pressure to speak, and no one will be put on the spot or forced to share – but all questions are fair game.

May & June Sabbatical for Brian

Brian's sabbatical is fast approaching, and the plan for pulpit supply is coming together nicely. You can see the worship schedule for an outline of who will be preaching and providing pastoral care coverage for May and June. Our lay leaders will also be offering extended leadership, in administration, pastoral care, etc. and the two retired ministers who will be with us at different times, LeeAnn McKenna and Robin Wardlaw, are looking forward to their time with us, and offering additional pastoral coverage as needed.

The best news to share at the moment is that an application has been made to a United Church Shining Waters Regional Council fund that helps congregations cover the additional financial burden of their minister's sabbatical, and it looks like we're eligible for a \$3,200 grant, which will basically cover the minister's pulpit supply!

If there are any questions about Brian's sabbatical, speak to Beth Jazvac of the Ministry and Personnel Committee.

Congregational Discussion of Future at AGM

At our Annual General Meeting after worship on March 5th, in addition to taking care of the approval of the Annual Report, our 2023 Budget, our nominations, and other business, a discussion about the future of the congregation took place. This was centered around the four options outlined by the Council, specifically its Executive, which were contained in an urgent letter which went out to all members, adherents and friends of the congregation nearly a month earlier.

There was a conscious recognition by virtually all present that there has been considerable decline in both attendance and leadership over the past five years within our aging community of faith, and considerable reliance on a few dedicated leaders to enable the work of the church to continue smoothly. There

was also a recognition that our rentals income has increased, and that, while the total income of the operating fund is still fairly healthy, it is congregational donations that have declined over the same time period.

In addition, as the letter indicated, Brian will be retiring at the end of June 2024, and therefore a Congregational Ministry Needs Assessment will have to be done as soon as he indicates a formal desire to retire, which will happen soon. This Needs Assessment will need to be conducted with the calling of a future minister in mind, and therefore will require some volunteer effort as well as imply some degree of confidence that a call to a future minister will be to a congregation with a viable future.

While there was lament, and a sense of loss that was palpable in the discussion, it was also clear that, when asked about our capacity to have effective and energetic leadership in place for the congregation for the next 5-10 years, most people felt this was not realistic. Therefore, the Council was encouraged to explore options for our eventual closure at some point in the near future, with an eye to leaving some form of legacy in our community, perhaps through the building somehow remaining open, though it belongs to the United Church of Canada and not our congregation per se. This was in recognition that our renters have relied on the use of our building for many years, and we've formed strong bonds of relationship with them.

There was, lastly, a desire to continue to give time and space to enable people to digest the direction and implications of this conversation, and to have the Council do some research, with the Shining Waters Regional Council and others, regarding our more specific options related to closure, and report back to the Congregation in a timely fashion.

If you have feedback you'd like to share about the future of our congregation, please contact any member of your Executive, namely Pat Conway-Willis, Julia Stavreff, Paul Rose, or Brian.

Brian, for the Executive Committee

Finance News Update from AGM

Bloordale United Church ended the 2022 year with a deficit of \$7,520. We had budgeted for a surplus of \$3,958. So were \$11,478 below the budgeted amount.

Our congregational givings were down \$13,000, both from the 2021 givings, and the 2022 budgeted givings.

Thanks to increased rental revenues, our total revenue was \$299,000, considerably better than the previous year, and almost spot on with what we had projected in the budget.

Our expenses were not far off the mark from what was expected, except for property costs which in total, were \$12,000 more than expected!

For 2023, Bloordale is projecting a deficit of approximately \$14,000. Expenses are going up, and rental income is pretty much at the max, under present conditions.

The \$14,000 2023 deficit was approved by the memberships at the AGM on March 5th, 2023.

Perhaps you are wondering how we can survive a 2022 deficit of \$7,500 and a 2023 deficit of \$14,000 (i.e. \$21,500 over two years).

Bloordale had operating equity of \$39,000 at the beginning of the 2022 year, the result of a financially good 2020 year. This money was available to fund Bloordale over 2022 and the remainder is also available for 2023 and beyond.

If all goes according to plan/budget, Bloordale should still have equity of about \$18,000 to fund a further deficit after 2023.

Also, Bloordale has a manse fund investment of approximately \$250,000. We have been earning income annually from this investment and transferring \$17,000 annually to help with the payment of staff salaries. This amount can be increased if needed, at the direction of the Trustees, but would diminish the amount remaining in the manse fund investment.

We shall have to see what will happen over the next few years. But in the short term we are not in a bad place financially.

Julia Stavreff

For the Finance Committee

65th Anniversary Wine & Cheese

Bloordale United Church celebrated it's 65th Anniversary with a Wine & Cheese reception, for the congregation and their friends. In total 44 happy people attended, including 3 Wisniewski children.

Council sponsored this event, which was held on Sunday, March 12th from 2:00 to 3:30pm. There was complimentary red, white, and rosé wine (Open Cab2 Merlot VQA, Babich Sauvignon Blanc from the Marborough region of New Zealand, and Sandbanks Rose VQA), Perrier and San Pellegrino sparkling waters, and regular water. We had five varieties of cheese, and six different kinds of crackers, including gluten free crackers. Cheddar cheese sticks, raw walnuts, dried fruit, and some fresh fruit were also provided for some added variety.



Delmanor Prince Edward on Dundas Street West provided two large veggie trays with dips, and an abundance of dessert squares. Many thanks to Nancy H. for arranging for these treats from Delmanor, and many thanks to Delmanor for providing them.

Also, many thanks to Nancy for phoning many members with an in-person invite to our wine & cheese, and to Diane M. for taking photos, one of which is shown here.

Part way through our reception, the Bloordale 2023 Anniversary Award Winners were announced, and presented with certificates (see the subsequent sections of this Bloorbeat).

Thanks to all who helped put this event together, and thanks to all the guests who came and participated. Everyone seemed to be having a wonderful time, nibbling, sipping, and chatting.

We are planning to have more such events in the near future.

Julia Stavreff

For the Social Committee

Bloordale Anniversary Awards

Previous Bloordale Anniversary Award Winners

For the past eleven years we've bestowed upon three people, the Annual Bloordale Anniversary Awards, as a way of recognizing the significant contribution that our members make to both the church and the community. The past awards were:

The Bloordale Outstanding Service Award

The Bloordale Outstanding Service Award is given to a member in recognition of long-term, distinguished service to Bloordale United Church. The award may only be bestowed once to an individual, who must have been a member for at least ten years.

Previous Award Recipients

2022 – Julia Stavreff

2021 – Dana Bach 2020 – Shirley Jankus

2019 – Shirley Scott 2018 – Pat Nelson

2017 – Edna Bell 2016 – Helen Hitchcock

2015 – Jo-Em Bettridge 2014 – Ross Prout

2013 – Joan Hollowell 2012 – Grace Everett

The Bloordale Community Service Award

The Bloordale Community Service Award is given to remarkable people who put service

at the center of their lives, making a significant contribution to the surrounding community. The award may only be bestowed once to an individual.

Previous Award Recipients

2022 – Nelsona Dundas
 2021 – Lynn Lawrence
 2020 – Patricia Conway-Willis
 2019 – Diane Mulholland
 2018 – Diane Hercus
 2017 – Joan Hollowell 2016 – Frank Sword
 2015 – Ruth Alexander 2014 – Jim Donaghy
 2013 – Jack Lovatt 2012 – Bill Alexander

The Bloordale Vision and Mission Award

The Bloordale Vision and Mission Award is given to a person who has offered significant leadership in the past year toward achieving our vision and mission goals and objectives. The award may only be bestowed once to an individual.

Previous Award Recipients

2022 – Joan Hollowell
 2021 – Debbie Cauch-McIntosh
 2020 – Beth Jazvac
 2019 – Paul Rose 2018 – Pat Conway-Willis
 2017 – Roy Harvey 2016 – Jim Donaghy
 2015 – Bob Hitchcock 2014 – Norm Dundas
 2013 – Julia Stavreff 2012 – John Pauksens

Bloordale Anniversary Award Recipients for 2023

Bloordale Outstanding Service Award

Nancy Harris

Bloordale Community Service Award

Julia Stavreff

Bloordale Vision and Mission Award

Helen Hitchcock

Introducing the 2023 Anniversary Award Winners

Outstanding Service Award 2023

Nancy Harris, introduced by Julia Stavreff

Today it is my pleasure to introduce the Bloordale United Church outstanding Service Award recipient for 2023. It is **Nancy Harris**.



Nancy has been at Bloordale for 45 years. In that time, she has been a member of the Choir for years, and a member of council for years. She has been chair of Congregational life, and Chair of Ministry and Personnel, committee member of pastoral care and nominations.

In the late 1990s, Bloordale introduced a mentorship programme for the youth being confirmed. Each youth was matched with an adult of their own choosing, who was called, the Church Godparent to meet and discuss about whatever they wanted. One of these Church Godparents was Nancy Harris. I am pleased to say that she was the Church Godmother to our daughter Kristina. Somehow, they bonded over Purple Hair.

After all these years, Kristina and Nancy have maintained a warm and loving relationship.

In 2006, (or so) the Social and Fundraising Committee was established at Bloordale United Church. Nancy was one of the founding committee members. Besides going to at cost outings, this committee provided fundraising events for the Bloordale members and the Community at large to enjoy.

Nancy was instrumental in procuring many of our entertainers, most notably the Climax Jazz Band, on a number of occasions. Fashion

shows were arranged, with children as well as adults participating. It was quite something to have a high powered lawyer introducing the fashions worn by our models. Nancy both wrote the script describing the fashions, and got this lawyer to present.

The Social and Fundraising Committee has raised over \$88,000 for Bloordale programmes over the years, and Nancy had been actively involved over all those years with publicity, sales, brainstorming, and administration. Most current, Nancy has been instrumental in having DelManor Prince Edward provide us with some goodies at both last October’s Wine and Cheese, and today’s Wine & Cheese.

Many here today received a personal phone call to attend from Nancy. This is one of her most important ‘jobs’ at Bloordale – keeping in touch with everyone.

Please join me in applause, as we present to Nancy Harris the 2023 Bloordale Outstanding Service Award.

Julia Stavreff

Community Service Award 2023
Julia Stavreff, introduced by Patricia Nelson

I feel honoured to present this year’s Bloordale Anniversary Award for Community Service to **Julia Stavreff**.



In the winter of 2011, Julia initiated Friday evening craft nights for children aged 4 to 10 in the community. They became so popular that attendance had to be limited to a maximum of 40 each Friday evening. The

sessions ran for 1 ½ hours for four weeks in February for ten years, ending just before COVID.

The sessions were usually held in the gym, but sometimes in rooms 24/25 upstairs. All necessary materials and a facilitator were at each of about six tables. The children could move through the different stations as the evening progressed. One of the most popular stations was Gord Moore’s Play Doh table; Gord had as much fun as the kids!

As only Julia can, she excelled at recruiting volunteers for each evening to register the children, hand out name tags, work at the tables, serve juice and water and take children to the washroom. Some of her helpers had probably never done anything crafty before, but discovered it was good training for entertaining future granddaughters!

Word spread quickly and parents were phoning months ahead to register their children. Though that was not the main purpose, many parents were disappointed that the sessions only lasted for four evenings each winter. One year Julia was able to obtain a \$5000 grant from the United Church of Canada and that enabled the hiring of Lisa Cecchetto, a friend of Kristina Pauksens and Lynn Lawrence and the sessions were extended to ten weeks.

Please join me in congratulating Julia on this well deserved award for community service.

Patricia Nelson

Vision and Mission Award
Helen Hitchcock, introduced by Joan Hollowell

I am honoured to be presenting the Vision and Mission award to a very deserving **Helen Hitchcock** who has been a guiding light through many years.

Together with her husband Bob, and his love of things organized, they gave us charts to follow and records to keep.

Helen has been one of the undercover back bones of our church!



She is first to greet anyone new with a sincere welcome. She's the keeper of our records membership- a source of information on anyone who is ill – you've got to let us know – with constant check ups and check ins. Members are removed if no connection for 3 years but reinstated if they return. A great deal of her time has been spent keeping our phone lists up to date for which we are grateful. One of those people from whom if you ask you shall receive.

As an active church member, and an important Pastoral Care Committee member, it would fall apart without her! She is most deserving of this Vision and Mission award.

Joan Hollowell

Lunch Bunch News

Our next lunch bunch event is Sunday, April 2, 2023, at Cora's on the Queensway, 1555 The Queensway, south side, east of The East Mall. Cora's is one of our favourites, with all that fruit and whipped cream! Please tell me if you are coming so that our reserve seating is not off. A few last minute eaters can also be accommodated; just tell us that you are coming during coffee time. To sign up, or for information, talk to me Julia at 416-622-6309 or email me at stavreffj@stavreff.ca

Everyone is welcome, and we will save you a spot if you are on 'coffee' duty and will be a bit late. Some have been known to come for lunch, not being able to attend church. This is OK too.

Carpooling is provided, and a good time is had by all.

The Bloordale Lunch Bunch was the brain child of Gord Moore, (who died February 2, 2021), and had been around, going strong, for a number of years, before COVID put a stop to things.

The lunch bunch organizers arrange for group lunches after the church service and coffee time, at nearby restaurants, that can accommodate groups of 6 to 15 people at peak Sunday brunch time (usually around 12:15 or 12:30). Not everyone's favourite spot can accommodate us, but we ask for suggestions, and try to accommodate.

When we go, (usually once every 6 to 8 weeks) we sit together at tables of 4, 6, or 8, and order from the menu (breakfast, lunch, or even dinner) and pay individually.

Our first lunch bunch post Covid was on February 12th, at The Olive Restaurant, on The East Mall and North Queen. It was very nice, and enjoyed by the ten of us who went. Most of us had driven by The Olive but had never eaten there. All of us had egg breakfasts, sandwiches or salads. No dinners.

See you at Cora's on April 2, 2023!

Julia Stavreff

Upcoming Events Summary

Sunday, March 26, Chat with Brian, after worship

Monday, March 27, 7pm Council meeting

Fridays, March 31, April 14, 21, 28, May 5, 12, 19, and 26; 6:30 – 9:30 free gym basketball for tweens and teens

Sunday, April 2, Lunch Bunch Lunch at Cora's on the Queensway

Friday, April 7, Good Friday Service at Bloordale

Sunday, April 9, Easter Sunday

Monday, April 10, Easter Monday

Sunday, April 16, Chat with Brian, after worship

Monday, May 1, start of Brian Sabbatical

Sunday, May 14, Mother's Day

Monday, May 22, Victoria Day

Basketball is HUGE AND FUN!

What a great sport!



Basketball is

- creative,
- open ended,
- great for learning problem solving skills,

- excellent for learning to think on your feet,
- terrific for confidence building,
- AND best of all, in pick up games, there is no pressure while you learn.

Basketball at Bloordale 6:30-8:00 (10-12yrs) and 8:00-9:30 (13-16) yrs continues to be very well attended.

While our young participants are improving their skills and having fun I am also learning. I want to focus this article on my person observations.

As a community we need more places where teens and preteens are welcomed and enjoyed. They often have time limits in restaurants and adults seem to worry when there is a group of teens near. Yes, they are big and loud but still our children.

Twenty years ago I spent every weekday with 1200 teens. It was my privilege and my joy. The kids that come to basketball twenty years later are just the same. Clever, fun, polite, and kind to each other and to me. Yes, they try to pull one over on me and frequently succeed, but I wouldn't have in any other way.

Teens are the most interesting of humans. It is a difficult task to grow up in today's world and as a community we need to give them

more support. Organized sports are expensive for families and we need to provide more safe settings for teens to be welcomed and those settings should be free.

Beth Jazvac

Interfaith Food Drive

In celebration of Passover, Lent and Easter, and Ramadan, March 23 - April 23, 2023.



This year sees a convergence of holy days and seasons among the Abrahamic faiths during the months of March and April: Passover for Jews, Lent and Easter for Christians, and Ramadan for Muslims.

During this holy season, we come together in solidarity, compassion and kindness and join the Give 30 Campaign to support local food banks.

There are many people in our country who find it difficult to make ends meet.

During this holy season as we take stock of our blessings, let us turn our minds and hearts to those who may not have enough.

From March 23 - April 23, we request our members and congregants to make a contribution to a foodbank of their choice at <http://www.give30.org/donate.html> and invite their family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours to follow their example.

Let's be generous, kind, and compassionate to the friend and the stranger alike and respond to selfishness with generosity, division with social solidarity, and meanness with compassion and kindness.

Donate:

<http://www.give30.ca/donate.html>

Participating Organizations:

<https://bit.ly/3xc8DPa>

Drive Up-Drop Off Food Drive



We all want to help St. James Food Basket, so Bloordale is making it easier to donate. Please drive up to the side door with your donation weekdays between the hours of 1 and 4pm. Ring the doorbell and Mae Herrera (our new Office Assistant) or a volunteer will come out to collect your donation right from your car. If you have extra to share, please help!

Joan Hollowell has been making sure that we collect and deliver contributions for many years. The best way to honour her long time commitment to food insecurity in Etobicoke is to assist with donations. Please consider buying a few non-perishable foods to donate! Most helpful are protein foods such as peanut butter, canned fish, powdered milk, evaporated milk and tinned meats. Other useful items include spaghetti sauce, pasta, rice, canned tomatoes, canned vegetables, canned fruits, tea, coffee and soups.

Let's make Joan's ever present smile as wide as can be, while helping our neighbours!

Drive up-Drive off - Weekdays between 1:00pm and 4:00pm

- Drive Up to the side Door
- Ring the doorbell
- Your donation will be picked up from your car

Beth Jazvac

AA in Ontario

Did you know that AA has been in Ontario successfully helping people and families for 80 years? (Jan 24, 1943-2023)

A United Church Minister George Albert Little, (Metropolitan United Church) not an alcoholic, but so concerned about the effects of alcoholism he became keenly interested in AA as it grew in the US. He returned to Toronto after the First World War in 1940. Finding a copy of Alcoholics Anonymous -The Big Book he became so invested in the issue of

alcoholism that he would graduate from the Yale School of Alcoholic Studies.

Reverend Little continued to work for the welfare of alcoholics in Toronto and Ontario.

When he died at 74, J.V.McAree of the Globe and Mail wrote, "He was the sort of practising Christian who would literally give the coat off his back to anyone who sought his help. He did it many a time. The Church has lost a devoted servant and a great Toronto citizen. He left a wife, a son and untold thousands whose lives he had a direct or indirect hand in saving."

Rev Little was instrumental in starting Toronto AA groups as well as in Midland and other locations. He also invited the founders of AA to speak in Toronto. In 1944 there were 100 members. The Bloordale Group of AA has been with us for 37 years (October 5, 1986). During the pandemic through the wisdom of Brian McIntosh and Gord Howe our group leader, the meetings continued with protocols. Meetings must be available for support. Our group continues to be successful with many members.

The history of Alcoholics Anonymous and the heroes who began it is not common knowledge. Implicit bias strikes again. There are few families today untouched by problem drinking in some way. Anonymity is a cardinal rule in AA so few of the early heroes are widely known. We still owe them a great a deal!

This past weekend the Ontario Regional Conference was held at the downtown Sheraton and there were 3000 in attendance.

Information from Eighty Years of Happy Destiny (The Story of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ontario, 2023. Generously donated to the Church Library by Gord Howe, March 16, 2023.

Beth Jazvac

From Your Chair of Council

It hasn't been that long since our last newsletter, but I say hello to all and hope that all is going very well.



By the time you receive this, spring will be upon us - Happy Spring!

We held our Annual General Meeting on March 5th preceded by a luncheon. We also had three members participating on Zoom.

On March 12th, we held another Wine and Cheese in the gym to celebrate Bloordale's 65th Anniversary. We all had a great time and appreciated that so many came out, especially a few we hadn't seen in several years. Thanks to Nancy Harris' contacts, Del Manor Prince Edward provided us with two veggie dishes along with some sweets, all of which were very much appreciated. Thanks to Nancy for calling all our members to remind them of the occasion.

The 2023 Bloordale Anniversary Awards were presented as follows:

Bloordale Outstanding Service Award - to Nancy Harris, introduced by Julia Stavreff

Bloordale Community Service Award - to Julia Stavreff, introduced by Pat Nelson

Bloordale Vision and Mission Award - to Helen Hitchcock, introduced by Joan Hollowell

Congratulations to all.

We continue to receive calls from people wanting to rent space in the church, so that is good.

Thanks to John and Julia for looking after the Bloorbeat. It is very much appreciated and we all enjoy reading it.

Pat Conway-Willis,
Chair of Council

From Your Choir Director



Greetings members of the Bloordale congregation!

After the Christmas season our choir continued to practice regularly and provide various anthems for our church services. With all of our members' commitment we were able to inspire you through singing various anthems,

sung preludes and solos, during our worship services.

On the Family Day Sunday we joined our voices with the children's choir: Lily, Emily and Walter and sang a beautiful hymn with the congregation called Power of Your Love. I hope that we will continue to have our children participate in future services.

This past Sunday, March 12th, we celebrated our congregation's 65th Anniversary with the choir's dedication of the anthem We Have One Faith. It was a special celebration as we were joined by former choir members and other guest singers. Currently we are preparing music for the Holy Week, including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday and anyone is welcome to join us. We rehearse on Thursdays at 7:30 pm. Please speak to any of our choir members or myself if you would like more information on how to join.

Thank you.

Paul Wisniewski

Sunday Ushering and Coffee Time Volunteers

Please consider joining our wonderful Sunday Ushering team, which is shared and decided upon by availability. Our team thus far consists of the following amazing volunteers:

Dana Bach, Debbie Cauch-McIntosh, Pat Conway-Willis, Diane Mulholland, Jean Parker, Linda Sakamoto.

We are also so grateful to our two amazing greeters: Joan Hollowell and Helen Hitchcock.

Coffee Time Volunteers are in great need, as without them there would be no coffee time, which our congregation notably enjoys. Many thanks to Pat Conway-Willis, Linda Sakamoto, Beth Jazvac, Amy Bickford, Evelyn Relyea, Shirley Scott and Helen Hitchcock for volunteering and for everyone who has stepped up to help with clean up from coffee time.

The responsibility of coffee time and ushering

from time to time is so important to ensure coverage as well as avoiding burnout for those listed above who have generously joined our team.

Whether it's to volunteer to usher or do coffee time or both, all are welcome and would be so appreciated as we come together to worship.

Please contact Debbie Cauch-McIntosh or Pat Conway-Willis if you are able to join our wonderful team of volunteers.

Blessings, and with many thanks.

Debbie Cauch-McIntosh

Note from Mae

As you may know, I started in my role of Office Assistant in early December and with April coming up fast, this means that I will almost be 5 months with BUC. And there have been so many changes so quickly!

I started off working my 5 hours in the church office as a split-day and before February ended, the new office hours have changed to Mon to Fri, 1-4 p.m. This is all in part due to my work at Millwood Junior School, where I used to be a Lunchroom Supervisor and have recently become the morning School Secretary.

I have to say that the days at the church office are packed and not one day is the same. Which I appreciate, because I enjoy the variety and the way the days go so quickly. I am definitely grateful and am in awe of the work that Pat C-W and Beth Jazvac undertook as volunteers in the fall and over the months of transition where they still came in regularly to train and work with me.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank not just Pat and Beth for all their wonderful help, but to also thank Brian, everyone in the Council, leadership roles and every member of the BUC family for being so amenable to the changes that have been brought about with the changes in my schedule. I am so glad

to have both jobs at Millwood and here at the church. It makes for a busy day but definitely rewarding knowing that I am able to be of service to both the school and Bloordale.

Thank you for continuing to give me the opportunity to work for the church, the members and the groups that make up the wonderful Bloordale community.

Mae Herrera

New Renters

Wonderful news! We will have 2 new renters. One is for an adult basketball group that is trialling weekly for the next 4 weeks. We also have a summer camp that will be renting out one of the rooms for coding (it's the latest kind of camp for kids) for July and August. In addition, we may also have a potential for another renter for another children's camp this summer (creative dance). That would make 3 types of summer camps at BUC! We are truly a community hub year-round. And this also translates in revenue for the church and its operations. Great news, overall

Mae Herrera

Still Collecting Stamps and Glasses, and Flower Donations

For many years now we've collected used stamps for the Canadian Bible Society, and used glasses for Doctors Without Borders. Please see the receptacle containers on a table near the front door for both items. Your Pastoral Care Committee thanks you in advance.

In addition we also are happy to receive flower donations for significant Sunday remembrances. Please let the office know.

Bloorbeat Submission Guidelines (updated Jan. 2019)

When you email items to Julia and myself for Bloorbeat, please include the word "Bloorbeat" and words about the specific content in your e-mail header and in any file names, e.g. "Bloorbeat Upcoming Events". This makes it much easier to locate the items in my rather busy e-mail inbox when putting the Bloorbeat together.

In general, for text-based submissions, please avoid use of fancy fonts, and fancy spacings or tab settings because these create more work for me and make it more difficult to maintain a consistent style in the newsletter. And please never use "All Caps" in headings or elsewhere .

Straight text, in 11 point font, with bold (but not underlined) headings in 14 point font, is best. Use word wrap within a paragraph and "Enter" key at end of paragraphs, but not at end of each line.

For photographs of church related items we can handle the standard graphics formats such as .tif .gif, .jpg, .png or .pdf. We print in black and white but post on the church website in colour.

For advertisements, PDF or uncompressed TIFF are the preferred formats. Please check picture clarity and text clarity of your ad printed in your chosen size in black and white on a laser printer and viewed in colour on a computer monitor.

Bloorbeat on the Internet

This issue as well as past issues of Bloorbeat can be accessed on the Bloordale United Church website at:

<http://bloordale.ca/bloorbeat/>

Bloorbeat Available by e-mail

If you wish, you can receive Bloorbeat electronically as an e-mail attachment. Just inform the church office by email or at 416-621-1710

Health Guidelines for In-Person Worship Attendees

While we continue to encourage vaccination, we no longer require proof of being vaccinated, and will therefore no longer do contact tracing or be asking for either a medical exemption letter or negative PCR test. Our only continuing suggested protocol is using masks when in proximity with others, as you and others are comfortable.

Invitation for Submissions to Bloorbeat

Spiritual perspectives, committee news, community happenings, and ideas for changes and improvements to make Bloordale an even nicer place than it already is are all welcome.

Please submit or discuss your ideas with our Communications Committee chair

Julia Stavreff, 416-622-6309, stavreffj@stavreff.ca

Bloorbeat Publication Schedule

Following are tentative publication dates and submission deadlines for upcoming issues

Publication Date

Submission Deadline

May 26, 2023

May 19, 2023

Sept 24, 2023

Sept 17, 2023

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Consider a Planned Gift to Bloordale United Church

Giving a gift to the Planned Gift Fund through your will is one way to continue faithful stewardship beyond your lifetime. When your estate plan is prepared please consider a gift to your church through the Bloordale Planned Gift Fund. Contact Julia Stavreff or Norm Dundas for further information.

St. James Food Basket

When you go shopping, please pick up extra items for our food box, if you are able.

Please put items in Bloordale’s food box, located in the sanctuary, and we shall take it to the St. James Food Basket.

Or use our new Drive-up Drop-Off service during Bloordale office hours on weekdays.

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

Our printed pages size is 8 1/2" x 11"

To advertise, please call Julia Stavreff, 416-621-8050 or email stavreffj@stavreff.ca

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