



YPBC NEWS

December 2010

JOYEUX NOEL

There is a line in the film *Joyeux Noel* that seems to say something new about Christmas. The film tells the remarkable story of Christmas Eve during the First World War when soldiers fighting on the western front declared cease fires so that the birth of Christ could be celebrated in peace. The unforgettable line in the film comes the day after on Christmas morn when the conflict is about to resume. Three commanding officers agree to extend the peace in order that the dead and decaying bodies in no man's land can be collected and given a proper burial. The French officer and the German officer had reached agreement when the British officer said, 'Bury the dead on the day Christ was born? Makes sense.' But does it make sense? Christmas is about a birth not a death!

Yet to bury the dead on the day Christ was born makes sense when you think of the birth of Christ as a sign from heaven that it is indeed time to bury the hatchet and to let bygones be bygones, because that is clearly what God has done. He has come not to judge or seek vengeance against a world that has turned its back on him, but he has come to us in the innocence of a child to offer us peace on earth and good will.

The film actually begins with German children reciting poetry of hatred against the English and English children reciting terrible lines against the Huns of Germany, and the French children doing the same. The innocence of these soldiers had been corrupted and they had been taught to hate each other from early years. If that wasn't enough the dead bodies of their comrades in 'no man's land' gave them all the more reason to hang on to hate.

Nonetheless, on that first Christmas Eve on the western front, the German soldiers brought small Christmas trees into their trenches and started placing candles in the trees. Then Scots started playing their pipes and singing songs of home. The music ended, the candles flickered and the tension began to rise, but then a German soldier who was also a star of the Berlin Opera broke the silence and began to sing 'Silent Night.' When you hear that song coming from behind enemy lines you can't help but think, 'How can another who calls Christ his brother be my enemy.' And so

the Scots started to accompany the singer on the pipes and one carol turned to another and in no time the barriers were broken and together enemies were worshipping God. Sometimes we become entrenched in our grudges, but to bury the dead at Christmas means to let go of our grudges.



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The seasons pass and once again it is Advent. This issue brings Christmas messages and greetings from our Ministerial staff, and the richness of Christmas experiences from those who have served at YPBC in the past, as well as in other countries.

Also there is news of Church matters, a book review, a profile of a member away and photos of some recent activities.

The editor welcomes comments and suggestions. Please submit all articles for future editions to pilgrim.h@sympatico.ca

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and all the best in the Year 2011.

PRH

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Bury the dead on the day Christ was born? Yes, it makes sense. Of course in 1914 burying the dead meant more than simply letting go of grudges and guilt, but also the grief. It meant literally burying the dead - those who had been killed or left for dead in no man's land. It was no easy task. These were their comrades, friends and in one case even a brother. The surviving brother couldn't forgive himself or the enemy soldiers who had inflicted the fatal wound. There was a grudge and guilt and grief - often there is, but there was also a grace - there always is.

A cross was erected beneath which a padre offered the words of forgiveness at the Christmas Communion Table as a reminder that Christ took upon himself our flesh that he might also take our death and be raised up that we too might live. The only reason I hesitate to affirm that the day Christ was born is a sensible day to bury our grudges, guilt, and grief is that it is still a few weeks away. Why wait? Today is really the day to begin to let go. There is no time like the present. We all come to Christmas from this side of Easter and so Christmas Day and every other day is a fitting day to bury our grudges, our guilt and our grief that we too might be born anew. May your Christmas truly be filled with signs of hope and peace and a new sense that God is with us - Immanuel.

Peace,

submitted by Peter Holmes

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family card collection 1925

“Glory to God in the highest and peace to all of good will”.

When we sang this in the Children's worship time, someone asked, “What does good will mean?” One of the children immediately answered with, “God wanting the best for us...” That may not be how many of us would define “good will” but how appropriate for this time of year. Indeed, it is God's desire that each person will experience His best (He sent us His best!) and that we will extend God's grace to others. May we be faithful to demonstrate that “good will” not just at Christmas but year round. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

submitted by Miriam Little, Director of Children's Ministries

This Christmas season I have been meditating on the importance of receiving. God's people are invited to accept, to receive the Christ child. God has surprised us with Christmas and offers a gift we can simply receive.

It is my prayer we will discover the beauty in receiving;

receiving God's gift full of mystery and wonder,

receiving God's gift that will fulfill our deepest needs,

receiving God's gift that gives us hope for the future.

May God give us His strength as we walk alongside one another with hands open, waiting and yearning to receive.

In Christ our Lord who graciously receives us,
Merry Christmas!

submitted by Carolyn King, Greg and Ezra



Stopped at a traffic signal in the morning rush-hour traffic, my attention was drawn to a neatly dressed man, standing on the south-west corner of the intersection, holding a two foot or so hewn cross in his hands. A rather unusual sight, it begged the question, who could he be? What was his “story?”

The signal changed to green and I moved ahead, still reflecting on the image of the man with the cross, praying God would bless him, and feeling strangely grateful for having caught a fleeting look, amid the rush of heavy traffic, at the symbol that served to remind me of God's sacrificial love, the offer of salvation from sin and the hope of Heaven for all mankind. It also reminded me that the cross is the bridge between Christian spirituality and health, and that our Saviour whose birth we celebrate, cares for all in body, mind and spirit.

And so in preparation for Advent, the Health and Wellness committee launched The Walk to Bethlehem program on October 1st. A program that would serve to promote physical activity in members of our Church family but also offer, through weekly meditations, an opportunity to spiritually prepare our hearts for Advent.

That evening we had fun together, learned a little more about the benefits of walking but were also

honoured to have with us Dr. Nadel Tbaileh, a former Palestinian anesthetist who shared his story of his “spiritual walk” from secular Islam to Christianity. How profoundly moving for us to learn how God spoke to Nadel through a persistent dream in which “the cross”, a symbol he had never before seen, together with the testimony of a family friend who had become a Christian, prompted him to earnestly read Scripture, meet with Christian missionaries in Jerusalem, and ultimately seek and find the Saviour born in Bethlehem.

Ninety-five participants have now collectively walked from Toronto to Bethlehem (we did “fly” over the Atlantic!) over a nine-week period, and thousands of kilometers have been logged. Congratulations to all – we did it!!

At a date to soon be announced, we will share a mid-eastern meal together and look forward to meeting again with Nadel, his wife Heba and their three children.

William Barclay penned these opening words in a Christmas Day prayer:

“O God, our Father, we remember at this Christmas time how the eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

We thank you that Jesus took our human body upon him, so that we can never again dare to despise or neglect or misuse the body, since you made it your dwelling-place.”

The closing words of that same prayer remind us:

“never to forget that he knows life, because he lived life, and that he is with us at all times to enable us to live victoriously.”

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and may you know many blessings in the year ahead.

submitted by Heather Hetherington, Parish Nurse



To my YP family

Christmas is a time of celebration and joy. As we enter the season together my prayer is that we will feel God's presence, enjoy God's peace and be encouraged by God's power shown to us in weakness. Merry Christmas!

submitted by Cheryle R. C. Hanna

CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCES

Scotland

It is my pleasure to write of experiences of Christmas, with the flavour of Scotland. However, I begin first of all by describing our very first Christmas in Canada! It was Christmas Eve and after our service in church Betty and I headed for the airport to meet up with Fiona and family. It was the last plane out of Scotland before Christmas. What excitement! Those of you who know me know that I am not very good at meetings or departures!! But sure enough there they were making their way through the exit gate, tears of joy in their eyes to meet up with their recently departed parents to the great new land of Canada.

Then on Christmas Day after I had conducted the Christmas Morning Communion at Yorkminster Park the Spiers family met for their first Canadian Christmas dinner at Weybourne Crescent. It was two o'clock in the afternoon. The children had had their presents from Santa Claus and we were just beginning Betty's delicious chicken soup when I looked out of the window to see the snow falling in beautiful and thickening drops until the tree on our front lawn was covered. What a wonderful introduction! I felt that was what a Canadian Christmas is meant to be; a great fresh blanket of pristine snow.

Christmas is an experience to which we add in the gradual unfolding of our lives. There were our early Christmases in childhood spent in the basic community of the family. And as the family changes or expands or becomes separated so the thoughts and experiences of Christmas correspondingly change. New members are welcome. Babies are born. The older generation have their own memories. And every Christmas forges new memories for the children, the teenagers and the mothers with their young children. Donnie and Fiona will never forget the last plane on Christmas Eve.

And some of my own memories of Christmas past? Amusing or serious? When I was Minister of Hillhead Baptist Church in Glasgow one of the

highlights was the late night Christmas Eve service. It was my practice to begin the service from the back gallery and then move to the pulpit. As I was descending there were still latecomers piling in. I hadn't noticed that one of these had brought her little black dog. Consequently there was a mighty collision with the dog and me traveling in different directions. In a moment whatever dignity I had was brought low by this wee Spaniel while one of the deacons gathered up my gown, hood and sermon. I knew there were animals in the Christmas story but this was different.

We spent three years in a little church in a fishing



The Church on The Rock, Anstruther, Scotland

village called Anstruther. I remember taking our Labrador dog for a walk on Christmas eve. The harbour was quiet. The fishing boats were home for Christmas. The waves were

brushing gently against the harbour walls. It was eleven o'clock. Out of the Christmas stillness a church bell began to toll and every time now I hear Silent Night that is the image in my imagination. That was the night I couldn't get our little fellow Graham to sleep until a boat moving into harbour persuaded him that it was Santa coming to our town.

And finally this. It was Christmas Sunday and I was preaching in a little country church in the Border country village called Ashkirk. It was a plain small Kirk. There was no stained glass. If the sermon was boring you could look out of the window to the sheep and hills outside! There was no electric lighting: it was paraffin lamps. I had just begun to read the Christmas story from the Gospel about the Bethlehem Shepherds when the snow began to fall. It entranced me as I saw a flock of Cheviot sheep come round the shoulder of the pastoral hill accompanied by two busy Border collie dogs. The entire operation was supervised by the shepherd. I

could have sworn that Bethlehem was just round the corner.

A blessed and merry Christmas to all at Yorkminster Park from Betty and Kerr!

submitted by Kerr Spiers

*Kerr was our Senior Minister from 1991 to 1999. He had this to say about **Christian Preaching** (from his book "The Church on The Rock") :*

"It is the communication of vision. What the people have a right to say to their preachers and priests is this: Tell us what you see. Not what you saw thirty years ago. Not what you think you are expected to see. Tell us what you see: of the kingdom and the power and the glory of God: of the ways of God in the turbulence of our day; of the meaning of Christ for us. It is the people with the vision who will win the battle for the souls of men; not those who have a philosophy but those who have a dream; not those who are persuaded by argument but those who are impelled by a vision."

Moldova - Christmas Uncluttered

It was Christmas Eve 2006 in Moldova. The doorbell rang and I opened it to discover three children standing there. With shy smiles they asked "Sa poate colinde?" (May we sing carols?) This was something new to me in Moldova but I stepped back and invited them in, uncertain of exactly what was expected of me. One little boy pulled a small bell from his pocket and rang it throughout the duration of the song the children sang. Then one of the little girls, about 7 years old, began to recite a poem. Some Moldovan friends were with me that evening and explained that the children would expect something like candy, which I gave them. I was later to discover that throughout the Christmas and New Year's season children would go door to door at random times singing carols and reciting poetry, expecting some money or candy in return.

Christmas in Moldova (a former Russian Soviet state) has little resemblance to the over-commercialized experience of a western Christmas. The Russian Orthodox state church traditionally celebrates Christmas according to the Julian Calendar on January 7. During the Soviet regime, Christmas had been banned in Russia from the time of the 1917

Revolution. For 75 years the communists had instead exchanged gifts on New Year's Eve around a secular fir tree. It was only after the fall of communism, in 1992, that the Christmas holiday was once more openly observed. New Year's Eve continues to be the main winter celebration.



In the five years I was in Moldova things did begin to change. With a recent changeover in government party from communist to democratic, there has been a move toward the west, both politically and culturally. For example, last year, 2009, was the first time that December 25 was declared a national holiday.

While Christmas provided a break for some, the busiest people on our OM Moldova team were our Local Ministry Teams. They would use this time, in partnership with the local church, to bring the Christmas story to children in schools and kindergartens, some of whom had never heard it. Here is the account of last Christmas' outreach, written by Corinne, the Dutch team leader:

" We were also asked to help in Rezina with a Christmas program for some school classes and for 90 children from poor families. But, one day before our first program, it started to snow and snow and snow. In the evening I called the pastor from Papauti and he told me that the roads were blocked with snow; the only solution was to leave the car at the bottom of the hill and travel the rest on foot. A climb of 45 minutes in normal situations but now with snow, temperature of -10 degrees Celsius and lots of luggage (décor/ clothing/ guitar/ props/ 10 kg. of oranges/ 60 books). The preacher called again in the morning. Some cars

had arrived in the village so getting there was possible! My car didn't have winter-tires yet so we couldn't use it but someone from the church offered to take us there with his van if he could use my snow chains. The 15 km journey was a real adventure and



I still find it a miracle that we actually arrived. We couldn't take the normal route back to Rezina because the snow chains were broken. The only solution was to take the shortest route, straight-down the hill! A journey I never want to do again, but the enthusiastic children during the program were worth it. Were we going to reach the villages was the question we asked ourselves everyday; the only village we didn't reach was Pripiceni."

As you celebrate Christmas with your family and friends, please think of those teams who will be taking the gospel to poor village children in Moldova. Pray that their Christmas – and ours! - will not be cluttered with materialism but will be filled with the joy of knowing Jesus and worshipping Him.

"And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and worshiped Him..." (Matthew 2:11)

submitted by Barbara Fuller

LEGACY OF A FATHER

I was about 14 years old when my father invited me to accompany him to a little mission in the city where he had been asked to speak. I loved going anywhere with my dad so I gladly went with him to this special place on Yonge Street. It looked a bit like a small church with rows of benches, and the

preacher's podium up at the front. I chose to sit in the third or fourth row. We were quite early so the place was kind of empty. I sat quietly wondering who comes to this place. My dad seemed busy up at the front with the man in charge, Rev. Andrew Chisolm.

Gradually the "congregation" started coming in. It was not what I expected. Poor, rather scraggly men moved in all around me and I was not too comfortable. In fact, I sort of thought my dad had abandoned me. I could not believe my eyes and I felt sad and scared. This was not like our church.

The routine was that these men had to hear the preacher before they got their soup and sandwich. I don't remember what my father, who was a medical doctor, preached that night.

What I do remember is the look of despair on so many of those faces, making an indelible impression on my mind. I remember making a vow that when I was older and some day earning money I would support the Mission, a vow that I am glad to say has never been broken.

That was Yonge Street Mission in 1946. Little did I



imagine that 50 years later I would be on the Board of Directors of this place which has been a beacon of light in the midst of darkness for so many people. When I told this story to our executive director, he was greatly moved by my father's action. He said

“Your father didn’t just tell his son about the poor but he brought his son to be amongst the poor.”

My most vivid memory of my father is that he was a deeply caring and compassionate Christian doctor. We tend to think of a legacy as a sum of money given through a will. I’m grateful for a “living legacy” from a father who gave much of his life caring for the poor.

submitted by John K. Fenton, Treasurer

BOOK REVIEW

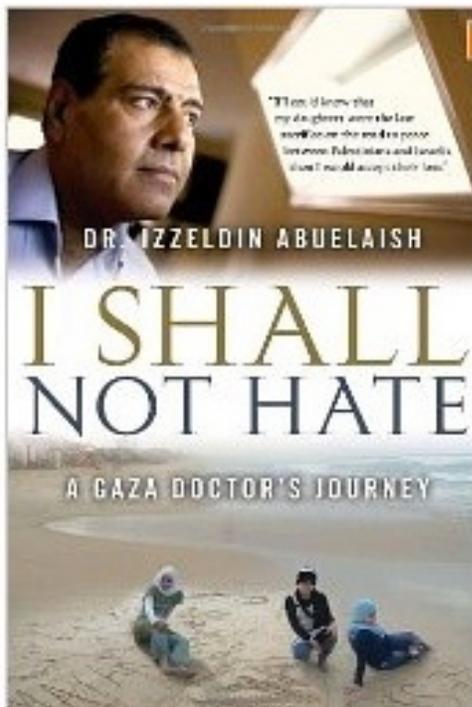
“I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor’s Journey”, Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish

Every now and again a series of unrelated events leads to the same destination. Reading the book “I Shall Not Hate” was the destination. First, a couple of the men of the church had the desire to begin a book club and asked my help. Over the next few months I paid greater attention to the book reviews printed each week in the Toronto Star and placed this book on the list of potential books for the book club to read. Second the ministers of the Church-On-The-Hill (COTH) were planning the fall leadership dinner and asked Dr. Abuelaish to be the speaker. And of course the largest event, Yorkminster Park entering into the mission agreement with CBM and the country of Lebanon, meaning a team of persons traveled to Lebanon to gather facts, meet the key mission partners and bring back ideas helpful for navigating the next three years.

I Shall Not Hate is the story of one man’s life as a Palestinian living in Gaza, set against the backdrop of the history of the region. Dr. Abuelaish begins the story near the end; a time when the struggles of dreaming of a better life for himself and his family seemed within reach. He had received an offer to work in Canada and the family was looking forward to new opportunities. Yet, the picture was not perfect, for they would make this move without his wife and their mother. He uses this quiet time to reflect and remember the story of his life.

Dr. Abuelaish weaves within the story of his own growth the history of conflict, sacrifices and humiliation experienced by the Palestinians living in

Gaza. Some of the stories are difficult to hear and I cannot imagine how difficult they were to tell. They are told without much ceremony or request for pity, but with a sense of sharing that is done when old friends meet and are asked to fill in the events of life that the other has missed. The goal is education and motivation. When his entire family came together to bid him farewell as he left for university he says, “This personal coming-together helped me realize that sometimes it’s better to look forward, to move into the future, rather than dwell on the past. And there was much to look forward to.” This statement



comes from a man that had to choose between earning the money his family needed to live and receiving the education that would ultimately make a real difference in his life and the lives of his family.

After reading this powerful book and then having the opportunity to meet the man and sense the passion of his conviction I am convinced that the events were not only very related but also ordained by God for my good. The men decided to make Dr. Abuelaish’s book the first for the club; his presentation to the COTH leadership dinner was compelling and challenging and the STEP team returned making me even more interested in learning more of the complex reality in the Middle East. The book *I Shall Not Hate* was a wonderful first step and I recommend the book as an opportunity to learn and begin to unpack the very complicated story of countries and peoples tangled together as we are in Gaza.

submitted by Cheryle R.C. Hanna

REFLECTIVE THOUGHTS - APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVIEW PROCESS

For the past six months many of us have met one-on-one to share our stories, our spiritual growth and our connection with the church. These conversations were meaningful and inspiring. They provided opportunities to draw out the best memories, hopes and dreams for the collective future. By linking one another through this process new relationships were formed as we opened our hearts and gained one another's trust. Not only did we engage in structured conversations with many individuals, we also met with Board members to seek input into their memories and conversations, recognizing that they have histories of their own.

These interviews were part of the journey. Now we focus on reviewing the conversation responses, looking for themes that link the past to the future. We are seeking to identify the positive core and discuss where God exists in these stories. We want to allow God to bring our story into His story. Guided by God's purpose we will soon identify themes and develop proposals at an Appreciative Inquiry Summit in February where leaders and congregants will gather to shape long-range plans. We will grow in this process and rejoice in the splendour and beauty of our church.

Ettie Dawkins I enjoyed being personalized and having the opportunity to give my views on the growth that I have seen at the church. In the past few years it has become more inclusive here at YPBC... I see the changes. I believe the greatest potential of the AI Initiative is gaining insight on the spiritual needs of the congregation and being able to offer support to anyone who is struggling with their faith.



I hope that the information gathered will allow the church to take a good look at how it is being run, ensuring that the church

continues to grow and advance the work of God to its highest level.

Ron Wakelin I felt blessed and challenged. It was amazing to see how many different ways that our church meets the needs of people in ways you would never think of. Certain commonalities came out. In my interviews people were transformed and excited about the future. I felt a real bond with them. I think we will tap into the real needs and aspirations of the congregation ...



people will feel a sense of inclusion and empowerment. The church will recognize important initiatives to start and other traditions to keep and build on... the congregation will think in positive ways and come to worship with a renewed sense of expectation and joy. I hope that we can translate the comments into meaningful results and that the spirit of God will be with those who interpret how the data can be used to make the outreach of YPBC more evident in our community and beyond.

Courtney (youth) I really think it's good to have a teen perspective... to hear points of views that others may not have. It was very helpful to see what I had put into the church and what I would like to see in the church.

Janet Kim This initiative gives a voice to everyone - even sometimes-silent members... it will be a challenge to reconcile everyone's vision for our future together, but each one of us has the wonderful opportunity to contribute to the process. I've really appreciated being able to reflect on what I love about our particular body of Christ, and sharing my hopes and dreams for how we can be greater salt and light in the world.



Diane Letsche I found the process to be a very rich experience. It gave me a chance to hear the wonderful experiences so many have had... and value at YPBC. We have made connections with so many people in our congregation. Nothing can take the place of a face-to-face interaction, to listen to what people have to say, and to offer invitations to people to become involved in new ways at our church. Many people I interviewed mentioned the long-lasting personal relationships and friendships as an experience that they highly value.

Neil Hetherington This was an opportunity for me to quietly reflect on why I love Yorkminster Park. I am grateful for the process that shows clearly that we have the energetic volunteer leadership in place that is serious about listening and acting on new ideas or reinforcing traditions in order to further strengthen His church.



Henry Regehr I was reminded of the importance that YPBC has been to me over the past nearly 40 years. It has become my "home", my community, the place I belong. It has become the place where I have been appreciated and have been able to contribute my skills and interests. This process let me know that I was a recognized part of the community and that my views were taken seriously. The interviewer was kind and supportive during the process and recognized my commitment to the community of worshippers.

Jane Johnson The interviews were all so different, yet very positive. There was a definite 'connection' as we spoke; it was lovely... the people I interviewed really love the church. This initiative allows people to be heard. I hope people continue to feel even more a part of the church.



Carol Belford Interviewing allowed me an opportunity to get to know people in a more familiar way. So many people are involved in various activities. How often do we really get the chance to share our thoughts? The potential value of this initiative is to have a congregation that is united in continuing the positive characteristics that made us such a warm church in the past.

Tom Robertson This interview process made me feel part of the church family. I am pleased that my input and thoughts may be integrated into our church's future. Overall, the process brings more people into active participation. I hope that our church will be encouraged to continue to be reflective of its members.



Andrew Alberti I enjoyed the opportunity to meet a variety of people in the congregation. I discovered new things about their involvement with the church and the things that they found most important about the church. I hope that this process will give us the opportunity to help identify the things that are most important to people and allow us to focus on them. I hope that it will help us to find the things that attracted people to Yorkminster Park and try to attract other people to the church.

Patrick (youth)

I enjoyed the interview process. I really think that it was productive. I felt as if what I said seemed reasonable and attainable. Being able to express my ideas out loud to someone who might be able to help with making changes, made me feel like I was heard and valuable to the church. I believe that it will change the youth in many positive ways. This process should happen more often so that the youth can expand. I really do hope that this interview helps and that our youth group will grow.

submitted by Elaine Snider



FROM THE WOMEN'S EXECUTIVE

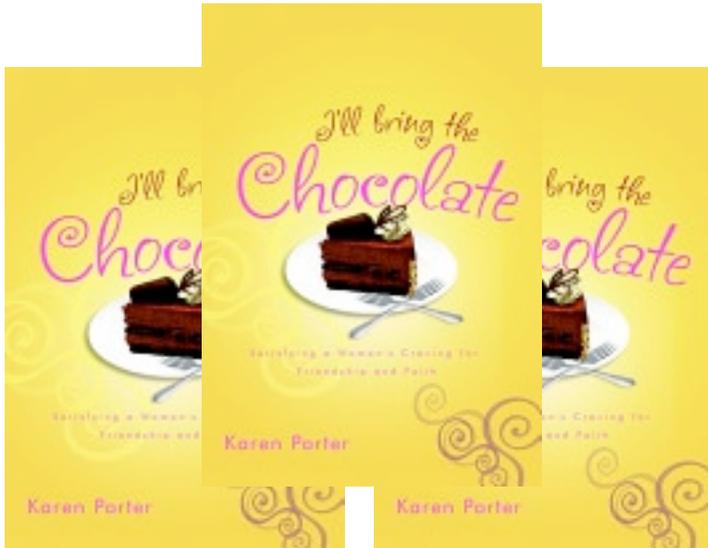
OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

As women with a passion for serving God, we are a caring community who strive to be faithful, creative and accepting.

For such a time as this, we endeavour to

- **Welcome and invite all women into our community**
- **Encourage women to discover their full potential in Christ**
- **Motivate, minister, mentor and befriend**
- **Live and serve under the influence and empowerment of God's Spirit**

In the spirit of our mission, we are planning a day long **WOMEN'S RETREAT** on Saturday January 15, 2011. Reverend Cheryl Hanna will be our leader and her theme will be based on the book, *I'll Bring the Chocolate – Satisfying a Woman's Craving for Friendship and Faith*, by Karen Porter.



Cheryl is the Minister of Discipleship at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church and Karen is Vice-President of international marketing at a major food company in Texas and an adjunct professor of the Texas Bible Institute.

Karen writes...

Chocolate is that sweet "something extra" that infuses anything ordinary with delectable flavor and zest. In the same way, loving friendships can sweeten a woman's life and make almost any situation – good or bad – taste even better.

Women of all ages are warmly invited to what promises to be a fun-filled and inspirational time apart. Be sure to set this day aside – a wonderful way to begin a new year!

Time: Saturday January 15, 9:30 am-3:30 pm

Place: 33 Harbour Square - Party Room, 35th floor (SW corner of Bay Street and Queens Quay)

Registration Fee: \$25.00 Light refreshment and Lunch Included

Registration Forms: 1) In the envelope on bulletin board in the north hall 2) The narthex

Registration and Payment Due:

Wednesday January 12. Please submit payment, cash or cheque, to Diane Letsche, Rhoda Hill or Ellen Branscombe. Cheques may be made out to YPBC Women.

AND THERE WILL BE CHOCOLATE!

submitted by Jonanne Fenton

TRANSITIONS

Since the last newsletter there have been several milestones in the life of the church.

Infant Dedications

Benjamin Martin Abell, *son of Kim and Martin Abell*

Olivia Charis Lee, *daughter of Jin and Sam Lee*

Baptisms

Jackie Chung

Janice Giles

Heather Rayne

New Members

Phaby Utomo

Rick Hariman

Deaths

Al Brown

Jacob Spelt

UNDERSTANDING SABBATICAL

Understanding “Sabbatical” from Clergy Renewal by Richard Bullock and Richard Bruesehoff states:

“The essence of sabbatical comes from the Hebrew word ‘sabbat’ and the biblical traditions surrounding it. Sabbath keeping and sabbatical leave are intended to refresh and renew. A sabbatical is not a vacation, but a purposeful time when ministers can be renewed in vision and hope, and connect with the roots of soul and mind, and with God.

Sabbath keeping is setting aside time that God consecrates and makes holy.”

In his book Remember the Sabbatical to Keep it Holy, David Ellingson describes sabbatical as ...

“a time to relearn and rehearse that critical capacity to reflect... to receive rather than to give, to get input rather than give output, to carefully nurture and cultivate their lives so that the soil of their spirits might be rid of weeds and have an opportunity to receive nourishment.”

“A sabbatical is a life and soul changing time – a time when perspective and the Holy Spirit can come together.

Jesus models for us what needs to be done in the sabbatical and in daily ministry: keep moving toward Abba, the Father – in prayer, in teaching, in travel and especially in moving from community to community. Sabbatical is about pilgrimage with Jesus toward God. Jesus’ forty days in the wilderness marked a turning point in his ministry, Moses’ time spent tending sheep helped change his perspective on life so that he could hear God’s call. David, too, tended sheep and thereby learned valuable lessons about God’s care and provision. Paul, struck down on the road to Damascus, disappeared into the desert of Arabia for three years and emerged with a new vision. Sabbatical offers a minister an opportunity to step completely out of current ministry obligations, and frees the minister to

embark on a holy journey. Over and over stories in Scripture point to the renewing power of Sabbath time. It is a gift of rest given by God, a gift of renewal and refreshment.”

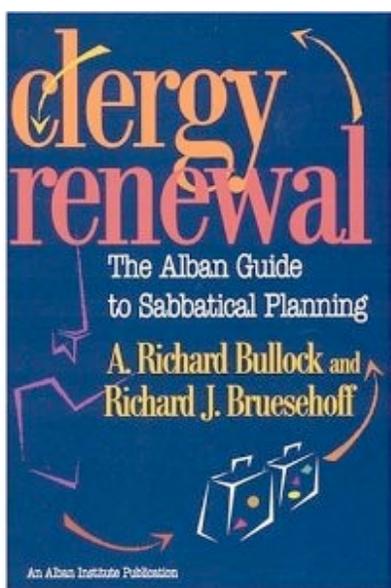
“The nature of being an effective minister involves continual spiritual growth. Spiritual depth does not happen by accident, but takes hard intentional work. It is a lifelong process involving big chunks of time set aside for reading, prayer, solitude and reflection. Trying to do this while working between forty five and fifty hours per week is nearly impossible. If ministers are to provide deep and challenging sermons regularly, congregations will need to provide opportunities for them to get away for extended periods of time dedicated to spiritual development.

Ministry today is changing rapidly. Visiting other congregations that are successfully reaching out to new members allows a minister to garner new insights to bring back to his own congregation. Minister vitality is the greatest asset in building up a congregation. The paradox of congregational ministry for ministers is that they are constantly invited to overextend (there is always someone they

should have called or to whom they should have given attention), but doing so can torpedo the vitality that drives their ministry.”

Planning for a time of sabbatical and renewal for Peter Holmes has been an important initiative for the Board of Deacons this year. We have talked about it and prayed about it. We have reflected on the possibilities and gifts which this time of renewal will bring to Peter’s spiritual life and to the life of this church. The Board of Deacons has approved a sabbatical leave for Peter Holmes from April 25-October 11, 2011. The details of Peter’s plans and the plans for Interim Ministers are “in process” and will be shared with the congregation as soon as they are completed.

submitted by Diane Letsche,
Chair, Sabbatical Committee, Board of Deacons



RETURNING WITH SONGS OF JOY

The young Moldovan couple met me at a pizza place downtown in Chisinau, the capital city of Moldova. They had recently returned from a Closed Access Nation (CAN) in the Middle East and I was meeting with them to debrief and offer some pastoral care. Hearing their stories of the risks and dangers of being a Christian in that strict Islamic culture, I marveled at the call of God in their lives as they prepared to return for another term.

At the same time I was beginning a course of preparation for another young woman from Moldova who sensed the call of God for her to go to a CAN in Central Asia. In our sessions we would talk about the challenges she would face in a Muslim society and the risks she might encounter as a Christian believer. She had read enough and heard enough to count the cost and without hesitation she said, 'Yes, I believe God is calling me to this.' Within three months of her arrival in that country she had been

arrested along with a youth group that were meeting together one night. Fortunately she was released the same evening because she was a foreigner but the leaders were held for

several days. This is a country where the police are known for their brutal torture. Natasha knows that the call of God can be personally costly but she loves Jesus. And she wants others to know about Christ's love for them. As her mentor and teacher sometimes I felt guilty at the thought of sending her into potential danger. At the same time I felt honoured to be part of her journey, knowing that others will come to know the love of God and to understand His grace through her life and testimony.



For me missions is exactly that :

- Demonstrating the love of the Father
- Proclaiming redemption through Jesus Christ
- Helping people to understand, to grow, and to walk in God's grace

For the last five years, sent by this church, and in partnership with Canadian Baptist Ministries and Operation Mobilization, I have been serving in the Republic of Moldova with the OM team there. The OM Moldova team works in this former Soviet country to assist the Church in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, meeting felt needs in the community and in helping the Church develop a vision for and fulfill its role in world missions. While I personally sat behind a desk much of the time, our team was and continues to be involved in numerous ministries, always in partnership with the national church. OM Moldova runs missions training

programs, provides Christian literature in villages, provides training and grants for micro-business enterprises, establishes and resources day centres for poor children, brings relief to forgotten elderly, shares the gospel with youth through sports ministry, hosts hundreds of short-term missionaries annually, and involves the partner churches in development projects.

It was my privilege to provide support services in the form of member care, encouragement, training and help to those who

fulfilled the ministries mentioned above. When newcomers joined the team – either foreigners or Moldovans – it was my department (Personnel) and I that ensured that their needs were met. We provided cross-cultural training, organized language lessons, arranged housing, established budgets and dealt with whatever crises arose.

Years ago when my heart was first awakened to world missions, my desire was to go to a place where

the gospel had not been preached. How odd that God would send me to Moldova, a nominally Christian country! (Let me also say that there are still many people in this former atheistic-Soviet country who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and who have no hope in this life or the next.) My greatest joy, though, was to teach young people, like Natasha, who had a zeal to share Christ where the gospel was not known. For me it was a joy to help prepare Vlad to go to Nepal, where he and his team-mates trekked through the mountains of the Himalayas bringing the Christian message and literature to remote mountain villages. To help Viorica prepare to serve in Angola; to assist Aurica, Ina, Olea, and Viorica going on a short-term mission to Kazakhstan; and to help prepare Natasha to go to Central Asia – these opportunities thrilled me, knowing that Christ’s name would be made known in countries that I may never get to myself, and places where the gospel had not been preached.

My time with OM in Moldova gave me a much broader view of the world and its needs. I think I have learned, not only to be less egocentric, but to be less ethnocentric. I have also gained a broader view of what God is doing throughout the world and what He is able to do through people who love Christ and who want to serve Him, whatever the cost. My heart’s desire is that, wherever God may lead me next, I will continue to have some opportunity to challenge and mobilize people for missions, not only locally but globally as well.

I take this opportunity to thank Yorkminster Park Baptist Church so much for faithfully supporting me financially and praying for me regularly. Thank you to the Board of Missions for your help and encouragement, and to the Yorkminster Park Women (including the Tuesday Morning study group!) for the ways you remembered and helped me. It is a joy for me to see the church take a deeper STEP into missions in partnership with CBM. May the Lord continue to enlarge your hearts, to lengthen your stakes and to broaden your vision as you demonstrate and proclaim the Kingdom of God here in Toronto, in Canada and throughout the world. May each one of you know beyond doubt that you too are “firmly in His grip.”

submitted by Barbara Fuller

MEMBER PROFILE

I recently enjoyed the beautiful Thanksgiving service at YPBC and wanted to share why we aren’t at our home church more often! Stu and I have settled in to our new home in Northwestern Ontario. We now live in Sioux Lookout, which is a 4 ½ hour drive from Thunder Bay. Our community is around 6000 people, half of which are First Nations people of Ojicree descent. There are hundreds of lakes, millions of trees and a vast sky here – it is simply beautiful. The spectacular nightly sunsets make it easy to call this place home.



Stu is currently working with a local environmental engineering firm to address environmental disasters on northern fly-in reserves. He has been spending lots of time in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig (aka “Big Trout”) working with local people to clean up diesel spills. There is much work to be done in supporting initiatives to keep the land and water clean.

I am working full time as a community physician for Wunnumin Lake First Nation, which is about an hour flight north of Sioux Lookout. I spend 5 days per month on the reserve, and support the work of the nurses by phone the rest of the month. When in Sioux Lookout, I am involved in a blend of Emergency Room, inpatient medicine, and obstetrical work.

The challenges people face here are great, not the least of which are poverty, malnutrition, joblessness, and serious physical illnesses. The battle against

depression, substance abuse and teenage suicide is raging, and we are only beginning to understand the political and historical undercurrents to so many of the problems that have devastated these communities.

There are strong spiritual beliefs here, each community being a unique blend of traditional beliefs and influence from outside cultures. Overall there is incredible resilience and positivity as people take care of one another and move towards improving their future. It is such an honour and a blessing to be part of life here, and although we miss our Toronto home (and church!), we feel that we are where God has called us to be. Stu and I have been volunteering at the Sioux Lookout Out of the Cold, so it feels like home!

Meegwitch (thank you) for all your support and we look forward to being back at YPBC for a visit in December!

submitted by Lianne Gerber Finn and Stu Finn

LESTER RANDALL PREACHING FELLOWSHIP

Once again, for the 24th time, those people interested in the craft of preaching at its highest level were rewarded for their attendance at the Lester Randall Preaching Fellowship week-end at the end of October. This year our guest lecturer and preacher was the Reverend Dr. Molly T. Marshall, President and Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation at the Central Baptist Seminary in Shawnee, Kansas. She gave her Saturday lecture the title “Telling it Slant; Preaching on the Trinitarian Life of God” and, in her sermons Sunday morning and evening, gave evidence of her thesis that “The doctrine of the Trinity holds great promise for renewing congregational life”.

She proffered the point of view that the preacher must paint a picture for the congregation rather than merely quote verses and make arguments for God. Throughout her lecture she referred to the iconic image painted by Andrei Rublev in the 15th century of the three angels enjoying the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18). She came prepared as a teacher with printed outlines of her lecture, allowing us to follow the progression of her comments about the biblical roots of the Doctrine of

the Trinity to a concluding expression of hope that those who preach might lead their congregations to experience “Preaching so ‘Truth Might Gradually Dazzle’”.

Dr. Marshall’s sermon titles were: “God Plays All the Roles” and “The Church as Icon of the Trinity”. In them she offered practical illustrations of the



preacher’s use of the themes of her lecture. As in years past, we experienced outstanding presentations of the Word of God which exhorted us individually and collectively to live according to our faith and present the Church as an example of The Kingdom of God. All of Dr. Marshall’s contributions are available on disc at the table in the Narthex.

submitted by Norm Hubley

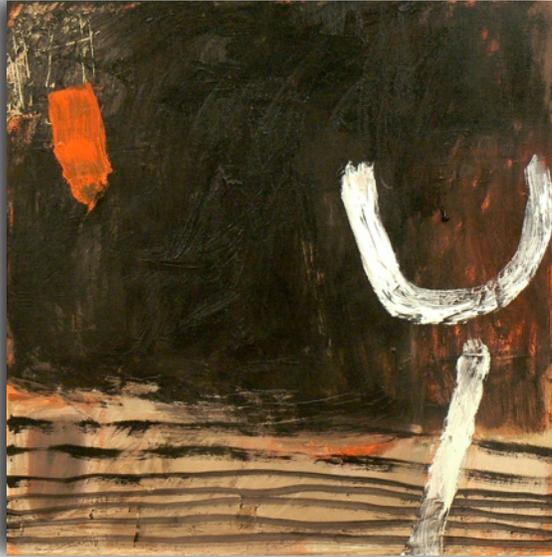


YPBC GALLERY

Until Sunday, Dec 19 - Fibre artist **Tracey Lawko** has re-visited a 16th century European artform called Stumpwork, a raised embroidery technique so labor-intensive that the results are mostly miniatures. Tracey has modernized and personalized the technique so her works can be significantly larger in scale without losing any of the intricacy and lavishness of single-thread embroidery, padding, appliqué and beadwork.

Tracey Lawko's reception attracted a wide sphere of out-of-towners, patrons, friends and family most of whom were visiting YPBC for the first time. Congratulations to Tracey on a most successful opening with positive comments and a number of pieces purchased.

Opening Sunday Jan 16, 2011- This new year, **Margaret Glew** has developed a body of work specifically created for our gallery space. We feel excited and proud to be able to show an artist of



Margaret's calibre. Her large-scale abstract oil paintings have had showings in NYC, Atlanta, several Canadian provinces, extensively in Ontario and in at least two households in our congregation.

Yorkminster Park Gallery is committed to exhibiting a wide range of artistic subjects, materials and approaches. Those who love abstract art will respond

to Glew's use of colours, textures, strokes and symbols enhanced by her graphic and robust execution.

Others who are confused or intimidated by abstract painting need not feel alone. An excellent Globe & Mail article (1797293) titled **How to read abstract art** is available on line. In the article, Kitty Scott, director of visual arts at the Banff Centre gives concrete tips for becoming "art smart." One sub-section, **You don't have to get it**, says, "There's not going to be a quiz, and you don't have to like it. . .discovering an artist's work [is

like] learning a new language."

Margaret Glew will be present at the Jan 16 opening to welcome you and discuss her work. Please come and invite others to join us.

submitted by Sue Ericsson

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

In a world that seems not only to be changing, but even to be dissolving, there are some tens of millions of us who want Christmas to be the same ...

with the same old greeting "Merry Christmas" and no other.

We long for the abiding love among men of good will which the season brings ...

believing in this miracle of Christmas with its softening, sweetening influence to tug at our heart strings once again.

We want to hold on to the old customs and traditions because they strengthen our family ties,

bind us to our friends,

make us one with all mankind

for whom the Child was born,

and bring us back to the God Who gave us His only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

So we will not "spend" Christmas ... not "observe" Christmas.

We will "keep" Christmas - keep it as it is ... in all the loveliness of its ancient traditions.

May we keep it in our hearts, that we may be kept in its hope.

Peter Marshall (1902 - 1949)



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☆ORDINATION☆

photos by Donna Willett