

AN INCLUSIVE
CONGREGATION
MINISTERING TO
MULTICULTURAL TORONTO

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Good News ON BLOOR

Easter Surprise

by The Rev. Joyce Kelly

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. John 20:1.

Mary is confused. No stone. No body. She doesn't know what's happening, so she runs to tell Peter and the other disciple. They race to the tomb and look in, but they don't know what's happening either. Even the one who got there first.

What a bizarre way to begin the story of Easter. Mary is confused. Peter, too. John's gospel says that the other disciple believes, but there's no telling what he believes, certainly not a lot, since both guys just go home as if nothing has happened.

Even when Mary realizes that the gardener is the Risen Christ who knows and speaks her name. Even when Peter and all the others meet Him in coming days where they live. Even when we are confronted with the shocking reality of Easter, it's hard. Wouldn't we all just like to have it back the way it was – or the way we'd like to think it was? Please, God!

Most of us do not want the radical new life that the Resurrected Christ promises, can't trust that it's real, and that we're part of it. We sure don't want the struggle that leads to it – betrayal, denial, pain, regret – or our complicity.

We prefer a warm-blanket Easter that skips over all the hard stuff, and brings us straight into a fine Easter Day. One artist painted

Christ floating above his vacant tomb, dressed in flowing white and blue robes, his face clean, hair neat, hands and eyes upraised in gratitude. His feet do not touch the ground, but are socked in a white cloud that separates him from everything on earth.

But another artist depicts Christ stepping out of the tomb, hips hardly covered with rags, palms turned upward displaying their ruin, side bleeding. And on his lips, almost a smile. What a shocker! The man almost looks glad. Even midst sure signs that resurrection has been a struggle, something happened. Something fierce and world-altering. Something costly. But he smiles because he has been raised out of the worst the world can do.

The truly is, if there is no death, then God's got nothing to do. Whatever your confusion, your struggle, or sorrow, whatever death is happening in you, go all the way through it, and you will meet the glad Light of Easter morning. You can do it, for you are not alone. The grace and power of God overcomes all that Evil Friday can do. Good is stronger than evil. Love triumphs over hate. Life conquers death.

And in these coming days, may your Easter experience bring a smile to your lips. Blessings.

Congratulations to **Betty Noble** who received an Ontario Volunteer Service Award for 20 years of consecutive service with the Victoria (University) Women's Association .

Don Gillies, a Victoria Univ. alumnus, was recognized for his outstanding volunteer service in support of Victoria at the Univ. of Toronto's Arbor Award ceremony last Sept.

Nancy Williamson, Faculty of Information Professor Emerita, was honoured in a recent edition of *Cataloguing & Classification Quarterly: Volume 48 Issue 1*. Known as a Festschrift, the book honors a respected person, usually an academic, and is presented during his or her lifetime. This edition is titled, "Special Issue: Is There a Catalog in Your Future? Celebrating Nancy J. Williamson: Scholar, Educator, Colleague, Mentor." (*Val Lem*)

Laurie Gordon and **Harold Durnford** were honoured during a service in March for their years of dedicated work for the Communications Committee and Bloor St. Church. Laurie has worked several years to create our new and improved website. Harold, who does the posting for our website, and takes many of the church photos which are used in *Good News on Bloor*, is our webmaster.

Three Very Special Birthdays:

Congratulations to **Arthur Dayfoot** who celebrated his 95th birthday in March. Arthur was born in Georgetown. When he graduated from Emmanuel College, he worked briefly in Canada and then became a missionary to West China. It took him a year to get there during World War II, going via South Africa, and India, picking up Dengue fever on the way. In China he met and married Bessie, who had travelled to China as a missionary nurse. They left China due to the revolution and continued their mission work in Trinidad. After returning to Canada, Arthur was minister at Regent Park and Heritage York pastoral charge before retiring to Brampton and then Toronto. (*Nancy Gordon*)

Congratulations to **Ellen Vincent** who celebrated her 96th birthday in March. Ellen is a long-time member and supporter of Bloor St. who served in many roles including Chair of Session (now Council).

Congratulations to **Dr. Peter Barg** who celebrated his 92nd birthday in February. His whole life has been rich, productive and full of adventure. When Peter was 6 years old his parents and their seven children traveled by train, steamship and train again from Ukraine to southern Ontario. They were Mennonites who had heard there was land near Kitchener/Waterloo. But when they arrived they were told there were no spaces left. They got back on the train and traveled to Duchess, Alberta where they were warmly embraced by a rich Mennonite community. Within a year they had built their own home and began farming. Peter was the youngest and the one who benefited most from the education available in his rural community. He attended a Mennonite college in Kansas before being accepted in medicine at McGill Univ. Edna was training to be a nurse in Montreal where they met in a Student Christian Movement group. They married in 1946. Following post graduate studies, Peter and Edna settled in Wallaceburg where Peter was a beloved family doctor for thirty years — delivering more than 2,000 babies. After their five children had left home, Edna and Peter worked in remote, northern United Church hospitals in BC and Newfoundland.

Edna and Peter retired to Toronto, close to their family cottage in Haliburton, and became faithful members of Bloor Street Church. During Peter's medical career, woodworking became a hobby and relaxation from the stress of long hours. Today he crafts beautiful creations for lucky family members and friends — lamps, tables, bookshelves. At Bloor Street our library on casters in McClure Hall is a Peter Barg creation as well as a plant stand in the sanctuary. We are blessed to have Peter and Edna among us! (*Mary Sanderson*)

Quick Sketches

Our new website. Vibrant colours, photos and a user-friendly format provide an updated and exciting new look for Bloor St.'s website. Designed to be a snapshot of Bloor St. and its activities, the new website is intended to give interested browsers a quick picture of our congregation in just a few web-pages. The former site can still be accessed using the "Members' Site" link on the home page. Gradually the contents on the old site will move to the new format. Many thanks to Laurie Gordon for redesigning the site and making it a reality: www.bloorstreetunited.org.

Our **Annual Report Part I: Finance and Administration** is available from the church office.

The photo of **Dr. Robert McClure and Amy McClure**, which hung on the side of the shed in McClure Hall for many years, has been reframed and moved to a better position. It now hangs on the west wall near the door to the kitchen. A plaque will soon be added with details of their lives and work. Dr. McClure was a medical missionary from Bloor St. Church, working in China, then in Gaza and India. He won acclaim as the first lay moderator of the United Church of Canada. Returning to medicine after his term as moderator, he practised in Borneo, Peru, the Caribbean, Zaire and Port Simpson, BC. He lived to age 90, working as a busy speaker and fund-raiser for hospitals and missionaries after he retired from medicine.

Gladys S (below) shares her happiness after her refugee claim was accepted. On March 7 we celebrated with 4 families whose refugee claims had recently been accepted. The "Welcome to Canada" cake was a good ending to a Latin American lunch prepared by Rebeca Venegas and a large number of volunteers. Proceeds from the lunch will help send refugee families to summer camp. *Photo by Sue Kaiser.*



Summer Camping. The Refuge Outreach Project is fundraising again to help us send refugee families to summer camp. It costs \$288 to send someone to camp for a week, and our goal for this year is \$7000. Your donations make a positive impact on the families who go to camp, and help support the ongoing ministry of the United Church's Camp Scugog. For more information, contact Sue at kaisersue@hotmail.com. Cheques can be placed in the offering plate, with "ROP Camp Fund" in the memo field.

African Heritage Month. Our guest preacher on Feb. 7 was **The Rev. Dr. Prince Sorie Conteh**, seen here with **Alydia Smith**. Rev. Conteh also participated in the service on African drums.



Cheryl Miller (below) celebrated African Heritage Month with a display of African drums and textiles. Sadly, Cheryl passed away a few weeks after this photo was taken. *Photos by Harold Durnford*

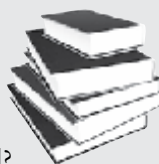


GIANT BOOK SALE

Friday, June 4 2 – 5 pm
Saturday June 5 10 am – 3 pm



Hundreds of books
30 sorted categories
Bargains galore
\$1 each for most books



Are your bookshelves overloaded?

Are your tables weighed down by piles of books?

Are university English or history books cluttering your home?

Would you like a new home for your surplus books?

Boxes and bags of books are needed for our sale. Books may be left in the church office. Outside of office hours just leave books outside the office door. Our hard-working sorters need time to sort donations. Don't be late! Sale books are welcome now.

The deadline for donations is Sunday, May 23.

*Looking for reading or research titles?
Come to the sale for bargains & surprises.*

A Benefit Concert in Support of the
Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
of the Stephen Lewis Foundation

Featuring

TC3—THE TORONTO CHILDREN'S CONCERT CHOIR & SOUL INFLUENCE

Guest Speaker

Ilana Landsberg-Lewis

Executive Director – The Stephen Lewis Foundation

Saturday, April 24 at 7:30 pm

Bloor St. United Church

Tickets at the door \$30. Children 12 and under \$15.

Presented by:

The Togogo Grannies of Bloor St. Church &
The Old Orchard Blossoms of St. Timothy's Anglican Church



Left: Rev. Joyce Kelly with Rev. Christopher Levan from Fredericton who was our guest preacher on Jan. 31. Right: Rev. Chris Levan speaking with Very Rev. Bruce McLeod. *Photos by Harold Durnford*

Good News

ON BLOOR is edited and published 4 times a year by the Communications Committee. All articles are copyright and may not be used without permission of the author. 250 words is the standard length for unsolicited articles. Articles should be single spaced, in 12 point type, without paragraph indentations. All articles may be edited. Photos will only be used if space permits and if suitable for publication.

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COMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 24

Grandmothers to Grandmothers Fundraising Concert.
7:30 pm (See ad on this page)

Sunday, April 25

Speaker event hosted by Social Justice after the service

Sunday, May 2

Congregational lunch following the service
Community Commons for university students 5:30 pm

Friday, May 14

Reel Activism 7:00 pm

Sunday, May 23

Speaker event hosted by Social Justice after the service

Tuesday June 1

Congregational Meeting Part II – Program
Pot luck dinner 6:00 pm
Meeting 7:00 pm

Friday June 4: 2 – 5 pm and

Saturday June 5: 10 am – 3 pm

Giant Book Sale (See ad on this page)

Sunday, June 13

Church School Picnic

Looking Ahead to Fall 2010

Saturday, November 6 & Sunday, November 7

Anniversary Weekend

Saturday, November 6

Gala Fundraising Evening
Dinner & Entertainment



Visit our NEW website at: www.bloorstreetunited.org