



The MEMO

The Newsletter of St. Mark's United Church, 115 Orton Park Road, Toronto M1G 3G9

www.st-marks.ca

September, 2009

WELCOMING THE REV. CHERYL-LYNN MACPHERSON!

Larry Smith, our Board Chair, Katharina Manassis, Chair of our Ministry & Personnel Committee, and Harry Brown were appointed to lead a search, in cooperation with our Presbytery, the Toronto Southeast, for a supply minister. They interviewed several prospective appointees and, after reference checks and the requisite vulnerable sector police records check, recommended to the Church Board the appointment of The Rev. Cheryl-Lynn MacPherson!

Welcome

Cheryl-Lynn comes to St. Mark's from Camilla-Laurel-Mono Centre pastoral charge in the Caledon Hills. She graduated with a Masters of Divinity degree from Knox

College in 2001 and was ordained by Toronto Conference in 2006. During her years of training she served in supply positions at Cliffcrest and Birchcliff Bluffs United churches here in Scarborough. She comes highly recommended by Jackie Rudd, a former member and leader of St. Mark's.

In applying to St. Mark's, Cheryl-Lynn wrote, *"I continue to challenge my congregations to name their purpose and calling as Christians and remind them of the steadfast love and promises of God My ministry has been focused on helping congregations identify their adaptive challenges as the church of the 21st century moves from being focused on civic faith to human transformation.*

Cheryl-Lynn's appointment is as "Supply", meaning that she is appointed for a specific period of time (in our instance, to June 30, 2010) while we do the necessary preparations and then a proper search for a "called" minister. Thank you Larry, Katharina, and Harry for completing this large piece of work so quickly.

Cheryl-Lynn and her spouse, Batya Levy recently bought a townhouse in Scarborough. Batya is an elementary music teacher with the Toronto District School Board.

While Cheryl-Lynn starts September 1st, we look forward to formally welcoming her on Sunday, September 13th when we return to 11 am Sunday worship. There will be a lunch following the service, thanks to the Social Ministry Team!

Sunday Services return to 11am on the 13th

Sunday, the 13th, worship time returns to 11 am. We all look forward to welcoming Cheryl-Lynn that Sunday! Plan to stay for a welcome lunch after the service.

There will also be a brief Congregational meeting on the 13th to appoint the members of the Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC).

Sunday School resumes on the 13th, too!



A Party to Celebrate

Set aside Friday, September 11th at 6:30 PM to party at St. Mark's! The occasion is to celebrate with Alan our twenty-three years of ministry together.

There will be a BBQ dinner, brief speeches, and lots of time to visit with each other and with Alan.



The United Church of Canada

L'Eglise Unie du Canada

St. Mark's is a progressive, inclusive, and life-affirming community of faith within The United Church of Canada.

Worship services are held Sundays at 11 am (10 am in July and August).

A GIFT OF POTTERY SACRAMENTAL WARE

The Rev. Alan Hall

In Catholic and Anglican traditions the worship practice revolves around the Sacrament. The Reformed, or Protestant, worship practice has revolved around the Word. In true St. Mark's fashion we have over the years evolved a worship practice that revolves around the Word *at* the Table and the Font. And in the best of our emerging *progressive* tradition the Table moved down from "up there", remote from us, to the floor where we stand, into our midst, because God is not remote and the Sacred is not "up there". We worship in the round, in the square, in U's, always with the Table or the Font at the centre of who we are and what we are doing.

Another characteristic of our worship is that it has become life-affirming and joy-filled. This is both old and new. Authors Rita Brock and Rebecca Parker note in their book *Saving Paradise* that it took Jesus a thousand years to die. You see, in the first thousand years the church filled itself with images of beauty and stories of life, of good life, of blessing, of Jesus life as blessing. It wasn't until the second thousand years that we became obsessed with Jesus' death, with brokenness and damnation. Remember what Matthew Fox writes: long before original sin there was original blessing!

At our Table, bread and cup become symbols of life in all of its abundance, in all of its capacity to heal and mend, to satisfy and delight, to give to each other and to give to others. We have recaptured that much earlier sense that this is an act of Thanksgiving, truly a "Eucharist," seeing in bread that which sustains and nourishes, gift of the earth, essence of God and seeing in the cup that which delights and pleases, refreshes and teases us into new beings.

When I considered what I could give to you as a symbol of my deep and abiding gratitude for you and your rich ministries, I naturally looked to our worship and, in our worship life together over these years, the Table. In gratitude for the insights into faith and life that you have so generously shared with me and so insistently pushed me to, I offer you the gift of ceramic Sacramental ware.

Fashioned by Irish Canadian potter Dennise Buckley, it is made from the clay of the earth, as we imagine God fashioning us. It holds the colours of earth, water, and sky. The pitcher, unorthodox in shape, reminds us that shape need not conform to a single orthodoxy. May it hold the waters of your Baptisms and the wines of Communion. The small bowl is for the baptismal oils of chrism, those oils that mark us as blessed and blessing. The cups are broad at the top for dipping and small at the bottom, perfect for tiny hands, as well as grown up hands, to hold. The plate depicts a human form, round loaves, the sweep of the horizon and the deep colours of seas and sky.

It is my prayer that these gifts will contribute to your experience of the Sacred Presence in our midst, bound up with our beings and with the earth.

Amen.

JNAC for St. Mark's

Each time there is a change in pastoral relations, a Joint Needs Assessment Report is required before a new minister can be called to fill the vacancy. *The Manual*, the rules and regulations of governance in the United Church of Canada, sets out the requirements for what must be covered in this report.

In 2006, when Alan was on sabbatical, there was a Joint Needs Assessment completed to re-vision who St.

Mark's was and how to move forward as a congregation. However, as we were not anticipating a change in pastoral relations, that component of the Assessment was not completed.

Now, in order to hire a new minister, a Joint Needs Assessment Committee will have to be formed to study and report on the ministry personnel needs of St.

Mark's. It will also articulate the needs and expectations of our congregation. This will be done through an open and participatory process of information gathering and analysis. The Nominating Team will suggest names to the congregation at the meeting on Sept. 13, and if they are accepted, those people, along with two members of Presbytery, will work for several months to prepare the JNAC Report.

After the Report has been prepared, it will be presented to the Board and subsequently a congregational meeting for approval. Then, the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee will review the report, prepare its recommendation to the presbytery and declare a vacancy. Finally, a Joint Search Committee will be appointed to begin the task of recruiting and hiring new ministry personnel.

BASEBALL GAME

Don't forget that Wed, Sept. 23rd is the evening for the St. Mark's group to journey to the ball game (Jays vs. Orioles). Please meet in the back parking lot by **5:10** to pick up your tickets, and board the bus. The bus will leave promptly at 5:30 p.m.

17TH BENDALE SCOUT GROUP

This group provides boys and girls with a varied program that introduces them to both indoor and outdoor activities on a weekly basis. Participation in the program will provide today's youth – ages 5-14 – with the opportunity to experience the outside environment, develop leadership skills and build their own self confidence. Meetings are held at G.B. Little Jr. Public School. Contact Carol in the office for more details.