

# BLOORBEAT

The Newsletter of



Volume XXVIX, Issue 3

## Minister's Message

Did you know that February 2<sup>nd</sup> hasn't always been Groundhog Day? Only in recent memory each year has Wiarton Willie, the poor, hibernating groundhog, had warm air blown into its burrow for a week to wake it up, so some silly human in a top hat can hold it up before the members of the media to see whether or not we can see its shadow and, thus, supposedly predict how much longer winter will be (though with this year's warm winter weather, it's not like we've been anxiously awaiting its end!). But February 2<sup>nd</sup> isn't really Groundhog Day – that's just the depths to which the day has sunk.

It used to be celebrated – and still is by a faithful few – as the Christian festival of the Presentation of Jesus to the priests in the Temple for their blessing. It is also called Candlemas, because on this day the Church blessed all the candles to be used until the same day the next year. It was, in other words, and still is in some places, a final celebration of the Epiphany of the coming of the Light of Christ at Christmas. Alas, for most North Americans now, February 2<sup>nd</sup> is just Groundhog Day.

So, too, with Valentine's Day, which now is simply about romance and roses, but used to be about the pain of real sacrificial love as seen in the life of Saint Valentine. So, too, with Mother's Day, which in recent times has gone all sentimental and soft, but started as an anti-war day in which mother's were challenged to take up responsibility to protect their sons from chauvinistic nationalism and the aggressive imposition of war. So much, it seems, of what was once noble and deep has been reduced or rendered trivial.

We Christians have had our long and rich traditions taken over, secularized, trivialized in recent times, and, worse still, we have been complicit in it. We'll soon face it again as bunnies and eggs appear everywhere as the central motif for the popular celebration of Easter.

May I suggest that we refuse to buy into bunnies this year?! Perhaps we could start, instead, a Take Back the Days campaign among ourselves and our brothers and sisters in faith. We need a concerted effort to reclaim our own days, our own festivals and observances, to re-infuse them with depth and meaning.

*(continued on page 7)*

## Bloordale United Church

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Minister	Rev. Brian W. McIntosh	(416) 621-1710

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Congregational Life (co-chairs)	Shirley Scott	(416) 622-3771
	Ameena Ramsahai	(905) 821-3394
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Outreach (co-chairs)	Jill Donaghy	(416) 621-8214
	Shirley Scott	(416) 622-3771
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Property	Bruce Jackson	(416) 621-4719
Social and Fund Raising	Vanessa Ramsahai	(905) 821-3394
United Church Women	Jo-Em Bettridge	(416) 621-2335
Worship	Sharron Le Blanc	(905) 602-9823
Member-at-Large	Joan Hollowell	(416) 621-3641

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## LOOKING AT THE WEEKS AHEAD

- **Saturday, March 27** - **Rummage Sale**— 9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.
- **Sunday, March 28** - **Palm Sunday**—Communion
- **Thursday, April 1** - **Maundy Thursday**—Tri-Church Service at St. James
- **Friday, April 2** - **Good Friday**—Tri-Church Service at Bloordale
- **Sunday, April 4** - **Centennial Hill Sunrise Service**—6:54 a.m.
- - **Easter Breakfast hosted by Bloordale Choir**—9:30-10:15 a.m.
- - **Easter Service** -10:30 a.m.
- **Saturday, April 10** - **Community Wine & Cheese and Silent Auction**—4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- **Guest Speaker—Dr. Ron Taylor** - 6:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, April 11** - **Easter 2**
- **Sunday, April 18** - **Easter 3**—Outreach/Community Ministry Sunday
- **Saturday, April 25** - **Easter 4**—Good Shepherd Sunday—Communion
- **"Investing in Us" Card Art Sale in the Gym**
- **Sunday, May 2** - **Easter 5**—Hymn Vote-a-thon Sunday
- **Sunday, May 9** - **Easter 6**
- **Saturday, May 15** - **Hymn Marathon**
- **Sunday, May 16** - **Easter 7**—Confirmation

**WORSHIP SERVICES ARE AT 10:30 A.M.**

## RUMMAGE SALE

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2010

9:30am - 12:30pm

Starting on Sunday, March 21, you are welcome to bring rummage sale items to the Stage in the Gym.

- *Good used clothing (on hangers please)*
- *Collectibles for Granny's Attic*
- *Books, games, toys, sports equipment*
- *Small appliances, small furniture, lamps*
- *Dollarama*

### HOW ELSE CAN I HELP???

Please mark your calendar...and consider volunteering to assist in sorting and organizing on Friday and/or work and shop(!) on Saturday at the actual sale. See Sign-up sheet on the UCW bulletin board.

This project is big and the UCW appreciates and needs the help of many in the congregation to make it a huge success.

## Hymn Vote-a-thon

The worship committee & choir are encouraging you to join in the fun by voting for your favourite hymns from Voices United. Starting Mar 21<sup>st</sup> you will be able to vote at coffee hour for \$2 per vote (bargain hunters...6 votes for \$14 or 15 votes for \$20 & you can vote more than once). Proceeds will benefit the Mission & Service fund. Votes will be collected until April 25<sup>th</sup> & the winners will be sung on the following Sunday. Please note that Christmas & Lent/ Holy Week selections are excluded.

## Symbols of the Passion

Please join us on **Sunday March 28th** after worship for our Palm Sunday Passion Play, presented after service by our children and youth. Come and enjoy coffee and hot-cross buns and experience this unique interpretation of Christ's journey to the cross in our "Symbols of the Passion" play.

*All are welcome!*

## Easter Breakfast

The choir will be hosting an Easter breakfast from 9-10:15 am on Easter morning April 4<sup>th</sup>. Please bring your families & enjoy the choir's hospitality. A good will offering will be gratefully received.

Come join us at our

## Community Wine & Cheese/ Silent Auction

Featuring Guest Speaker

**Dr. Ron Taylor**

Saturday, April 10, 2010

Bloordale United Church

Come anytime between 4:30 and 7:30 pm

Dr. Taylor will be speaking at 6:00 pm



Ron Taylor was a two-time World series champion pitcher, for the 1964 St Louis Cardinals, and the 1969 New York Mets.

Subsequently he became a Medical Doctor, the Team Physician for the Toronto Blue Jays, and helped to establish a Toronto-based sports medicine clinic. He is an accomplished Public Speaker.

Admission \$15

Includes a complimentary glass of wine or juice with fine cheese and crackers

*For further information please contact*

*Julia 416-622-6309 (h) / 416-621-8050 (w) or*

*Juanita at the Church office 416-621-1710*

## Hymn Marathon

Please circle Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> on your calendar. For 8 hours (at least) the choir will attempt to sing every hymn in Voices United. You can sponsor us for an hour/ the day/ or sponsor special performances (solos, duets, etc.). Each choir member will have a sponsor sheet & we will be ready to launch this project on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Then we invite you to join us for as much time as you can spare to listen to our wonderful choir. Pack a picnic & join us in the sanctuary!

## Geranium Sale

A UCW Project

If you ordered last year, don't call us -  
We'll call you!

Pick-up on

**Thursday, May 20**

1:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.

For information, call Jackie Trimble  
416-239-9419



## Bloordale Celebrates 52 Years at Greek Restaurant

March 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 was Bloordale's 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary, and we celebrated with a dinner party at Astoria Shish Kebob House on Dundas Street, in Mississauga. 75 people came, and ate and drank, and talked and mingled (although it was a bit tight to walk around in some places). Past chair Bruce Jackson was MC, and did a marvelous job: there was no microphone so he did his welcome address twice, each time facing a different direction.

Evelyn Relyea did a superb job organizing the evening, but was en route to India on March 7<sup>th</sup>, so she could not attend. Thanks Evelyn, for a job well done!

We sat at tables of 6, in Astoria's Sunroom section, adjacent to the main dining room. The four waiters (and owner Nick) were very attentive, keeping our beverages filled and our needs met. We started the evening with an appetizer platter filled with fried calamari (absolutely delicious), dolmades, spanakopita, tzatziki, and hummus with pita bread. After a short rest, we had individual Greek salads, followed by the main course: 8oz of beef, pork, lamb, chicken or veggie souvlaki, with rice and roast potatoes. It was quite a surprise for some to see rice and potatoes on the same plate! The servings were hefty, and a number of us took doggie bags home.

After another short break, to digest, we had mini baklava desserts with coffee or tea. All this for \$25, tax and tip included!

We had the very popular 50/50 draw, and Verena von Stritzky was the winner, as was Bloordale (receiving \$110 each). Catherine Barrett won the door Prize: 2 tickets to our upcoming concert, "Finest Kind", which will be held on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

*It was a lovely evening.  
Thanks to all who came!*



## "Me to We" Presentation

Join us on April 18<sup>th</sup> for our Outreach Service when Victoria Mazzariol and a special guest will be doing a presentation on their upcoming International Volunteer experience to the Maasai Mara region of Kenya in August 2010.

They will be discussing their upcoming work projects, such as laying bricks for a new school, working on a community water filter project, teaching opportunities, planting trees to reduce global carbon emissions and visiting a local AIDS orphanage.

Please join them after service in room 15 for this short but fascinating and informative presentation.

## Silent Auction Returning to Bloordale

In conjunction with our Wine & Cheese/Guest Speaker event on **April 10<sup>th</sup>**, we will be holding a repeat Silent Auction. Please think about what you would like to contribute. Some suggestions include:

- Theatre tickets
- Sports tickets
- Original artwork
- Baking
- Baby Sitting
- Cottage rentals
- Bed and Breakfast
- Gift certificates

Proceeds from the Silent Auction will go towards our Securing A Sound Future campaign.

For further information, please talk to Julia Stavreff or any other member of the Social and Fundraising Committee.

A painter paints his pictures on canvas. But musicians paint their pictures on silence. We provide the music and you provide the silence.

*Leopold Stokowski,  
reprimanding a talkative  
audience, May 1967*

## Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup>.

### Mark this day on your calendar.

Pat McDermott and Laura Mazzariol will be displaying and selling their unique brand of "Card Art" on the stage in the gym.

*Proceeds will support "Investing In Us",  
a Bloordale United Church fund raiser.*

## Securing a Sound Future Update

Our Campaign continues until the end of June, and while we're depending on the generosity of individual donors to meet our goal, we do have a few special projects to have some fun along the way.

The ***Investing In Us*** campaign was launched February 7<sup>th</sup>, and we've been giving away \$50 to any one who wants it ever since! The idea is to be creative and use the money to make more for the church – people have come up with some wonderful ideas already. You have until June 15<sup>th</sup> to do as much or as little as you like and then return the original investment and any proceeds to SSF, c/o Joan Hollowell, who's coordinating the project. So why not speak to Joan – 416-621-3641 - and let the church invest in you!

A ***Community Wine and Cheese***, with auction and special speaker **Dr. Ron Taylor**, former major league baseball player (2 World Series rings!) and current medical doctor with the Toronto Blue Jays (2 more World Series rings!), on April 10<sup>th</sup> (see elsewhere in this Bloorbeat for details);

A ***Go for the Gold and Silver*** initiative – in an Olympic year! – launched March 14<sup>th</sup> and coordinated by Marjorie Jackson (see the gold brochure at Church, or next page, for details);

A special ***Golf Tournament*** fundraiser on June 15<sup>th</sup>, again details of which will be given in an upcoming Bloorbeat.

If you have any questions about our campaign, speak to one of the Steering Group members – Julia Stavreff, John Pauksen, Jack Lovatt, Joan Hollowell, Bruce and Marjorie Jackson, or Brian.

## Learning Option

### ***Saving Jesus for the Third Millennium***

Early last fall, and again in the winter, Brian held a four-session DVD-based video and discussion series entitled *Saving Jesus*, one of a number of *Living the Questions* resources from progressive Christians in the United States. The last series of four sessions begins on **Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**, with the following three on the **13<sup>th</sup>**, the **27<sup>th</sup>**, and **May 4<sup>th</sup>** (skipping April 20<sup>th</sup> for the Council meeting), all from **7 – 8:30 pm** in **Room 15**.



The last four topics to be covered are as follows:

- 1) Killing Jesus, Part One: Who Killed Jesus?;
- 2) Killing Jesus, Part Two: The Atonement;
- 3) The Resurrection of Jesus;
- 4) Why Jesus Is Worth Saving.

These sessions will conclude the entire series, but each session stands alone as worthy of discussion, so come to have your faith stretched and transformed in conversation with others, even if you can only come once! Facilitated by Brian, you can speak to him if you'd like to know more.

## Stewardship Spot

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

### ***Simplifying Life***

A lot of us are being forced to "simplify" our lives, against our will, because of a 90's trend that has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: downsizing as a result of a downturn in the economy. Many who lose jobs are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to find another that pays near as well, since many new jobs being created are low-paying, with stripped down or essentially eliminated benefits. For many people their self-esteem, their very identity is lost with their job and their income.

Families break apart, we speak of someone being "ruined" by severe financial loss, some contemplate ending it all. Yet the idea of finding more fulfillment in life by living with less, not always striving for more, has been with us for ages, a component of all major world religions. There's no question that voluntary simplicity is another luxury that only the relatively well-to-do can afford. The working poor and lower middle-class have always been the ones recycling and conserving resources by using public transportation and buying used cars, finding their children's clothes in thrift shops, living in apartments and modest homes. For most this way of life is a necessity, not a novelty or a choice. And trying to make ends meet in these ways doesn't usually seem like a life of "simplicity."

But rich or poor or in-between, most of us can gain by asking God to grab hold of us by the Spirit and help us focus on life – on family, friends, faith, relationships – rather than on things, whether we believe we have too many or too few. Being frantic about possessions or plans is never the way to happiness or the blessedness of deep joy. This Holy Week and Easter season "let go and let God," simplifying and staying tuned to the sacred in our lives.

## Go for the Gold and Silver!

Everyone has old, broken or unwanted/unused gold; everyone has a few silver dollars or silver coins. The price of gold and silver is fairly high right now, but if you sold these items to a jeweler you would only receive 25% of their value. But on March 14<sup>th</sup> we launched a **Go for the Gold and Silver** drive at Bloordale, as part of the *Securing a Sound Future* campaign, and by donating your items to the church you will get a tax receipt that will be worth more to you than selling the items yourself!

Marjorie Jackson heads up a team of people who oversee the process, and are ready to receive your jewelry. Simply collect your items, write your name and church envelope number, and/or your phone number on an envelope, place the items in the envelope, and drop it off at the church office or give it to Marjorie Jackson directly at coffee hour. Your items will be valued based on their gold and silver content, we will sell your items for 75% of their total value and receive the cash directly, and you will receive a tax receipt for 100% of what we receive! In turn the church will receive your donation and include it as part of the *Securing a Sound Future* campaign! It's a win-win program, and with very little effort we hope to raise \$10,000 – or more!

Note: In the event that you have a large quantity of gold jewelry, or a coin collection, the value of which could be substantial, you may elect to keep a portion of the proceeds as you see fit.

For information on this program or to question the suitability of items to be donated, you can speak to Marjorie Jackson at 416-621-4719.

### Picnic June 13th

Plan ahead to come to our outdoor Picnic worship service and family day on Sunday June 13th here at Bloordale. We'll worship outside, and join together for food and games.

*Stay tuned to the bulletin and the next Bloorbeat for details!*

People who understand only what can be explained, understand very little.

*Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach  
1830-1916*

## Two Tenors and Friends Concert at Bloordale

It was a wonderful Valentine's Evening!

On Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, the much anticipated concert featuring Rev Brian McIntosh and Minister of Music Mervin Fick came to Bloordale United Church, in a "Tribute to Love." 220 audience members and performers packed the sanctuary to see and hear Brian, Merv and friends perform a programme, dedicated to love, in English, Italian and Cape Bretonese.

Mervin and Rudy De Paoli started the evening singing the Herman's Hermits' favourite "Leaning on a Lamp Post," although there was no lamp post in sight. Another friend, Joy Klopp, performed a love duet with Mervin, "La ci darem la mano" from Mozart's Don Giovanni. This was an amazing performance complete with big eyes and kisses.

Brian and friends Lydia and Sarah McIntosh performed a number of songs from the Maritimes, where Brian was minister for over 10 years, and where Sarah was born. Francine Morency provided back up vocals, as well as playing the guitar, and various percussion instruments. Verena Von Stritzky and Brian McIntosh together performed the Celine Dion/Andrea Bocelli number "The Prayer" to thunderous applause; and Brian gave a silver medal performance of "Hallelujah," second only to k.d. Lang who performed the Leonard Cohen song at the opening day ceremonies of the Vancouver Olympics.

Pianists David Murrell and Barry Peters kept the evening flowing along nicely.

After a two and a half hour performance (including intermission) we all went to the gym for homemade goodies, decaf coffee and Valentine's Day punch. The photographer from "Snap" newspaper was there for the whole evening taking pictures, as was our in-house photographer, Norm Dundas. Almost \$4,000 profit was raised from this evening's performance, with proceeds going towards both Bloordale programmes and the United Church of Canada's Mission and Service Fund.

Many thanks to Brian McIntosh, Mervin Fick, their friends, the attendees, the bakers, and the organizers, for such a wonderful evening.

***A Great Time Was Had By All!***

### A Reminder

Finest Kind, the Grammy nominated folk trio, featuring Ian Robb, Ann Downey and Shelley Posen will be performing in concert at Bloordale on Friday evening, June 4th, 2010.

*Plan on being there!*

## Brian's Book Reviews

I've been asked in some of my learning sessions to recommend some books for those who would like to learn more, so I'm starting a book review section in the Bloorbeat. Feel free to ask me about any of the books – I might even let you borrow my copy, if you promise to be sure to give it back!

My daughter Sarah is interested in environmentalism, and a while back I loaned her a wonderful book that changed my perspective on the world dramatically when I first read it. A poetic and rich example of reflecting about our deep connections to the earth is the award-winning writer, Annie Dillard's **Pilgrim at Tinker Creek**. She outlines in splendid detail and vivid imagery the wonder and terror of the creation and the God we find within it, causing us to lift or lower our eyes a little more to see what we formerly would not have noticed. Her style is entrancing, and her weaving of biblical imagery throughout her poetic prose is testimony to her deep life of faith. Tinker Creek is a place where awe and mystery mingle under the attentive gaze and enchanting pen of Annie Dillard.

- from *Harper and Row, N.Y., 1974, softcover*

Those who enjoy reading fiction and finding religious or mythic content will be perked and guided by Robert McAfee Brown's **Persuade Us to Rejoice: The Liberating Power of Fiction**. The title is taken from a W.H. Auden poem, and Brown combs Auden's work as well as Salinger, Beckett, Wiesel, Camus, Lewis, Walker, LeGuin, Paton and others, in an effort to articulate the sometimes deeply masked or hidden shape of God in these writers' works. Highly readable, it never jumps to the good news too quickly, and manages to outline the spirit of cautious faith that seems only to peek through rather than pervade the current culture. Brown is an engaging writer, and interprets those writers upon whom he casts his gaze quite justly, with insight and humor.

- from *Westminster / John Knox Press, 1992*

## (continued from page 1)

Let us begin with the greatest of them all, the Day of Resurrection, Easter. This year we could, each in our own way, with church, friends, partners, children, recover its true focus by participating, as we are able, demoting the trivial and promoting the sacred. And before that celebration, to capture its true and priceless worth, we could be sure to:

- take home a blessed palm from Palm Sunday, having worshiped and then witnessed the Passion Play from our children and youth following;
- receive communion in Maundy Thursday worship at St. James, our Tri-Church partner, at 7:30 pm;
- enter the passion of Jesus on Good Friday, in morning worship at 10:30 or afternoon walk for justice at 2 pm.

We could follow the whole unfolding mystery by being at the Sunrise Service on Centennial Hill at 6:54 am on Easter's dawn, joining in joyful fellowship for breakfast here at 9 o'clock, and then helping to raise the roof with joyful song in worship here at 10:30 am.

This year let us as Christians toss out what is trivial, take back what is rightfully ours, and turn the tables of our lives to be reformed and transformed by renewed faith.

Blessings at Easter and beyond, from all the staff and me!

## Thank You

Marg Cloke wishes to thank everyone who saved their Christmas stamps which benefit the Canadian Bible Society.

## Deadline for Next Issue

Articles for the next issue of Bloorbeat should be submitted no later than **May 14th**.

Send your articles directly to the Church Office at **office@bloordale.ca**.

### **GREAT OPPORTUNITY**

HAVE YOU ENJOYED OUR CONCERTS?

AND OUR YUMMY HOMEMADE REFRESHMENTS?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR "**ASSOCIATES**" TO SHARE IN OUR FUN TO PROVIDE BAKING

TO TAKE TICKETS

OR TO DO OTHER JOBS AT CONCERTS

OCCASIONALLY OR WHENEVER YOU CAN HELP US.

PLEASE SPEAK TO NANCY HARRIS AT 416- 620-5377

OR PAT NELSON AT 416-622-5274

**FROM YOUR SOCIAL & FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

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