



The Islington United Church

LINK

 Newsletter

Amos and the End of Church Music

John Derksen, Minister of Music

Church musicians don't often go to the prophets to find support and encouragement for their vocation. We would rather read and sing the Psalms, where the blessing of music is extolled, and we are repeatedly told to sing as a response to God's goodness. We tend to tread warily around passages such as the following from the book of Amos:

Take away the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

(Amos 5:23, 24)

It sounds as though God is saying, "Put an end to your worship music. You need to do social justice instead." This is a very disquieting thing for a musician to hear. Does Amos really think that worship would be better without music? Is he perhaps reacting against a particular musical style – harps and noisy (loud? badly performed?) songs?

On closer reading, it becomes clear that Amos 5 is a passage that my fellow musicians and I, along with the whole church, ought to take seriously. Amos has been raging against cynical hypocrisy that sees no need to make real connections between "talk" and "walk." In these verses, he denounces worship that has no ethical dimension, where praise is divorced from the issues of justice and integrity.

Harpists and singers (and organists, bell ringers, drummers, guitarists, pianists, string players, brass players, woodwind players), pay attention, says Amos. Unless we bring to our music-making a concern for justice and hearts that are open to the needs of others, God would rather dispense with the music program, along with (one assumes) other aspects of our worship life. Worship acceptable to God will always come from worshippers and worship leaders who have a passion for justice and righteousness.

Thomas Troeger, a recently retired professor of preaching, musician and hymn-writer captured this need for the alignment of heart, word and deed in worship in the hymn, *As a Chalice Cast of Gold (Voices United 505)*. I invite you to pray these lines with me:

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Music Sunday

June 4, 2006
9:30 am
11:15 am

This Is Your Invitation to Holy Communion

Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, June 11, 2006 at both the 9:30 AM and 11:15 AM Services of Worship. We hope you will be able to share these very special services with us. As at other Communion Services, there will be Benevolent Offering envelopes in the pews to allow you to participate in our ministry of outreach to our community.

Name _____

Elder _____

District No. _____

Elder's Telephone _____

Amos and the End of Church Music

(continued from page 1)

As a chalice cast of gold, burnished bright and brimmed with wine,
Make me, God, as fit to hold grace, and truth, and love divine.
Let my praise and worship start with the cleansing of my heart.

Save me from the soothing sin of the empty cultic deed
And the pious, babbling din of the claimed but un-lived creed.
Let my actions, God, express what my tongue and lips profess.

When I bend upon my knees, clasp my hands, or bow my head,
Let my spoken, public pleas be directly, simply said,
Free of tangled words that mask what my soul would plainly ask.

When I dance or chant your praise, when I sing a psalm or hymn,
When I preach your loving ways, let my heart add its "Amen."
Let each cherished outward rite thus reflect your inward light.



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Vacation Bible School

Leslie Arsenault, Church School Coordinator

SonTreasure Island


August 21 to 25
9:30 am to 12:00 noon

Islington United Church

Who wouldn't want to explore a Caribbean island, with its glittering turquoise waters, warm white sands and cool ocean breezes? Visitors to *SonTreasure Island* are welcomed by the scent of exotic flowers, the taste of tropical fruits and the captivating sound of a steel drum band. But this is no ordinary tropical experience! There is treasure to be found. More precious than gold and more lasting than diamonds, it is the greatest treasure of all – God's love!

Each day of Vacation Bible School your children will learn how Jesus' life illustrates one of the key truths about God's love. They'll learn that because *God's Love Is Giving*, he sent his only Son, Jesus, to show his love to us. They will learn that Jesus helped a young girl and a sick woman because *God's Love Is Kind*. Through Jesus' compassion for a Samaritan woman, they will see *God's Love Is Caring*. Jesus' friendship with the tax collector, Zaccheaus, will show them that *God's Love Is*

Forgiving. Finally, your children will discover that through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can know that *God's Love Is Forever*.

All children are welcome to join us for this week, so bring your friends, neighbours and family and share in God's love. We also encourage youth to join us as group leaders (this time can be added to your Community Service Hours), and adults who would like to share their love of God are welcome to join as section leaders (e.g., crafts, games, snack preparation, etc.). Please plan to join us. 

Summer has just begun and we have already started to dream about our Fall programs.

On Kickoff Sunday, September 10 look for the results of our Summer Dreams ...

Youth Confirmation

Sunday School Registration

SEEKERS YOUTH GROUP

Junior Youth Group

Junior Choir

Youth Choir

Junior Bell Choir

Youth Bell Choir

Summer = Reflecting and Dreaming

Michael Shewburg, Minister to Youth

Summer is quickly upon us and as I reflect on another changing season, I cannot begin to think about it without reflecting on what has passed this year and all it has afforded me and those who have touched my life in such a meaningful way. This year has brought me to Islington United Church and to one of the most important ministry opportunities I have ever experienced.

There is much to celebrate as we enter a season for family, fun and relaxation. The Seekers youth group attended retreats, theme conversations, social excursions and community events. Friendships and faith were explored in dynamic ways including Confirmation Class where 12 youth were confirmed this past April. In their testimonies on Confirmation Sunday, my work and the life of this congregation were re-affirmed in their powerful messages and calls to action (see pages 4–6).

A large group of young adults received ministry care packages at their post-secondary homes and a small group of young adults gathers monthly to socialize and converse.

We are abundantly blessed by their presence!

As the summer unfolds, some programs will continue such as the Mission Trip to Maine, with stops in United Church ministries in Montreal and Fredericton. This trip will allow youth and young adults firsthand outreach experience with children, seniors and those living in low-income neighbourhoods. It is my prayer and hope that this new knowledge will be transformed into local action!

This summer will also allow for times of dreaming and visioning of what is to come in the next year in the children's, youth and young adult ministries within the congregation. A new Confirmation Class will begin in early fall, Seekers and the Young Adult Get-togethers will continue and a new focus and growth in Christian education will become a large focus of my work. Please do not hesitate to drop by and visit this summer as our work and planning continue and to ask questions or give feedback for next year's programming. ☞

Caring Friends at IUC

Rosemary Drinnan

I first heard about the concept of Caring Friends over a year ago at a Parish Elders' meeting. But when trying to access their services for someone in December, Linda Wheler suggested a coordinator was needed to reactivate the program. After determining that the coordinator would not be required to attend a lot of meetings, I agreed to take on the job in January. I did attend one meeting to hear input from all staff and with their ideas in mind I began to get this program up and running again.

I received a list of about 40 people who had, at one time or another, signed up as a Caring Friend and each was asked if they were still able to participate. The vast majority of the original volunteers were now dealing with new circumstances and I found myself with an extremely short list of people who were able to drive others to appointments or prepare and deliver a meal to families in need. I did receive a few new volunteers from the notices in the weekly bulletin and, thus, I began.

The first requests were to provide meals for three church families who were dealing with a family member's health issue and to arrange a drive for a parishioner to a twice-weekly physiotherapy appointment. Two families needed longer-term assistance and so, using the church roster I began phoning anyone I knew even slightly. We all prepare daily meals for our own family and so it isn't usually difficult to make a little extra to share with another family. Each person called made one meal only for the families in question. If necessary, I arranged to pick up and deliver the food.

Each potential cook was asked to prepare a salad and simple evening meal, which was either warm on delivery or oven-ready. The products were delivered in disposable containers so that the recipients did not have the problem of returning dishes during an already stressful time in their lives. People who are dealing with health problems are not usually concerned with exotic meals but really appreciate that fact that the Caring Friends of IUC have relieved them of the tedium of deciding on a menu when they don't have the time or inclination to care. As their own personal circumstances improved, two of our early recipients have already reciprocated with a meal for someone else. This is truly the Golden Rule at work!

As the coordinator, I have received a very warm response from the people asked to help. Although some demurred at first (fearing a fancy meal was expected), once they knew the meal should be simple and child-friendly, they all relaxed and said, "no problem." I worked around winter vacations and March Break and, whenever possible, I enlisted peers to help each other as a way for families to get to know each other outside of Sunday worship. Personally, I am meeting more people through this ministry and the recipients of the gifts are so pleased that the food just turns up at their door at the appointed time.

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Youth Confirmation — April 2006

On April 23 ten youth from Islington were confirmed in their faith at a special Confirmation Service. One week later two more youth from St. Luke's United Church celebrated their confirmation with their congregation.

In studying and professing their faith each confirmand presented their own testimonial of their faith in the context of The New Creed. Read what these young people had to say.

Brittany Burek

We are not alone; we live in God's world.

God is always with us, watching over us. We are not alone. Knowing this, and believing this gives us hope! Hope that no matter what happens in our lives, even in our darkest, saddest moments, God is with us!

I, like many other people I know, have experienced times in my life when I felt very overwhelmed, sometimes I've even found it hard to go to sleep, but even then God's love was with me through my parents' support, my church family and my close friends. There was always someone there for me, watching over me, and although I was overwhelmed, I was never alone. When I lay awake in my dark room in my silent house, I know that God is there, guiding me through and keeping me safe. "Nothing can ever separate us from God's love ." (Romans 8)

We live in God's world. In other words, God is our Creator: he has made the world and it is great! We need to remember not to mess it up, as if it is our own! Not to fill it with hate and violence, destruction and despair.

We are alive in this wonderful world and this is God's gift to us. I want to treat my life as a gift and use it as a gift to others!

Sam Derksen

We believe in God: who has created and is creating,

I believe in God, and I discovered in confirmation that most of the major religions also believe in God.

On one of our field trips we visited a synagogue and a mosque. My faith partner also took me to a service in a high Anglican church. In the synagogue we wore yarmulkes on the crown of our heads. During the service there was a lot of reading and singing in Hebrew. They would say the titles in English so that we could understand a bit of it.

In the mosque the form of worship is very different. The men all sat on the ground in rows without shoes, listening to readings and singing, and then bowing

down to pray with their heads touching the floor. The field trip made me look at these different religions and think that, although we all may have a different way of doing it, we all believe in God, in one way or another.

Although we all believe in God, we still have different beliefs. The Jewish people believe that the Messiah is still to come; while we believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, but not the Son of God.

However, I think what makes Christians different is that we know God through the works and teachings of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. We also believe that Christ is part of the Trinity, which includes God the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

A couple of weeks later, I went with my faith partner and visited a high Anglican church. This was a Christian service, but was still very out of the ordinary. I found it interesting that all their readings were sung instead of read. After the sermon we had a few more readings and a song. During one of the readings incense was burned. It symbolizes all their prayers rising to God. I thought that was a really cool way to symbolize our prayers.

I also believe that God has created everything there is. I don't think that I have ever been closer to God's creation than when my family and I and our relatives go down to Minnesota to a cottage on Lake Five. It is a very beautiful place filled with nature and the wonders of God's creation. Every year it seems as though we find something new that God has created.

Each year I also look at my cousins and relatives and see how God has changed them in some way. I look at them and think that we were all created with different personalities and different things we like to do.

I also believe that God is still creating. At Lake Five there are new plants and animals every year. In the water I see swarms of tiny fish and tadpoles, barely hatched. Six years ago, my uncle and aunt came with a new baby, Christopher. And with my cousins, I can see how our relationships change and grow.

After all this, I think that we are all created in God's image and were made to praise God. Thanks be to God.

Caitlin Leavitt

Who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new,

When I feel lonely it is comforting to know that I am a part of God's world and that I am never alone. God is everywhere; he is a part in all of us. Knowing that God sent Jesus down as "the Word made flesh" adds to the feeling of comfort and protection. Jesus was

human just like all of us. He did not come to earth as a super hero, but as a person just like the rest of us. He knows what it is like to be human and because of this I can relate to him and learn from how he lived his life. God shines through Jesus in everything he does. For me, today I am opening my heart to Jesus and committing myself to follow his path. I am promising to listen and lead my life from my heart. I am promising that I will be a good person, friend, sister, daughter, granddaughter and member of this church. But more than this, I am promising to reconcile and make new – to open my heart up to the entire world, to each living creature, to all of nature, to all those people who need support or need a friend.

Melissa McCoo

Who works in us and others by the Spirit.

I feel the Spirit works in me through my musical contributions. I say this because you can often find me in musical leadership during worship. For example, Sunday mornings I participate with the Youth Choir. I also play in the Bell Choir and in the Youth Gathering Band.

I see the Spirit working through people in the congregation. The Refugee Support Ministry helps those who may not be as fortunate as we are to live in a country where they are free.

This day and in the many days to come I hope that the Spirit will continue to work through me and for you.

Leah Moncada

We trust in God. We are called to be the Church:

When I hear these words, I think of our faith in God, but our faith for what? To help us, to guide us and forgive us if we stray from his path? Think about what God stands for. He is a symbol of equality, love and kindness, forgiveness and understanding. That is what we trust God to be, and help us to be. For example, when we pray we have to trust that he will hear us and answer us. And when we need help that he will provide guidance.

What is the Church? In my mind it is a gathering of people committed to a faith. A faith that doesn't care about what you look like, how much you earn, or what you wear on Sunday. Church is a place that cares, and isn't afraid to help. So when we say that we are called to be the Church, it means we should step up to the plate for what we believe in, doing the right thing.

Sarah Reece

To celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in Creation,

During my confirmation time at Islington I have learned to celebrate God's presence in my friends, family and my overall life. God's way of demonstrating this to me is through their abundance of support, love and friendship that they show me every day.

One of the highlights of this year for me was when we took a weekend trip to the retreat centre at Five Oaks. In a group with people whom we had just met we had to build a snow structure the same height as the tallest person in our group. At first it was a challenge because everybody thought that their idea was the best, but in the end we found that, if we included everybody's ideas we could complete the task. During this activity we got to know each other better and to trust and respect each other's ideas. We worked with each other and used everybody's thoughts to build the structure. This taught us to respect everybody's decisions and ideas, and at the end celebrate when the task was completed.

Overall the experience of confirmation has taught me to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in creation – an experience I will never forget.



Xavier Remacle

To love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil,

To love and serve others – this means we should treat others and ourselves equally and be respectful and fair.

To seek justice and resist evil – to me this means that God helps us go on the good and right path and not the wrong and evil path; God helps me through prayer and faith as I become a Christian.

Confirmation has helped me understand my life to seek justice and resist evil with God helping me in a new way.

(continued on page 6)

Youth Confirmation — April 2006

(continued from page 5)

Camilla Rice

To proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

It's not always easy to proclaim Jesus. At school I am often aware of how easy it is for us not to be kind to each other – something as simple as buying the same skirt can bring out the worst behaviour. Words can really hurt and it is hard not to become part of the rumours. Focusing on trying to remember the good in everyone is probably the best solution I have found to stay away from this type of negativity.

I am just starting to understand what it really means to be Christ-like, and I will continue to strive to be the person God has created me to be. But, even when I fail to live up to what God wants for me, I take comfort in the knowledge that Jesus died on the Cross for every single one of my sins and I will never be far from God.

Allison Tower

Our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death,

To me these words mean that God (our judge) and Jesus (our hope) will be with us forever. Sometimes God and Jesus are here with us in the form of other beings like our friends, family and even our pets. Sometimes they are here in our bodies, in our hearts and minds. Either way, God and Jesus will always be with us.

In confirmation I learned that God created Jesus to guide us and give us hope for our lives in the future. That's why I think Jesus is called "our hope." God watches over us through his eyes, he judges us. That's why I think God is called "our judge."

In confirmation I learned a lot of valuable lessons about what God gave us. God sent Jesus to show us how to live and forgive us for our sins. He also gave us spiritual gifts for us to use in our lives. In one of our classes, we completed a quiz to discover our spiritual gifts. I learned that my top two spiritual gifts are Hospitality and Creativity. These spiritual gifts can be used in our church. Once I take the next step in living with God's and Jesus' presence by being confirmed, I would like to use these spiritual gifts more in the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and in the nursery and toddler care.

Matthew Townsend

God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

This part of the creed suggests that God is with us everywhere. That is, God is with us every place that we are and every place that we go – our home, school, work and play – and in sickness and in health. God is with us every place on Earth. God is also with us everywhere we travel in our faith journey – at church, in the community, in our homes, on the streets, and in every country and continent.

It also suggests that God is with us at all times – when we are awake and asleep, when we are young and old – in our hearts, in our thoughts and especially in our progress.

I think that God is with everyone – young, old, male, female and all sizes and colours. We all belong to God because God is with us.

I also think that God is with us when we pray. I think that he hears our prayers and he answers them. Sometimes the answer is "no."

Because God is always with us, we don't need to be lonely. He is with us as individuals and as groups – family, church, community and city.

We thank God. We offer him our prayers, but also our praise. We praise God for being who he is – our heavenly Creator – and for being what he is – protector, parent and friend. ☩



Our Christmas Hampers Are Helping Hands

Julie Smith

It was a very rainy day November 29 when Jane Cameron and I delivered the first Christmas Hamper of last year's project. We drove up to the back door of the LAMP building on 5th Street and many hands helped us unload baby formula, books, treat bags for children and a large donation of food vouchers. By doing this, our congregation ministered directly to approximately 200 families that needed the LAMP Food Bank in the month of December.

In our 2005 Hamper program we had families who asked not for toys but for sheets and blankets for their children's beds. We provided winter boots for a nine-year-old boy who had none during that first December storm. And, we were able to provide a new snowsuit, hats and mitts to a six-year-old who going to school in a jacket sized for a two-year-old. We had a mother who asked for "low key" items for her children but could we give her extra food? Another single mother of three asked for diapers for her three-year-old daughter with cystic fibrosis. More people walked into our church in December and January needing food, warm clothing and bus fare than ever before. We have seen changes over the last five years and would like to move forward by meeting the real needs in the lives of the people we are called to serve. There is a need for assistance on an ongoing basis both within our church and immediate neighbourhood. We would like to ensure that families have food on their table not only at Christmas but also throughout the year.

Making it more difficult for those in our area is the lack of a "low cost" grocery store where people can go for affordable food. At Islington Junior Middle School right down the street, children in Kindergarten are coming to school without breakfast – a problem likely occurring in other classrooms, as well.


We have the opportunity to reach out a helping hand and with your Hamper Ministry donations we have opened an emergency food cupboard in the church to provide basic food for those who need it at any time. We will keep on

hand a small quantity of bread, margarine, cheese slices, peanut butter, canned soup, pasta, tuna, baby formula and diapers, and other staples.

As well, we have agreed to be part of a new breakfast program being held at 49 Mabelle Avenue. By donating fresh fruit twice a week until the end of the school year, we will be working alongside the Daily Bread Food Bank to help feed up to 100 children (but no child will be turned away). In September, funding will begin and this program will eventually be operated by the members of the Mabelle community. There is talk about starting the same breakfast program in the East Mall/West Mall area, where apparently even more help is needed. No child should have to go to school hungry and we would like to do our part.

Here is how you can help today. The Helping Hands Committee recently formed here at Islington is looking for volunteers. The Hamper Ministry is now just one hand under this committee and we are looking for volunteers to work on the food cupboard program. Would your family take responsibility for a one-month period to check the cupboard and restock what has been used? Would you be willing to purchase the fruit and deliver it to the Breakfast Club at 49 Mabelle for one week during May or June? Are you still willing to knit warm hats and mitts? We already know we have lots of children in our Homework and Breakfast Clubs at Mabelle who will need them. We still need your donations at Christmas and we already know of families we have met through these neighbourhood programs who will be receiving our extra help at Christmas.

On behalf of all of the members of the Hamper Ministry and the Helping Hands Committee, I thank you for your continued support of this project and I ask that you prayerfully consider how you can help to make a difference.


Please contact Julie Smith at 416.620.0179, if you can lend a hand. 

Caring Friends at IUC

(continued from page 3)

If you would like to help, and I haven't called on you yet, here are a couple of things that you can do. The next time you are making a casserole or meat loaf or anything that will freeze well, make an extra one to serve four to six people and freeze it in a disposable container. If you don't have room in your freezer, call me and I'll store it. If you aren't a cook, the next time you buy a bottle of soup, a quiche or meat pie, or anything for your own family, please consider picking up an extra one to be used by the Caring Friends.

If you can help, email Rosemary Drinnan at rosemary.drinnan@sympatico.ca or call 416.621.2897 and sign up as a Caring Friend. The longer the list, the less frequently I have to call anyone. It would be wonderful to have so many volunteers that you only need to help once a year.

Remember – everyone needs a little help at some time in his or her life. Please become part of IUC's Caring Friends. 

LINK
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Sunday Services

Sunday Morning Worship
 9:30 and 11:15 AM (September to June)
 9:00 and 10:30 AM (July 2 to September 3)

Taizé Worship
 First Sunday monthly (October to June)
 7:30 pm

The Gathering
 Last Sunday monthly (September to June)
 4:30 pm
 Community Supper to follow



**Drop in during the summer—
 We're here!**

- June 4* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Music Sunday
- June 11* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
- June 18* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- June 25* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Note: early Services begin next week
- June 30 – July 8* **Youth Outreach Trip to Maine**
- July 2* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- July 9* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
- July 16* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
- July 23* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
Sacrament of Holy Communion
- July 30* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
- August 3* **Baptism Seminar at 7:30 p.m.**
(Toddler Room)
- August 6* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- August 13* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
- August 20* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
- August 21–25* **Vacation Bible School**
SonTreasure Island
- August 27* Services at 9:00 and 10:30 am
Sacrament of Holy Communion
- August 31* **Baptism Seminar at 7:30 p.m.**
(Toddler Room)
- September 3* Last Sunday for 9:00 and 10:30 Services
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- September 7* **Baptism Seminar at 7:30 p.m.**
(Toddler Room)
- September 10* 9:30 and 11:15 am Services resume
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
Kick-Off Sunday