

The Islington United Church



LINK Newsletter

Ultimate Christian Stewardship

Mark Aitchison, Senior Minister

Many Christians can name the hour and the place of their salvation. For instance, on April 9, 1975 I made a commitment to Christ that changed my career path and led me to a vocation in Christian ministry. I have had to answer different calls and make new commitments many times since.

On Saturday, April 28, 2007 I made another commitment. It didn't happen in a church or a chapel. It happened at, of all places, The Hummingbird Centre in downtown Toronto. Pattie and I, along with 3,200 others, were the guests of Ian McPherson, a member of Islington United Church and president of Criterion Investments, Canada's first and only actively managed water fund. Ian invited us to hear former vice-president of the United States, Al Gore, talk about the precious commodity of water and the urgency for us to care for our planet. I have heard thousands of preachers, teachers and other public speakers but none any more passionate or believable than Mr. Gore. I had a conversion experience. You can call me a

born again environmentalist or whatever, but know that from that moment on I share Gore's passion to save our planet and make it a greener, healthier place to live now and for the future.

"The planet has a fever," says Gore. "If your baby has a fever, you go to the doctor. If the doctor says you need to intervene here, you don't say, 'Well, I read a science-fiction novel that told me it's not a problem.' If the crib's on fire, you don't speculate that the baby is flame-retardant." Al Gore's two-hour-plus presentation was very gripping and convincing and moved me to think about ways I can make a difference. How might I at home and we here at the church reduce our emissions and lower our energy consumption? Here's how:

Replace a regular incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). CFLs use 60 percent less energy than a regular bulb. This simple switch will save about 300 pounds of carbon dioxide a year. If every family in Canada made the switch, we'd reduce carbon dioxide by more than 10 billion pounds! You can purchase CFLs at many stores.

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This Is Your Invitation to Holy Communion

Holy Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, June 3, 2007 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 _____



Ultimate Christian Stewardship

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Move your thermostat down two degrees in winter and up two degrees in summer. Almost half the energy we use in our homes goes to heating and cooling. You could save about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year with this simple adjustment.

Use less hot water.

It takes a lot of energy to heat water. You can use less hot water by installing a low flow showerhead (350 pounds of carbon dioxide saved per year) and washing your clothes in cold or warm water (500 pounds per year) instead of hot water.

Turn off electronic devices you're not using.

Simply turning off your television, DVD player, stereo and computer when you're not using them will save you (and the planet) thousands of pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

Only run your dishwasher when there's a full load and use the energy-saving setting.

You can save 100 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

Plant a tree.

A single tree will absorb one ton of carbon dioxide over its lifetime. Shade provided by trees can also reduce your air-conditioning bill by 10 to 15 percent.

Seek out and support local farmers' markets.

They reduce the amount of energy required to grow and transport the food to you by one-fifth. You can find a farmers' market in your area.

Avoid heavily packaged products.

You can save 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide, if you cut down your garbage by ten percent.

Reduce the number of miles you drive by walking, biking, carpooling or taking mass transit, wherever possible.

Avoiding just ten miles of driving every week would eliminate about 500 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions a year!

Keep your car tuned.

Regular maintenance helps improve fuel efficiency and reduces emissions. When just one percent of car owners properly maintain their cars, nearly a billion pounds of carbon dioxide are kept out of the earth's atmosphere.


Check your tires weekly to make sure they're properly inflated.

Proper inflation can improve gas mileage by more than three percent. Since every litre of gasoline saved keeps five pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, every increase in fuel efficiency makes a difference!

When it is time for a new car, choose a more fuel-efficient vehicle.


You can save 3,000 pounds of carbon dioxide every year, if your new car gets only three miles per gallon more than your current one. You can get up to 60 miles per gallon with a hybrid! (Source: <http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/>)

Spring is my favourite time of the year. What a glorious world we live in! And how wonderful to watch the earth turn green and burst into bloom as daffodils, tulips and forsythia add their colour to the landscape. I feel called to care for this planet earth like never before. Another famous American, Eleanor Roosevelt, said: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is mystery, TODAY is a gift." How can we use the gift that is today to ensure that our planet will be a healthy and life-giving home for our children's children?



Read more about environmental issues in the May 2007 issue of *The United Church Observer*. *Weaned from the Bottle* by Sabitri Ghosh examines the reaction to the 2006 General Council's statement to discourage the purchase of bottled water.

In the coming weeks our congregation is going to be asked to be part of a Visioning-Goal Setting process. Please watch the weekly bulletin for details and opportunities to share your thoughts, ideas and passions for ministry at Islington United Church. Now is the time for us to be asking: "What kind of church do we want to be five years from now?" Your Church Council and staff want to hear from you and share in your dreams and desires for your church. Salvation, occurring in all times and places through the Holy Spirit's direction, is being offered to one and all. That is the Good News of the Gospel. Thanks be to God.

P.S. See you in worship 

Sunday School News

Leslie Arsenault, Church School Coordinator

What a blessing this past year has been in the Sunday School. The numbers in our classes at both services are growing and we have had very dedicated teachers!

This has also been a time of interesting challenges. At times, we have been unable to fill our rooms with enough teachers to meet the needs of our children. We have also had some teachers who have taught most of the year with very few breaks. I am very grateful for their dedication and commitment. I have examined these challenges often throughout the year and wondered “why?” How can I share the joy, friendship and spiritual growth that our children offer each week?

With the support of Maureen Wilson we will be holding a forum in late May to brainstorm, discuss and strategize how we can support and encourage new people to join our team as teachers. If you have comments or suggestions, or if you would like to be part of the conversation, please join us. Just give me a call at 416.239.1131 ext. 25 or email me at leslie@islingtonunited.org to express your interest in being part of this forum. It will be an opportunity to explore many questions and create new ideas. I feel truly blessed to be Islington’s church school coordinator but this vision should not be determined by the Christian Development Committee and me alone. We need thoughts and ideas from parents, teachers, children, youth, grandparents, and all members of the congregation. Following this meeting we will put together a plan to move forward in the fall with ways to continue to support and build our Sunday School and to begin the ongoing process of assessing our program needs.

One change is already in the works. We will be stepping away from our classroom format into a workshop

rotational model (WORM) for children ages three to nine. This model has been used successfully in many United Church Sunday Schools and indicates great promise for Islington. WORM will give us the opportunity to share our special and diverse gifts with the children in very specific ways. We are looking for people who like to tell stories, love to cook, enjoy doing crafts; those who find science interesting, love music and much more. The commitment would be for three to four weeks at a time, for one service only each week. Leaders would work as a team to explore Bible stories with the children using their special gifts. The children would be divided into small groups (equal to the total number of workshops for a given theme). They would rotate through each workshop, doing a different workshop each week so that they can explore the theme fully with the leaders.

For example, to explore the theme of being good stewards the children could participate in: a science workshop to explore God’s gift of the world (Genesis 1:1-2:3); a cooking workshop to discern God’s gift of time (Psalm 104:1-24); an art workshop to discover God’s gift of talent (1 Corinthians 12:4-11); and a games workshop to find out about God’s gift of treasure (Mark 12:41-44).

While big changes are ahead for the younger children, our Grade 4 to 6 and *Living with Christ* programs will continue in their current format.

This coming year will be an exciting time – one full of new ideas and opportunities to continue the caring ministry of Jesus with our children. I encourage and welcome your thoughts and ideas and look forward to this opportunity to explore the direction of our Sunday School together. ☞

Coming This Fall ☐ Faith Family Fridays!

We are a community of families of all shapes and sizes and expression and we would like to extend the invitation to all to come and express your faith at five fun-filled evenings throughout the coming year. Each evening we are committed to providing opportunities for: **Faith ✧ Family ✧ Fellowship ✧ Fun ✧ Food**

So set these dates aside and plan to join us!

October 19	Bowling & Pizza at Planet Bowl	April 4	Trivia Challenge
December 7	Skating Party	June 6	Drive-In Movie Night (in our parking lot!)
February 15	Valentine’s Family Dance Party		

We would love to have your input so we encourage you to be part of the planning. This is an opportunity for us to share our gifts in a new and different way and grow our faith together in community.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact us at 416.239.1131:

Leslie – ext. 25

leslie@islingtonunited.org

Cathy – ext. 28

cathy@islingtonunited.org

Michael – ext. 31

michael@islingtonunited.org

Summer = Opportunity Like No Other Season

Michael Shewburg, Minister to Youth

The rhythms of our seasons, especially in the church follow a unique pattern. Autumn brings us back to church, back to reality. After a summer, which for many is a break from reality, we seek a chance to connect back with our community and find ways to challenge and nurture our faith. Our youth again attend retreats, like the one hosted at Camp Tawingo last October; they come out to Seekers youth group to experience faith, fun and fellowship; and, many begin the journey of confirmation of faith.

Winter soon catches us off guard and we are thrust into the season of Advent. Care packages are sent to over 75 of our university and college students from Vancouver to St. John's. Our young people go far!

Spring arrives with Easter's excitement of new life. Confirmands enter a new phase of the faith journey and wonder what church life may become for them. Thirteen of our young people have become members this year. Look for their testimonies from the May 6 worship service in the Fall issue of LINK.

This year I was honoured to be called to full-time ministry here at Islington. This calling has enabled me to hope for and create faith programs for our youth and young adults like never before. Our seasons will continue; it is my hope that they will experience these changing times in new and refreshing ways.

Like no other time of year, our youth and young people are available in summer. School has ended; the season of sandals and shorts, warm weather, camping and nostalgia begins. Like no other time of year we take holidays to spend time with those we love. We gather in unique settings, some near and some far.

This summer it is my hope that Islington youth, along with other United Church youth, will experience the mission of Jesus in a new and exciting way. The GO Project will change our sense of mission and the way we see summer. It is my hope that you, as youth, and you, as families, will begin to see summer as an enhanced opportunity to serve and challenge your faith. The new family ministry plans, along with the GO Project, challenge the ritual of summer as a

break and encourages summer to be a time of creative faith learning inside and outside of Islington United.

The fall will bring new ways of programming to the youth scene at Islington. There will be a new confirmation program implemented. The current one-year model will be replaced with a two-year program (the second year will be optional). The first year of the program will focus on the teachings of our common story, our faith background, the faiths of our brothers and sisters of other cultures, worship and prayer, and the community aspect of why we gather. The second year option for current youth and previously confirmed youth will focus more deeply on how we implement and live out our faith in the church, the community and the world at large. We will concentrate on the call to social justice, deepening our spiritual practices. We will engage the call of stewardship, outreach and our individual spiritual gifts. This will be an exciting new way of learning for Islington's participants in the confirmation program.

If you are interested in confirmation, please contact me as soon as possible at 416.239.1131 ext. 31 or michael@islingtonunited.org.

Seekers youth group will also change in the 2007/2008 year. The group will continue to meet as a whole community, but there will be separate and specific programs for Grades 7 to 9 and Grades 10 to 12. During each Seekers meeting we will gather for a time of welcome, worship and community then split into two groups for special interest programming, and finally gather

together again for a closing time. By dividing during program time, the individual stages of development and interest for these age groups will be met.

I am so excited about what the summer and fall will bring in programming for youth and young people. Please feel free to contact me this summer!

Peace, Michael ☩



Have You Heard about the GO Project?

Youth: Have you ever wondered what it would be like to serve a community outside of your own immediate experience (even close to home)?

Youth Leaders: Have you ever been frustrated with the lack of mission and outreach possibilities geared to the teachings and theology of your United Church ministry?

Parents: Have you yearned for your young person to have a deeper sense of service that is grown in the radical roots and fertile soil of Jesus' ministry?

Congregation: Have you longed to discover how you might discern the needs of your own community?

The GO Project is a new mission program for youth that was born out of deep prayer. It is a response to years of discernment from various experiences of mission and outreach programs by our young people. While there are other programs available, few respond to the unique ministry of The United Church of Canada and its partners.

Youth from Grade 9 to age 19 and their leaders will have an opportunity to serve in the community of Islington this summer, intentionally focusing on developing their gifts of discernment so that they can identify the mission needs in their own community.

For 12 days, from July 8 to 20 or July 22 to August 3, youth from Islington United and from congregations across the country will be immersed in this active, growing and diverse community. This congregation continues to change and evolve as long-term residents and newcomers form a new community.

Youth at Islington and from across Canada are invited to come to this church to be part of this change. They will have mission opportunities to:

- Participate in a community-focused children's program
- Reach out to local youth through community programming, shelters and street cafes
- Support seniors and newcomers through community clean-up and home maintenance projects
- Practise pastoral skills through visiting
- Serve the basic needs of this community's members through the food bank and clothing share programs



Volunteers from Islington United are needed to be a part of this innovative program in the community. You can be a part by:

- Supporting the project's leadership and helping with grocery purchases, meal preparation and youth transportation
- Making a donation to the Youth Mission Fund (the goal is \$2,500 - it will be matched dollar for dollar with a grant from the Vision Fund of The United Church of Canada)
- Meeting our own and visiting young people by attending the youth-led worship on July 15 and July 22; both services will be followed by a potluck meal
- Accompanying youth on July 14 or July 21 on the "meet the city" tour and subway rally
- And much, much more...

For more information, contact Michael Shewburg at 416.239.1131 ext. 31 or michael@islingtonunited.org. Registration forms are available on bulletin boards around the church. ☞

**Be sure to visit the GO Project website at:
www.islingtonunited.org/goproject/**



Kids – You're Invited!

Leslie Arsenault, Church School Coordinator

Islington invites children to this year's Vacation Bible School – Avalanche Ranch: A Wild Ride through God's World!

This year our church will be a stampede of excitement as we visit Avalanche Ranch. Our program will provide fun, memorable Bible-learning activities for kids of all ages. Each day kids will sing catchy songs, play team-building games, nibble Church Wagon Chow, take on a Daily Challenge to let God's love grow into their homes, experience electrifying Bible adventures, collect Bible Memory Buddies to remind them of God's Word, and create Bible Point Crafts that they'll take home.

Avalanche Ranch is an exciting way for children to learn more about God's love. Kids will also participate in gathering food for the food bank. On Friday of VBS week we'll take all that we've gathered to our local food program at 49 Mabelle. This will be a great opportunity for the children to experience mission and service in their own neighbourhood!

AVALANCHE RANCH
A WILD RIDE THROUGH GOD'S WORD

Each day will conclude at Showtime Roundup – a celebration that will get all the participants involved in living what they've learned. Family members and friends are encouraged to join us daily for this special time in the Sanctuary. We hope Avalanche Ranch will get everyone wild about God in our community.

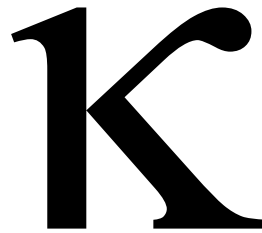
Avalanche Ranch begins on Monday, August 20 and continues daily until Friday, August 24 from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon.

Pre-registration is needed so that we can ensure we have the appropriate staffing and supplies for everyone. A daily registration desk will be located at the rear ramped entrance from the parking area.

This week is also a great opportunity for the youth in our congregation to earn Community

Service Hours (approximately 20 hours) for their high school credit.

We need Ranch Staff to help make this great week happen! All the planning is completed for you – all you need is the desire to have a fun week sharing your love of God with our children. And you'll have full support from staff to do the rest.



For more information about joining the fun on Avalanche Ranch, call Leslie Arsenault at 416.239.1131 ext. 25 or email leslie@islingtonunited.org.

Registration forms for your child(ren) are available on bulletin boards throughout the church. ☞

AVALANCHE RANCH
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
August 20 - 24
9:30 am - 12:00 noon

Living the Questions

Cathy Dilts, Minister of Congregational Development

A cedar of Lebanon ... was beautiful in its greatness, in the length of its branches; for its roots went down to abundant water.

(Ezekiel 31:3, 7)

Several weeks ago during Youth Time in worship, Michael Shewburg invited the children in our church to ask their questions about faith. We, the congregation, sat in wonder as the youngest members of our faith family shared the questions God has placed in their hearts. Their questions were thoughtful and profound.

This past winter a group of about 12 people met in the church on Monday evenings to engage in *Living the Questions*, a study resource designed to help individuals and small groups explore faith questions. Here are some of the reflections on our time together:

“It was permission-giving. It gave me a place to ask faith questions I have been wrestling with for a long time.”

“My eyes have been opened to new perspectives and faith understandings.”

“The theology and perspectives articulated in *Living the Questions* make sense in our post-modern context.”

“I had never thought about [faith] that way before.”

So what is the place of questions and questioning in our faith? Or, is faith about subscribing to particular doctrines? In 1925 when The United Church of Canada was born out of the union of three denominations (Congregationalist, Methodist and some Presbyterian congregations), the Basis of Union was written. It included 22 Articles of Faith – the

doctrines of our church. But these are not hard and fast “rules” of the church but are more like a framework of understanding in which one is invited into essential agreement. That phrase, “essential agreement,” allows for multiple points of view and diversity of understanding.

In Ezekiel it is the nation of Assyria that is likened to a cedar of Lebanon, “beautiful in its greatness ... for its roots went down to abundant water.” Growing in faith happens when our roots can grow deeper and deeper into the fertile soil of God’s grace; ever reaching and seeking the abundant Living Water that is Jesus Christ.

But for roots to grow deeper the earth around them must be disturbed, loosened, to make room for growth. Asking our faith questions, giving voice to our uncertainties and wonderings, is one way of disturbing the familiar, traditional or hardened aspects of our faith. By sharing our questions we can open ourselves to learning from one another, to hearing God’s voice in the challenging and unfamiliar, and to experiencing and expressing faith in new and diverse ways.

So go ahead and ask your questions. Share your thoughts and understandings. After all, we are all theologians!

If you are interested in participating in *Living the Questions*, there will be another session offered in the fall along with a new study unit entitled *Saving Jesus*. Watch the weekly bulletin for dates and times or contact Cathy Dilts for more information at 416.239.1131 ext. 28 or cathy@islingtonunited.org. ☞

Summer Worship

Jack Grady, Chair – Worship Committee

We’re going to try something ‘old’ this summer! The Worship Committee and Church Council have heard from some of our members that they would like to try a return to a single summer worship service each week. In response we are going to hold one service at 10:00 am beginning on Sunday, July 1 and continuing until Sunday, September 2. Refreshments will be served on the lawn following the service.

This venture will be carefully monitored and evaluated to determine its impact on the nature of worship itself, the effect on the Sunday School program, the number of people who attend, and the offering that is received during this ten-week period compared to previous years. Our expenses will remain virtually the same whether there are two services or one. We would also like your feedback on this change: do you prefer one service at 10:00 am or a choice of two services at 9:00 or 10:30 am? Once the evaluation is completed in the fall the Worship Committee can make its recommendation on the format for future years to Church Council.

We look forward to seeing you in worship this summer at 10:00 am. And please direct your feedback to Jack Grady at 416.620.1411 or jgrady@sympatico.ca. ☞

LINK

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Sunday Services

Sunday Morning Worship
 9:30 and 11:15 AM (September to June)
 10:00 AM (July 1 to September 2)

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

Healing Prayer
 Second Sunday monthly (year-round)
 (following morning worship)



Drop in during the summer— we're here!

- June 3* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Stephen Ministry Commissioning
- June 10* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Music Sunday
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
- June 17* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- June 24* Services at 9:30 and 11:15 am
Note: a single Summer Service begins next week
- July 1* Service at 10:00 am
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- July 8* Service at 10:00 am
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
- July 8 – 20* **The GO Project: Youth Mission at Islington**
- July 15* Service at 10:00 am
- July 22* Service at 10:00 am
Sacrament of Holy Communion
- July 22 – Aug 3* **The GO Project: Youth Mission at Islington**
- July 29* Service at 10:00 am
- August 2* **Baptism Seminar at 7:30 pm**
 (Toddler Room)
- August 5* Service at 10:00 am
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- August 12* Service at 10:00 am
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
- August 19* Service at 10:00 am
Sacrament of Holy Communion
- August 20 – 24* **Vacation Bible School**
Avalanche Ranch
- August 26* Service at 10:00 am
- September 2* Last Sunday for 10:00 am Service
Sacrament of Christian Baptism
- September 6* **Baptism Seminar at 7:30 pm**
 (Toddler Room)
- September 9* 9:30 and 11:15 am Services resume
Service of Healing Prayer (following worship)
Kick-Off Sunday