

The Islington United Church



LINK Newsletter

Poolside Reflections on God's Purpose



Dear Friends,

As I write, the summer of 2003 is rapidly passing by. I remember when the advent of August, the C.N.E. and "Back-to-school sales" meant that summer was as good as gone and school was not far away. But this year I'm excited about the arrival of September and the start-up of so many church programs and services.

This summer I went to California with Pattie for a conference related to her work with Foster Families. In Los Angeles we worshipped at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Orange County, the scene of television's *Hour of Power*. I wanted Pattie to experience the wonderful service that I had enjoyed on a previous visit, and we were not disappointed.

Neither Dr. Robert Schuller nor his son, Dr. Robert Schuller Jr., was there and, although I cannot remember the name of

the guest preacher (the former President of Godfather Pizza), I do remember his message: *Whenever your life intersects with human need you can discover God's purpose for you.* Pretty basic, but very real! It got me thinking about our shared ministry at Islington United Church.

Monday morning, sitting by the pool while Pattie attended the conference, I read a newspaper article about the Rev. Rick Warren – "the most influential evangelist you've never heard of" – and his latest best seller, *The Purpose-Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* I happened to have a copy of the book in my hotel room, a gift from an Islington member. Was God trying to give me a message?

I continued to think about how we discover God's purpose for our lives. At the closing banquet of Pattie's conference,

Continued on page 2

This is Your Invitation to Communion

Holy Communion will be celebrated on October 5 at both the 9:30 A.M. and 11:15 A.M. 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 _____

Telephone _____

A Prayer

There were many requests for the words to this classic prayer from the *Book of Common Prayer*, quoted by Mark in his August 3rd sermon.

*O Lord,
support us
all the day long...
until the shadows lengthen
and the evening comes
and the busy world is hushed
and the fever of life is over
and our work is done.*

*Then, in your mercy, grant us
a safe lodging
a holy rest
and peace at the last. ☪*

Poolside Reflections *Continued from page 1*

to which I had been invited, the keynote speaker told how she had discovered God’s purpose for her as a parent, and how she used that experience to encourage Foster Parents.

Each of these experiences makes me excited about continuing to discover God’s purpose for us, the people of God, at Islington United Church. In June we bade farewell to the Shaw-Fennell family. I was sad to see Sally and Rob move on to their new ministries in Kitchener, but happy that they had discovered God’s new plan for their family. Likewise, I am pleased to see God’s plan for us unfold as we welcome Leslie Arsenaault, our Church School Coordinator, and Danielle James, our Minister for Youth and Congregational Development. I believe God has wonderful things in mind for us as we welcome these new staff members and their gifts into our Ministry Team at Islington.

Please join me in praying that our ministry at Islington United Church will be guided by God to turn seekers into saints, consumers into contributors and members into ministers as we fulfill our mission statement: *To be an open, friendly and caring church where people of all ages are invited to discover, explore and develop their spirituality in Christ’s name.*

May God bless and keep you.

Mark Aitchison

P.S. See you in worship. ☪

Who Cares?

*Linda Wheeler,
Minister of Pastoral Care*

I have heard visitors say, “Islington United is a warm and caring congregation – you can feel it as soon as you walk into worship.”

That welcome is from the people of this congregation. On Sunday mornings greeters and ushers offer warm welcomes, people exchange wide smiles and handshakes in the pews, and you can hear care and concern expressed in the hallway chatter following our hour of worship.

Our care is not limited to Sunday mornings. **Elders** extend their hands in care as they visit the homes of both members and adherents. **Caring Friends** offer hands-on help to seniors who need a drive to a church activity or doctor. Did you know that the twelve people on our **Visitation Committee** visit over forty seniors on a monthly basis? There are twenty active **Stephen Ministers** and our **Prayer Link** holds many people in their prayers.

The care that is expressed goes beyond mere numbers; it is the heart of our community of faith, an expression of faithful love that seeps into all we do. Our congregation is warm because we truly care for each other. This task is not always easy but we have the commitment that makes it work. Many people offer their time, talents, treasure and selves in Jesus’ ministry of care and compassion, and our caring ministry is constantly evolving to the needs of our growing community of faith.

Jesus invites each one of us to follow him and to love all of God’s children, friend and stranger. When we reach out in love and care we do not do it alone: it is the One who loves and cares who works through us. I am reminded these words:

*Jesus says follow me.
I am the way for you.
I am the truth for you.
Blessed are your eyes for they see.
You are my witness. You are my brother.
I am hungry, give me food.
I am in prison, come to me.
I am thirsty, give me drink.
I am a stranger, welcome me
I am naked, cloth me.
I am sick, visit me.
Abide in me and I in you.*

—Iona Abbey Worship Book

Who cares? Jesus cares and so do the members of Islington United. ☪



Friends and the P-Word

Gael Hannan and Shona Kindness

Just when you *think* you know someone, that nothing could surprise you in a comfortable-as-an-old-shoe-friendship, something shifts.

Even the subtlest of changes can have a deep, far-reaching impact on relationships. It happened to us when, after being best friends for almost 35 years, we found ourselves talking – to each other – about the love of Jesus and the power of Prayer.

The year we met, we celebrated turning 15; next year we're planning something fabulous for our big 5-0's. The years have been crammed with adventures and friends, food and travel, husbands and children, tears and laughter. At 25, we partied hard. These days, we're still capable of a party, if it doesn't go too late, but we also spend a lot of time at church...of our own free will!

We were raised in church-going families, but dropped regular attendance when our moms weren't around to push us on Sunday mornings. Church was sporadic over the years, often limited to weddings and funerals, but when we became mothers and reached mid-life (for one of us, these happened simultaneously), something shifted. We both wanted to return to church and there it was, Islington United, waiting for us! (*Gael: When church-shopping at IUC, I tried not to be swayed by its physical beauty. Shona: I'm shallow, I loved it!*)

While our IUC faith activities are quite different, we both signed up for the first Week of Guided Prayer which became one of those life-changing events, the spiritual equivalent of a kick in the boot. Each of us experienced the week on a very personal level, during times of private prayer and in discussion with our respective prayer companions.

Before the closing gathering on the Saturday morning, however, we huddled together in the car in the church parking lot. Just a *wee bit* behind in our tasks, we feverishly read that last bit of scripture, quickly trying to evaluate the role of Prayer in our lives.

We stopped cold. "Do you realize it's *Saturday* morning and we're sitting in car reading the *Bible* together – and talking about the *P-word*!?"

In our world of non-church friends, Prayer and Faith are subjects simply not discussed. While the two of us had

"Friends
4Ever!"
Shona
Kindness
(left) and
Gael
Hannan
(right),
1974



talked about spiritual matters from time to time over the years, our discussions never focused on Jesus and we certainly had never prayed together. So there in the car, we felt a little shy discussing a subject that had always been abstract, but was now deeply personal. Yet, we were also excited at a shared new spirituality.

Another, bigger shift. We were silent for a moment. Then – being us – we broke up laughing and went into church, bibles in hand.

In this last gathering of the Week of Guided Prayer, participants share fellowship and communion, as well as thoughts on what the previous week has meant to them. We shared our parking lot experience, trying to explain the defining moment that has added a new vocabulary to an old friendship. It was gratifying to discover that some other people felt as we did – awkward or incapable of talking about spiritual matters with non-church friends – and we all agreed that this Week of Guided Prayer helped us feel more comfortable in our faith and church involvement.

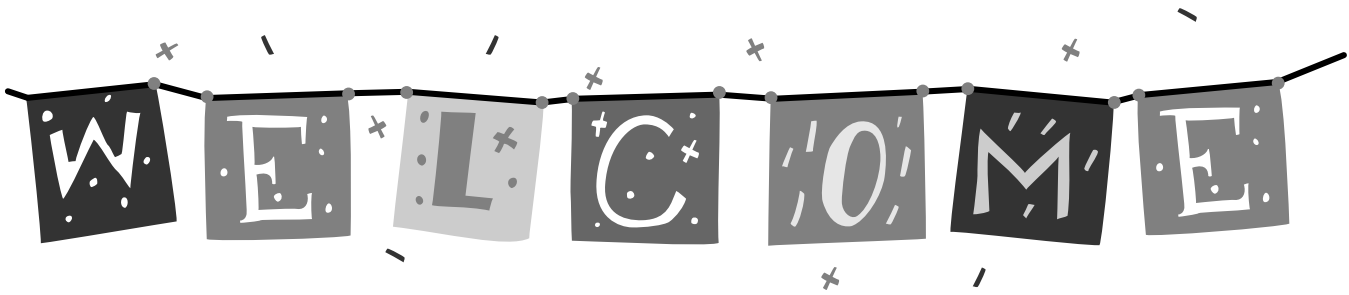
Jesus says: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

We ask: "Is there an easier way?"

"OK," says Jesus, "Do this. Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

Life has changed with the knowledge of how much God loves us. His love lasts forever, and through His promise, we know that our friendship will continue in heaven, to infinity and beyond. ☺

We Roll Out The Welcome Wagon!



It's said that when one door closes, another opens, but in our case, two doors have closed (but never completely) and two more are opening wide. With the departure of Sally Shaw and Rob Fennell, the *Joint Needs Assessment Committee* and the *Search Committees* are evaluating the church's requirements in terms of staffing and development. In the meantime however, the Ministry and Personnel Committee has interviewed and contracted two wonderful people to help carry out the church's commitment to vibrant Church School programs, youth ministries and congregational development.

We are all very pleased to welcome Leslie Arsenault and Danielle James into their new positions. The contract positions are effective until June 30, 2004 or until the work of the Joints Needs Assessment and Search committees is completed. Please introduce yourself to Danielle and Leslie and share with them what you can of your time and talents.

Leslie Arsenault – Church School Coordinator

Islington United Church is very excited to welcome Leslie Arsenault to our staff as Church School Coordinator effective July 1, 2003.



Leslie and her husband David and their children Christopher (6) and Hayleigh (4) have been active at Islington United Church for several years. Leslie took her degree in Early Childhood Education from York University and has been at home with her children for the past few years, as well as being a volunteer in our Church School and the annual Vacation Bible School. While she enjoyed her time at home, she's thrilled with her new position, which takes advantage of both her education and her commitment to the church.

Leslie will be working on a part-time basis during her time with us. Watch for further details regarding Leslie's office hours and availability. Anyone interested in volunteering to help with our Children's Ministry in this coming year, is encouraged to contact Leslie at the church.

Danielle James – Minister for Youth and Congregational Development

Danielle James, B.A., M.Div., joined the IUC ministerial team as a temporary full-time Minister for Youth and Congregational Development on August 15, 2003.



Danielle is responsible for providing Christian support and ministry as well as leadership and program planning for youth, new members and enquirers to the Church. She completed her Master of Divinity degree at Yale and is currently a student for ministry from St. Paul's United Church in Brampton. We feel blessed to have Danielle working with us at Islington United as we strive to meet our goal of being the welcoming and nurturing church that God calls us to be. ☺

We Gathered to Wave Goodbye

Beth Pollock

On June 23rd, Islington United Church celebrated the ministries of Rob Fennell and Sally Shaw with a barbecue and strawberry social, followed by a service in the sanctuary.

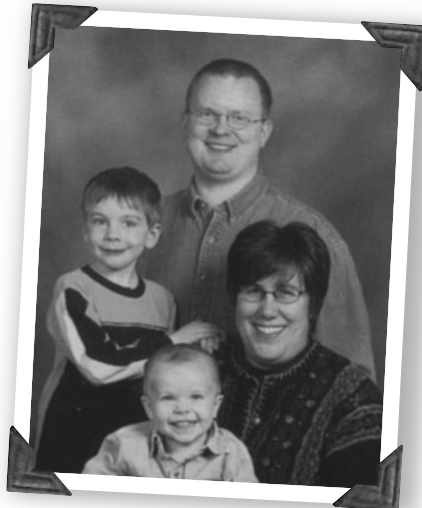
Sally began her tenure as Minister to Young People and their families in August 1998. My earliest memory of Sally came on her first Sunday in the church. Standing in the pulpit, she radiated such joy that I felt uplifted. I knew she was going to be a great fit for the congregation.

And she *was* a great fit. One of Sally's most wonderful traits was the complete respect she had for children. Sometimes it would have been easy to go for a laugh at a child's expense. Sally never did that, and as a parent, I really appreciated it. The Sunday School thrived under Sally and, with her encouragement, many men and women volunteered in the Sunday School for the first time.

Rob served as Islington's Minister of Congregational Development for three and a half years. I can't imagine a friendlier face welcoming new people to the church. More than a few people have said that his personal invitation was what made the difference in their joining the congregation.

Rob's passion was The Gathering worship service. He delighted in using rock music, drama and video clips to present his ideas in a non-traditional way. The Gathering services were beautiful and moving, and it is a tribute to Rob that they will continue long after he leaves.

We wish Rob, Sally, Dexter and Noah many blessings in their new home in Kitchener. Our faith family was truly enriched by their time with us! ☼



A Village of 100

In his sermon on August 10th, Mark quoted from an article in the SCAW (Sleeping Children Around the World) June 2003 Newsletter. Several people asked for a copy of the article.

If the world's population was reduced to a village of only 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, that village would look something like this. There would be:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 from the Western Hemisphere and 8 from Africa
- 52 would be female
- 48 male
- 70 would be other than Caucasian
- 30 would be white skinned
- 70 would be other-than-Christian
- 30 would be Christian
- 97 would be heterosexual
- 3 would be homosexual
- 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 70 would be unable to read
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be near birth
- 1 would have a college education
- 1 would have a computer ☼



A Note from the Editor

Gael Hannan

Welcome to a more streamlined *Link*! Our goal for the newsletter is to provide a better focus on the heart of our church – its spirituality and its people. We hope you enjoy the new format, and welcome, even encourage, you to share some story ideas.

What brought you to Islington United and what has made you stay? Have you been inspired by congregation or staff member? Perhaps a person or church program has made a difference in your life? What is *your* story – has loving God or coming to know Jesus changed how you live, think or feel?

Another exciting development – in the near future, a condensed version of *Link* will be available on the church website, www.islingtonunited.org.

Please contact me at 416-237-1274 or gdhannan@rogers.com, or contact any of the ministers or staff. ☺

Link is a quarterly newsletter produced & distributed by

Islington United Church

25 Burnhamthorpe Road
Etobicoke, Ontario
M9A 1G9

416-239-1131
Fax 416-239-7421

Senior Minister

Mark Aitchison, ext. 23

Minister of Music

John Derksen, ext. 26

Minister of Pastoral Care

Linda Wheler, ext. 24

Minister for Youth and Congregational Development

Danielle James, ext. 28

Church School Coordinator

Leslie Arseneault, ext. 25

Editor

Gael Hannan

Layout

Leah Gryfe

Sunday Services

9:30 A.M. and 11:15 A.M.



Coming This Fall

September 26

Gene Di Novi Gershwin Concert

September 28 – 7:00 P.M

Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
Covenanting Service for Rick Tamas

October 22

United Church Women Fashion Show

October 24/25/26

Youth Retreat

October 25

Men's Day Apart

October 26

Anniversary Sunday
Turkey Supper

October 27

Congregational Meeting

November 6

Annual Holly Day Bazaar & Luncheon

November 14

Refugee Dinner with Michael Coren