

EDUCATION AT ST. JOHN'S

This window at St. John's symbolizes the Bible Classes in our past and is described in the centre pages. This Newsletter focuses on education.

May 1993

OUR NEWSLETTER

It's been four months since our last newsletter and a lot has happened in the parish since then ... Christmas, a great New Year's Eve party, the annual vestry meeting, a meeting with architect Gerald Robinson, Lenten bible studies and Easter services, to name just a few activities.

There was no February newsletter because your editor (Mike Maunder), discovered during then what it means to be a full-time student and try to earn a living at the same time. He was swamped with term papers and classes. It's a familiar feeling for many St. John's parishioners - other adults who are ongoing students, a number of teachers in the parish, and younger students as well. And so, appropriately enough, we decided to devote this issue to education:

- * a story by Mike on adult education in the parish;
- * a story by Mabel-Anne Waters on the church school;
- * and a story by Irene Munroe on Bible Classes in the past;
- * and if that's not enough, Jim Crummey writes a letter to Bob Rae with a unique proposal.

In our summer issue, we would like to bring you up-to-date on many of the stories we've covered in the last year: youth group news, seniors in the church, the St. John's Trust families, the parish statement on homosexuality and the ministry, results from the meeting with the architect, church finances and future plans. It has been a busy year.

Please let us know if there's other news you'd like to see:

Maggie Pawson	763-2266
Mike Maunder	961-1521
St. John's Church	763-2393

ADULT EDUCATION AT ST JOHN'S

If current activities are any indication, St. John's is a parish which believes in the power of adult education:

- * During the fall, winter and now into the spring, Tom and Judy Wolever continue to host a weeknight Bible Study in their home.
- * During this past Lenten season, a group of parishioners met every Sunday morning with Bruce Alton to discuss the history of the Bible.
- * On many Sundays following the service, Forums are held to explore current issues and to dialogue with guests. Recent topics have included the situation in South Africa, AIDS and taking a trip to the moon. The latter was an activity run by Bruce Alton to explore the meaning of consensus making.
- * On most Wednesdays, the Gospel at the Eucharist is not simply read, as well a brief homily explores its meaning and then there's an opportunity to discuss it and ask questions.
- * St. John's parishioners are active in the diocese's LOGOS program of adult education, recently co-leading two courses: "Will Our Children have Faith?" and a study of Mark's Gospel. These courses have been shared with St. Paul's, Runnymede.

Walter Deller is co-ordinator of the LOGOS program for the diocese. He believes that the people in churches who are most in need of education are the adults, although the focus in education is often on the children.

"If we, as adults and parents, have a Faith that is authentic, then the children are going to want to have it too," he explained in an interview at his diocesan office. "It's not enough simply to have a good adult education curriculum. LOGOS strives to have adults actively involved in deepening their own understanding and Faith."

In LOGOS, getting adults actively involved begins with the lay volunteers who co-lead the adult courses. In Saturday clinics, they study the curriculum they will be teaching. In weekend retreats, they learn the dynamics of how adults learn and how to help small groups function.

Small group learning is key to the LOGOS approach. "Faith is developed through trust and through personal challenge," explained Walter. "And the only setting in which there can really be trust and challenge is in a small group. It's this kind of setting that allows people to build community together, to bring their own experience to bear on the concepts that are being explored."

Thus, in a LOGOS course, there are many occasions when participants divide into smaller groups. We did this when I sat in on the course being run recently by Sheila Crummey. We were studying Mark's Gospel. Amazingly, the first night of the program simply consisted of reading the Gospel in its entirety. Hearing it all at once, like a real story, instead of dissecting it into tiny pieces was something I had never done. In the second week, we divided into small groups to look at particular parts of the Gospel, not in the spirit of putting each piece under the microscope, but in the spirit of seeing the pattern of the whole Gospel. I had never read the Bible like this before and found many new insights. I also found myself starting to get to know my small group partners, members of St. Paul's. Community building is an important part of the LOGOS approach.

Perhaps St. John's is so active in adult education because many parishioners are involved with teaching and continuing education, and understand the need for it. That was certainly the motivation for a small group of parishioners who decided to get together on Sundays during Lent to learn more about the Bible.

We wanted to learn more about the history of the Bible," explained Alan Waters, a member of the group. "It's wonderful to have someone like Bruce Alton (of Trinity College) who could explain and almost act like a personal tutor for us."

The group spent five Sunday mornings studying topics like the structure of the Old Testament, methods of analysis and textual criticism, and parallel readings of the Gospels.

"Learning is inescapable," explained Alan. "The opportunities for learning just keep coming at you. You don't have to be in school, learning is out there in so many ways. I see myself on a stream of information, just trying to keep up by getting the next book at the library."

But if St. John's parishioners see an active ministry in continuing adult education, there are still many adults in Toronto who only see education as something that is done to you when you are younger in a formal school setting. Hopefully this is beginning to change - as our "jobless recovery" continues, the idea of lifelong learning is becoming better understood by many more adults now looking at training and upgrading their skills.

For those interested in learning about building community and deepening their Faith, St. John's and LOGOS offer many opportunities.

CHURCH SCHOOL

The Christian Education Committee provides a Sunday School program for 28 children, ages 2 - 10 years, based on "The Whole People of God" curriculum. The children leave the service after the focus for about 20 - 30 minutes of instruction with volunteer teachers. There are four classes. The two youngest classes are the largest and have the best attendance.

Before they return for the Eucharist, the children learn and say different parts of the service. They have now learned the Lord's Prayer and are working on the Doxology. As anyone who has been at the Eucharist knows, they return with an explosion of crafts, colours, energy and stories as they proudly wave their creations.

Learning doesn't have to stop here however. Weekly "Home Packs" appear with the Bulletin to encourage parishioners and parents to follow-up on the instructional material used in the classes through the week.

In an effort to get to know more parishioners and to encourage more people to become teachers, a "Win-A-Trip to Sunday School" draw was held monthly during the Fall. It is important that the whole parish be involved in the Sunday School, not just parents. We hope we have interested some more of you to become involved.

The Christian Education Committee also helps plan and carry out special intergenerational services. On Good Friday, An Illustrated Pilgrimage on the Life of Christ was held for the children. On Easter Day, there was a very festive service. A special service is being planned for Pentecost (May 30) to round out the 50 days of Easter.

Right now, evaluation forms are being distributed to parents, teachers and students to get feedback on the program. If you did not receive one, please ask Mara Nickerson or Mabel-Anne Waters. Your input is important to improving our program. Please return these evaluation forms as quickly as possible.

Plans for next year are already in the works. Concern has been expressed about the absence of formal teaching after age 10 (Grade 5). On Sunday, May 2 there will be a brief meeting during the coffee hour to discuss this and develop ideas. Implementation of the proposals will be discussed at a second meeting.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

THE BIBLE CLASSES

In the years from 1919 to 1947 graduation from Sunday School meant joining a Bible Class. As the five bible classes during those years were for different ages, a person advanced from one to the next.

It was a common sight on Sunday afternoons after classes, to see a group of young women on one side of High Park Avenue and a group of young men on the opposite side, all walking south to Bloor Street for a "soda". By coincidence, they often met... We are told that 16 couples married as time passed. Many lived near the church, taking an active part in the life of St. John's: as teachers, wardens, choristers, and in women's groups.

In 1976, a 50-year Bible Class reunion was planned for ex-members and friends across Canada and the United States.

The invitations suggested making donations for a Bible Classes Memorial Window in the Narthex. Surplus money would establish an ongoing Theological Bursary Fund, which used only the interest each year. By donating to the Bursary Fund people could record the names of loved ones on a Memorial Board, to be erected in memory of Mr. Frank Munroe by his family. The response was overwhelming: 149 people made donations and planned to be present at the reunion.

The November 21st dedication ceremonies included some special guests: the late Right Reverend H. R. Hunt; the late Canon Minto Swan; and the Hon. Pauline McGibbon, then the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, who, with her party, was escorted up the aisle by Piper Major George McRae to join the 575-strong congregation. All were welcomed by the Reverend Canon M. P. Poole. During the Service of the Holy Communion, the organist was accompanied by the Trumpeters of HumberSide Collegiate, playing "Amazing Grace".

Proceeding to the Narthex, the Memorial Window was unveiled by Mrs. McGibbon and the Memorial Board by Irene Munroe, and both were dedicated to the Glory of God by Bishop Hunt and Canon Swan. The centre panel of the Window shows the Rising Eagle as the symbol of St. John, the left panel depicts the "Tablets of the Law", and the centre left panel the "Chalice". The other panels depict the "Scroll & Quill" and the "Holy Bible".

Afterwards, people moved to the parish hall where "joy reigned at the reception time, as friends of many years exchanged greetings"!

Note: In the past few years approximately \$7,000 interest from the account has been given to individuals and Theological Colleges to assist in theological studies. The principal of the Fund still stands at around \$6,200.

THE LAST WORD: ST JOHN'S SAVES PROVINCIAL ECONOMY!

An Open Letter to Bob Rae on the Subject of Saving this Province by following the Shining Example of the Parish of St John's!

Dear Bob,

I know you think you've got big problems, what with the Provincial deficit looming over \$11 billion and all, but here at St. John's we think we have just the answer for you. Now, before you get worried, I want to reassure you that we're not just another vested interest group after a piece of the action. Not at all. What in heaven's name would we do with \$11 billion in the collection plate anyway? I mean, if you showed up some Sunday in Eastertide and just dumped that \$11 billion in the offertory, we couldn't cope. Can you imagine Kyle Mohler trying to lift the collection plates? We'd probably lose not only Kyle, but all the other servers as well under the pile, and nobody would have enough space to run around the altar or swing on the altar rail. Besides, since Irene retired, I'm pretty sure nobody on the Finance Committee can count that high.

However, if it's advice you want on how to run a deficit, you've come to the right place, Bob. We know all about deficit financing right here at St. John's, yes sirree - and Bob's your Uncle. We know deficits, big-time. We've been running a deficit ever since I can remember - but that's not too long! I've a good memory, but it's very short. Given our Christian background, our deficit could go back very far. I mean, did Noah ever pay off the Ark? He must have built it on credit, and after that flood there was nobody around to collect for quite a time, right?

And if you want to go all the way back, I don't remember that Eve ever paid up for that apple either. And did Elijah ever pay for that chariot ride to heaven? I doubt it! So, that's the good news, Bob, we've been running a deficit since the beginning of time and we're still up and running! I think that qualifies us to give you a little advice on how it's done.

Now, the first thing I want to point out is that you obviously haven't taken any good LOGOS courses lately, Bob. Would do you a lot of good. The first thing you would learn is that what you need is a Social Covenant, Bob, not a social contract. Now, I can't give you all the dope on this for free, but if you're a member of our deanery, they might consider giving you your enrolment fees back, **IF** you complete the course! For now Bob, just remember "Covenant", not "Contract".

However, Bob, taking a LOGOS course is not really how you can save the Province. Let me explain first how we helped your predecessor, Mr. Peterson, stay in power as long as he did.

Actually, there was no magic involved: it was really no big deal or anything. He merely gave us a ¼ million or so to start our Daycare and fix up our basement. This, of course, led to work for many people and an increase in his tax base, many happy parents and parishioners (i.e. voters), and had he lived up to a few of his other promises, with our help he might still have a job in the public sector today.

Now I want you to realize that you are in a slightly bigger pile of do-do (due-due?) at the moment than your predecessor was, and St. John's won't be able to pull you out quite so easily or as cheaply as before. No little daycare here, Bob. No sirree. You're going to have to go all the way here and sponsor the St. JOHN'S EAGLES Baseball Team.

Now before you get all worked up here, consider the Blue Jays and what they've done for this city. Well, Bob, those guys aren't even Canadians. Every one of the \$126 million (US) those guys are going to make this year is going to fly the coop (your coop). The Eagles, Bob, are 100% Canadian, local talent entirely.

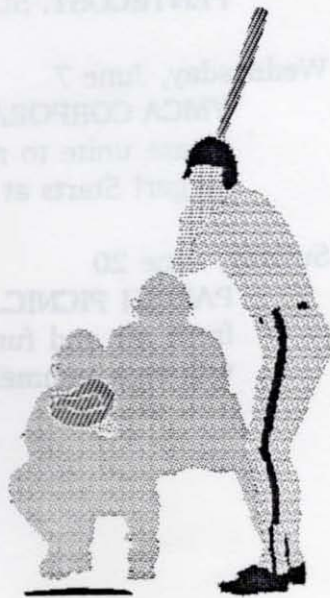
Now, just in case you don't think we're worth it, let me tell you about our line-up. Star-studded to say the least: slick-fielding Anthony Rutamar, the power of John "Boom-Boom" Gower, managerial genius of "Cito" Swayne, "Boomer" Alton out in the pen, the flash and panache of the great José Crumesco, the fire-balling Fred "Rocket-Person" Addis our politically correct starting pitcher, our soaring outfielder Maggie "The Hawk" Pawson, and our politically correct bat person, Adrienne "Shepherdette" Roffey - not to mention our off-field genius "Stand-Pat" Waters. Awe, yes, Bob, with a line-up like this, the Province would soar like the foul balls off the Eagles' bats. What an offer! The whole package, \$126 million, and we take Canadian fund\$!

Better believe it, the Eagles have landed! One final piece of advice Bob - with the Eagles as your team - I'd go with a snap October election!!!

Yours in baseball,

THE ST JOHN'S EAGLES
(in a league of our own)

(if you build it, they will come)



OUR CHURCH

Saturday, May 8

RUMMAGE SALE. Time to think of spring cleaning! Donations of good-quality saleable items gladly accepted - no winter clothing, used toothbrushes or Ontario Government budget documents, please!

Unsubtle Hints: Home-baking always sells well... Please contact Joan Devitt if you can help at all with setting-up and pricing.

Sundays, May 2, 16, 30 June 6, 13 and 27' - NO RAIN DATES

INTER-PARISH BASEBALL. Starts promptly at 2 p.m. at George R. Gauld Public School, 200 Melrose Avenue (Royal York and Evans Ave). If you ain't got that swing, it don't matter a thing - come and cheer the teams on!

Sunday, May 30

PENTECOST. St. John's plans to see RED. Please wear it!

Wednesday, June 7

YMCA CORPORATE TEAM CHALLENGE. Joggers of St. John's please unite to make a winning team of 4: a mere 5 Km per jogger! Starts at 7 p.m. sharp. See Jim Crummey for details.

Sunday, June 20

PARISH PICNIC. Site #1 in High Park. Plan to be there for fresh air and fun, before we disperse for the summer (there **will** be a summer this year!)