

June 25, 2008

Domenica and Jessica at the Campout

SJWT



Dear Friends,

This coming weekend's Gay Pride Events are another reminder that we are the Church that is for everyone, *Absolutely Everyone*. You are welcome and we are glad you are here!

Worship with us this Sunday, June 29: 7th of Pentecost: 8:30 Early Eucharist 10:30 Sermon: The Rev. Liz McKendry: Sacred Geography - Pilgrimage in Israel. Celebrant: Rev. Gary van der Meer; Musician: Jaroslav Czerwinec, accordion.

Funeral Details for Stu Schroeder of the Redeemer Lutheran Church:

Visitation: Thursday, June 26, 2008 7 - 9 p.m. Ward Funeral Home, Weston Chapel, 2035 Weston Road (north of Lawrence Avenue); Friday, June 27, 2008 10 a.m. (before the funeral) Advent Lutheran Church, 2800 Don Mills Road (north of Sheppard Avenue). Funeral: Friday, June 27, 2008 11 a.m. Advent Lutheran Church, 2800 Don Mills Road, reception to follow in the church hall.

Announcements & Events



Anglican Presence in the Gay Pride Parade

Plan to represent St. John's as a church that affirms gays and lesbians: **Run in the Pride and Remembrance Run: 5K, Saturday, June 28, 10:00 AM**; Walk with welcoming Anglican Parishes in the Parade: Meet at the Staging Area (Rosedale Valley Road), **Sunday, June 29, 1:30 PM**. A Great City Festival for the rest of the day!

Breakfast for the homeless

The Leadership Team supports the invitation from St. Stephen's College Street for volunteers from St. John's to come once a month to put on breakfast for the homeless, beginning in September. **We will need 6 volunteers on Sunday 7 to 9:15 am, one Sunday per month**. Think about whether this might be a way you might make a difference in the world. Sign up at the Action Desk.

Upcoming Hikes

July 12, September 6, October 4 - Great details to come!

Great Upcoming Music!

June 29: Jaroslav Czerwinec, accordion; July 6: David Jones, piano and organ; July 13: Glory Glory Hallelujah, praise band; July 20 and 27: David Jones, piano and organ.

Worship with us during the week

Thursday, June 26, 10:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer (with discussion, home-baked refreshments, and visiting).

Summer Tuesday Evening Worship

Every Tuesday 7:30 p.m. in the Garden Chapel **from July 7 to August 28**. Our theme this year is *'Who do you say that I am?'* a reflection by different people on who Jesus is to them. *How I describe my Faith...* Musician: Jaroslav Czerwinec, Accordion.

Teenager Lunch

Attention 12 to 17 year olds at St. John's. Father Gary and the St. John's Youth Committee would like to invite you to join us for pizza lunch at Vesuvio Restaurant (3014 Dundas St. W., just east of High Park Avenue) after the 10:30 service on **July 13th**. Each attendee will be asked to contribute \$5.00 towards the cost of this lunch. For further information, please contact Brad Christakos (416-767-9347) or brad.christakos@rogers.com.

Advanced Notice

We will hold a One-Day Yard Sale on **Saturday, September 27**. Put the date in your calendar. Set your items aside in a box - Start now! Bring the box to the church in August and early September for storage on the balcony. For more information, contact Sue Ferguson, 416-769-5267.

Update on Design for New Altar Frontals

The congregation attending the services at 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM on June 8, 2008 were presented with background information on symbols and asked What values or teachings would you want represented in our frontals? The following values and teachings were identified: a sense of soaring with God lifting us up, openness, spreading the news (a dove), taking the message out, community inclusiveness, child friendly, we are children of God, a family of God and a community of God, Christ in us and in each person, a sense of light, a challenging community, thoughtful journey, challenging journey, peace, joyous, embracing, hospitality. As well, some members proposed specific symbols: open hands (ascension window), flame, circles, table, water spouting out, a fountain, a water pitcher, gardens, flowers, crosses, wings in flight, wings lifting us up, doves instead of eagles, St. John's eagle, eagle with wings spread a fish in mouth and fish in beak, fish symbol and echoing our own symbols. This information will be shared with the artist who



St. John's Book Club - The Geometry of Love

'The Geometry of Love' by Margaret Visser, takes readers on tour of an "ordinary church", Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura, a smallish Roman church dedicated to the fourth-century martyr Saint Agnes. Her work covers art, architecture, theology, myth, symbolism, history, Christian doctrine, with the subject church as a launching pad to find meaning in many symbolic places. In keeping with the location, our discussion will feature a (potluck) *Italian Pasta Dinner, Wednesday, July 9: 6:00 supper; 7:00 discussion.*

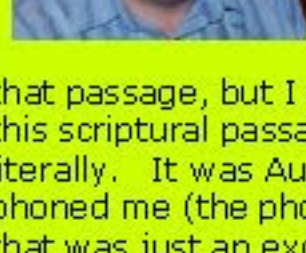


Catalina and Robert



Catherine and Jacqueline

No more secrets



"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops." Matthew 10:26-27

I'm fairly certain that Jesus was not talking about Pride Week in that passage, but I will follow a time-honoured tradition, and wilfully misconstrue this scriptural passage to suit my purpose. A few years ago I was in the dark - quite literally. It was August 13, 2003, the night of the blackout. My sister Cathy phoned me (the phones still worked!) to ask me how I was coping with it. Well, that was just an excuse, I believe. In June of that year, Michael Leshner and Michael Stark had become the first same-sex couple to legally wed in Canada, and she'd seen the reports on television and in newsmagazines. I had gone to school with Mike Stark, and she thinks she may have babysat him. She was aware that I'd paid visits to him in Toronto on a fairly regular basis in the early eighties, and I'd mentioned Michael Leshner to her as well, without making it clear what their relationship was. Now it was obvious however. "That was very courageous of them," she said to me.

I assumed, probably correctly, that she was inviting me to confide in her. In a choking voice, trying to suppress my panic, I told her that I was gay too. "Oh, I knew that," she said. In fact, she'd known it for years! This was depressing. I'd spent - wasted - my entire adult life keeping this a secret from people who already knew. What a shame.

A half century ago homosexuality was criminal in most places, with penalties ranging from prison sentences to death. It was also classified as a mental illness, with treatments ranging from psychotherapy to electroshock, lobotomies and castration. It is important to realize that these attitudes and practices were at the time considered solidly secular, not "faith-based". Although, yes, churches at the time universally condemned it as sinful, as many still do. And no boy or girl has ever passed through any school system without being made acutely aware of how much non-institutional hatred of homos (and others) there exists among one's sweet, innocent peers. Consequently, for a long time most gays and lesbians couldn't afford to be open about themselves, and preferred to hide. Once you develop the habit of secrecy, it's hard to rid yourself of it. Even now, I am reluctant to display even an abstract token of my identity such as a rainbow flag pin or a pink triangle, for fear of hostile stares from strangers on the bus or subway. Even at St. John's, I sometimes (absurdly) feel like an intruder, somebody who really shouldn't be here.

Things have changed rapidly - the status of LGBT people (in our part of the world at least) has improved dramatically over the course of the last forty years in many places. No longer criminal, but with full legal rights. No longer diagnosed as sick. Religious groups, it would seem, are the last holdouts. Pay attention to the news out of Lambeth this summer, where Anglican bishops from around the world are meeting to discuss sundry matters, including this one. Bear in mind that despite the controversy, the Anglican Church has for a long time been strongly committed to respect for everyone's rights. That is why I remain an Anglican.

"To you all hearts are open, and from you no secrets are hidden..." What a relief to know that there is Someone from whom you don't need to hide anything; who has known it for years anyway; who besides, has heard it all before; and who won't hold it against you.

Brian MacIntyre

For meditation and reflection, consider the scriptures for next Sunday, June 29, 2008: Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42.

P.S. I hope you find it helpful to get an update like this from St. John's Church, West Toronto. If you would like something listed in the announcements, or if you know someone who would appreciate receiving this, please contact me. If you would prefer not to receive news from St. John's in this way, please also let me know.

Best wishes, Gary+

Check our website. www.sjwt.ca

And remember this!

We are not a Building!

We are an accessible, accepting, diverse community. We are young and old, able-bodied, and disabled, employed and unemployed. We are married, single, divorced, straight and gay. We are from all over the world, yet we could live next door. You will find open minds and open hearts at St. John's.

The mission of St. John's Church is to build a community of caring believers committed to Christ, to work for justice and service to all in need. We gather to praise God, and to give and receive support to meet the challenge of our daily ministries. We call on all who will to come and join us.

