



## Your Newsletter

Welcome to the summer issue of our newsletter.

The newsletter will come out five times a year (Oct., Dec., Feb., Apr., and June) and is divided into five sections:

1. YOUR NEWSLETTER The first is your newsletter, which you're now reading. Normally this will be near the end of the newsletter but we're using it in this issue to talk about our philosophy of media and hopes for this newsletter.

June 1992

2. YOUR COMMUNITY St. John's is many communities - groups of people joined by interest, age, friendship or geography. Each issue's long story will focus on one of these communities, with the hope of increasing understanding and interaction between the many communities which naturally make up a church. We think this story needs to be long, in depth, with background and meaning. We hope it's not also boring.

3. YOUR CHURCH People and communities of the church all come together in worship, activities and meetings. This section will highlight upcoming worship, activities and meetings.

4. YOUR INVOLVEMENT The centrefold section is, to us, the most important section, and the section which will determine whether the newsletter is succeeding. It will feature your opinions, comments, responses and participation in the newsletter. Since this is the first issue, this time it includes a poll. We hope it will contain much more next issue (in October). Write to us or phone us. We promise to either answer you or print you.

5. REGULAR FEATURES We have a bunch of ideas here, and want to hear yours. For this issue, Frances Bain talks about Pages From Our Past, and we include a miscellany of facts from the numerous talks the church has had recently about sex.

The philosophy of this newsletter is to try to get people involved and active. We believe that the barrage of media and information coming at people today results in people simply ceasing to care. This week it's the latest in Olympia and York or Yugoslavia, last week it was the coal mining disaster, before that it was the riot on Yonge St., and on and on.

People get numbed by this barrage of information. We cease to really care; we cease to become active; instead we become passive receivers. Advertisers like that. Eventually, the conscious mind just shuts down a lot of the information. We forget we even heard it in the first place.



We want this newsletter to be active, not passive. There's three ways we're trying to encourage this:

1. Just tell us that you want to continue getting the newsletter. You can do this by phoning Maggie (763-2266) or Mike (961-1521) or filling in the poll and getting it to the church.

2. Get involved a bit more by giving us your opinions, comments, reponses, ideas. Letters and phone calls are encouraged.

3. Try out an activity. Several stories include a box of suggested activities. Try one out.

And now, about us:

This paper is the official newsletter of St. John's Church, West Toronto, member of the Anglican Church of Canada, 763-2393 and is co-edited by Mike Maunder and Maggie Pawson. This issue has been typed and put together by Lynda Woolrich.

Mike is relatively new to St. John's, arriving here in November. He was a teacher in experiential education for 18 years, works now at odd jobs in writing and teaching and is looking forward to becoming a student, next year, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. He says he is still searching spiritually and finds St. John's a congregation where others are asking questions and trying to be a community.

Maggie Pawson has been a member of St. John's for four years. Married and the mother of three, she spends much of her time pondering the need for hope, and how the church does or does not answer that need. Former Executive Assistant for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Maggie is now Chairperson of our Outreach Committee.

Lynda is on a journey that presently takes her on a path with the pilgrims of St. John's, West Toronto.

## THINGS TO DO

1. If you like media that offer in-depth, long stories with background and meaning, try watching Vision TV on cable. They offer a spiritual base (although not strictly Christian). They also put out a monthly guide to upcoming shows. Relevant to issues we're covering: June 17, 8 pm, a show on Seniors; and coverage of Anglican Synod, 9:30 pm June 18-20 and June 22-26. Phone 368-3194 for July-August listings.

2. A good book covering much of the concerns we've expressed about media is Amusing Ourselves to Death by Neil Postman. "Now everything from junk mail to the silicon chip has amplified the din of information to such decibels that information no longer has any relation to the solution of problems. The tie between information and action has been severed." Thanks to David Holmes, for recommending it to us.

# Your Community

## SENIORS IN THE CHURCH

This story attempts an overview of issues around seniors, with a lot of ideas provided by people who work with seniors. Not enough of the ideas have been provided by seniors themselves, and I hope those in the congregation who read this article will correct this deficiency by responding.

-----

Many St. John's parishioners are senior citizens. Those of us who are not, are generally baby-boomers--rapidly approaching the "Golden Years" ourselves and often concerned for our own aging parents. As Canada's health care system shows increasing signs of strain and change and as economic conditions threaten many people in the 45 to 65 age bracket with loss of jobs and security, we should all be concerned at the prospects for seniors in our society, and in our church.



In general, seniors tend to become isolated in our society.

Look at St. John's Church as an example. There are roughly 125 names on our mailing list. About 50 of these are people over 65: half can attend church activities fairly regularly, half can't. Church activities are naturally dominated by the other 75 names, many of them families (with each name really standing for 2 - 4 people).

There is nothing wrong with this. It is inevitable in any growing body. The major reason that St. John's has grown in the last five years has been because changes have been made: new liturgy, new prayer book, new hymns, an appeal to younger families. Often, older members in the Anglican communion have left because of changes like this. At St. John's many older members of the congregation were willing to see changes take place because it meant the survival of the church. But is it a necessary part of these changes that elders become isolated?

"A reality is that older people get frailer and then have to give up activities," explained Evelyn Butler, a St. John's parishioner and Nursing Director of Public Health. "They move and they have a hard time making the effort to get back. I particularly remember "Gladys" Graham and her smiling face greeting people at St. John's. Then, one day, she wasn't there anymore."

Other churches and communities have obviously gone through similar changes, some more successfully than others. Evelyn and I talked recently with Debbie Vigoda, Executive Director of the Ontario Gerontology Association and a member of Holy Blossom Temple. She talked of many ways that Holy Blossom has attempted to involve seniors and improve their quality of life. She stressed two points:

-- "Our first step was getting together a number of the older members of the congregation to find out what they wanted," she said. But temple members did not limit opinions to this consultation: they added other programs. "Most people come to a meeting like that with one or two set ideas. But how can you choose from a smorgasboard until you see all the possibilities that are available?"



-- Consistently, the major problem which arose was the problem of transportation. Simply having a number of volunteers who were available to pick up and drop off people made a huge difference in the success of many programs, and in interaction.

As Evelyn and Debbie and I talked, dozens of ideas seemed to spark off one another. I list some of them here as a sampling of the "smorgasboard" that's possible:

- Brown-bag lunches with speakers.
- Holy Blossom runs programs in the summer because many seniors go south in the winter.
- A core of volunteers who visit or phone seniors.
- Grandmothers involved in day-care and church school.
- Seniors are available in afternoons; other parishioners, at night. Therefore Supper activities have the best chance of combining both generations in decisions.
- The bottom line is social activities with refreshments. Activities arranged around community meals are the most successful.
- There are many functions like greeting people, counting collections, etc. in which seniors can be involved.
- Holy Blossom has an Old Time Service every two years, using the old hymn book, prayer book and liturgy.

A major reason that church-based programs are important is that much of what's available for seniors comes through the non-professional network of family, volunteers and friends rather than the formal health and social services system. The province is now beginning a major initiative to de-institutionalize formal health care, and make it more informal.

I talked to St. John's parishioner Anne-Marie Mohler about this new health system initiative. Anne-Marie is Executive Director of the Frank O'Leary Community Health Centre at 1700 Bloor St. In their response to this policy, Anne-Marie and representatives from other community health clinics are concerned that formal long-term care services, such as those with Alzheimers, are going to be reduced without helping the non-professional caregivers:



"It is apparent that with the re-direction of long-term care services comes an increased responsibility for family volunteers and friends as caregivers. At present the support these caregivers receive from the government is vastly insufficient. Many family members are caring for their loved ones in the home setting at the cost of loss of income, increased stress and potential burnout. These people need to be supported by home-care services, financial support, respite care and community resources."

The Frank O'Leary Community Health Centre is taking a lead in establishing community standards of care. The Centre's staff of doctors, social workers, and other professionals supplement the medical model of treating illness by moving to a "wellness" model. For instance:

Better nutrition and social time through a garden project on the roof of a senior's apartment... Diner's club, to teach nutritional cooking... A support group for caregivers, which provides those who care for seniors with knowledge and sharing... Education sessions every Wednesday (for instance, June 10, back care; June 24, arthritis)... Clinics and exercise groups... Access to information is one of the Centre's main roles, since many people don't know how to work their way through the bureaucratic maze to find out what's available.

Anne-Marie points out that seniors' needs are the same as all of us. But we often group seniors with other devalued groups in our society like the handicapped or those on low income. Not paying attention to the value of senior citizens, and at the same time isolating them, are major attitudes in our society.

The combination of this devaluation and isolation is often tragic.

"Loneliness is the biggest problem," said Evelyn Butler, a comment not just on seniors but on many in our society. "We're so segregated and fragmented. We as a community should be starting to break that down."

There can be real benefits for seniors and real benefits for the larger community when the fragmentation starts to break down. There is a wide range of possibilities in which interacting with seniors brings benefits to all of us.

Programs like home-sharing allow seniors with their own home to provide rooms as much-needed accomodation for younger people. It can often be a mutual helping exchange. Home-help programs, in which a teenager helps an older person with chores like cleaning and shopping can provide an allowance for the young person and enrich both in the human contact.

Grandparents have traditinally been as important in child-rearing as parents. A June conference at the University of Toronto looked at ways seniors were helping schools and day-care centres as tutors, mentors and adopted grandparents. They concluded that this sharing between generations is a sign of a healthy society.

"They're nice," one youngster was reported as saying. "They listen and don't interupt, like your parents."

Perhaps he put his finger on what is important: Simply listening to one another.

#### THINGS TO DO

1. June 18 is Open House at the Frank O'Leary Community Health Centre, from 3:00 - 6:00 pm. There'll be displays, snacks, activities and a visit from area MPP Elaine Ziemba. Phone them for a schedule of events (604-3361).

2. If you're a senior, or if you're not, try one of these: A) HARBOURFRONT - weekly trips for seniors, Niagara Winery tours, hiking, etc. Phone 973-4093. B) ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE has old-time movies every Wednesday at noon. C) TORONTO ISLANDS has a day program for seniors at the Church of St. Andrew-by-the-Lake on Centre Island. The next eight week program begins July 6. Phone 924-3979 for information.

If you don't see something you like, phone Seniors Information at 965-5103.

3. Volunteer for driving seniors to church. Express interest in a meeting of seniors to discuss these issues. Write us or phone us with your opinions or ideas.



# Your Church

**June 21** - is the Sunday for our Parish Picnic. Your wardens will be calling you with more details. See you at site #1 in High Park.

**Summer Home Eucharists** will be taking place again this year and at the same time - that is, Wednesday evenings, 7:30 pm in different people's homes, beginning July 8. The list will be posted in the Narthex and in the Sunday bulletins or you can phone the office (763-2393) and ask for information.

**ATTENTION** all Intercessors, Readers, Eucharistic Assistants, Hosts, Greeters, we have your name. Check bulletin board in August regarding your assigned Sundays.

**THE FUTURE** - On Sunday, May 31 a parish pre-planning meeting was held. The emerging agenda to be discussed in the fall includes:

1. Relationship with neighbourhood and
2. Quality of relationships with the existing parish community



from The Joyful Noiseletter  
© 1991 Spyder Webb (Father Flood)  
Reprinted with permission

# Parish Talks About Homosexuality

St. John's Parish is trying to form a consensus on the place of homosexuals and homosexual unions in the church.

It started with a forum held one Sunday afternoon in March. About 30 attended a lively discussion, following a talk by Jim Reed, director of the Toronto School of Theology. Jim said that Anglicans typically made decisions based on scripture, tradition and contemporary reason.

He presented 25 scripture references on homosexuality. He said their major thrust was prohibiting behaviour that is debasing and humiliating. He pointed out that the "holiness code" in Leviticus, as well as condemning homosexual behaviour also condemns priests marrying widows and the eating of shellfish. "How do you pick and choose?"

He said tradition indicated sexuality was a gift of God to be enjoyed, but only for heterosexual people. Tradition denied that enjoyment for homosexual people. The traditional Christian context is marriage and family. He said the church's control of these sexual matters guarded against threats to the family.

Contemporary reason tells us that 10 percent of the population is gay or lesbian. We don't know how a person becomes gay --hormones' genes' particular functions of the brain, learned behaviour, Freudian and other theories. But even if we knew, it still leaves us with the theological and moral questions.

Lively discussion ensued. Among the statements:

It's been well known for centuries that gay priests have lived in same sex relationships, but the tradition of the church has been not to see... Hypocrisy is the grease that makes society function... Allowing homosexual relations would be poor role models for children... What about the 10 percent who are gay, why can't they have gay role models?



Three further meetings were held in April and May, open to all interested parishioners, to formulate a statement reflecting the attitudes of St. John's towards these issues.

A working committee was formed, chaired by Maggie Pawson. That committee is now working on a statement to be presented to the parish in the fall for discussion.



## Pages from our Past

Our cover shows this year's youth group on its camping trip to Bon Echo Provincial Park over the Victoria Day weekend.

Over the year's St. John's has had a very active youth ministry.

In the '20's, CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training) didn't have so far to go for their camping. On a Saturday morning in early spring, the girls would travel to the west bank of the Humber River, in the wilderness north of Dundas Street. Armed with all the makings, they'd cook breakfast over a campfire, to be followed with a sing song and a hike along the riverlands.

In the '30's, high school children attended Miss Cote's FAHELO Bible Class (Faith, Help and Love). At age 21, they moved to Mrs. MacNamara's KISELO class (Kindness, Selflessness and Love). With radio just coming into use and television still in the future, church attendance had no competition! The FAHELO and KISELO classes are remembered by the window directly over the front doors in the narthex.

In the '60's, the leading edge of the baby boom was beginning to hit the church with a drop off in youth attendance. It was the age of Woodstock and Aquarius, folk masses and jazz masses. One attempt that St. John's made to reach the young people of that period was a coffee house operated in the basement of, what is now, the priory. Called the Camel's Eye, it attracted up to 140 young people each night - "which proved to be too many" notes the Parish Report for 1963.

Perhaps you were one of the young people attending the Camel's eye in 1963 and captured in the picture below?

Please write us with your memories of St. John's past.



WHERE WERE YOU IN 1962?



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments on Newsletter

I like

I didn't like

I would like to see

#### YOU CAN HELP

We would like to start a regular feature in the newsletter called Critics' Choice, a guide to upcoming movies, magazines and TV to help our readers wade through information overload. We need 3-4 readers who are willing to form a club, meet occasionally, and give us a list every two months of what's upcoming. Please call if you're interested.

We want this newsletter to look good. We need a third person to join Maggie and Mike - a person who can design graphics, who has access to desktop publishing, who can give about 20 hours each month that we're publishing. Please call Maggie or Mike.

## INTERGENERATIONAL CONTEST

A BIT OF FUN - PAIR YOURSELF WITH AN OLDER OR YOUNGER PERSON AND ENTER OUR MUSIC TRIVIA QUIZ

### Clues:

### Answers

1. You're the only girl that I adore. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I'm so young and she's so old. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I'm always thinking of you. \_\_\_\_\_
4. She feeds you tea and oranges. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does your mother know you're out? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Don't take your love to town. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Someone's in the the kitchen with \_\_\_\_\_
8. Lovely \_\_\_\_\_ meter maid. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Wait until the sun shines, \_\_\_\_\_
10. Went to a dance, looking for romance \_\_\_\_\_
11. For I'll be paddling \_\_\_\_\_ home. \_\_\_\_\_
12. It's 4 o'clock & we're in trouble deep \_\_\_\_\_
13. I'm dreaming now of \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Why can't you be true? \_\_\_\_\_
15. If her eyes are blue as skies, that's \_\_\_\_\_
16. You lived your life like a candle in the wind. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Can't you hear me calling \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_
18. I can see her leaning back in her satin dress. \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_