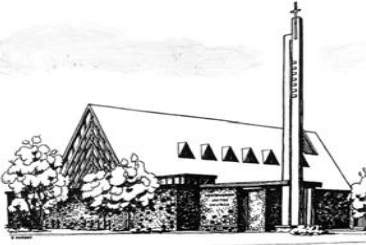


# REFLECTIONS



## REFLECTING THE PAST PRESENT & FUTURE AT NEWTONBROOK UNITED CHURCH

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### CLERGY:

Rev. Allan Baker  
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**Christmas is not my birthday!** Although I have a nephew who was born on December 24<sup>th</sup>, that is the closest that anyone in the Baker's extended family comes to being eligible to receive gifts on December 25<sup>th</sup>. And yet with all of the hype and advertising that Canadians experience in the final two months of the calendar year, one would think that additional "retail therapy" would leave us feeling happier and healthier. Instead, many of us feel exhausted and emotionally drained by the time that Christmas arrives. I wonder if there might be a way that I could be transformed on the journey through Advent so that, by the time Christmas arrives, I might be able to, in the words of Moderator Mardi Tindal, "Occupy Hope"? There must be a better way, no?

Yes, there is an alternative approach to Christmas. It is one that differs from being like a birthday party – even a birthday party for Jesus. The alternative is a value-driven approach to sharing in the abundance of life. This alternative profoundly provides that wholeness of soul, community and creation that Mardi advocates.

The wholeness that nurtures our spirits frequently arrives in unexpected, and counter-cultural ways. Instead of a gift for ourselves, spiritual nurture feeds us through gifts that we share with others. Gifts that bring wholeness to community and creation, also bring health and happiness to us.

In 2011 two students each received \$2,000 from **The Gwendolyne Ledger Fund**. The money helped to pay their post-secondary school tuition. This Fund makes grants each year to youth who live at Lester B. Pearson Place. Just imagine the difference that this is making in their lives! A gift to this Fund – just mark it on your donation envelope any week – will help to make a positive change in the lives of people you'll never meet. If my experience is any measure, your heart will be touched. This legacy is making a difference; a positive contribution to a wholesome community. A donation to **Lester B. Pearson Place** – talk to Irene Carriere about this – can help to insure the affordability of housing for people who are neighbours. Your heart will be touched. Our community will be strengthened.

Many of us experience God's presence when we are walking through the great outdoor parks and ravines that are woven through the tapestry of Toronto's urban landscape. The wholeness of life in the wider community can be nurtured through gifts to the **Living City Foundation** of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Your heart will be touched and God's creation will be restored.

No, Christmas is not my birthday. However, my experience is that, in a mystical way, by contributing to these alternatives to a world that is centered on "me", my spirit gets nurtured, and I experience a feeling of healthiness and joy. Transformation takes place in my spirit, and there's less need for "retail therapy". **Jesus is the Reason for the Season!**

Rev. Allan Baker

**PEACE PIECES**

Max Born was a famous German physicist and one of the first to flee Hitler. Though invited, he refused to join the Manhattan Project in developing the atomic bomb. After the bombing of Hiroshima, he wrote this to his son. "If man's curiosity leads to self-destruction there is no hope for him. But I am not convinced he is so constructed, for besides his brain, he has a heart. Love is a power just as strong as the atom."

*Eldon Comfort*

**LIMERICK CORNER**

On November 11<sup>th</sup> – Remembrance Day,  
We think of our planet's disarray.  
We pray for the time  
When there's no more crime  
And when peace with justice holds sway.

Bigamy is perceived as a curse  
And four wives are deemed perverse.  
And yet, at the alter  
We did not falter  
And said, "4 better or 4 worse".

*Eldon Comfort*

**SERVICES ON CD**

In addition to being able to hear the Sunday reflection on our church website or picking up a printed copy, the while service is recorded onto CD each Sunday. These services are available in the library (north wall inside the east door) and can be signed out in the same way as a book. Please return promptly.

**ADVENT/CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES**

Advent 1 – Sunday, November 27, 2011 at 10:30 am - communion and choir presentation

Advent 2 - Sunday December 4, 2011 at 10:30 am  
-White Ribbon

Sunday December 4 at 3pm -  
covenanting service at Willowdale  
United

Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 7:30 pm  
- Taize worship service at Newtonbrook

Advent 3 - Sunday December 11 at 10:30 am,  
White Gift Sunday

Sunday, December 11 at 7:30 pm - Blue  
Christmas service at Northminster United  
- a Northminster / Newtonbrook / Asbury  
& West service

Advent 4 - Sunday, December 18 at 10:30 am

December 24 at 7:30 pm - TUCT and  
Newtonbrook's annual Christmas Eve  
worship service

December 24 at 9:30 pm - Christmas Eve  
communion service

Sunday, December 25 at 10:30 am -  
Christmas Day worship service with  
communion



*BROWSING.....***AT HOME A Short History of Private Life**

by Bill Bryson Doubleday Canada 2010

Bill Bryson, a transplanted American who has lived most of his adult life in England, is one of my favourite authors. Bill has an inquiring mind and a lively sense of humour although never making fun of anyone but himself. He and his family live in a former Church of England parsonage in Norfolk, the most easterly county in England. Initially, just curious about the idiosyncrasies of his own house, he expands the account to include the evolution of the private home in general. He also adds North American influences.

We learn many bits of information that may never have occurred to you; e.g. There are 659 medieval churches in Norfolk - some older than Notre Dame in Paris. An archeologist friend asked him one day, "Have you ever noticed how country churches nearly always seem to be sinking into the ground?... Do you know why that is?" [For the answer, read the introduction to the book.]

Bill takes us through The Hall; once the only room in the house, and the various additions and refinements that enhance the livability of the residents. Onwards to The Kitchen, which was only used for cooking, and after a long time; the writing of cookbooks. 'Washing up' was done in the scullery, often several inconvenient steps away. During 1810 -1820, canning was perfected by Bryan Donkin. The heavy tins kept food well but were almost impossible to open without serious tools and the danger of injury. It wasn't until 1925 that a practical can-opener was invented [and after lighter tins were developed].

A history of bathrooms in chapter 16 is fascinating in the breadth of diseases

contained therein, and how little understood was the transmission of germs. Bathing was mostly avoided until the late 18th century. When John Wesley, the founder of Methodism coined the phrase, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" in 1778, he was referring to clothes, not a clean body.

The chapter on The Bedroom is anything but comforting, although a source for the occasional chuckle. In earlier times it was common for a servant and/or adult children to sleep in the same room as the homeowners. Bedding of several materials could provide a fine home for mice, insects, and who knows what else?

This is a great book to enter as we approach winter. It's easy to pick up - harder to put down, and has many entertaining stories to share with family and friends. With a 21 page bibliography, facts are well-documented. Bill's curiosity and his genuine interest in the human condition is affirming. You will also gain an appreciation for your modern home. "AT HOME " is also available as an e-book.

*Andrea Journeaux*

<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>
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**We are excited!**

Northminster United and Newtonbrook United have agreed to join as one congregation. A very exciting event.

**What has been agreed to so far?**

The new congregation will worship from the Newtonbrook location, 53 Cummer Avenue, as one congregation on July 2013.

**Our exciting future!**

As the development along Yonge Street continues at a rapid pace, you can see the changing needs of

our community. Newtonbrook, Northminster and members of the community are already working to address some of these needs - a Drop Inn and Refugee Re-settlers program being just two examples.

Our recent agreement on the sale of our air rights will allow the renewal of our building. The amalgamation of the two congregations will renew our focus on our Christian values and our role in the community. Don't you think this will be an exciting time?

The strength of this new congregation will significantly impact our uptown 'downtown' community. It will make a difference. Many opportunities exist for you to volunteer, big and small.

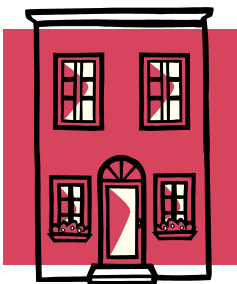
**So how would you like to be involved?**

### Lester B. Pearson Place

The Board of Directors of Nuc-Tuct Non-Profit Homes Corporation (Lester B. Pearson Place) did not manage to organize a fundraiser this year but will be doing so in the new year.

In the meantime, if you are looking at your tax situation and want to make a charitable donation before the end of 2011, please consider making Nuc-Tuct one of your choices. We do need your help and would very much appreciate any gifts that come to us. Please make your cheque payable to Nuc-Tuct and put it on the offering plate or give it to Evelyn Robertson, Harry Ort, Jim Dillane, Janet Love or Irene Carriere.

Many thanks for your ongoing support.



## VISION 2020 UPDATE

On October 30, 2011, Northminster United and Newtonbrook United voted to amalgamate as one congregation. This is a very exciting development in our church life; even more satisfying was the unanimous vote from our members who were in attendance. We look forward to working with Northminster to bring a new congregation into existence.

### What has been agreed to so far?

We have agreed that the new congregation will worship from the Newtonbrook location and the NEW congregation will start worshipping as one beginning in July 2013. During the upcoming 18 months we will work out the details.

### Where do we go from here?

As the development along Yonge Street continues at a rapid pace the needs of our community are rapidly changing. A number of joint ministries to address these needs already exist between the two congregations, the Drop Inn and Refugee Re-settlers being two examples. However there is much more to be done. Our recent agreement on the sale of air rights will allow us to renew our building. The amalgamation of the two congregations will allow us to renew our focus on our Christian values and our role in our community. The strength of this new congregation will have the prospect to significantly impact our "uptown" downtown community.

Many opportunities exist for you to be involved in making a difference. How would you like to be involved in making this new congregation a reality?

*Newtonbrook's representatives on the Implementation Team are Rev. Allan Baker, Irene Carriere, Phil Coulter, Jim Dillane, Nancy Ort and Gordon Robertson.*

### Eldon's Amalgamation Limerick

*The work toward amalgamation is done.  
The committee can now bask in the sun.  
Now we are told, lo and behold.  
That one and one makes one.*

## A NEW CHURCH? Yes!

On October 30, 2011, Northminster United and Newtonbrook United voted to amalgamate as one new congregation, by June 30, 2013!

This has been a brave decision, especially for Northminster-ites. Some of their founding members are still active and have dedicated 50 years to Christian service at that site. However, after a two year study considering future options, the Northminster congregation voted to explore partnership with Newtonbrook United. Almost immediately it was recognized that both congregations already share similar visions of Christian service in God's world.

### How we got this far

After a nine month joint study, a report was published and circulated to both congregations, outlining our journeys thus far and the benefits of amalgamation. There are already many activities we share in common – worship during the summer months and special occasions, the Men's Club at Newtonbrook and the UCW at Northminster and such initiatives as the Don Valley Refugee Re-settlers (DVRR) and the Drop Inn. And so, the joint report recommended: *"Commencing January 1, 2012, our two congregations will fully engage in an amalgamation process which concludes on June 30, 2013. And further, that the site of the new Pastoral Charge will be at 53 Cummer Avenue."*

After animated question & answer sessions on the report at both sites, a vote was held on Sunday, October 30. At Newtonbrook, 90 members voted 100% FOR the motion – unanimously. At Northminster, 88% voted FOR, well above the 66% target that had been set! The motion is now referred to South West Presbytery for their endorsement and is on the agenda at their next meeting – November 19, 2011.

### To boldly go ...

Over the next 18 months, there are many steps to be taken as we begin to think of ourselves as one new congregation. By the time you read this, we will have already taken one step with the exchange of baptismal fonts as symbols of commitment to our future together. The planning team has identified many of the steps required to complete the journey. These decisions such as form of worship, mission and vision, human resources (lay, clergy, music, administrator), trustees, governance structure, programs and ministries, property and finances, and a church name remain to be made by the new congregation.

An Implementation Steering Team will coordinate activities through the amalgamation process over the next 18 months. Hopefully, we can build on the traditions and values of both Northminster and Newtonbrook to serve God in faith hope and love by reaching in, reaching up and reaching out. In addition to helping set the overall direction of the new church, there will be many opportunities to get to know other United Church families in our community. How can you participate? We encourage you to volunteer to help create a new congregation. Speak to one of the people listed below.

*Submitted by Ian Miller on behalf of the Implementation Team: Allan Baker, Irene Carriere, Phil Coulter, Jim Dillane, Nancy Ort and Gordon Robertson*



## Newtonbrook Neighbourhood Garden

### Well Done!!!

As of October 30 over 230 pounds of food was produced in our first growing season. Several kinds of tomatoes, broccoli, Swiss chard, green and yellow beans, carrots, eggplant, peppers and zucchini graced the meals at the Drop-Inn. Flavour enhancers were parsley, chives, basil and sage. We even enjoyed a few flowers, and most of the raspberry plants survived.

Many thanks to all who dug the hard soil; built and filled the raised beds; planted the seedlings; and especially to those who cared for the crops over a long hot summer.

Yes, we grew a lot of food, but we also built community with all the volunteers who donated skills, time and work to achieve these results. You truly exemplify the Stewardship theme for 2011: "Plant Seeds - Reap Dreams".

We are thankful for the expertise of our designer, Danielle Davis; the support of Minaz from the "Live Green Toronto Animation Program"; and to the leadership and commitment of Janet Love.



### BULLETIN BITES

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespear's Hamlet in the church basement Friday at 7:00 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

### MILESTONES

#### Baptism

Charlotte Amelie Sefcik  
daughter of  
Michael Gustav Sefcik & Anna Gatova  
on  
October 16, 2011

#### Deaths

Joyce Phyllis Sutherland  
on  
September 9, 2011

**Next Newsletter Deadline:**

**Lent/Easter: Sunday, February 26, 2012**

**Contact:**

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**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_



# ***In the Christmas Spirit***

## ***An Evening of Seasonal Stories and Songs***

**Saturday, December 3, 2011 at 7 p.m.**  
(Doors open at 6:15 p.m.)

**Newtonbrook United Church**  
**53 Cummer Avenue (at Yonge Street)**

Bring your family and friends to an exciting evening of readings,  
adult & children's choir performances, instrumental music and carol singing.

***Featuring***

<b>Paul Bliss</b>	- CTV News
<b>Pauline Chan</b>	- CTV News
<b>Steven D'Souza</b>	- CBC News
<b>Steven Hobé</b>	- Story Teller

**& the music of**

***The Toronto French Montessori School Choir***  
***Newtonbrook United Church Chancel Choir***  
***Seneca Hill Public School Choir***  
***The Singing Birds***  
***& The East York Concert Band***

***telling traditional and contemporary stories:***  
***The Hockey Sweater, The Last Straw, Santa's God***  
***Mr. Majerlka and the Magic Organ***



A wonderful way to get into the Christmas spirit. Proceeds support the *NUC-TUCT Drop-Inn Program* for the homeless and hungry, and *Newtonbrook Outreach Programmes*.

Tickets: Adults \$10; Children 12 & under \$5.00  
Call (416)222-5417 for ticket information  
Meet the performers at a reception after the show