



REFLECTIONS

Lent - A Journey to and through, Transformation

Rev. Allan Baker

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

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A long, long time ago, when I was much younger, I attended a one-room schoolhouse here in Ontario. We were a pretty uniform group of 30 or so children, with the exception of one family: the Baldwins were “Catholic.”

Each year the Baldwins “gave up” something for Lent. In our small United Church congregation we didn’t pay any attention to the season of Lent and we regarded the temporary “giving up” as a somewhat unusual behaviour. Little did I know then that intentional journeying through the season of Lent can have a profound effect on one’s soul. This is a discovery that I made when I returned to the United Church and I detected that the church had changed. Lent was now a part of the United Church too.

Down through the ages Christians have found that ancient spiritual practices can bring us closer to God. An intentional journey through the season of Lent is just one of these time-honoured spiritual practices that can nourish our souls. What may look like “giving up” to an outsider, can be a way that Christians move towards the adoption of a different way of living, so that their life can be changed.

As we in the United Church learned about the benefits of adopting a new spiritual practice during Lent, and the positive difference that this could make in our lives, our national Church began to publish a guidebook to Lent. This annual publication has a daily reading from scripture; a reflection on the reading, and a prayer. These help to open our eyes to God’s presence in our life. This year the daily devotional book is called: *Rising With the Morning Star*. It fits well with our worship theme of Soul, Community and Creation. A summary of the book says that:

At a time when strife, triviality, and disaster seem to fill our world, it matters greatly that we take time to gently nurture our mind, heart, and spirit. Rising with the Morning Star lifts up the good news of God’s presence with us and of God’s abundant healing of soul, community, and creation. Read, ponder, and pray—experience that healing in and around you and your faith Community.

Let’s all take a profound journey together in this season of Lent by engaging in reading *Rising With The Morning Star*. It is available from the United Church of Canada at www.ucrdstore.ca or by telephone at 416-253-5456.

May we all experience spiritual transformation as we journey together through Lent.

EASTER AT NEWTONBROOK

- March 9** ASH WEDNESDAY - A joint service at Northminster United Church 6:30 pm followed by soup and bread
- March 13** Lent 1 Communion 10:30 am
- March 27** Guest Speaker Paul Shepherd 10:30 am
- April 10** Choir Service 10:30 am
- April 17** PALM SUNDAY 10:30 am
- April 21** MAUNDY THURSDAY TAIZE SERVICE 7:30 pm
- April 22** GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP SERVICE (with Taiwanese United Church) 10:30 am
- April 24** EASTER Communion 10:30 am

**PEACE PIECES**

War brutalizes and dehumanizes its participants. Someone trained and authorized to kill people of different nationality, race, colour or religion is also taught to hate them.

Most soldiers are decent, law-abiding citizens. But the opportunity offered by military conflict to vent violent or sadistic impulses, often with impunity, tends to draw psychopaths into the armed forces.

The only way to prevent war crimes is to put an end to war itself.

Eldon Comfort

**LIMERICK CORNER**

There once was a pious young priest
 Who lived entirely on yeast.
 "For", he said, "It is plain
 We must all rise again."
 And I wanted to get started, at least.

When we see round us deeds that appall,
 And Heaven seems deaf to our call,
 We need not enquire
 What the Lord doth require -
 It is justice and kindness for all.

Eldon Comfort

BROWSING.....

For many years our newsletter has featured an in-depth book review, in the hope that you our readers would be encouraged to read. Last fall while attending St. John's United Church in Kemptville, Ontario, I was given a copy of their newsletter. It included four brief 'blurbs' about books being read. I immediately thought, "Great - more books to appeal to a wider audience".

We hope you will be enticed to dip into these selections. If you wish to contribute to future newsletters, please contact Joan or Andrea. We'll try to achieve a balance of fiction/non-fiction, Canadian and international authors, and male/female contributors. Consider why you chose your book and what it is that makes it enjoyable. This is a new venture for us. Let us know how you like it.

The Uncommon Reader (a novella)

Alan Bennett. Faber and Faber 29997 pp121

The un-common reader is Queen Elizabeth II . This is a short, funny and beguiling tale by one of England's foremost and diverse writers today.

The premise is that the Queen is walking her yapping corgis when she chances upon a mobile library and feels duty bound to borrow... a book.

She does so and gets hooked. The remaining send-up tale, while totally improbable, is immensely entertaining and suggests that literature has the power to change even the most un-common reader's life. And, it seems to have worked!!!

Maura Payne

The Empathic Civilization

Last June while watching Allan Gregg's half-hour program, he interviewed Jeremy Rifkin about his book and his perspective as a "social thinker" of humanity's future. I had to wait eight months before the Library could give me a copy of "The Empathic Civilization". It was worth the wait! What a journey he takes you on.

It's an up-to-date historical account of our planet's previous civilizations, and how God's great gift to us humans of our brain, has let each generation learn to survive the turmoil of drastic change, and to make use of their brains for invention, exploration above and below the land and the waters of the earth. In so doing, humans came to understand other cultures' developments and ideas. We are, without a doubt an empathic species!

Although we have had warnings from scientists and environmentalists over the last thirty years, to my knowledge we have been remiss in sincerely participating in conservation. Mr. Rifkin's book ends with a very special message of challenge that I think should be broadcast to all Humanity; particularly to Business, Governments, Economists and Social Circles.

Rosalie Hatt [better known as Hattie]

The Inheritance of Rome

"A History of Europe from 400 to 1000

by Chris Wickham

One has to be awed by the remaining structures from the times of the Roman Empire when visiting Rome. So what lead to its collapse and what came after it. At its height Rome's population was estimated to be greater than 1 million inhabitants but by the year 400 the population had declined to less than half that number. This book examines the rapid decline of the Roman Empire in Western Europe while the Empire transformed in a much more orderly manner in the East. An interesting read although as the author indicates we have a much better understanding of the life of the upper class and

who were the rulers through the years with little understanding of the difficulties of the peasants of the time.

Items of relevance to our current times? The division between the Sunni's and the Shi'a Islam tribes which can be found in today's Iraq originated in 656 from a civil war. Each side accused the other of murdering the governor of the time and the hatred between the two sides has been an issue of tension through the 1,350 years through to today's world. Also, Baghdad developed to be a major city of the region and had many of the same infrastructures - viaducts, canals, labour forces - as Rome except the year was 775. Finally one can see the origination of the governance structure that is now being called into question in modern day Arab world.

Harry Ort

FAITH WORKS

Two community ministries in South West Presbytery have shared stories of their ministries with us at Newtonbrook.

During the fall of 2010, we listened to Karen Williams from **Davenport Perth Community Ministry** tells us about the people she serves. Their goal is to strive for "economic justice, social inclusion and a deep sense of community" for their community residents. In partnership with Pelham Youth

Centre, Toronto Community Housing and Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre, they provide an after school program for school-aged children. Other programs include a summer day camp for school-aged children and a place for seniors to "meet, mingle, laugh and learn". Spiritual care is provided by "walking with people in times of sickness, grief, and unemployment as well as times of celebration".

In February of this year, Rev. Dr. Barry Rieder spoke to us about his 16 year involvement with

the people of **Jane Finch Community Ministry**. This ministry provides "community development support, pastoral care and advocacy through coalitions and networks". This public housing community is culturally diverse with 70 different languages and dialects spoken. Barry introduced us to the **Black Creek Microcredit Program**. "This program guarantees loans to community members who have sound business ideas but who are unable to access credit from banks."

What is the Black Creek Microcredit Program? (from the brochure)

"The Black Creek Microcredit Program is a loan support program that seeks to help businesses in the community get up and running, Established in 2007 as a part of The Black Creek Community Capacity Project, we partner with Access Community Capital Fund and Alterna Savings to support individuals in the community who need assistance with funding for business and skills development."

For more information visit the website:

<http://www.blackcreekcapacity.ca/communityloanfund>

Email microlending@blackcreekcapacity.ca

Telephone (416) 747-5616

Brochures and applications for the fund are available from Allan Baker.

Quotations taken from websites:

Davenport Perth Community Ministry at

http://dpnc.ca/community_ministry

Jane Finch Community Ministry at

<http://www.twpcommunityministry.org>

GREEN NOTES

Your Green Team is hard at work planning a community garden on the south side of the church to be known as Newtonbrook Neighbourhood Garden. We have held two meetings and we are fortunate to have the assistance of Danielle Davis, a fourth year landscape architecture student from the University of Guelph. Applications for grants have been submitted and we hope to have feedback soon.

This work entails much more than digging and planting! We need to look at soil quality, light availability, winds and possible workers, as well as choosing suitable crops. Flowers will be a part along with vegetables and fruits. It appears that raised beds will make most sense as many of us are unable to squat for long, and adding good soil to bins is less work-intensive than digging North York clay. Raised beds also make gardening more accessible to more people. We hope to involve neighbours in the surrounding condos and apartment buildings who miss their gardens.

Watch the bulletin for ongoing information and feel free to join in the process.

The Green Team is also developing greener policies for the use of the church, both by our own members and groups, and by those who rent space. This is a work in progress to be submitted to and passed by your Co-ordinating Committee.

PROPOSAL....

Leading to Marriage?

On January 30th Northminster United held a pivotal meeting. After two years of discernment, they recognized that their future as an independent congregation had limited potential. While honouring their past, they were experiencing increased difficulties in finding people to fill key leadership roles. Faced with the prospects of diminished quality of Sunday worship and other aspects of congregational life, they voted to take the courageous step of seeking to explore the prospects of joint partnership with Newtonbrook United at the 53 Cummer Avenue site with a target date of July 1, 2013.

At Newtonbrook's Annual General Meeting on February 20, Ian Miller read the letter from Northminster. Several Newtonbrookers rose to speak sensitively to

Northminster's concerns and enthusiastically towards exploring the prospects of a future together. Our two congregations already have many good memories of shared worship services, as well as common interests in such programs as Don Valley Refugee Resettlers (DVRR), the Wednesday Drop Inn, and the Men's Club. Some Newtonbrook ladies attend Northminster's UCW meeting. Accordingly, the following motion was moved and passed unanimously:

WHEREAS Newtonbrook United Church has been contacted by Northminster United Church seeking a joint partnership at the Newtonbrook/TUCT site.

It is MOVED that Newtonbrook United Church respond to Northminster United Church by accepting their offer to work together towards forming a partnership, provided that the Taiwanese United Church in Toronto (TUCT) is also invited to participate. It is further MOVED that Newtonbrook United Church establish an "exploration task force", including clergy and laity members appointed/confirmed by the Co-ordinating Committee and the Board of Trustees, with a mandate to meet with Northminster United Church and TUCT, if TUCT so chooses, to investigate the feasibility and particulars of an arrangement to join together at the Newtonbrook/TUCT site. As we go to press, we are still anticipating a response to our letter of February 20. Membership in the exploration task force from Newtonbrook will be advised shortly. Stay tuned!

2020 STEERING UPDATE

Your 2020 Steering Group continues to work toward the longer-term goal of enhancing the role of Newtonbrook as a socially responsible place of worship as well as a facility addressing the needs of the North York community through strengthening our congregation, our ties with our local community, our ties with our sister congregation - the Taiwanese - and our ties with other neighbouring United Church congregations. An important means of accomplishing this will be a re-engineering and refurbishment of our premises.

Since our last update we have been requested by Northminster United Church to form a "partnership"

with the continuing congregation centered at the Newtonbrook site. At our recent congregational meeting their request was unanimously accepted.

We will be working with the Taiwanese United Church in Toronto to form a task force in order to make this proposal a reality.

Further to our last report, our negotiations and discussions with the owners of the neighbouring plaza continue. Our goal is to have an agreement completed ready for submission to Presbytery for their approval during the next couple of months.

We are also monitoring the redevelopment projects at other churches within the Yonge Street corridor, as there are many things that we can learn from their experiences.

Co-chairs: Irene Carriere, Harry Ort – Members: Sheila Gordon-Dillane, Robert Liao, Vicky Chen, Rodger Thompson, Valerie Ferrier (Secretary)

Harry Ort

Co-Ordinating Committees 2011

Officers:

Ian Miller, Chair
 Jim Dillane, Vice Chair
 Angela Carley, Secretary
 Carl Evans, Treasurer

Operating Committee:

Rodger Thompson, Administration
 Joan Altmann, Care of Members
 Mary Cowper-Smith, Christian Education & Development
 Bob Woodrow & Phil Coulter, Co-Chairs, Communications
 Irene Carriere, Community Ministries
 Mary Mundle, Stewardship
 Henry MacLeod, Worship

Other Committees:

John Carriere, Ministry & Personnel
 J.T. MacNeil, Presbytery Rep #1
 Catherine Smith, Presbytery Rep #2
 Andrea Journeaux, Presbytery Rep #3

Harry Ort & Irene Carriere, Vision 2020

Trustees:

Harry Ort, Chair
 John Carriere, Secretary
 Gordon Robertson
 Carl Evans
 Gwen Pattinson
 Rodger Thompson
 Andrea Journeaux
 Jeanette McCullough
 Karen Carlson
 Allan Baker, Ex-Officio

SOUTH WEST PRESBYTERY

Saturday, February 26, members of the "new" [2 year-old] presbytery met at Newtonbrook. There are 58 pastoral charges [congregations] and 2 community ministries in Southwest Presbytery. This is a much larger group than before. We were treated to an inspiring worship experience with the Heritage Singers, along with drums, piano and steel pans. The Rev. Michael Blair presented a challenging message on how language affects our perceptions of black people, and how they continue to suffer within our society. Rev. Blair works in the General Council office.

As a new Presbyter, I was amazed at how much work was accomplished between 11:15 at the end of worship, and 3:30 when we adjourned. Other Presbyters from Newtonbrook are Catherine Smith and J.T. McNeil, who joined about a hundred clergy and lay people from many congregations.

It is traditional for the host congregation to give a little history in their welcome remarks. Ian Miller, with Show and Tell items from our archives, mentioned that Newtonbrook was already 85 years old when The United Church of Canada was formed 85 years ago. Lester B. Pearson was born in the manse when his father served Newton Brook Methodist Church.

Andrea Journeaux

211 - A NEW INFORMATION SERVICE

PowerStream is pleased to support the work of the 211, a free, three digit community information line rolling out in communities across Ontario. Dial 211 for information about services that can help with rent arrears, child care, language classes, employment, housing, emergency shelters, home support, legal clinics, financial assistance, and much more.

211 is 24/7, confidential and answered live by trained information specialists who connect callers with services in their community.

211 has interpreter services in almost 200 languages and TTY access at 1-888-435-6086. Self help is available at

www.211Ontario.ca



A LITTLE HUMOUR.....

All Men/All Girls

When my daughter, Kelli, said her bedtime prayers, she would bless every family member, every friend and every animal (current and past). For several weeks, after we had finished the nightly prayer, Kelli would say, "And all girls". This soon became part of her nightly routine to include this closing. My curiosity got the best of me and I asked her, "Kelli, why do you always add the part about all girls?" Her response, "because everybody else always finishes their prayers by saying, 'All Men!' "

LOT'S WIFE

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My Mommy looked back once while she was driving, 'he announced triumphantly', " and turned into a telephone pole?"

MILESTONES

Deaths

Marilyn Jean Glanville - December 5, 2010

John Cameron Turnbull - December 10, 2010

65th Wedding Anniversary

Marguerite & Ken Taylor - Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Next Newsletter Deadlines:

Summer Sunday, May 1, 2011
Fall Sunday, August 28, 2011

Contact:

Phone: _____





CELEBRATION OF CHOCOLATE WORD SEARCH



WORD LIST

- BAKED ALASKA
- BLACK BOTTOM PIE
- CHEESECAKE
- CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- COCOA ROLLS
- ICE CREAM
- DEVILS FOOD CAKE
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