

The Church Mouse

The Newsletter of Oxford Presbytery in the United Church of Canada

March 12, 2008

Volume 27, Issue 3

Dear Friends in Oxford,

How can a group of people work best together to get a job done? That's been a question since the beginning of time. Even many animal species cooperate in groups—from ants to wolf-packs—and it's also a question at the heart of the functioning of any church congregation. Recently the youth of the Christian Council of Mozambique asked for a course in just this sort of question, so that they as an organization could learn to do their mission better. The idea grew. So did their questions. It's become a course on many aspects of what we've loosely called Administration.

There's quite a bit to it:

- Defining a mission statement
- Setting objectives
- Planning
- Budgeting
- Management of resources human, financial and material
- Leadership
- Delegation of roles
- Communication
- Decision-making
- Group dynamics
- Conflict and crisis management.

So now a group of 23 young people from various church denominations meet once a week to learn about and talk about these notions, and how as the CCM Youth they can put them into practice.

In Canada, every college offers courses about these matters, usually compulsory in programs like Administration. Here in Quelimane, the idea grew spontaneously from these young women and men themselves. They're in this class because they want to be; we're teaching what they themselves asked for. In fact, again at their request, the program has expanded, to courses in computers, video-making and English. Education opens minds and doors.

Bill and Karen Butt

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“**Embracing Life**” is the title of a three day workshop sponsored by Oxford Presbytery School for Christian Studies, a Division of Oxford Presbytery. The format will consist of morning presentations with time for questions and general discussion, and afternoon small group discussions on how the topic applies to one's life and work.

The workshop, June 24-26, takes place at Fanshawe College, Woodstock Campus and (Wednesday only), at Quality Hotel & Suites, Woodstock. For further information or registration forms contact: Rev. Kent Garrett at 519-421-2064 or [kdjg@execulink.com](mailto:kdjg@execulink.com).

Oxford Presbytery, three years ago, created the Division of The School for Christian Studies, to promote and sponsor education for laity and clergy. Its mandate is to promote educational events such as those offered at Five Oaks and to provide training for Licenced Lay Worship Leaders. In addition, it has been offering one major educational event per year in June. Its status as a Division of Presbytery will be evaluated after a five year trial period. *Rev. Glen Wright*

## **RURAL COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR**

**Norwich Community Centre**

Wednesday, April 2 \*\*\*2 pm to 8 pm  
30 manned booths      4 - ½ hr interactive  
info- 519-539-9800 ext3493      Presentations

## WATOTO CHILDREN'S CHOIR

On Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, Dundas Street United Church had the privilege of welcoming the Watoto Children's Choir who came to Woodstock all the way from Kampala, Uganda as part of their worldwide "Concert of Hope" tour. A freewill offering was taken up with over \$2,000. being raised in support of the Watoto Children's Ministries. What an amazing group of kids, and what an honour it was to have them performing in our sanctuary.

The Watoto Children's Choir is a group of young children, each who have experienced deep personal tragedy and have been left parentless due to AIDS, disease and war. Since 1994, they have toured internationally as ambassadors for orphan children in Uganda. The goal of Watoto is to raise the next generation of Ugandan leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, so that each child becomes a responsible and productive citizen.

Throughout the Concert of Hope, we experienced the energy and sensed the joy and hope these beautiful Ugandan orphans have found! The performance included a blend of native African rhythms, contemporary gospel music and inspiring ethnic dance performances. The children also shared their unique experiences, as well as their newfound joy and hope. When Uganda's Watoto Children's choir sing either a traditional African hymn or gospel song, you know it is not just a performance, but a true expression of their praise and thanks to God. It truly cuts to the heart knowing that they are only here because of God's goodness and the care and dedication of the Church at work in the world. Praise be to God!

Dundas Street United Church is raising funds to send a team to one of the Watoto Villages in Uganda in 2009 to build a home. If you are interested in joining our team and/or in helping to raise funds to build this home, or would like more information, please contact: Dundas Street United Church at 519-537-7935 or email: [dundasstreetunited@execulink.com](mailto:dundasstreetunited@execulink.com) You can also visit the Watoto Child Care Ministries website at: <http://www.watoto.com/>

*Brenda Knott*

**From Allan Slater.** Hello to all. I really thought I was through sending out these bulk mailings. I have had enough of the long plane rides and trauma of going to places like Iraq and Palestine. But a local issue has arisen in which CPT has become involved. An open pit uranium mine is being proposed for north Frontenac County here in Ontario. This project would have serious environmental, economic and social implications for the area. It would all but destroy the territory of the Ardoch First Nation. Ardoch First Nation is part of the Algonquin First Nation. For several months CPT and other local people, called settlers, to distinguish them from First Nations people, have mounted a peaceful blockade to prevent further exploration. The blockade has ended because one of the Ardoch leaders, Bob Lovelace has been handed a particularly severe sentence for participating in it. The Kingston judge hearing the case has sentenced him to 6 months in prison plus a \$25,000 fine plus an additional \$2,000 for each day he was at the site. Other leaders escaped the sentence only by promising to give up the struggle. They have been effectively silenced. Other Ardoch people are continuing the struggle to save their community. I have lead a CPT delegation to the area to support the struggle in any way possible. Our delegation has been on site at the United Church manse in Sharbot Lake from February 24 until March 1, 2008. Remember us in your thoughts and prayers,

*Allan Slater* Other letters can be forwarded by contacting Ruth. Allan is home and very upset that this can happen in Canada. The mining act says any company can come on your property, without asking, to explore or test for any kind of mining, if they find something, they can set up their mine and be in business. The law needs to be changed it will only happen if everyone voices their concerns.

Even Health Canada says that drilling (even test holes) can contaminate the water source as the rock can be cracked and let the contaminates into the aquifer and then into the soil. Send your concerns to these two men right away. The man in prison is a professor at Queen's University.

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier, Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A4, Telephone 416-325-1941, Fax 416-325-3745; or by e-mail at:

**[dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dmcguinty.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)**

The Honourable Michael Bryant, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, 1407 - 99 Wellesley Street, West, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1W3, Telephone 416-314-2536, Fax 416-314-2701, or by e-mail at: [mbryant.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:mbryant.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)





## UCW SPRING EVENT

### Sleeping Children Around The World

Dessert \$4. Served @ 6:30pm Worship & Music  
Hickson United Church Mon. March 31, 2008  
Registration 6 pm Everyone Welcome  
An Oxford Presbyterial UCW Event

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Mount Elgin United Church Beef Stew Supper March 30 th 4:30-6:30 Mount Elgin Community Hall Adults \$8. Children 6-12 \$5. Under 6 Free Tickets available at the Door

Two realities:

As I continue in ministry, I am aware of my own need to be continually “re-educated.”

Marcus Borg in his book, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*, writes that ““one of the most urgent needs for congregations in mainline churches in North America today is adult re-education.

Why do we need this re-education?

Because the vision of Christianity that most of us over 40 (and many under 40) learned as we were growing up in the church is no longer valid.

As we move through our time of transition, two questions:

What does it mean to be a Christian in the first decade of the 21st century?

How can we be passionate believers today in our new community of faith?

Let me offer an opportunity to answer either or both of these questions for yourself and for your congregation.

How: a 12 week experiential learning opportunity using the book

***The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* by Marcus Borg.**

Oxford 4-H members/volunteers serving up pancakes, sausages, maple baked beans at Jakeman's Pancake House

March 1st to 30th--weekends only AND Wednesday, March 12th from 9:30am to 1:30pm

Other activities (weather permitting)

Walks in the 'Trillium Woods Nature Preserve' and Maple Bush

Horse Drawn Wagon/Sleigh Rides

War of 1812 Encampment Re-enactment

Jakeman's Pancake House--454414 Trillium Line, Sweaburg (www.themaplestore.com)

Proceeds to Oxford 4-H Clubs

When: Monday, 7-9:15 p.m. (if numbers warrant) and / or Tuesday, 2:30-4:45 p.m. (if numbers warrant) beginning Monday, 31 March and/or Tuesday, 1 April

Where: the lounge of the building in which we are worshipping

Cost: \$16 for the book and the risk of changing your presumptions about what it means to be a Christian today.

- For more information, contact Rev. Steve Hershey, shershey@execulink.com, Central/Chalmers Church

- To indicate your interest and to reserve a copy of the book, contact either church office,

519-539-1161 or 519-537-2373

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New Phone number for Innerkip/Eastwood Pastoral Charge 519-602-6692

London Conference is looking for your pictures to use in Worship at the Conference in May. Send digital pictures, with permission to use and edit as required. Want song & celebration to [pmilliken@brktel.on.ca](mailto:pmilliken@brktel.on.ca) By April 1, 2008