

# The Church Mouse

The Newsletter of Oxford Presbytery in the United Church of Canada

May 14, 2008

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*Dear friends in Oxford,*

Here in Mozambique, as in Oxford and worldwide, the prices of fuel and basic foods lately have been zooming upward. You're paying some dollars more every time at the pumps and the supermarket checkout.

For you maybe it's only irksome. But in Mozambique, these price rises are disastrous. Antonio Guebuza the President of Mozambique declared last week that the country is in crisis. The prices of essential staples—rice, corn, wheat—have almost doubled. Suppose you are Mozambican and your income is only \$70 a month, the current minimum wage. You're spending maybe two-thirds of your income now on food. How can you afford other essentials—clothing, your children's school supplies, transportation, medicines, blankets? People are desperate.

In a poor part of Quelimane called 17 September, the Church of the Nazarene where a PEDRA program centre operates has also been running a feeding program for the last several years, for 80 neighbourhood AIDS orphans that families of the congregation have taken in. The families are poor, one extra small mouth is a difficult burden, and so the church helped with a healthy lunch of rice or corn, fish or

beans cooked and served to the orphans each day in the churchyard.

They don't run that program any more. There's no more pot of rice or corn porridge simmering over charcoal. The church can no longer afford it. The orphans go hungry.

There in fertile agricultural Oxford as you plant this year's corn this month or other crops, growing food to help feed the world, please keep in your thoughts and prayers for people like the 17 September orphans and millions worldwide who are going to be starving. Pray for feeding and healing of our planet.

*Bill and Karen Butt*

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Bill and Karen have a new address, they have been dial-up internet, but now are high speed: [ccmzambezia@tdm.co.mz](mailto:ccmzambezia@tdm.co.mz)

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We also have a new address for Oxford Presbytery, this is the land based address: P. O. Box 1688, Woodstock, ON N5S 0A9

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Information about the visit to Mozambique and the garden project can be found at [www.londonconferencedwo.org](http://www.londonconferencedwo.org)

This is a new web page address. Please pass it on to the congregations.

*Curtis Marwood* Moderator, Kent Pres Web Site

[curtis@kentpres.org](mailto:curtis@kentpres.org)

# **Emergency Response: United Church Launches Emergency Appeal for Myanmar (Burma)**

## **Cyclone Nargis Devastates Burma**

On May 2-3 Myanmar (Burma) was struck by the worst Asian cyclone since 1991, triggering a storm surge and flooding in the five worst hit states, where more than half of the country's 53 million people live. Reports suggest that as many as 100,000 people may have been killed and one million displaced. Tens of thousands of people are missing. The full extent of the destruction to property and infrastructure is massive and still being ascertained. Relief delivery infrastructure and capacity in Myanmar (Burma) is limited and authorities have been slow to grant access to international aid organizations, raising the prospect of even greater suffering. However, it appears that permission is now being granted to the United Nations and others.

United Church of Canada partner, Action by Churches Together (ACT) is preparing to distribute immediate relief food and supplies. ACT is a global alliance of faith-based relief organizations that work through local and regional partners.

## **What the United Church Is Doing:**

The United Church has responded immediately to the crisis by committing \$100,000 for relief aid and reconstruction purposes. The funds will be channelled through ACT. Priority needs are for water purification tablets, plastic sheeting, basic medical kits, bed nets, and food. The church will also be considering funding additional relief efforts mobilized by partner organizations in the region.

## **The United Church Launches an Appeal:**

To fund its humanitarian response, the United Church has launched an emergency appeal for donations designated for cyclone relief and reconstruction in Myanmar (Burma). As always with United Church emergency appeals, 100 percent of the donations received for the Cyclone Nargis Emergency Appeal will be committed to relief and reconstruction. This is made possible thanks to the generous ongoing support of United Church members to the church's Mission and Service Fund. These contributions allow the United Church to absorb the staffing and administration costs of processing donations for emergency appeals.

## **How United Church Members Can Help:**

\* **Pray:** Our thoughts and prayers go out to our sisters and brothers who have been affected by Cyclone Nargis.

\* **Donate:** Individuals are invited to contribute to the United Church's Cyclone Nargis Emergency Appeal either through their local congregation or directly to The United Church of Canada's national office, 3250 Bloor St. West, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M8X 2Y4 or through our secure online donations page. Cheques and online donations should be made payable to The United Church of Canada and marked "Cyclone Nargis Appeal." Please note: Supragifts cannot be counted as M&S Fund credits. However, they are eligible for tax receipts. Congregational treasurers may receive and receipt individual cheques and then forward one congregational cheque to the United Church. Page 2

## PLASTIC MILK BAGS

Big plastic milk bags do collect up and we probably feel guilty always putting them in the land fill site. Well the UCW has a solution. They are collecting these bags, they go to a person who cuts them in strips, the strips are crochet into maps that are sent to poor countries for the children to put on the earth floor for sleeping.

The other side of this project is, more people are needed to do the crocheting. So you people out there who are looking for something to do and know how to crochet, here is a project for you. If there are others out there looking for something to do and are willing to learn to crochet here is a worthwhile project for you too.

Sandra Stock is doing the collecting and will be glad to take your bags at any UCW event, the next one is June 9. She might even be glad to take them at a Presbytery meeting.

I think there are instructions for the crocheting and if she doesn't have them, she can get them.

Now isn't that a win-win situation!!

Ruth Skillings

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UP-DATE ON RAZA FAMILY  
Kenn Doerksen, Chair of the CFR Sanctuary Steering Committee, says: "With strong support coming from so many others, the congregation has been able to house and support the family in our church for the past 18 months. We have paid government fees for the new application process and we are committed to meeting all past

and future legal costs until Permanent Resident status can be obtained.. Crescent Fort Rouge is prepared to support the family on their continuing journey and, in particular, by providing a rental subsidy to the family of up to \$500 per month for up to 18 months."

Rev, Barb Janes, one of the ministry staff at the church says: "In addition to strong volunteer and financial support from within the congregation, Crescent Fort Rouge has been blessed by amazing support from other congregations in Winnipeg, from across the Conference, from all over Canada, from other denominations and faiths, and from people with no particular faith connection."

That support is still needed as we move through the next 18 months. Grateful for past support, the congregation invites any individuals, groups or congregations to consider a monthly contribution over the next eighteen months. Of course, single donations in any amount are a welcome support too. Donations may be sent payable to Crescent Fort Rouge United Church (Rental Support), 525 Wardlaw Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3L 0L9

*Youth Ministry Support Committee of Oxford Presbytery*

We have been meeting regularly to implement the decisions of the presbytery youth ministry consultation and report. Our focus for this month was on gathering people doing and supporting youth ministry in Oxford Presbytery. Each member of the committee took part in a leadership role. 26 people attended an evening event at Innerkip United Church on May 7th. We began with a shared

meal at 6pm, delicious tacos and important time of getting to know each other. Each table had questions around youth ministry to get conversation started. Then we gathered in a circle for community building and worship. Andrea Buttars was a guest speaker from 5 Oaks providing us with information about the 5 Oaks Youth Ministry Training Program (Neos — which is the Greek word for youth). Rebecca Woodall came and spoke about an exciting new initiative in London Conference with funding from Westminster College, which will focus on supporting specialized ministries in the United Church of Canada, of which Youth Ministry is the first priority. CanLead is the name of the program, and it will be happening in January 26th — 29th, in London at the Lamplighter Inn. Watch for more information on both of these key programs for supporting youth ministry in our congregations. After ice cream sundae's for dessert, the group engaged in very helpful and supportive conversation — open and honest with room for all kinds of questions. Everyone left feeling connected, informed and heading back to their respective churches with ideas and a sense of empowerment. The committee is so grateful for the success of the event, and the support of the Presbytery for this initiative. We look forward to gathering people again in the fall. We are also looking at how we can connect youth across the presbytery from grade 5-8, through faithful initiatives and experiences.

Rev Maya Landell

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**AVEL has wonderful resources for Pastoral Care. Contact Jackie Childerhose at (page 3) [avel\\_booksandvideos@on.aibn.com](mailto:avel_booksandvideos@on.aibn.com) She will be glad to send you a list of DVDs & or books.**

**Etonia United Church  
24th Annual Pork BBQ  
Smorgasbord Style**

**Sat. June 7, 4-7 p.m.**

**Advance tickets Adult \$12. Child \$6.**

**At the door \$14. \$ 7.**

**Preschoolers eat free**

for tickets call 519-458-4295 or 519-458-4533

**UCW JUNE RETREAT**

Mon. June 9/08 cost \$10 9:30 am to 3 pm

Theme: Come & Find the Quiet Centre

Speaker: Rev. Maya Landell

Ingersoll Seniors Centre 250 Ingersoll St.

INGERSOLL All Women Welcome

Canadian Bible Society

Sowers Book Store

Super Spring Sale

[londonbooks@biblesociety.ca](mailto:londonbooks@biblesociety.ca)

424 Waterloo St. London 519-432.6663

Sale ends June 30<sup>th</sup>!

Church personnel will soon be paid from a central office, one for Canada. To learn more about how it will work, call or write to:

Lee Corlett

Compensation Program Coordinator

Ministry and Employment Policies and Services (MEPS) Unit

Phone: 416 231-7680 ext. 3118

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London Conference: 519-672-1930 [www.londonconference.ca](http://www.londonconference.ca)

For further information on what is happening in Asia please contact:

Gary Kenny

Program Coordinator for Southern Africa/Emergency Response Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit United Church of Canada 3250 Bloor St. West Toronto, Ontario, Canada M8X 2Y4  
Tel: 1-800-268-3781 or 416-231-7680 ext. 4051 Fax: 416-231-3103

E-mail: [gkenny@united-church.ca](mailto:gkenny@united-church.ca)

In less than a week there has been a devastating earthquake in central China.

Linnea Good & Good Company is coming!

*Sponsored by the Shared Ministry of Central and Chalmers United Church*

**Central United Church**

*Corner of Riddell and Adelaide, Woodstock*

**All-ages Concert**

**Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at  
7:30 pm**

*Tickets: \$12/adults, \$8 children 6 & up, family \$25*

**Afternoon Workshop: 'The Hospitality of Worship'**

*1:30 to 4:00 pm, cost \$10*

*Combined tickets for workshop and concert: \$20*

*All tickets available by phone 519-537-2373 or 519-539-1161*

*Tickets also available at the door*

*Email: [centralunited@execulink.com](mailto:centralunited@execulink.com)*

INNERKIP UNITED SPRING FISH FRY  
May 22, 4:30 to 7pm Adults \$12 Children \$6  
Call 519-469-3543 or 469-3416 for tickets

*Mark your calendar*

*EASTWOOD CHICKEN BBQ, June 21, 4:30 - 7pm*

*CFGB WOODSTOCK PROJECT Pork BBQ*

*Sept. 12, 2008 5 to 7pm Knox Presbyterian*