

The Church Mouse

The Newsletter of Oxford Presbytery in the United Church of Canada

January 13, 2010

Volume 29, Issue 1

Dear friends in Oxford,

In Mozambique, the new year in a sense is 'newer' than in Canada, because it's also the start of the new school year, after December-and-January summer holidays. Students are busy registering for this year's courses, or applying, or in some cases still waiting for last year's exam results to know if they qualify for the year's new program.

This week in the isolated mountain village of Molumbo, in the residence which CCM runs for rural schoolgirls, six girls of the Christian Council's bursary program are preparing for their test for admission to teachers' college. The admissions procedure is quite competitive, with lots more applicants than spaces. If they succeed it'll be a dream come true for each of them.

Usually, girls in rural Mozambique don't reach grade 5. Often their family and community don't value girls' education (or boys' either), and they leave school early, marry, have several babies, and a short hard life hauling wood and water and hoeing fields to survive. But in communities with the PEDRA program, the culture has transformed. Parents dream of an educated future for their girls. Last year, twelve bursary girls graduated from teachers' college and now are professional teachers. Many, like this year's six girls, want to follow in their footsteps.

So they're writing and discussing past samples of the entrance exams in math and Portuguese, and—most important—practising for the interview which carries the most weight in determining who will be admitted. They'll study the general-

knowledge questions, and practise interviewing each other--articulating their plans for their future, their views on education.

Angela, Berta, Lidia, Lucia, Rosita, Violeta. They and young people like them are Mozambique's future. Pray for them. It will help, because we'll let them know we asked you to.

Yours in Christ, *Bill and Karen Butt.*

OXFORD PRESBYTERIAL UCW

48TH Annual Meeting

Bless Now, O God, The Journey

Theme Speaker – **Eleanor Wood**

Wednesday, January 27th, 2010

Registration 8:45am Meeting 9am - 3pm

Dundas Street United Church, Woodstock.

Cost \$8 (includes noon meal) music worship

COME, ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ATTEND

Child Care available without pre registration

WELCOME TO OXFORD PRESBYTERY

The Rev. Fred Hagle is ministering at Avondale Zion and Brownsville, Delmar. He comes after a long ministry in Ayr.

Food Aid Convention	Page 2
Woodstock CFGF Project	Page 2
Ugali Growing Project	Page 2 & 3
Embroidery Growing Project	Page 3
Tricounty Growing Project	Page 3
Camp Tanner Dinner & Auction	Page 3
Opportunities Five Oaks	Page 4
Rev. Dr. Eloi Gunn letter	Page 4

Christian Churches and the Food Aid Convention

In 1968 Canada and several other rich food aid donor countries signed a “gentleman’s agreement” named the Food Aid Convention which was supposed to set a minimum level of food to be provided to the world’s hungry. In 2010, this non-binding agreement is supposed to be renegotiated. The 15 national churches or their outreach agencies in Canada (who own the Foodgrains Bank) are concerned about these negotiations. Canada will chair this process and therefore has a role and responsibility in providing leadership. The CFGB membership is encouraging Canada to push for an increase in the minimum level of global food aid provided and increased flexibility in how this food can be utilized. Canadian Churches are also asking that the new agreement be binding and that recipient countries (and NGO’s) be included in the discussions so that future food assistance be more efficient and targeted to the most vulnerable people. Canadian public input will be important. For further information contact David and Kathryn Mayberry 519 485 3642 or www.foodgrainsbank.ca

Warm Regards, *David & Kathryn Mayberry,*

Ontario Resource Coordinators,

~~~~~  
**Woodstock Growing Project CFGB**  
**Our Canadian Foodgrains Bank committee wants to thank you for all your support. This year we are sending \$32,500 to the CFGB in Winnipeg. With matching Federal grants, the amount to be used for world relief will be up to \$162,500. For some perspective, we've averaged over \$25,000 per year over the previous 10 years (with the matching grant, \$1,250,000 over 10 years). This was only possible with your help. This money is divided among the Presbyterian, United, and Christian Reformed churches' relief and development agencies, based on participation in our ecumenical project.**

**Keep us in your prayers as we continue our work. Every year we look for available high-quality arable land and raise crops, accepting the vagaries of the climate. This year will be no**

**exception -- in Ontario grain production is 15-20% lower this year due to the weather. Also, every housing development you see around Woodstock means less land for growing crops. Approximately 1/4 of our proceeds is from donations; so please keep donating along with your regular church offerings. Another 10% of our proceeds is from our popular Pork Roast and Bean Supper in September. Please keep supporting that, too. We really appreciate the work from all the volunteers that make that event happen.**

Growing pumpkins in partnership with Thames River Melons, nets us each year with around a thousand dollars.

**We also count on continued support from the Canadian government. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank regularly applies for a grant renewal to support its efforts. Pray for wisdom at CFGB and the government so that the CFGB work can continue.**

CFGB always works with Partners, so they know where the grain is going and to whom. They are very careful to see that what is sent in doesn't compete with local prices. In fact now they are able to buy what they need from countries near by, or even in another part of the same country. That means their money goes a lot further.

Most often the grain is used to pay for work that has been done by the people in need. This works very well, as the families then have the food they need and infrastructure is built in their community.

*Steve McInnis*, Chairperson W. G. P.

~~~~~  
Ugali Growing Project

\$9,416.12 raised from the sale of wheat and soybeans.

\$2,893.30 expenses (Sylvite, ProRich)

Total profit of \$6,522.82

Also we were given \$742.00 from Stonecroft Folk and \$100.00 from a personal donation, both of which were sent to CFGB, for a grand total of \$7,364, matched 4 to 1= \$36,820.

We are planning a dinner, at the Anglican Church in Ingersoll again, on Feb 6/10 and will be highlighting Afghanistan. The guest speaker will talk about their personal experience in the region, although it is often
Page 2.

an area where Foodgrains Bank members have supported programming.

The Ingersoll project is about the only one in Ontario that really doesn't have an obvious connection to churches. Our early efforts were to have an truly ecumenical project but it is really more NON-denominational. Sadly, the field work is pretty much left up to only two farmers. There is a committee, they don't meet regularly and usually only to discuss the dinner plans.

Since its inception in 1993 about the only expense that the Ugali project has incurred is for fertilizer.

Vicki Whiting and David Mayberry.

THE EMBRO PROJECT

Hi - after my conversation with Kathryn just before Christmas, I authorized the sale of the 5 acre Hazeleger crop. A cheque for approx. \$3,480 was to be sent directly to the Cdn. Foodgrains main office from YantziAg. I am working on the sale of the 12 acre Cockle crop grown on Cockle-Hiscocks lands. We have a few bills to pay from the sale of that crop (rental of land and drying/storage of crop) so I will probably have London Ag send the church a cheque for the proceeds and then settle bills and send the rest to main office. In addition, Knox United and Knox Presbyterian congregations have raised approx. \$4,000. So.... I expect our total proceeds will be in the neighbourhood of \$14,000. I will let you know when we sell the second crop and get the bills settled.

We didn't have a supper but we did have a celebration Soup and Sandwich lunch for both congregations after service on the first Sunday in December. Both crops were harvested in the week prior to this lunch.

Our project is a joint venture between Knox United and Knox Presbyterian in Embro. We did attempt to find an urban partner this year but that hasn't worked out yet. We have almost all of the product and work donated. We are paying rent on part of our 12 acre plot and are paying for the drying costs of that crop as well but by far the majority of the costs and involvement are graciously donated.

Lynne Dunlop

TRICOUNTY GROWING PROJECT.

Tricounty Foodgrains Project at Uniondale had 8 acres of soft red winter wheat in 2009. Ken and Mary McCutcheon donated 8 acres of land for the project. Other members of the McCutcheon family planted and harvested the crop. The church partners of the project thank the McCutcheon family for their assistance. \$5600 was forwarded to the Canadian Foodgrains Project from the sale of the wheat and donations from members of the church partners and community individuals. The partners in this project are East Nissouri Union Church, Living Rock Pentecostal and First Baptist in St. Marys, Christ Church Anglican in Lakeside, Community Bible Church near Lucan. Sheila Greason is the chair and Bev Slater the secretary/treasurer for the project. This was the fourteenth year for the Tricounty Project.

Tricounty Foodgrains Project provided \$5600 for food assistance. The Canadian Government (CIDA) match for this project would be \$22,400. That means \$28,000 for food assistance. If this money is used by one of the members of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to purchase food for a needy community it is possible that approximately 150 tonnes of corn could be purchased. One tonne of corn or maize as it is called in many countries will feed about 2500 people for one day. 150 tonnes could feed approximately 2500 people for 5 months.

We meet with a pot luck noon meal usually the first Sunday in June, after the regular church services. Following the meal we go out to the field and hold a dedication service. We put a float into the Ilderton Fair in the summer. In the fall we have a corn roast, the rest of the food is pot luck. Time of fellowship and different churches provide a program and music.

Bev Slater.

CAMP TANNER DINNER & AUCTION
Embro West Zorra Community Centre
January 30, 2010, Viewing 5:30 pm
Dinner \$16. At 6:30 pm by
Janice's Fine Country Catering
Al Lockart, Auctioneer, articles, services or
whatever very much appreciated, for tickets
or to donate call Sandra 475-4833 or Sheila
349-2768 Interact, Visa, M. C. available

OPPORTUNITIES AT FIVE OAKS

~A Sacred Place to Seek God in the Heart of all of Life~

Male Spirituality: Rhythms of Pain and Joy,
Feb. 8-11 or Feb. 16-19

Confirmation Weekend #1: In the Beginning,
Feb. 12-14

Expressive Arts Retreat, Feb. 19-20

Courage to Lead® Retreat, Feb. 23-25

Confirmation Weekend #2: Digging Deeper,
Feb. 26-28

Courage to Lead Retreat, Feb. 23-25

**Rhythm at the Heart: Spiritual Practice of
Soundmaking, Mar. 1**

**Creative Community: Spirit Moved Over the
Deep, Mar. 1**

Keeping the Faith in a Culture of

Consumerism w/ John Bell, Mar. 8-10

March Break Day Camp, Mar. 15, 16, 17

Confirmation Weekend #3: Revelations,
Mar. 26-28

Spiritual Practice: Mindfulness Meditation,
Mar. 29

**Licensed Lay Worship Leaders/Lay Preachers
Program, Apr. 6-8**

Stones Would Shout! Mar. 22

A special Five Oaks program offered free of charge to all groups & individuals, to share Five Oaks stories, facts & future vision. Register individually or as a group. Phone: 519-442-3212

In 2012 Five Oaks will be 60 years old, from when the first programs were held on the site. They are planning a commemorative book, which they hope will be stories, poems, pictures ect. by the people who have attended events, worked there or whatever interested and passionate people send in. It will be co-edited by Adam Mason and Debra Kigar who are very pleased and excited to be co-editors for this wonderful book. Adam has been connected with Five Oaks since 2002 and has been a significant part of the children, youth and family programs at the Centre. Debra has been involved since 1995 in many different capacities, including Chair of the Five Oaks Board. Call the above number for more information. Submissions must be in by December 2010, so do it right away. Page 4

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God, our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Not long ago, we began the Advent journey to Christmas and the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Advent is a season of newness and hope. We are reminded of all the new possibilities that will come our way if only we are open and prepare ourselves to receive our Lord in our heart.

It is in that spirit of newness and hope that, on behalf of your Presbytery (Oxford Presbytery), I would like to share with you our vision and direction for the few months ahead of me as your chairperson.

First of all, allow me to remind you of some general information about the Presbytery.

Oxford Presbytery is made of 26 Pastoral Charges for a total of 34 congregations in Oxford county.

It has an Executive which meets once a month before the monthly Presbytery meeting. The Executive is chaired by a Chairperson who is elected for a year.

Each congregation is encouraged to have a representative as a liaison between the Presbytery and the congregation. Each presbytery representative should come with a **teachable spirit and a servant heart**. If your congregation does not have a representative yet, I encourage you to elect one at your annual meeting.

At the Executive level, it is our vision to find ways and means to bridge the perceived gap between Presbytery and congregations. **Remember: the Presbytery is you and me working together for Christ. It is not "them and us". It is "WE"**. I can ensure you that all Presbyters and each Division and Committee are using their best knowledge and effort to make our Presbytery a wonderful instrument at the service of all congregations.

Together, we can make it work for the sake of Christ

Finally, on behalf of the Executive of Oxford Presbytery, I wish you, a Happy New Year.

Shalom in the name of the One who was, who is, and who is coming soon.

Rev. Dr. Eloi GUNN Chairperson Oxford Presbytery

Editor: Ruth Skillings 519-467-0187 rskillings@aol.com

Web Master: John Ross, webboxfordpucc@look.ca 519-469-3320

Web Page: <http://www.oxfordpresucc.ca>

London Conference: www.londonconference.ca 519-672-1930