



COMMUNIQUE



Erin Mills United Church: www.emuc.ca

April/May 2010

The Plain Truth about EMUC

Joining a congregation, participating in worship services, attending study groups or congregational events in a local church can be enriching and life-affirming, and also a bit confusing. It's a bit like joining a family as a newcomer. It takes time to discover sacred traditions, core values, customs and unspoken norms of behaviour. For example, when I married into my husband's family, I learned that when a birthday was celebrated, one didn't blow out the candles on the cake immediately. Candles on the cake were always arranged in a cryptic form that when solved would reveal the age (or ages if multiple birthdays were celebrated) of the birthday people. Sometimes solving this puzzle took so long that the candles burned down into a puddle of wax on the cake.

Of course, other family values and norms are more substantial extending to everything from the use of money, roles of men and women, expectations about celebrating Christmas, Easter, anniversaries and so on.

Although Erin Mills United Church is a relatively new congregation compared to others, in its almost 22 year history, it has developed traditions, values and norms, that may not be always quite as transparent to newcomers as one might assume. So, in an effort to be help folks understand the culture and ethos of EMUC, here are a few reflections.

EMUC is fairly light on protocol and formalities. All the church staff are called by their first names (no matter how old you are!); the office door is always open, and if I'm in my office with the door open and you drop by, you can stop to talk without an appointment. This informality also extends to dress-

codes. Whether you are attending a worship service or a congregational event, casual attire is always OK. And if you want to 'dress up', that's fine too. Folks are encouraged to be comfortable. That being said, T Shirts with offensive logos or phrases are not encouraged (similar to the policies of most public schools).

Worship services, programs, events, dinners hosted by EMUC are open to the community; participants in the congregation are encouraged to invite friends and neighbours. With few exceptions,



participants of EMUC, both 'old-timers' and 'newcomers' are invited to join committees or groups or project teams where they have an interest and/or gifts and talents to share. Some of the elected positions on the Leadership Circle (e.g. chair and vice chair) can only be held by members. At various times during the year, members of the Leadership Circle will approach participants to invite them to participate in the work and mission of the congregation by joining a committee or group. When that happens to you, you are invited to prayerfully consider the request. In making your decision it is important to discern what is enriching and life-giving for you as well as ways that you can be active with the congregation in responding to God's call. As a duty of care to those who are vulnerable because of age, anyone giving leadership with children or youth is required to provide a current police record check.

Wearing name tags is encouraged by everyone so we can get to know one another and call each other by name. To get a name tag, contact the church office (\$2/tag is a suggested contribution).

As a congregation of the United Church of Canada, EMUC is rooted in the Protestant tradition of the Christian Church. An historic 20 articles of faith formed the 'Basis of Union' in 1925 when the UCC came into being. Today, however, the United Church Creed and the Statement of Faith (2006) are the foundational statements that help to inform our faith; and of course, the Bible continues to hold a central place as a source of God's wisdom, truth, story, vision and challenge. The life and teachings of Jesus are embraced as a pattern for living that expresses God's compassion and justice.

The Bible, Creed, Statement of Faith and other UCC statements are not meant to be used as coercive documents requiring rigid adherence. Faith is perceived more like a journey of a deepening and growing relationship with the God we come to know in Creation, in Christ, and in the ongoing work of the Spirit in the world. And as in any deepening and growing relationship, questions and dialogue, doubting and wondering, searching and seeking both as individuals and as a faith community are considered normative in the journey of faith.

And so it's not unusual to discover that within the UCC and within EMUC, there is a continuum when it comes to the professed faith of congregations and individuals. Some, for example, would say that Jesus was a prophet and an important worker for God's justice.

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Others would say that Jesus was chosen by God to be the Saviour – to embody God’s saving love for the world. Some believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus from death; others understand the resurrection to be a metaphor for God’s power to bring life out of death.

Given that there will be differences and variety among participants in the congregation and in the larger church, learning to listen and developing a healthy respect for differing views and understandings is important.
Sounds like most families I know!

Although there’s much more I’ve left unsaid, with the constraints of newsletter space, I’ll defer to another issue. In conclusion, I think it’s important to come to an understanding of a congregation like EMUC, as a large extended family with ‘relatives’ of all ages and stages – some whom we readily connect with and others whom we may be reluctant to sit beside at a church dinner! In a congregation, we may not like everyone, but we do recognize that we are all part of the same family; we all belong and we all have a place at the table. And so we seek to find ways to be inclusive – to work, worship and play together so that the central values and foundations of our communal life together are upheld. To be part of an extended family doesn’t require perfection, but it does ask each of us to seek and offer forgiveness and to strive with one another for deeper understanding and respect.

Peace, Kathy Toivanen

Worship Schedule

Every Wednesday evening at 6:45 a service of readings, reflection, prayer & communion. Sunday worship is at 10:00 a.m. with care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, EMU Club for children up to Grade 5, Junior Youth for Gr. 6,7,8, & Teentalk for youth in high school.

Worship During the Season of Easter

Sunday April 18 Easter Three: Baptism. Theme: ‘Jump in the Water’. Readings: John 21: 1-19.

Sunday April 25 Easter Four: Earth Day Sunday. Theme: ‘Recreation & Resurrection’. Scripture Readings: Psalm 148; Revelation 21: 1-6. Following worship, stay for a special percussion workshop!

Sunday May 2 Easter Five: Communion. Theme: ‘Life-Giving Acts’. Scripture Readings: Acts 9: 36-43.

Sunday May 9 Easter Six: Christian Family Sunday. A service for all ages with music and drama by Sing Out Loud & others.

Sunday May 16 Easter Seven. Theme: ‘Sowing Seeds for Abundant Growth’ with leadership by Anne & Paul Burnham (farmers, farm market owners & educators about sustainable farming and food)

Sunday May 23 Pentecost Sunday. Theme: ‘The Church is Wherever God’s People are Praising’. Scripture Readings: Acts 2: 1-21.

Transitions

Baptized on Sunday April 18

Aidan Ichiro, son of Alyson & Danny Coppolella, brother to Emily

Condolences

To Yvonne Marot and her extended family on the death of Yvonne’s mother Aline Wells on March 17
To Lauren Fontaine and her extended family on the death of Lauren’s father Larry Robillard on March 23
To Laura Macro and her extended family on the death of Laura’s mother Elsie Van Sickle on March 26
To Richard and Julian Diver on the death of Anne Iachetta (Richard’s spouse & Julian’s mother) on March 29

Congratulations

To Kristen, Spencer, & Mitchell Ekels for receiving their Stage Two Religion In Life Awards

Thanks!

Earth Hour Planning Team of Hermine Bingham, Paul Nauss, Dorothy & Andy Wilson, Susan Ogilvie, Sylvia Arnold, Linda Lee, Al Seymour, Peter Hodgkinson, and to those who provided refreshments.

All who have contributed to the 'Cool the Kitchen' & 'Lighting the Way' campaigns

Audrey Macdonald, Sue Ogilvie, Barbara Jennings, Deb Sturgeon, Janet Gilmour for their ongoing work to coordinate the work to create a new servery.

All who contributed flowers for the Easter Season.

All those who gave leadership by reading, offering music, or taking part in dramas during in the special services of Holy Week & Easter; special thanks to Kristen Fontaine, Alana Kiteley & Shannon Rodrigues for their Palm Sunday drama, and to Jim McVittie for his musical accompaniment at the First Fire Easter service.

The worship committee; especially, Sylvia Arnold, Hermine Bingham & Paul Nauss for their dedication in organizing all of the special services recently.

Bonnie Turner for her musical ministry at Erin Mills Lodge.

Sharon Baker, Heather Nutbeem, Peter Hodgkinson for their coordination & leadership of the Guiding/Scouting Religion in Life Program.

Kathy Toivanen is thankful to the congregation for the cake and flowers in recognition of Kathy receiving the 'Companion of the Centre' award from the Centre for Christian Studies (a joint United Church of Canada and Anglican Church of Canada theological college that prepares students for diaconal ministry).

Youth News

Cheers, as we progress through April, it might seem slightly strange that all the announcements are of upcoming events in May. But of course next month has traditionally been a rather hectic one. EMUC's annual Garage Sale is set for Saturday May 8th, which always provides an excellent opportunity for volunteering.

The Senior Youth group will once again close their year with a citywide Amazing Race, with the date tentatively set for Saturday May 15th. Due to some unfortunate scheduling problems, along with the youth finding themselves bogged down with school and jobs, last year's race was sadly cancelled. But the youth are enthusiastic about a return, and this year will be the fourth such competition. The format has also undergone a change, so be sure to attend.

A fantastic program is fast approaching at Five Oaks Retreat Centre in Paris. Down and Dirty is a highly anticipated and popular retreat just before exams; this year it is from Friday May 28th to Sunday, May 30. The youth will get a great workout over this weekend, as they work on projects around Five Oaks. These aren't boring projects mind you; we've built trails, campfire pits, railings and even a basketball court before. Everyone who's interested is encouraged to visit www.fiveoaks.on.ca/chyouth.htm for more information. If anyone wants to attend, please tell me soon—don't register online. This is a group retreat and needs to be arranged by a group leader. Erin Mills United has had a presence at Down and Dirty every year since 2000, so let's keep the tradition alive.

Ian Blackport

Come and Make Some Beats!!



On Sunday, April 25, after the worship service (approximately 11:45 am), Erin Mills United will be treated to a percussion clinic featuring Michael Phillips. Michael is a Peel Board elementary teacher who also performs with various world music ensembles. At his school, he leads a large group of Grade 5 students on homemade percussion instruments. They perform sophisticated call-and-response rhythms with elements of African and South Asian folk music. The music is exciting and upbeat. Michael will be showing us how to put together groups like this, and have lots of fun creating music. No previous experience is required, and all are welcome!

One Month as the Chair of Erin Mills United Church Focus Circle

As I prepare for the second board meeting as the Chair of the Leadership Circle, I can't help but reflect on the activities of the past month. There is so much activity in our EMUC community!

I was delighted with the first board meeting! The Focus Circle Leaders and Members are inspiring and easy to work with. I appreciate their openness and willingness to work with a new Chairperson and to try new things. The LC agreed on how we will work together to ensure our effectiveness and ensure our productivity. Having fun is an important factor, so each board meeting will start with a social time over a light meal. Thank you to Sue Ogilvie (our resident chef!) who has agreed to prepare the food. The board members who come directly from their day-jobs will especially appreciate not having to think and work over growling stomachs!



The FC members recognize that communication throughout the congregation is important. After each board meeting, there will be a communication from the FC leaders to committee chairs about the decisions and activities discussed at the meeting. This information is meant to be shared with committee members and broadly to the congregation. The communication will be placed in the Communiqué and/or the Friday messages to get the news to as many as possible. We are open to suggestions on how best to communicate with everyone. The website will be an important resource and work is continuing to refurbish the EMUC website.

The church building and property need some 'tlc' as it shows signs of aging, wear and tear. The FC is discussing what needs to be done and is setting some priorities. Some jobs will require professional service; others can be accomplished by work parties. The servery and lighting projects are two great example of people coming together to improve and beautify our building. EMUC folks came together to plan and oversee the projects; professional contractors were required to do the job. It is so satisfying to see the progress of these projects, to hear the excitement in the air and to experience the sense of pride and accomplishment of working together. EMUC needs even more of this kind of collaboration! The FC has identified an urgent need for an active building and property group and a plan for caring for our church home. Speak to any FC member about your willingness to help in any way. It takes all of us to care for and beautify our space so it is a welcoming place for all.

Leadership has also been discussed by the FC. The Strength-based Leadership model was introduced to EMUC through two workshops in November 2009 and April 2010. Laura Macro and I, co-facilitators of the session, have been delighted by the participation and feedback from the sessions. People have learned about their strengths and how they use them in leadership in every aspect of their lives. Secondary to the personal learning, great ideas around some of the EMUC's goals were suggested and these ideas will be very helpful to the FC, committees and project groups moving forward.

The FC members are currently clarifying the role and position description of the FC Leader for themselves and for others. There are numerous opportunities for people to get involved since FC positions for Vice-Chair, Children and Youth, Finance, Worship & Music, building and property are either vacant or will be changing in June. Committee Chairs and members are also required in any areas. What are your passions? As Chair, I along with the FC members invite you to get involved. Speak to any of us to learn more or to inform us of your interests and talents. Experience the joy, the excitement, the sense of satisfaction that comes from working together at and for EMUC!

The past month has also been filled with celebration. EMYOP became incorporated. Kathy T. received the 'Companion of the Centre' award from the Centre of Christian Studies recognizing her contribution to diaconal ministry. Once again we danced at Easter, the most holy season of the church year! The EMUC community is truly blessed!

Chair, Barbara Jennings

Women for Women

The next gathering of this group is planned for Friday April 30th. Mark the date in your calendar and join in a wonderful opportunity to socialize. Invite a friend as well. The event runs from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. Contact Cathy Kiteley or Pat Beck for more information.

Women For Women Retreat: May 28- 30

Consider taking some time for relaxation, good food, laughter, friendships and great conversation in beautiful Muskoka. EMUC's annual women's retreat is open to women of the congregation and their friends. Registration is \$60 and covers all weekend expenses. Registration forms and more details will be available soon.



Green Team News and Events

Energy Audit

The Green Team has reviewed the report of the energy audit that was completed in January and has come up with a list of priority items for implementation. The cost of implementing these items would be supported with money that was given to the Green Team from the 20th anniversary fund.

The items are as follows: retrofitting the exit signs with LED bulbs, retrofitting the fluorescent fixtures with more energy efficient ballasts and bulbs, and installing motion-sensor light switches in the bathrooms, utility rooms and storage areas. The Green Team will consult with the Leadership Circle regarding next steps in order to proceed.

It is hoped that some of the recommendations from the energy audit report, such as repairing caulking and weather stripping, can be carried out on a work bee day at the church.

Members of the Green Team will be investigating the use of window film (another one of the recommendations) vs. shades for the south-facing windows. This might be something that the Green Team will consider taking action on in the future.

Disposable Water Bottles

Kathy Toivanen will be making a proposal to the Halton Presbytery meeting in April to encourage all churches with potable drinking water in the Presbytery to become “disposable water bottle free”. Kathy would like to set up a task group of EMUC folk who would work with her to develop a package of information that would facilitate churches making this change. Anyone interested in participating should contact Kathy.

Community Garden

Before long it will be time to think about gardening. Have you considered growing some of your own produce? Plots are available in the community garden at EMUC. Contact Peter Kiteley for more information.

Informative Links

www.goingforthegreen.net

www.zerofootprint.net (also has a monthly newsletter)

www.storyofstuff.com/bottledwater/

<http://www.storyofstuff.com/capandtrade/>

www.thestop.org

Upcoming events

Check out the Green Team bulletin board.



The United Church of Canada Celebrates 85th Anniversary!

On June 6, United Church congregations across Canada are invited to mark and celebrate the 85th anniversary of our denomination. EMUC will be joining the celebration during regular Sunday worship at 10 am on June 6. A small team to help plan this special service and other ways to mark the anniversary will be formed. If you'd like to be part of the team, please contact Kathy Toivanen or Sylvia Arnold.



Additional special events are also planned by the General Council of the UCC. On Thursday June 10 there will be an open house at the offices of the General Council (3250 Bloor St. W in Islington) where visitors can meet Mardi Tindal (Moderator), the General Secretary and General Council Staff. There will be worship, tours, workshops, music and cake. The open house runs all day from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm; you can drop by for as long as you wish. Tickets can be purchased for supper for those who wish to stay for a special evening service of celebration to be held at Islington United at 7:30 pm. Please look for more detailed information on the bulletin board at EMUC and for the sign up sheet for those who wish to attend the open house. Car pools will be organized. To view more information on line go to www.united-church.ca/85th.

Community Life

EMUC will host and provide the food for the Open Door drop-in dinner at Square One on Thursday, May 13. Sign up to provide food, to take food to the Open Door and/or serve at the dinner.

Kitchen Servery Renovation Update

Once the new kitchen/servery has been completed, the congregation will be invited to a 'Kitchen Kick-Off Luncheon'. Lunch and a tour of the new kitchen/servery will be on the 'menu'. More details about the event will be available soon through Friday updates and announcements at the church.

As a result of the fire, most of the contents of the kitchen needed to be replaced. Thanks to those who have made a contribution to the 'Cool the Kitchen' campaign, this work is well underway. Contributions to the renovation are still being accepted.

The kitchen committee, consisting of Susan Ogilvie, Deb Sturgeon, Barb Jennings and Audrey Macdonald has been working hard to make the new servery/kitchen a wonderful place that will last for years. The new warm colour choices off-set the fact that there is no natural light in the servery. All work has been done according to the building code, so there were a few extra things that needed to be added, that were not in the original kitchen (such as a hand washing sink). The contractor, Polgres Home Improvement Centre, have been doing a fantastic job getting the servery in full working order. Thank you also to Janet Gilmour who has been a tremendous help in getting the insurance all sorted out.

With the new servery will come new health and safety procedures regarding its use. Access to the new servery will be with a sign out system. The intent of the new guidelines is to provide a clean, safe and hospitable servery for all users. Renters who wish to access the kitchen for parties, receptions, events will make a refundable security deposit against damages. With the care and respect of all users of the servery, the facility will serve everyone well for many years to come.

Ian MacRae Memorial Bursary

Students preparing to attend a college or university starting in the fall of 2010 may now apply for the annual bursary awarded in memory of Ian MacRae. Application forms are available from the church office and the brochure explains the details. This bursary is offered to all students and is not restricted to members of the congregation. Applications must be submitted by May 31, 2010.

Compelling Speaker at Glen Abbey United, Oakville

Hamilton Conference and Glen Abbey United are hosting Pastor Otis Moss III (minister of Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago) who will speak at Glen Abbey at a luncheon on Thursday, June 3 from noon – 2 pm (\$20) and later at a worship service at 7:30 pm. Pastor Moss brings a new perspective to youth and intergenerational ministries, along with insights into ministry in an African-American context. Register now for the luncheon. Flyers available. Contact Hermine Bingham or Kathy Toivanen for more information.

EMUC Garage Sale - Saturday May 8: 8 am to 12 noon



Please save this day and start collecting your recyclable items for sale – books, small (workable) electronics, CDs, DVDs, Videos, kitchen ware, toys, puzzles, sports equipment, small furniture items, and more. Volunteers are needed to sort on Thursday & Friday and to set up, sell, and clean up on Saturday. For more information, contact the church office.

Pilates

Terry Loffree will be teaching 3 additional Stott Pilates classes on April 24, May 1, and May 15 @ 8:30-9:30 a.m. The cost is \$10/person/class. Please bring a yoga mat (or several beach towels), comfortable clothes, and a spare towel. The class will be for beginners as well as experienced participants. Feel free to bring your friends. You do not have to commit to all 3 classes. For more information, please call Terry at 647-293-1452 or e-mail: trainerterry1@yahoo.com.

Calling All Gardeners: - Perennials, Annuals...

The perennial plant table will be back this year at the church's annual garage sale on May 8. All plant material should be delivered the Friday evening to the church before so they can be sorted and priced. There will be a designated drop off outside the front doors of the church. Kindly label your items with the name of the plant and colour of the blooms. Trees, shrubs, herbs and indoor plants are also welcome. If you require pots contact Mary Anna Williams (905-820-5305) who has a large selection.

Calling All Vegetable Gardeners

The community garden on the EMUC property will be growing again this year and plots are available on a first come first served basis. The cost of the plots has been reduced to \$20.00 each. Financial assistance is available. This is a great way to grow fresh, organic vegetables and reduce your carbon footprint on our community. Kids love to get involved and it is a wonderful opportunity to teach them about growing food. It is an amazing sight to see the plants and seeds growing and bearing vegetables. There is nothing like the taste of just picked freshness. If you or someone you know would like a garden spot, please call the church to reserve a space.



Erin Mills Youth Outreach

EMYOP is hosting a fashion show and afternoon tea with sandwiches and desserts on Saturday April 24 from 1:30 to 4 pm. at EMUC. Tickets are \$35/person and include the tea, show and an opportunity to win some unique prizes.

Elvis is 'in' the Building!



World Class Elvis tribute artist, Jay Zanier will be performing at EMUC, Friday May 14 at 7:30 pm. Jay has won many National Elvis contests and has been named 'Grand Champion' in a number of significant contests. In 2007, Jay earned the opportunity to enter the Ultimate Elvis contest at Memphis Tennessee and was a top 10 finalist! Tickets for the Elvis concert are on sale through the church office. Tickets are: \$20/adult; \$15/youth; \$10/children and \$60 max/family. This is an EMUC fundraising & funraising event!

Saying Grace

Preparing, eating and sharing food is a central part of our lives. For Christians, the last supper that Jesus shared with his friends is central to our faith.

In our busy days, meals can sometimes become perfunctory and rushed. Saying grace before a meal is a way of pausing, even for a moment, to remember with gratitude the land, those who grew and prepared the food and the God who feeds and nourishes us. Many of us say family graces that have been handed down from generation to generation.

The following graces are offered to add some variety to your traditional graces or to get you started in pausing to give thanks before a meal. The graces are gleaned from 'A Year of Grace' by William Kervin.

This wonderful little book of 365 'mealtime prayers' was first published in 2003; and I believe can still be purchased through Chapters/Indigo. William Kervin is a professor at Emmanuel College in Toronto.

God of grace and passion,
for companions, make us joyful;
for food, make us thankful;
and for justice make us hungry. Amen.

Bless, O God,
this food and drink,
all drawn from your creation.
May it nourish us
for your work
of peace and liberation. Amen.

Lord, bless this food upon our dishes,
as Thou didst bless the loaves and fishes.
And like the sugar in our tea,
may we all be stirred by thee. Amen (*a Newfoundland grace*)

The hands around this table
remind us of
hands that weed the fields
and tend the livestock
and haul the nets;
hands that pack the boxes
and load the trucks
and stock the shelves;
hands that work where we do not,
like the very hands of God.
For this and so much more,
we are deeply thankful. Amen.

Each time we eat
may we remember God's love. Amen (*a Chinese grace*)

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For food
 in a world where many walk in hunger;
 for faith
 in a world where many walk in fear;
 for friends
 in a world where many walk alone,
 we give you thanks, O God. Amen (*from Girl Guides of Canada*)

May the yams which our sisters and brothers
 plant in the earth this year be good.
 May children be born.
 May all have enough to eat,
 and may peace reign. Amen. (*Nigerian grace*)

O God, who makes a thousand flowers to blow,
 who makes both grains and fruits to grow,
 hear our prayer;
 bless this food
 and bring us peace. Amen (*a Dutch grace*)

Christ on the hillside – 5,000 fed;
 two small fishes,
 five loaves of bread.
 May the blessing of him
 who made the division
 rest upon us
 and upon our provision. Amen.

Book Review

Jeannette Walls, 'Half Broke Horses' - Scribner, 2009 \$34.00

I so enjoyed this story about the author's grandmother, Lilly. With little formal education, she nevertheless was very resourceful, and, although her life was difficult, she never felt sorry for herself. Lilly was an admirable person. A flash flood in Texas almost drowned Lilly as a child. Her father, who was successful at breaking horses, wasted his time initiating lawsuits. Her mother regarded herself as too fine a lady to draw water from a well or lift a bale of hay on the family ranch, so the children had to do the work. Lilly was unfairly denied much formal schooling because her brother, who was to inherit the ranch, needed the limited family resources spent on him.

So Lilly became very competent, starting to teach school at age 15, with only grade 7 education herself. But she maintained order, and taught what she believed the children needed to know of life skills. She was also the school janitor and school bus driver.

When the First World War was over, the men returned to the factory jobs that the women had taken over, the women returned to their peacetime roles such as teaching school, and Lilly was replaced because she was less qualified. Needing to find a job, Lilly headed to Chicago and was at first excited by the bustle of the big city. But she was conned into marriage by a salesman who went on long sales trips. He was actually spending time in Chicago with his other family.

She found a faithful husband in Big Jim, an older man, hard working and solid. They ended up on a 160,000 acre ranch owned by British investors. They could handle 20,000 cattle at a time; but it was not their land. After the ranch was sold, they moved to Phoenix. But neither could stand the confines of the city. They finally got a piece of land of their own.

The beauty of the Arizona desert and canyons are lovingly described, so much so that I would like to see some of those sights myself. I highly recommend this book.

Lloyd Freel

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