

# Wesley Mimico United Church

[www.wesleymimicounitedchurch.org](http://www.wesleymimicounitedchurch.org)

November/December 2011

Issue 16



## No Room amidst the Building Boom

Luke 2:7

“Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son; she put him in a simple cloth wrapped like a receiving blanket, and laid him in a feeding trough for cattle, because there was no room for them at the inn.” (*The Inclusive Bible translation, 2007*)

“And Mary brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” (*King James Translation, 1611*)

On Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. in front of Wesley Mimico Church, congregation and neighbours will gather to marvel – yet again – at the life-size Nativity scene – the birth of Jesus in a cattle stall. What a gift to see these life-size figures in the rustic setting testifying to this key Gospel story. Angel, animals, star, shepherds, magi, and Mary and Joseph with the baby – all are players in the eternal drama of salvation so simply stated in Luke’s Gospel.

But there was no room for Jesus and the parents in the inn, says the text. Nobody was ready to give up their room so that the birth could happen more safely, in greater comfort. The innkeeper didn’t offer his spare bedroom or even a corner in the inn for this birthing moment. Neighbours weren’t informed about the impending birth – so did nothing. If it had happened in Mimico, the birth might have taken place under one of the Humber bridges; or in one of the abandoned motel units waiting for demolition on Lake Shore; or in the waterfront bushes at Col. Sam Smith Park; or in a bug-infested room, in the badly-maintained apartments, in a make-shift shelter.

The poor, the homeless are easily forgotten when the inn is filled with wine and merry-makers and when burghers are settled in comfortable homes snug and warm.

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communicate  
educate  
celebrate

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## Thanks to .....

- Rebecca Ormond (see p. 4) for her work reconstructing the WMUC website and for designing the new congregational brochure. If you have Internet access and haven't yet seen our new website, go to [www.wesleymimicounitedchurch.org](http://www.wesleymimicounitedchurch.org).
- Karen MacPherson and other members of the Finance Committee for organizing both the enjoyable (and profitable) Four Men Concert and the informative (and delicious) Commitment Lunch that marked the end of our Stewardship focus.
- the Bell ringers and Bible carriers whose arms and legs help Sunday worship to happen
- Joan Hewitt who, each and every Sunday, prepares the refreshments for our after-worship fellowship
- Barry Rieder for sharing with the congregation about his work with in the Jane-Finch Community Ministry
- Larry McPhail & Murray Seeley for keeping our heating system functioning – no easy task!
- Collette Slone and the Community Kitchen folks (see p. 3) for providing the bread for the November communion service

## Transitions

- Congratulations to Martin Galazka and Shanene Barlow who were married in the WMUC sanctuary on September 16<sup>th</sup>
- In October, Cindy Kelly and her family moved from Mimico to Bala, ON and we wish them every blessing in their new home and community.
- Both May and Jack Kilpatrick, former Wesley choir members who have lived in Calgary for many years, passed away recently.
- WMUC members were saddened to learn of the sudden death of John Horkey at home on October 25<sup>th</sup>. We will miss John's presence on Sunday morning, especially his smile and warm greetings. Sincere condolences are extended to his spouse and devoted caregiver, Joan Hewitt, to his children Susan and Stephen and their families, and to close family friends



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But God enters our world in the most unlikely places. With the cattle, cushioned by straw, sheltered by the feeding trough - a stark reality is transformed into a wondrous place. That stall is the birthplace of Jesus and the Christian church!! We who love the baby turned Saviour, always remembers our origins and our divine purposes. Born in humility, we are nurtured by love for the divine transformation of the world into a place where there is room for all 7 billion sisters and brothers of God's human family, plus all the creatures.

In our community, the plans for redevelopment along the Lake Shore will want to make us keep asking: for whom are we making room? Will there be space for those on disability pensions and social assistance; for those in the growing number of low income jobs; for seniors on fixed incomes; for immigrants just trying to get a toe-hold in Canadian society; for the singles who are estranged from their families; and many more who might otherwise find "no room" in our community's new development.

As we marvel at the Crèche, may God's outreaching love become clearer for us and all our neighbours!

*Harry Oussoren*

## Food for the Soul: Glorious Berries by Joan Hewitt

In the late 1940's, my parents bought a cottage in Haliburton. It was not exactly a 2011 type of cottage. By that I mean we had no electricity or running water and the "Rose Villa" was over the hill. Drinking water was 2 pails and a half mile trek to the spring. Also, if you can believe it, my mother did the washing with a tub and scrub board, using flat irons, heated up on the stove, to iron things. My mother also taught my sister and I to jitterbug using our wind-up gramophone. We did not think that this was unusual and for me it was great fun.

There was also a lot of food for the soul – huge bull frogs croaking up a storm on their lily pads, the loons and their babies, fireflies, whip-poor-wills, the fabulous fall colours and the quiet mornings with the mist rising off the lake and the cry of the loons. You will forgive me if I do not dwell on the black flies, mosquitoes, deer flies and horse flies – we were food for them. Talk about giving back – we were more than generous.

One of my favourite memories is taking our wooden row boat up the lake, past the little loon island habitat and around the dog leg of the lake to pick blueberries. When you rounded the dog leg, there were the smooth rocks just loaded with berries. In less than half an hour, we had our spring water pails full and we were rowing back home. There, my mother had made fresh bread in a little black oven that sat on top of the coal oil stove (you regulated the temperature by adjusting the flame!). Then, we indulged in a feast of fresh blueberries and warm bread. That was food for the body as well as the soul. Also, someone was definitely watching over us because we never encountered a bear at the blueberry patch. Those were definitely some of the good old days.



*Editor's note: If you have a story about certain foods, meals and/or feasts that have (had) special meaning for you, please write it up and submit it to Cross Communication for publication in a future issue.*

## Community Kitchen

A Community Kitchen to guide people in preparing easy, healthy, low-cost meals has been taking place in Wesley's kitchen every Wednesday for eight weeks. Delicious lunches shared among the group have been the result. This project is sponsored by WMUC Mission and Outreach Committee in partnership with LAMP and is co-ordinated by Colette Slone. It ends on Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, so there is still time to join the last few sessions. A similar project, located at the LAMP Centre, will start on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> and continue until Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>. Time 5-8pm. For more information please contact Maki at 416-252-9701 ext. 271 or [maki@lampchc.or](mailto:maki@lampchc.or)



***The best vitamin for making friends..... B1.***

**God: Male or Female?** by Dale Pringle  
(#2 in the series: **Observing God's People**)

Ok now. Here's the question. Is God female? Or is S/he male? A silly question? I think not. It came up in conversation with a friend a while ago. I don't remember how, but we found ourselves on the topic of the gender of God. Mike stated emphatically that God is neither male nor female. I said I believed God was both. "How do you figure that?" he asked. It doesn't even make sense." His voice was louder than necessary and he appeared intractable. Bellicose, even.

"Well," I began, "I often see God in people. You know, like in the way they behave. When I see gentle compassion, or tender love and nurturing, I think of a feminine God. And when I see physical strength -- people building things, or fixing things for instance - houses, buildings, cars, whatever, I imagine a more masculine God. I mean, it's more complicated than that, of course. I'm not saying ---"

"NO WAY! THAT'S RUBBISH! TOTAL RUBBISH!" Mike was suddenly furious and off on one of his trademark rants. "YOU KNOW WHAT? ALL THIS CRAP STARTED WITH THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO STARTED SAYING GOD WAS A WOMAN. THERE IS NO GENDER WITH GOD. THAT'S ALL BULL\*\*\*\* STARTED BY WOMEN WHO THINK THEY SHOULD RULE THE WORLD. AND THEY THINK GOD IS ON THEIR SIDE. I AM SO SICK OF WOMEN THINKING THEY'RE RUNNING THE WORLD, DECIDING THE FATE OF MEN. (*insert a long string of curse words here*)"

His face was red. A vein in his neck was visible and throbbing. Saliva flew as he continued his tirade. "I'M SORRY, BUT THAT'S HOW I FEEL. THERE IS NO SEX WITH GOD. NO SEX!! WHY DOES EVERYTHING HAVE TO BE ABOUT SEX NOWADAYS? WOMEN, THAT'S WHY. IT HAS TO BE THEIR WAY OR NOT AT ALL. I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M SO ANGRY. YES I DO! BECAUSE WOMEN HAVE TO TRY TO CONTROL OUR LIVES, THAT'S WHY. AND I HATE IT." (*more expletives*)

He took a sip of coffee as an awkward silence fell over us. I knew Mike wasn't angry with me, but I felt incredibly uncomfortable nonetheless. I guess the silence affected Mike too, because he began then to calm down. "Sorry. I just don't know why everything has to be a gender issue these days. It's not enough they're taking over the world, now they want to be God."

Mike's wife threw him out after suffering his anger for 24 years. She took the house and the furniture. He left behind his identity as a husband and homeowner. And he is legally obligated to pay alimony – \$1300 per month, possibly forever. I understand why he's so misogynistic. I was too, when I was first on my own. And my anger was much like Mike's. Explosive, violent and uncontrollable. My anger began to abate when I finally accepted my situation.

My marriage was over. But my Life was not over, only that part of my Life that had fettered me and kept me from moving forward. It took a few years, but I'm doing better now. I really am.

Mike's outburst had nothing to do with the gender of God. It sprang from his inability to let go of the past, and from his fear of moving forward as an individual. I know. I get stuck there still sometimes myself. I wish there were some way I could tell him that, but I honestly don't believe he's able to hear it right now.

God alone can help him. And I hope She's listening.

*When and where have you experienced the Spirit at work in the people you encounter or in situations where God's healing is needed? CC readers are invited to contribute their own observations to this series.*

## Online with Rebecca

Rebecca Ormond was received into WMUC membership by profession of faith on Pentecost Sunday last June. Born in Belleville, raised in Ingleside and then London, Ontario, Rebecca has a younger brother, Mike, who currently lives in Stratford.



Soon after high school graduation, Rebecca decided to head for the city lights of Toronto. She has lived in Toronto ever since, except for a two-year move to Taiwan where she taught English in a small town in a remote, rural area. After returning from Taiwan to Toronto, Rebecca continued to live downtown until 2010 when, looking for a change of pace and more affordable housing, she made the move to Mimico. She lives here with her partner David and his son Max who is turning 6.

Rebecca is a self-taught, freelance graphic/website designer. She has her own business and works primarily from home. Her hobbies are crafting and sewing and she's a bit of a movie buff and a sudoku fan.

Given her professional background, it's no surprise that it was an internet search that led Rebecca to our door reinforced by the interest that Max displayed in the Wesley Creche scene. Rebecca's professional skills have already been put to good use as a member of the Communications team. We welcome Rebecca and her family to the congregation and look forward to her continuing involvement.

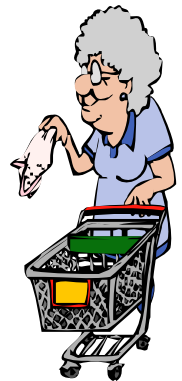
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## Good-bye, Mum

A young man shopping in a supermarket noticed a little old lady following him around.. If he stopped, she stopped. Furthermore she kept staring at him. She finally overtook him at the checkout, and she turned to him and said, "I hope I haven't made you feel ill at ease; it's just that you look so much like my own late son." He answered, "That's okay."

"I know it's silly, but if you'd call out 'Good bye, Mum' as I leave the store, it would make me feel so happy." She then went through the checkout, and as she was on her way out of the store, the man called out, "Goodbye, Mum." The little old lady waved and smiled back at him.

Pleased that he had brought a little sunshine into someone's day, he went to pay for his groceries. "That comes to \$121.85." said the clerk. "How come so much? I only bought 5 items." The clerk replied, "Yeah, but your Mother said that you'd be paying for her things, too."



It's never too late to become what you might have been



Happy Thanksgiving, friends. This year, I give thanks for a new wife and stepdaughter. I'm also grateful for a home with a cozy fireplace and for the firewood that sometimes appears like magic by the side door. On a blustery fall day, there is nothing more soothing to the soul than curling up with a good book beside a crackling fire. The book I've just finished is Lawrence Hill's The Book of Negroes. From the opening line - "I seem to have trouble dying" - this historical novel caught and held my interest

The Book of Negroes is a story told by an old woman – Aminata Diallo is her name – who was stolen from her African village by slave traders in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. She was eleven years old, forced to walk for months, chained together with others, and finally brought by ship across the "Great River" to America. Good luck and her ability to read and write often saved her from the horrible and violent deaths that befell many of her companions. She was sold and eventually put to work on an indigo plantation in South Carolina where the midwifery skills she'd learned from her mother offered her further protection from violence. She survives a lifetime of torments and eventually has the chance to register her name in "The Book of Negroes", an actual historic British military ledger that allowed Black Loyalists to sail from Manhattan to Nova Scotia. Copies of the document can be found today in the Nova Scotia Public Archives and in the National Archives of Canada.

Aminata is an extraordinarily strong woman. Her faith in God and her hope for a better life carry her steadfastly through her trials. At times, I wondered how anyone could continue under such horrible oppression. I felt inspired by her. I often sat til the fire was out and the ashes cold, long after bedtime, unable to pull myself from this engaging and compelling tale. I tell you truly friends, if you only read one book this year, read The Book of Negroes. I promise you will not be disappointed. *Lawrence Hill is a Canadian author living in Toronto.*

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### **The Search Is On**

Wesley's actively seeking a new minister. The recently formed Joint Search Committee meets at the home of Colleen and Dale Pringle. We've had three meetings so far. With the help of Rebecca Ormond, we've put an ad on our brand new website. Our hope is that it will attract candidates from across the country. Plans are also in place to advertise at United Church theological schools from coast to coast. Our hope is to hire an ordained minister to lead our congregation into 2012. The committee fully appreciates the importance of finding the right person for the job and we have agreed not to allow time constraints to cloud our vision.

The Joint Search Committee consists of: Dale Pringle (Chair), Patti Franklin (Secretary), Robin Pilkey and Louise Mahood (Presbytery reps), Patricia McPhail, David Tyler, Mary Rule and Colleen Pringle.

If you want your dreams to come true, you mustn't oversleep.



***The Heavenly Mailroom:***  
**WHAT HAPPENS IN HEAVEN WHEN WE PRAY?**

I dreamt that I went to Heaven and an angel was showing me around. We walked side-by-side inside a large workroom filled with angels. My angel guide stopped in front of the first section and said, "This is the Receiving Section. Here, all prayer petitions to God are received." I looked around in this area, and it was terribly busy with so many angels sorting out petitions written on voluminous paper sheets and scraps from people all over the world.

Then we moved on down a long corridor until we reached the second section. The angel then said to me, "This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings the people asked for are processed and delivered to the living persons who asked for them." I noticed again how busy it was there. There were many angels working hard at that station, since so many blessings had been requested and were being packaged for delivery to Earth.

Finally at the farthest end of the long corridor we stopped at the door of a very small station. To my great surprise, only one angel was seated there, idly doing nothing. "This is the Acknowledgment Section" my angel friend quietly stated. He seemed embarrassed. "How is it that there is no work going on here?" I asked. The angel sighed. "After people receive the blessings that they asked for, very few send back acknowledgments."

"How does one acknowledge God's blessings?"

The angel answered, "It's simple. Just say, Thank you, God. "

"What blessings should be acknowledged?" I asked.

"If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. And if you have a computer, you are part of the 1% in the world who has that opportunity. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, remember the many people who will not even survive this day.

"If you have never experienced the fear in battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ... you are more secure than 700 million people in the world. If you can attend a church without the fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death you are envied by three billion people in the world. If your parents are still alive and still married ....you are very rare. If you can hold your head up and smile, remember all those who live with doubt and despair....."

"Ok, what now? How can I start?" If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you as very special and you are more fortunate than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all. Have a good day and count your blessings.

Submitted by Judy Bower

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**More Voices Welcome:** If you would like to join the Wesley Choir for the Christmas Cantata, come and practise on Thursday evening at 8 pm

## **Cross Communication - Electronically**

The new Wesley Mimico United Church website is now up and running. Take a look at [www.wesleymimicounitedchurch.org](http://www.wesleymimicounitedchurch.org). Among other features, the current issue of Cross Communication is posted there. If you prefer to access your newsletter through the website rather than in print form, please let the church office know. Starting with the January 2012 issue, a reminder e-mail with a link to the website will be sent to you when each new issue becomes available.

*Cross Communication, the newsletter of Wesley Mimico United Church, is published 5 times a year. The editorial committee is Glenys Huws (editor) Joan Hewitt and Dale Pringle. The CC committee welcomes articles, jokes and news items for the newsletter. Submissions may be edited for accuracy and length. Next edition Jan/Feb 2012.*

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