

News from Knox

From our Interim Moderator Rev. Don Pollock



Since being appointed Interim Moderator – Search in late August I have used the time to familiarize myself with Knox - its organization and the congregation at large, and to begin the preliminary steps related to the call of a new senior minister. I have enjoyed my interaction with the congregation at worship both at the morning and afternoon services. However, at its January meeting the Presbytery of East Toronto expanded my role to encompass those duties performed by interim moderators in multi-staff congregations. It seems that I have been in a whirlwind of activity ever since. Although I am well supported by staff and by session, there is much to be done before Knox is in a position to begin a search for a new minister.

I find much to celebrate at Knox. Exciting work is being done on your behalf by the Strategic Planning Task Force on a new mission and strategy, the Stewardship ministry team in streamlining our financial planning and control, the Board of Mangers in upgrading our physical plant, and others - all designed to equip Knox to address the challenges that lie ahead. I take great heart from these efforts and I hope that as they are explained to you that you will be equally buoyed up by the commitment and dedication of the leaders you have called to service.

One area we need to work harder on is strengthening harmony and mutual trust at Knox. Now that the Strategic Planning Task Force has recommended core value and mission statements for Knox some of the ambiguity of the past will be dispelled.

It falls to all of us to submerge any personal agenda we may have to the greater service of God and our community as embodied in these statements.

I am always open to your input so when you see me on Sunday or at other times during the week, please share your ideas with me. ♦

News from Knox is the new name for our church newsletter, replacing *On the Horizon*. We hope that you find it useful, and that you like the new colour pages and pictures. We welcome your feedback and your submissions for future editions – just watch the calendar for deadlines and send comments and material to the editor, Lorna Hutchinson, through the office or by email at lornahutchinson@sympatico.ca.

If you would prefer to receive your copy by email, please contact Trish Veinott, the publisher, at patricia@knoxtoronto.org.

Inside

Upcoming Events	2
Session News	5
Trustees News	6
Strategic Planning Task Force	
News	7
Children and Youth	8
International Ministries	9
Urbana '09	10
Knox Youth Dinner and Food	
Bank	11

Upcoming Worship Services

Date	11 a.m.	5 p.m.
<i>February 21</i>	John Bowen	Donna Dong
<i>February 28</i>	Darla Walker	Alvin Kim
<i>March 7</i>	John Vissers	Connie denBok
<i>March 14</i>	Victor Shepherd	John Bowen
<i>March 21</i>	Glen Soderholm	Glen Soderholm
<i>Palm Sunday March 28</i>	Craig Shugart	Craig Shugart
<i>Maundy Thursday</i>		Wayne Hancock (7:30 p.m.)
<i>Good Friday</i>	Alex MacLeod	
<i>Easter Sunday</i>	Wayne Hancock	Angie Song

Mark Your Calendars

Knox Ladies Tea

Saturday, April 24th, 2010
2 – 5 pm

Guest speaker: Darla Walker
Watch the bulletin for further details.

Knox Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 7
1 pm

March Highlights

- 3 Morning Communion
- 7 Annual General Meeting
- 21 Evening Communion & EAT
- 28 Palm Sunday & Senior Choir Presentation

May Highlights

- 7-8 Evangelism Explosion
- 16 Evening Communion & EAT
- tbd Annual Ministry Review

April Highlights

- 1 Maundy Thursday communion (7:30 p.m.)
- 2 Good Friday – 11 a.m. service
- 4 Easter Sunday – Pancake Breakfast
- 15 Creation Care – World Vision
- 25 Ministry Fair

Knox Summer Fellowship

So we can all agree that Knox is a church in city, right? Well, what does that mean? How is God calling us as a community and also in our individual lives? How is God sorting us out and sending us out in the heart of urban Canada?

Our Summer Fellowship series in 2010 will try to help us discern how the Lord is leading us into the future when it comes to this central question for us as a congregation.

The theme of Summer Fellowship is “CITIES OF GOD: the Christian calling to urban life”.

The biblical story begins in a garden and culminates in a city, and throughout the whole story of scripture we see people coming together to build and work, to live and love in cities. We see wonderful examples of creativity and beauty and skill as men and women, made in God’s image, live out the “creation mandate.” But Scripture also testifies to humanity’s propensity toward radical evil and wickedness, flowing from our rejection of divine truth and guidance.

We also see throughout the biblical narrative a God who loves people in their urban life together. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ embodies that divine compassion and calls his people to make peace, to engage our neighbour, to welcome the stranger, to share our faith, to contribute our gifts, to do justice, and to creatively renew and work for the prosperity of the city. Through our Summer Fellowship series in 2010, we want to wrestle with the fundamental question of how, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are being called to follow Him in the city.

Join us, starting on June 23rd and continuing every Wednesday night until Aug. 18th.

Alex MacLeod



Goodbye to Dr. Livingston

On Sunday, January 10, the congregation gathered to say thank you and goodbye to Reverend Dr. Kevin Livingston, who has been our Senior Minister for nearly 10 years. The Winchester Room was transformed by tropical decorations, great food with a Latin flavour was served, and there was special music. Les Talbot's slide show reminded us of some of the many great memories we have of Kevin and his family. The congregation gave Kevin a new laptop, and the trustees also presented a gift. The warm atmosphere created at this celebration reflected the love which the congregation feels toward Kevin and his family. Our prayers and thanks go with him as he takes up his full time teaching position at Tyndale Theological Seminary. ◊



Many thanks to Kyle Long for providing the photographs.

From: Rev. Dr. Wayne Hancock, Associate Minister for Pastoral Care and Counselling



When Lorna asked if I would like to write something for this edition of *News from Knox*, I immediately said yes. Of course I have left it to the last minute to do so but I wanted to share a word of encouragement as we begin 2010. We began with a wonderful celebration of the ministry of Kevin Livingston among us for nine and a half years. This is noted elsewhere in this newsletter and I was glad to be able to add my voice to those thanking Kevin for his ministry at Knox.

As one of, by my count, just three staff at Knox who has worked here during a vacancy I want to assure those in the Knox family for who a time without a Senior Minister is a new experience, that vacancies can be positive times. During the last vacancy I was the only remaining ordained minister at Knox. This time I am pleased that Alex MacLeod is sharing that load and also that God has brought to us a gifted Interim Moderator, Don Pollock who has the time to invest at Knox since, unlike our last IM, Don is not serving another congregation. God has brought a very talented, gifted and committed staff team to Knox at this time and I can already see that, while we miss Kevin, ministry continues apace here. Throughout this newsletter you will read evidence of this.

Vacancies are a time for us to reflect before God on what he has called us to do and who he has called us to be. I know I reflect on that personally and we are also doing so collectively through our strategic planning exercise. This is extremely important work to do before we embark on the more intensive search for a new Senior Minister. I urge you to use this time of vacancy to reflect on these questions and to consider how God is calling you to serve him here. That may mean continuing what you are doing, doing something different or doing something more. I encourage us to pray regularly for the leadership and staff at Knox and to look for ways to encourage each other as we live out our faith.

I close with a quote from a prayer of the Apostle Paul.

“I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ’s return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation – the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ – for this will bring much glory and praise to God.”

Philippians 1:9-11 NLT

Your servant in the Gospel of Jesus,

Wayne

Knox Session News

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. *1 John 3:22-23 NKJV*

The past three months have been a time of great change and opportunity since we last reported to you. Dr. Livingston completed his time as Senior Minister at the end of December and in January Rev. Don Pollock began his term as interim moderator. In the January 31st Sunday bulletin the Knox Strategic Planning Task Force on the strategic plans that the Session, Board, Team/Staff leaders, and Trustees have jointly worked on. Other activities that the Session has been working on are:

Weddings, Baptisms, and Memberships

- Naatumanya Ssenabulya, daughter of Mathias and Doreen Ssenabulya, was baptized into our fellowship on November 29, 2009.
- Session was overjoyed to approve two upcoming weddings:
 - Jennifer Mabee and Kevin Lee for October 16, 2010. Many people know Jennifer as our Coordinator of Children's Ministries, including leading the children in worship service every Sunday morning.
 - Ashlee Campbell and Nick Reaburn for August 14, 2010. Ashlee was the interim Children's Ministries Director at Knox for many years.

Upcoming Events

- The Knox Annual General Meeting is set for 1:00 on Sunday March 7, 2009. All members are encouraged to attend. At our January meeting the 2010 Budgets were approved for presentation to the congregation.
- An "Evangelism Explosion" event will be held at Knox Church on Thursday, May 6 to Saturday, May 8, 2010. This is a new version of EE that focuses on the younger generations in a non-confrontational yet biblical way. More information about this ministry can be found at <http://www.eecanada.org/>

Personnel Updates

- Dominique Goold has demonstrated a joy and passion for the international community here at Knox, and her ministry has been richly blessed. We are delighted to report that her contract as Director of International Ministries has been extended to December 31, 2010.
- On a sadder note, on January 26 Rick Stender and Aaron Fennell resigned as active elders of Knox Church. Rick had been on Leave since July of 2008. Both elders contributed greatly to the life and witness of Knox church, and will be sorely missed.

- Scott Flemming was endorsed by Knox Session as a suitable candidate for ministry of word and sacraments and his name was forwarded to the Presbytery with a request that they take him under care as a student for ministry.

Elder Elections

- Several years ago Knox implemented Term Eldership, which means that every two years the congregation elects a number of new elders. The two year cycle has come upon us again. Session will approve a Nominating Committee at its February meeting, and you can expect to hear from them soon. Please pray for wisdom in the calling of elders.

Thank you for your support and prayers. The work of Knox Session is both very rewarding and stressful. Pray for the mental, physical and spiritual health of each member of Session. May all they put their hand to prosper and be blessed by God, and be honoring to God. Pray for Don Pollock as he undertakes the role of Interim Moderator. Pray for the Alex and Wayne as they perform their daily tasks. Finally, pray for the future Senior Minister of Knox Church; even before we know who that might be, for we are sure that God is putting into motion those events needed to bring him to us. ◊

News From The Trustees

Since our last “On the Horizon” report to the congregation in November 2009, your trustees have concentrated their attention on the following priority issues:

1. Ground lease renewal for January 1, 2014;
2. Preparation of 2010 budget along with the Stewardship Ministry Team;
3. Working with the Pension Task Force which is seeking to regularize our existing pension situation;
4. Closely following the progress of our Revenue Equalization Fund (approx \$3 million) which was initially established to fund revenue shortfalls in the final years of the 21-year ground lease period, but is now also being looked at to assist in funding our new pension arrangements;
5. Participating in leadership meetings organized by the Strategic Planning Task Force; and
6. Following the Manse situation.

During the past three months, progress has been made on all of these items as follows:

1. A preliminary real estate market report has been received from our appraiser Grant Edwardh to provide us with a base line report on today’s downtown commercial real estate market, a part of the information needed to make the case for the valuation of our Queen Street ground lease. This will be updated as we approach the beginning of lease negotiations in 2013.
2. 3. and 5. - We have appreciated the opportunity to participate with other Knox groups in connection with the Stewardship Ministry Team, the Pension Task Force and the Strategic Planning Task Force to ensure a unified approach to all of the issues facing Knox. All of these teams are in the process of reporting to the congregation about our progress.
4. As at December 31, 2009, our Revenue Equalization Fund had a market value of \$3.077 million, a \$309,000 (11%) increase from December 31, 2008. This increase was comprised of a \$219,000 market value increase of stocks and bonds held in our portfolio, \$113,000 in interest and dividends received (a 3.6% cash return), less \$23,000 in fees paid to our investment adviser. We continue to meet with our investment advisor twice yearly to ensure that the portfolio is being administered on the terms and conditions specified by Knox, with the right balance between return and security of capital.

During the year, the mortgage held by the Trustees on Dr. Livingston’s residence was repaid, and the funds reinvested.

6. Our Knox manse has been leased out to third parties as Dr. Livingston had his own residence. During 2009, the previous tenants vacated the manse due to purchasing their own home. Fortunately,

new tenants were located very quickly and took possession after necessary maintenance and refurbishing had taken place. The new tenants were given a twelve-month lease as Knox may wish to offer our new senior minister the option of living in the manse or purchasing his own home. If the new minister chooses the latter, consideration will have to be given to the future of the manse.

We look forward to our March 7th Knox Annual General Meeting when we can discuss these items in greater detail.

John Hutchinson
Chair of Trustees

EAT

One of Knox’s ministries is Everyone At the Table (EAT), a communal meal that takes place the third week of every month after the evening service. EAT is scheduled to coincide with Communion Sunday, so that breaking bread together continues beyond the service in a shared meal.

On January 17th we celebrated the first EAT of the new year with delicious chicken soup and lentil stew, concocted by Elsie Vrugteveen, our cook and culinary mastermind of the month. Elsie is one several cooks who have volunteered to cook for EAT for their very first time this year, braving the intimidation of cooking for 100 to turn out amazing meals.

Each EAT has a different character, I find, but one constant is the faithful volunteers, a mix of veteran and first-time, who cheerfully set up, serve, and clean up the meal. Another constant is the good fellowship happening around the tables at EAT. New people meet, old friends catch up, there is no shortage of

interesting people to talk to! Each table is a collection of conversations; people busy finding out each other's stories. I am grateful for the way in which EAT is able to serve as a means to creating true fellowship, true community.

Elissa Rodkey
Knox Hospitality Coordinator Intern

A group enjoys homemade stew and conversation at our November EAT meal.



News from the Strategic Planning Task Force

In this brief update, we'd like to share some more findings from the recent church-wide survey and the progress on the overall strategic planning process.

In November, a detailed report of the survey results was provided to all members of session, board of managers, trustees and leaders of our ministry teams. This "joint leadership" gathered to review the many findings coming from analysis of the survey data and other sources. Here are a few examples of the survey information our joint leadership examined:

- Knox's "God-exalting worship" and having an "outward focus" were identified as strength areas
- On the question of "how effective are we at learning and growing in community?" there were higher scores given from respondents attending only the afternoon service as compared to those attending only the morning service. (67% of 5pm attendees rated our effectiveness at 4 or 5 out of 5; 21% of 11am attendees rated our effectiveness at 4 or 5 out of 5)
- 1/3 of our 134 survey respondents are in a Knox small group. Who are in Knox small groups?
- 59% of 20-29 year olds
- 60% of those who have been at Knox < 1 yr
- 58% of those who attend 5pm services
- Only 29% of those who attend 11am service are in a Knox small group

The survey identified that 22 people whose Knox small

groups no longer meet are interested in joining new ones!

- Looking at "how effective is Knox at encouraging and equipping in the spiritual disciplines?"
- 1/3 of those attending Knox 4 years or more gave low scores of 1 and 2 out of 5
- 32% of those in the 40-49 age group gave a score of 1 while 50% of those in the 70 or older group gave a score of 2

In addition to answering survey questions, respondents provided a high volume of written comments. These have all been received with grace-filled hearts. All the data serves to be an invaluable source of information as we progress in our strategic planning.

On Saturday January 16th, a planning retreat was attended by 29 persons from our joint leadership. Reflecting on the survey data and other analysis, we affirmed Knox's values, and proposed our mission and strategic thrusts. These have been outlined more fully for a congregational information briefing on February 7th.

The task force is striving to fully engage all of you in the strategic planning process. We continue to covet your prayer as we move forward together, led confidently by the Holy Spirit. ♦

Children and Youth: Winter Programs



Sunday School

Preparations are being made to get ready for the Easter season.

We are on the hunt for a family event day in these winter blah's where there's no snow!

Youth

The winter retreat took place on Feb 5-7 at the Liebenzell Mission Centre in Moffatt, ON. The idea of our Christian Identity was front and centre and we studied this in the characters of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah as they made a stand for God in a foreign land (Daniel 1, 3, 6). It was a great time of fun in the snow and spiritual growth.

The last couple of months we have averaged about 8 youths on a Friday.

Please join with us in praying for more youth, for a larger committed core to appear, as well as the spiritual growth of those who do continually come.

After School Program

A drop-in basketball program has been started on Friday before Friday Night Fellowship with the youth. We hope to see more community kids come as they get word of the free program.

Knox Summer Camps

A new Camp Director is in the process of being hired and we are thankful for that! We also have prospective Program Directors already in place!

Big thank you to Andrew McLean, Camp Committee Convenor, who

is away for a season, and to Peter de Koning, new Camp Committee Convenor, who also stayed on as Camp Director to write never-seen-before camp manuals, job descriptions, and who has also almost completed the camp brochure!

Please keep the 2010 Knox Camp staff and campers in your prayers as the staff prepares for this summer.

Alvin Kim
Director of Family Ministries

Knox Church Library

The Library is pleased to be included in the church's opening newsletter for the new year, 2010. We invite the congregation to make greater use of the library facilities. The library is open after Sunday services or from 11 am on Thursdays.

At this time of the year, we look forward to Easter. Wednesday, February 17th is Ash Wednesday, the commencement of Lent. Lent marks the occasion when Jesus was led into the wilderness and tempted by the devil three times. The temptation was to follow the way of the devil and the world rather than the way of the Cross. Lent leads us to, and prepares us for, the celebration of Easter. Here are a few books we recommend as useful and interesting reading at this time of the year.

He Chose the Nails by Max Lucado (232.96/LUC)

The Cross is the symbol of our faith and He chose the nails that nailed Him to that Cross, as there was no other way to bring us to God.

Jesus on Trial by James Montgomery Boice (232.96/BOI)

Jesus was put on trial. All the legal procedures were followed. Where did it all go wrong? How did an innocent man end up dying like a common criminal?

Experiencing God by Henry T. Blackaby (248.4/BLA)

God reveals himself to us in special and sometimes exceptional ways. Have we discovered the place He has for us in His kingdom?

Pray Big by Will Davis Jr. 248.32/DAV)
The power of pinpoint prayers.

God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Belief in God Is Reasonable and Responsible
Edited by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister (239.7/CRA) Christianity and atheism.

I would also like to remind you that a good supply of Christian magazines are provided for your reading pleasure and information. These are on the shelves in the Winchester Room.

Reima Robertson, Librarian

International Ministries

The WORD became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

A few months back, we began to study John at our ESL Bible study on Wednesday nights. I remember ‘translating’ John 1:14 to ‘this Word has come into the neighbourhood, and put up his tent, his house, and moved in. I was surprised when a student exclaimed, “You mean he lived with us? You mean, he moved in and lived next door??”

The Word moved in, and dwelled among us.

The fall term until now has been somewhat of a roller coaster ride. Knox ESL classes on Monday nights have seen several leaders go—with some tearful good byes as some needed to move on due to health concerns, while others needed to go to pursue education, jobs, and focus on family. Please join us as we continue to pray for those leaders. Even with the losses in leadership, God has continually sent new leaders to partner in this ministry.

I have enjoyed meeting new students from around the world Monday nights at our Knox ESL classes, and connecting with others that we have known for awhile. Adding to our joy in International Ministries has been the interest of some students to consider faith in Jesus, or in Christianity in general. These conversations have come up from time to time in natural conversation as students have had questions, or shown interest. Some students have responded to the parabolic invitations to consider Jesus at the Wednesday night or Sunday morning Bible studies.

On one particular Wednesday night, I remember reviewing with the students what a witness was, and how John as a witness was saying that the Word had made the world, and everything in it.....and that in him was life, and that life was the light of all people. At that moment one student cut me off to say, “I don’t believe that is true!” We talked together about how it was ok to not agree. John was a witness. We remembered together how witnesses share what they believe to be true and credible, and we were there to consider the witness John made about the Word. The student smiled and said, “ok”.

We have continued the study and I have seen the glory of God.

Two weeks ago we studied John 4, about Jesus and the Samaritan woman. We considered the background details and the context in which the story was written, and we shared some questions we had from the passage. I remember later in the study we were wrestling with figuring out what the ‘living water’ was. In particular, we seemed to struggle with this idea knowing that Jesus linked his conversation about living water with asking the woman to call her husband and come back. Jesus said, “everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life”. After many ideas were shared, one student piped in, “maybe Jesus is offering Spirit—his spirit. Maybe the Living Water is himself.”

This student who shared was the same one who, only a few months ago, told me she hoped to become a believer in 3 months like her friend had. And, this is the same student who, only a few weeks ago, was in tears as

Highlights

October 2009: Joint Thanksgiving potluck with UYAM

December 11, 2009: Internationals sing Christmas carols in several different languages at Knox Church Christmas Party

December 14, 2009: Knox ESL Christmas Celebration

December 27-Jan 1st: International Ministries sends two people to Urbana, in St Louis Missouri.

we reviewed together in John how only the Holy Spirit is able to reveal who Jesus is. It seemed that she had feared that if she could not control becoming a believer, she might not be able to. We then talked about how God delights in revealing himself, through the Holy Spirit, and that is why He sent the Word, Jesus Christ, about whom we were reading! Please pray continually for this woman and for us as we communally consider how the Living Water can quench our thirst. We can see the Holy Spirit at work, and we will continue to pray and trust God to continue to reveal Himself.

I have enjoyed leading the Wednesday night study for the past 9 months. As I step out of this role in particular, I look forward to spending more time raising and training current and new leaders within International Ministries. In the next while we will be assessing what has been happening in International Ministries, considering where we see God at work, studying Scripture, praying and seeking to respond to the needs around us.

Please do pray for us as we are praying and seeking God’s face, so that we might continue to join Him where He is at work here at Knox!!!

Blessings, in Christ,

Dominique Goold

Director of International Ministries

Urbana 09

I was a little bit hesitant to attend Urbana because of the following reasons: 1) I'm not a student 2) I'm old and 3) the financial side of it--- -- but God just smiled at me and said: EMILY, there's no reason for you to be hesitant, it is taken care off---- GO and BE BLESSED!!! And so I registered and God fulfilled His promise. Isn't it amazing? Just like that. Easy and simple. Thank you to all those at Knox who helped me and who had been praying for me.

I registered in the International Track. The presence of Rosemary and sharing the room with her was a plus and to see all the international students and delegates put gladness into my heart. Walking towards the Dome, Wow—the crowd----, I can only say this----JESUS IS AT WORK AND ALIVE!!!! It seems unbelievable that people from all over the world will travel far just to attend this conference and to be a part of this corporate worship of our ALMIGHTY GOD. The Christians have this spiritual fever that made the city of St. Louis alive.

There was a seminar with IFES, (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) with 179 countries represented. When were called to stand to show which country we came from, the funny thing was, I'm a Canadian Passport Holder but there was no hesitation in my mind to represent my own country, the Philippines! The topic was "Dwelling Among Your Own People". This was a challenge to all the students abroad to consider going home after their studies to be of service and influence for the Kingdom of God in their own neighbourhood and to dwell with their own people. One thing that caught my attention was when the speaker declared that DISOBEDIENCE is a scary thing. She went on to cite the example of Queen Esther and how Mordecai convinced her to speak to the King; because of her obedience, the possible annihilation of the Jews, her own people, was avoided. Added to the testimonies of missionaries from different countries, it hit me, "What I am doing as a child of God? Where is my passion for Christ? Why did I allow myself to grow cold in my relationship and my walk with God?" The conviction was so great I couldn't stop crying and I'm so thankful that God made me realize all these things that day. I may not go to other countries to do missions but I am compelled to be a witness to my friends, my own people and to others here in my neighbourhood. I found out that, once we are willing and open to be of service with the Lord, He will use us. God will not see our own accomplishments, what level of education we had or how successful we are. What matters to Him is our whole-hearted obedience.

After discussing it with friends who had also attended URBANA, we decided to pray about our desires and to meet once a week. We had our first meeting and what a joy it is to have fellow Christians fully supporting and giving encouragement to one another. It's my hope that we will be strong enough to carry the cross of Christ in our lives and to be supportive to one another. To God be the Glory!!!!

Emily Butala

Christmas Hospitality Report

There are many international visitors at Knox. Some are post-graduate students at University of Toronto; others are visiting scholars (university professors), English language students, or those working while spending some time in Canada. Most are here for a year or less, although some are here for longer, and some decide to stay here for good. Many of them are introduced to Knox through our English as a Second Language sessions on Monday evenings, and some accept invitations to attend our church services and international Bible studies. Some come here as Christians, especially those from Korea, but the gospel is brand new to many others.

Over the past few years, members of Knox have invited international visitors into their homes for dinner over the Christmas season. For many visitors, this is their first experience in a Canadian home and their first Christmas celebration. That these visits are a blessing for the guests is shown by the fact that some guests continue to keep in touch with their hosts while they are here. We have shared outings with Christmas guests, and several have blessed us by offering to help to prepare a youth dinner or a meal at Portland Place. Many have kept in email contact with us after they have returned home or moved elsewhere. It's exciting to receive Christmas greetings from all over the world and to catch up on news – to hear of new jobs, new babies, new connections with Christian communities in their own countries. Several visitors have said the Christmas visits were their most memorable experiences in Toronto. For the hosts, it is a wonderful opportunity to stretch our horizons and to share our faith. Once host families have participated in this program, they usually sign up again the next year.

This year, ten Knox host families were visited by 31 international visitors, of whom 67% were from China, 23% from

Korea, and 10% from Japan. As well, some ESL teachers hosted another 12 visitors, for a total of 43.

Thank you to all of the Knox hosts this year. We hope that others who are able to do so will also consider becoming a host next year. In the meantime, please include the wonderful international ministries of our Bible studies and ESL classes in your prayers.

John & Lorna Hutchinson

Knox Youth Dinner and Food Bank

Based on the state of the economy, we expected this season to be a busy one, but even still, we have been caught off guard by the high numbers of youth who are coming to Knox every Tuesday for dinner and some supplemental groceries.

Whereas in previous years, it would be considered a very busy night if we reached the 100 mark, this season we are feeding more than 130, sometimes more than 150 youth. Add in our 25-30 volunteers, and allow for second helpings, and our intrepid volunteer cooks are regularly preparing 200 or so meals each week.

As you can imagine, this presents us with many challenges, not the least of which is that our weekly expenditures on food and TTC tokens (we provide each guest who needs it with 1 token to get them home) have increased by about 30%.

Still, we are happy that so many young people choose to spend their Tuesday evenings with us at Knox, and we are amazed at how generally happy and peaceful (perhaps not in decibels, but in spirit) the program remains, even with 150 mostly 18-25-year old youth from all different backgrounds in a small space for several hours. God, through your prayers, is certainly at work!

We have many other things to be thankful for:

Right now we are in the happy situation of trying to manage the schedules of the more than 30 former street kids who volunteer with us. One of our long-time volunteers, PetBoy, has even designed a “staff” t-shirt for volunteers to wear on duty.

These youth continue to amaze and challenge us; they feel deeply responsible for the program, its success and its effective organization, and they consider it a point of honour to be volunteers. (Not that it stops most of them from attempting to scoop up the best “treats” out of the food bank as they are organizing it each week—that’s just one of our challenges) We feel like we belong to a very large and marginally functional family with 30 loveable—but complicated—teenage kids.

One of the highlights of this season was seeing an old friend, Damien, at the door one Tuesday afternoon. Damien (AKA “Stretch”) was one of the very first street kids to stay at Knox in our first weeks of operation back in 1996, when he was 14. He used our program for several years. Damien is now working, has an apartment and is engaged to be married. Both he and his fiancée are volunteering with us regularly and they are lovely people.

Another long-time guest, Brian (Leprechaun) stopped by for a visit last month, just to say hello and show his partner the place where he spent a lot of time in his years on the street.

Several of our guest/volunteers have made great strides in their lives this year. One has really blossomed as supervisor of program set up each week. He’s now attending George Brown College and one of his teachers has taken him under his wing for extra coaching and encouragement. Another did exceptionally well in his academic bridging program last fall, winning a scholarship from Woodsworth College at U of T. He’s enjoying his first semester at University. Another, Trevor (everyone’s favourite smiling dishwasher) is enjoying his new job at a tire recycling plant.

We are also so thankful for our wonderful volunteers. Every week about 30 or so people come cheerfully to cook and serve food, clean, sort clothing, supervise bowling and the food bank, teach sewing and crafts and tutor kids in drawing. Some are former street kids, some are from Knox, some from the nearby UofT campus. Most of our loyal long-time volunteers are people from the neighbourhood and across the City.

We have come to love every one of them and pray that each would feel God’s blessing as we all work together week by week.

Vicki and Bill Wood

Membership Seminar

We were delighted to host 27 participants at the “Introduction to Knox and Membership Seminar” on Saturday February 6. The teaching team of Alex, Wayne and Myrna led the group an orientation to Knox that explored such questions as the nature of the Church as a whole; Knox’s history and cultural context; our reformation heritage, Presbyterian context and governance structures; the nature of church membership; opportunities for ministry and small group involvement at Knox; and our emerging vision for the future. A big special thanks to Doug Ord and Elaine Bullard, who provided both a continental breakfast and a delicious home cooked lunch. We look forward to receiving our new members in the near future. Many thanks to Myrna Talbot for providing the photos. ♦



Above Alex get’s discussion going during the seminar.
Right Doug Ord shows off his delicious pasta salad.



Boarding Homes Ministry

They are invisible - the men and women who live in the boarding homes in our city and elsewhere. Many are psychiatric survivors, recovering addicts, people who have suffered brain injuries. Often, they are isolated, visited by a variety of workers but cut off from family and from each other. Working at Evangel Hall and the Scott Mission, Presbyterian minister Rodger Hunter felt called to establish a mission to these men and women. Under his leadership, the Boarding Homes Ministry was founded in 1996 as an ecumenical ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Teams from 15 GTA churches are matched with boarding homes which they visit on a regular basis.

As part of a team supported by

another congregation, we have been visiting the same home on alternate Tuesdays for several years. It is a good home, compared to some others that exist, with a caring staff and quite a stable population but there is great loneliness there. On a typical visit, we share refreshments, catch up on news, and join in a brief worship service (which we take turns leading). We also have lots of special events – monthly birthday celebrations, a barbeque, pizza days, and a Christmas lunch. Twice a year, the minister joins our visit and we share communion with those who are believers. One resident has been baptized. Others have died, and we have conducted their memorial services. We are the church in that place.

We know that our visits are important to the residents by the grave courtesy of those who wait for our arrival so that they may open the door when we arrive, and by their

participation in our visits, even though sitting still may be difficult for some. Slowly, we have got to know them. Many are part of families that have been torn apart by illness or other problems. One is an artist. Others have been musicians, poets. Some are husbands and fathers, and the pain of no longer being part of their families is constant in their lives. Some have spent time in prison. It is important for these people who are so often overlooked to be reminded that they are the valued children of God, and that the Good News is for them.

If your heart has been touched by reading this, and you would like to know more or to talk about forming a Knox team to join in community in a boarding home, please email John Hutchinson: jhutchinson@sympatico.ca.

Lorna and John Hutchinson