

THANK YOU!

In this issue we stop to thank Gina Taylor who has been our volunteer coordinator for the past three years. As this was a new position, every one of us must have had a different perception of what that really meant. But Gina gave meaning to it and put her heart and soul into whatever needed to be done, as anyone who attended the recent congregational meeting would testify to. Gina, you sure went the second mile and got things done. First Church expressed its thanks with flowers, but we also wanted the opportunity to thank you via First Family Ties. Enjoy your 'leisure' time!

Imagine! Continued from p1

The outreach mission of our church has introduced our family to the real world of diverse people in an urban space that seek the love of Christ. For us, our perception of First Hamilton's outreach was really what we would now term "in reach". Slowly but surely, the people we meet at First are changing us and our view of the world.

So, if we have to do the tough work of fundraising and of planning and of good communication, let's get it done. Our consultants on this effort have done a great job in helping us along this path.

They have a good presence – they are not overbearing, but they are firm and truthful and thorough and we will benefit from their work. I appreciate that council is making every effort to get good input from the congregation, and that is important. What a privilege to be part of a community of believers. What a privilege to hear God's word preached every Sunday. Oh yes, it is sometimes messy to live together in harmony, but God is building his church despite our weakness. Imagine that! Praise God!

FIRST Family ties

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Inside:



Imagine!

A response to the feasibility study

By Michael Van Pelt

Imagine trying to find a path to a major renovation at First Hamilton CRC, a "rubber hits the road" commitment to our ministry for outreach, and a plan to find endowment funds to help our congregation build financial stability into the future. Each one of these three efforts is a huge task by itself, never mind all three together. At First Hamilton CRC, it may take time for us to get the ball rolling, but I sense the ball is about to pick up speed! Several weeks ago, off Deani and I

went to the congregational meeting to hear about the Feasibility Study Report. As I jumped in the van, it kind of felt like a date - a bit of anticipation, a bit of a breather from work and a chance to talk with my wife Deani. The two of us were excited and a touch fearful about this report.

Well, let me give you my biases. Deani and I love historic buildings and great architecture – we love them even more when they are beautifully kept and redesigned to make a great space to be together. We can't wait for this to happen to our wonderful building on Charlton Street.

Still More New Members

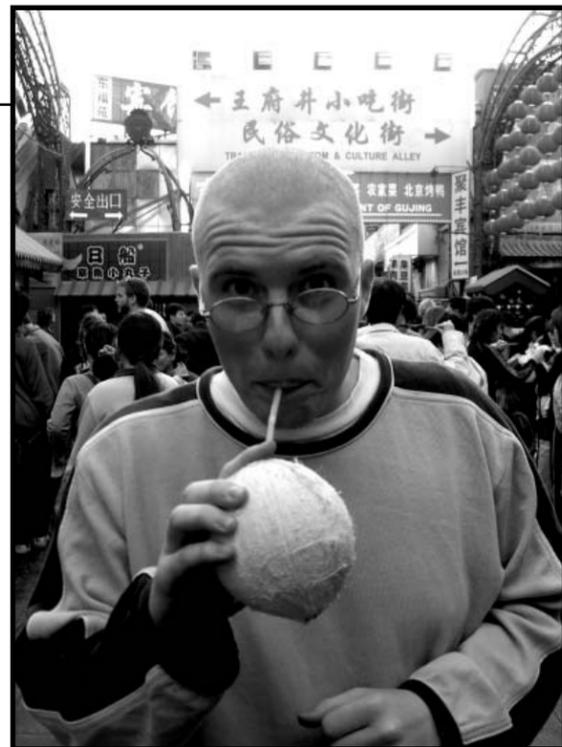
Marty and Rachel company and Rachel is a Speelman and one year teacher, having taken time old Joshua have been with off to be with Joshua for his us for some time now. first year. We will let them Marty works as a project tell us in their own words manager for a construction why they decided to join



the First Church family: “Although we only recently became official members of First CRC, we have both been attending First for many years now. We have been blessed through the years by the welcoming community at First, the incredible variety and depth in worship (both in song & liturgy) and the outreach and ministry vision of the church. We look forward to becoming more involved in the life of First CRC in the future.” We look forward to that as well, Marty and Rachel!

Rob Joustra introduces himself as follows: “Although more naturally a rural high-Anglo Catholic, I find myself – perhaps in an exercise of youthful humility – in an urban evangelical Christian Reformed Church. And far from begrudging, I am deeply committed to the mission and life of First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church. The

exercise and practice of the Reformed tradition has long impressed me as one of the only serious alternatives for a life in pursuit of God and the common good, a life which FHCRC has taken into itself in urban Hamilton. In FHCRC I find the faithfulness of



Christian Reformed Church and its church plant, New Hope Church, hosted a couple single-day bike repairing events at East Hamilton. These events had been well received by their neighborhoods, and furthered Jeff’s vision of developing a bike co-op at East Hamilton. This summer, New Hope Bike Co-op finally became a reality. The program was backed by church donations and a grant from Service Canada’s Summer Job Initiative.

Since its opening in June, the bike co-op served 20-40 people a day in two locations: a bike shop in the Delta East neighborhood and a stall at Ottawa Street Farmers’ Market.

The bike shop is in an out-of-business sports bar which was originally an upscale eating establishment in the 40s. With most of its furniture still intact, the space was retrofitted into a bike shop by adding

workbenches, tools and increasing numbers of donated bikes. In this purple-ceilinged bike shop with red-leathered booths, people’s hands are always covered in black. According to Sid, Coordinator of the bike co-op, “The best way to learn about bikes is to get your hands greasy and work on one. . . .people not only get their bikes fixed, but they also bring home a new skill.”

The three bike stands in the shop never stand empty. Whenever a bike is off the stand, another one is up, due to the high demands for bicycles and repairs. Restored bikes are put at the store front awaiting their new owners. Originally a summer program, the bike co-op is extending its operation throughout winter, running only on Saturdays. It will return full strength again next summer at the same location (1429 Main St. E).



Sid (in cap) reaching out to the community by fixing bikes



New Hope Bike Co-op

New Hope for Old Bikes

From an article by
Phyllis Tsang

This past summer, New Hope started a bicycle cooperative. Members of New Hope were amazed by the support they received from the community and the number of volunteers who became a regular part of the co-op. Over 180 bikes were donated throughout the summer months, a coordinator was hired for 10 weeks due to a generous grant from the federal government, and another 50-60 bikes were returned back into the community in good repair. The Bike Co-op is a wonderful opportunity to serve the community and to build relationships. This article is excerpted from a piece written by Phyllis Tsang, a

member of New Hope. New Hope Bike Co-op is a program which focuses on giving back to the community by helping people to fix their own bikes, and providing low cost parts, free use of tools and low cost refurbished bicycles. The program is the brainchild of Jeff Neven, a cyclist and a father of four.

The idea was born in 1997 when Jeff was working with inner city kids in Grand Rapids where he started a bicycle repair club for boys and girls. Upon returning to Canada, he continued to find opportunities and partner with likeminded groups, like Recycle Cycles in Kitchener and MacCycle Co-op at McMaster University, to serve communities with his bike repairing skills.

In the past three years, First Hamilton



Sid, coordinator of New Hope Bike Co-op, test driving a restored bike.



New life to old bikes

Victor and Chelsea Laarman have been attending First CRC since 2005, when they were students at Redeemer. They married in 2007 and moved to Hamilton permanently in spring 2008, and then became members of First CRC. They decided



to become members at First because they find it to be a strong community and a church that is continuously striving to be salt and light in downtown Hamilton. Also, they appreciate the genuine thoughtfulness and authenticity of each worship service.

Since they became members at First, Victor and Chelsea have sought ways to be involved in the life of the church. They have been involved in leading a worship team, Worship Planning Committee, 20-Somthings leadership, small group leadership, and

nursery. Victor and Chelsea are excited about what God is doing in First CRC and they hope to become more involved in the life of the church.

Victor is attending Tyndale Seminary in the Master of Divinity program in hopes of someday serving

as a pastor. Chelsea recently graduated with a Bachelor of Education and is currently teaching piano and voice lessons. They have been thankful for the opportunity to be part of First CRC and look forward to getting to know more people in the church community.

what my parents, and their parents and their parents' parents have passed down from "generation to generation" in the Church, and in Christ Jesus: it is for me a serious institution which defines who and what I am, and the story in which I live.

FHCRC is a place where tradition is held in tension, which is to say, faithfully. It

enacts, at times awkwardly, but always with gusto the call of the Gospel in all the places of life and draws me back – continuously – to the true preaching of the Gospel and the practice of the sacraments. It is home; my neighbourhood church, which though not always comfortable, renders God present time and again, in ways that exceed and at

times defy all the skill and acumen present around me in my daily work in politics and academia."

We welcome Rob, not only as a member, but as one of our new elders. Rob, may you find much blessing serving as elder in First Church. Welcome on all fronts!

What is PAR? Is it for you?

From the editor: You may have heard recent announcements at First CRC about PAR, which stands for Pre-authorized remittance. Perhaps you have had questions about the process, and wondered if it is for you. We hope this article from the deacons will help you understand PAR better.

Pre-authorized remittance (PAR): though sometimes known by other names, the general idea is that funds are automatically deducted from your bank account once per month (in this case, on the 20th day of each month) and directed to the recipient of your choice.

Our church now offers you this avenue for giving. It is easy to start; by completing a simple form and attaching a void cheque, you're on your way. You can stop the process at any time by notifying the church of your intention, and the plan is confidential as well as flexible. If you wish, funds can be designated

for both the first and the second offering each week, or you can specify funds for the first offering only. That way, you have the opportunity to support designated recipients of the



second offering at the levels you choose.

Why give this way? By using this system, you can assist us in an important way: consistency! Many of us attend services weekly, yet most of us also have times of the year when we are away for a variety of reasons – work-related, family-related, or for vacations. And while we're

away, we do not give. For many years, for example, we have had challenges meeting payroll and bill payments during the summer months, when many of our members are away for vacations.

Using PAR is a way of helping to ensure that we have the funds we need when we need them, even if you are not at church. Some people might miss the opportunity to physically put something into the weekly collection, and this is understandable. It will still be possible to perform that physical act of placing an offering in a bag during the second offering, when we support various ministries in our community and some that are far away.

Does this form of giving lead to a lack of thought about what we are doing? It could, but does not need to.* Some who use this system take the opportunity, as they pass the bag, to give thanks for the resources they have

Crown Point Youth Soccer

After identifying the need for a soccer league for children, New Hope was able to organize and lead the Crown Point Youth Soccer league this past summer. The four-week youth soccer



league served over 20 kids in the neighbourhood, thanks to tons of volunteers and support from the

community. Members of New Hope were able to meet some new people and to love and teach the kids who were able to come out. They look forward to kicking off another season next summer!

been given, so that these gifts can be shared with the church. PAR is intended to facilitate our honest desire to give. Please consider this system, ask a deacon for further information, and watch for a form in your mail box in the near future. Please feel free to give feedback about PAR to the deacons; the setup of this

system will be reviewed by the deacons regularly, and we value members' feedback.

**Editor's Note: In a sermon on Grace and Money, Tim Keller pointed out (this is a paraphrase of his words) that when you plan ahead how much and where to give your money, you are being more intentional and proactive about*

giving than when you decide on a spur-of-the-moment basis. Active and intentional giving is like giving God the first fruits of your income. On the other hand, passive and spontaneous giving (dependent on how much money is available at the moment) is more like giving God the "leftovers".