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MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATIONS GATHER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY (PIONEER) MINISTER

On a rainy Sunday afternoon in mid-October about 35 people from our local congregations plus a few community leaders gathered at Queensville - Holland Landing to learn about what a Community (Pioneer) Minister does. Knowing there were lots of questions about this new model of mission, the Living Presence Ministry Congregational Support Team planned this event to hear what people were wondering and give some answers.

What's a minister without a church?

What does a minister do if there's no Sunday worship to prepare and preach at?

What will happen in the house?

How will this minister relate to our congregations' ministers?

Is this competition for our churches?

What should we expect?

Presenter Kathi Philips from Sharon-Hope United talked with the group about how the pioneering minister will "make relationships with people as their neighbour right

from the start - as people move into the new developments in Queensville and Sharon.

They will be in the perfect position to create a welcoming environment and to notice needs and network to help resolve them." We can expect the minister to connect people with services within the community and with our churches. Through these relationships the minister will build trust and "invite conversations about the Spirit, about living a meaningful life, and about faith".

Janet Marshall from TUCC gave examples of these ministries in action. For example:



- Community meals (e.g. a weekly lunch for people who are home with their children or working from home)
- Gardening clubs (people's gardens will need a lot of work over the next few years)
- ESL support and after school clubs
- Music-making, "Beer & Hymns" nights
- Book clubs
- Personal support for families in transition (this will be a big move for some) or in crisis.

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A MESSAGE FROM BRI-ANNE SWAN, OUR NEW PIONEER MINISTER!

I am thrilled to be embarking upon this new adventure with Living Waters Presbytery as the Community (Pioneer) Minister for the Living Presence Ministry. Understanding the spiritual nature of “home” has a special place in my heart. Being raised in rural Ontario and moving to Toronto as a young adult, I have grown to understand the importance of finding one’s place in community. As a singer, songwriter and composer, I have toured United Church congregations—large, small and emergent—in dozens of communities across the country. I am a student of psychotherapy, a Level II Artist Educator, have led an Out of the Cold programme in downtown Toronto, have become an unexpected spokesperson and companion for a death row inmate in Texas, and am often at the centre of social justice initiatives within my current congregation, Rosedale United Church.



At the heart of all my personal, professional and volunteer activities, I strive to be a visible presence of God’s love and seek to emulate the principles of radical hospitality exemplified in the ministry of Jesus. My family and I are excited and enthusiastic about the prospect of being in community with those who are embarking on new journeys, as well as taking part in a new way of living out our faith, witnessing the incarnation of the Spirit.

Please feel free to seek me out online! You can read my blog and listen to some of my music by going to www.bri-anneswan.com, or tweet to me @swannybee.



MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATIONS... (cont. from p. 1)

It is also expected that the Community (Pioneer) Minister will be preaching and teaching in our local churches as well as supporting outreach work and young family ministries.

“Just saying hello to someone you don’t know can have a really positive effect.” Christine Stewart of the Network North Collaborative shared her recent experience of greeting a Chinese woman who was sitting alone on a park bench. “Her face lit up and she thanked me sincerely for simply talking to her.” Participants agreed that even just saying Hello to a stranger is a new and important practice they are willing to begin.

CONTACT US!

LIVING WATERS PRESBYTERY

416-241-2677 ex. 6230 or toll-free at 1-800-446-4729

David Leyton-Brown (Co-Chair, Vision & Church Development Commission), dlbrown@yorku.ca

Jane Sullivan (Minister for Congregational Support), jsullivan2@united-church.ca

TORONTO UNITED CHURCH COUNCIL

905-771-5124 or toll-free at 1-800-235-8822

Janet Marshall (Director of the Centre for Church Development & Leadership), ex. 25, janet@tucc.ca

Ron Ewart (Executive Director), ex. 29, ron@tucc.ca