

# OUR CURRENT MINISTER



Peter Lougheed

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In the sermon preached at Peter's covenanting service by Rev. Cornelius, he suggested we shelve our plans and reports and recognize the immense power of the Spirit to bring about God's change in the life of the Emmanuel Family. What a liberating thought. And who knows where the Spirit Wind might take Peter and us in the next few years!!

Rev. Peter Lougheed came to us from Kanata United Church where he had done team ministry for the last 14 years, and would now work with our lay designated minister, Christine Williams and the lay leadership of the church.

How would I describe this man who stood in our pulpit as our new minister for the first time July 1, **2007**? It took a conversation with a friend of his dad to find the right descriptive word, "humble;" a gentle soul in a very tall frame who listens to what is being said and responds with sensitivity and compassion. Yet, you can't miss that twinkle in his eye and a subtle sense of humour that waits for the appropriate moment to be shared. Peter is very much a team player and while he always makes himself accessible, he encourages the various committees to take ownership and then together make changes when there is support.

**Worship:** Helping us to understand the rituals of the service of worship, Peter introduced us to the lighting of the Christ Candle. Some were reluctant to loose the two brass candle-sticks, but when it was explained that we, as Christians proclaim that we live out our lives sharing the light of Christ with the world, it was only appropriate that we have before us the symbol of Christ's light, the "Christ Candle". We have now invested in a permanent candle mold filled with oil in keeping with our desire to be green. This past year we have added the Advent Candles made in the same fashion.

Peter has encouraged more testimony or faith story-telling in our church services. He believes that when we tell our stories we inspire and encourage one another on the journey. As Frederick Beuchner said, "one person's story is in part another person's story."

In keeping with the comments from a worship survey done shortly after Peter's arrival, our clergy have attempted to keep a balance between the requested "stepping out of the box creativity" and the "traditional". We have truly enjoyed many very special services; Youth Services, Christmas Eve, Healing-Peace Service, Remembrance Services, especially one in 2008 when Wesley Burness gave a very moving reflection on his trip

to Vimy, followed by a powerful violin solo by his brother Phillip. That year we were challenged to think about our planet during a Kairos Service. And then, there was Pentecost Sunday with the cross draped in yellow, orange and red as a reminder of the power of the Spirit. Hearing the Lord's Prayer spoken in many languages at the same time and the plea for peace from the confirmands, truly the voice of the Spirit was heard. On Father's Day of 2009 we welcomed Peter's Dad to the pulpit and enjoyed his reflection as he gave us stories of Peter's growing up years, sharing a picture of a man we hope to have with us for a number of years.. In the fall of 2009 we held our first "Intercultural Service." The African Community shared with us their ways of worship. It was colourful and upbeat, leaving folk with a positive feeling of hope and joy .During December we had drama and mimed scripture readings. One of the more untraditional but very meaningful services is the "Blue Christmas Service", now called "Journey into the Light Service." Truly there were many more special services like Stewardship, but this is a sample.

2009 we celebrated our **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**. This kicked off a year of celebrations which included a lot of food, a pictorial history of Emmanuel, a Spring Dinner with a magician and live entertainment by members of the congregation. A summer picnic which was a time of fun for everyone rounded up our events until the fall. Mary MacDonald honoured the occasion by creating a spectacular 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banner which was dedicated and now hangs in the sanctuary

In the fall, wedding pictures of those who had been married at Emmanuel were displayed.

Because of the H1N1 scare we made some changes to the serving of Communion and the way we greeted one another in an attempt to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

**A Prayer Circle was initiated by Ron Dicks** A small group met to study a book on "The Healing Gifts of the Spirit", with the goal of being present for anyone wishing prayer on a Sunday following worship. To date the Prayer Ministry is being very appreciated.

Christine suggested we consider using a Life and Work Packet in 2007. This would allow someone to pick up a booklet telling them all the happenings in the church for the coming month. It meant you could do long range planning of your time much easier. The order of service bulletin would still continue

to have the week's activities in an abbreviated form on an activity sheet. Inserts could be used when more weekly information was required. This met with some strong resistance, but is now well received. Junior Choir disbanded in 2008 with Cathy O'Brien's departure.

Orange Mugs were instituted for those who are new and wish to be approached during coffee and conversation.

Memorial com. contributed 40 More Voices for congregational use.

We have three licensed Lay preachers in our congregation, Marg Armstrong, Nadina Lopez and Victor Fuentes. In 2010 we witnessed our own Anne Montgomery being ordained.. Horray!!

**Music at Emmanuel:** We are truly blessed with a wonderful choir, director and organist along with Emmanubells, chimes, JAM and Country Spirit, and all who offer their talents to our worship through the universal language of music. This is so much appreciated by our congregation each and every Sunday. They are the BEST!!

**Parish Nurse Ministry:** The same goals are being met each year. Numbers for the exercise programs are growing steadily both from Emmanuel and the community and the art group meets every Wednesday with 6 people painting; 15-20 gather for line dancing and several for Christian Meditation. In September of 2007 Maureen supervised 3 Ottawa U students as they worked with the theme "How to Cope With Chronic Disease." Each year she continues to supervise 3-4 nursing students offering a wonderful insight into the role of the parish nurse and researching and presenting various health topics.

The first CPR course was run for 25 people in 2007 and since has been offered every year. We now have a defibrillator and folk who are qualified to use it. Maureen continues to promote health through many different venues. She has been invited to speak on the topic of Parish Nursing to several churches, as well as traveling to Nunivut to speak to the nursing students there, to third year students at Ottawa U, to students at Algonquin College, and to the Kiwanis club members. All in all this is a most valuable ministry combined with the excellent Pastoral Care Team, who cares for the Emmanuel Family.

In a newsletter, Peter remarked that Emmanuel has strong lay leadership and involvement in the needs of the community and folk become personally involved being the hands and feet of Christ, true disciples. In the reports of the various committees this seems to be well demonstrated.

**Christian Development:** The CD committee plans and implements CD activities both within and outside our church walls. Our Christianity has been nurtured and expressed in many ways. Here are examples of these activities:

The Sunday-school, numbering approximately 50, continues to use the Season's of the Spirit Curriculum.

Our children took part in Camp Awesome, Camp Bitibi, and Hiking Adventure in the Adirondacks. The numbers have grown to more than 60 for the Gray Rocks Adventure in 2009

Movie nights continue both for teens and adults. Preteens and teens participate in JAM. (teens music group)

Bible study by Peter at TGIT (Thank God It's Tuesday), the study of the lectionary group which meets in people's homes weekly and Larry Read's are our regular studies. Within the latter, we have referred to ourselves as "the heretics" but are presently working on a new name that may encompass "discovery". During the last two years, Dr. Read has requested that the members take ownership for the group, since he has reached the distinguished age of 90 and claims not to think quite so fast as when he was younger. We all respect that wish, while knowing with each thought provoking question he asks, there is no lapse of sharpness. We are so grateful for his presence and participation in each discussion.

The annual partnership Turkey Meal with proceeds going to the Habitat builds is a yearly event

Halloween for Hunger has proven to be very successful over the years as our youth go door to door collecting bags of food for the food banks. Sunday Night Live, a new interactive, intergenerational worship experience was begun with 30 participants and added to that was TGIT with a community meal and interesting workshops. Emmanuel Café, a medium size gathering in the lounge with low lighting, coffee and snacks has presented

the opportunity to listen to and ask questions of many speakers on varied topics and issues.

Toddler and Nursery Rooms were revamped with new toys and furniture.

In 2008 we welcomed the United Methodist Church choir from Virginia who provided a wonderful evening of worship music. A much appreciated meal for 30 of the choir was served.

Small groups have overseen bursary selection, book clubs quilting bees, and the library. Many new additions are placed on the shelves each year for children, teens, and families. The children's book corner continues during coffee and conversation once or twice a month and is much appreciated by their parents.

Under the umbrella of CD are the Men's Club who meet for breakfast once a month for fellowship and collect personal care items at Christmas; a garden tour and boutique was a great success in 09 with the proceeds going to the General Fund; Teleos, a women's study group meets monthly to nourish and encourage our faith ;Triple F ( faith, fellowship and fun) is a women's group that is as old as the church itself. It's givings go to M&S which was \$1,424 in 09. The Annual Homespun Bazaar takes place every November;

### **Quilting Group:**

Over the years the Quilting Group has created the most beautiful quilted hangings for the narthex which are changed both seasonally and according to our liturgical calendar. The larger ones which hang over the door from the chapel compliment the others in theme. The Quilters also donate their gifts to the Victoria Quilts Organization for cancer patients. In light of the revitalization project, they are accepting commissions for quilts of any size.

### **Property and Grounds:**

Being told our CE building no longer meets code and the realization in 2008 that we had spent some \$28000 on repairs and utilities, we knew the time had come for BIG changes. In the fall of 2007, Property and Grounds Committee engaged an architect to conduct a feasibility study on our Christian Education building .In May of 2008 the study was completed. From then until this printing in May 2010, many meetings have taken place and a great deal of work done by a few people. We have completed a very thorough fund-raising campaign and the members have responded very well,

yet we still are lacking funds to go green and have all our needs met. Oh for the good ole days when a bank would give you a mortgage and over the years the church was a beehive of activity as we worked to pay it off. With a new understanding and desire to help our environment, our challenge will be to find the balance of where we can cut and where we need to retain the costs incurred by going green. This project has also raised questions which we had to struggle with before decisions could be made. Two of these were whether we would allow raffles in the church and the use of alcohol should we decide to allow our hall's use for wedding receptions and for dinners at Emmanuel, with the goal of raising money. At this time neither has been given approval.\

Under **Communications**, a new sign with interchangeable letters has been erected in front of the church. This will be used to post upcoming events and inspirational messages. A newly revamped web site is to be launched in mid 2010. Our minister contributes a blog each week for our pondering. **Our newsletter** goes out 4 times a year with thought-provoking editorials, news of the church family, learning trip reports, profiles of members and much, much more. Russ makes sure we remain secure removing all addresses and phone numbers from the web version, emmanuelunited.ca, and by e-mail. .

### **Outreach:**

**The Meeting Place**, Emmanuel's after school outreach program for children, funded by the Legacy fund has been running since 2002 and it was felt in 2007 that a new design for the program was needed, still emphasizing the need to teach social skills, play games and do crafts. A substantial snack is always provided.

Vincent Massey School continues to assist us with the decision making of applications received. To date, this has been a most worthwhile outreach but there now is a need to find funding for the future.

### **Keeping in Touch:**

Due to low numbers, the Bus has been removed in favour of taxi cabs for those who require transportation.

The Buddy Group in 2009 is now referred to as Hymn Sing and Social, meeting three times a year. Ask Me Tags were worn by Keeping in Touch folk to help make Emmanuel a more friendly congregation and the

congregation is asked to wear their name tags to help 250 people get to know one another.

### **Minutes for Mission**

Our congregation continues to give \$54,000 to the Mission and Service Fund. Readings from the pulpit on a monthly basis inform the congregation of the activities at home and abroad that are supported by this fund. Over the years, Emmanuel has developed its own Minute for Mission stories from their personal experiences on service learning trips to other countries. These stories show how we are putting our faith into action.

**Salvadorian Liason:** 2007 brought changes to the way in which the committee would function. They developed a Covenant Agreement with 20-year global partner Iglesia Bautista Emmanuel (Emmanuel Baptist Church) of San Salvador; developed an allocation formula for the Salvadorian Mission Fund; developed guidelines for charitable requests for non-partner organizations; increased their liason with the Hispanic Christian Community and communicated with our partner in El Salvador through Emmanuel's newsletter, Minute for Mission, and the El Salvador bulletin board in the upper hall. The Committee used a number of ways to inform our members about this partnership and covenant agreement and the situation in El Salvador. Miguel Castro ( their minister) and his wife visited us in Ottawa in 2007. Many hours of sharing were enjoyed. In 2008 and 2009 the covenant agreement was reaffirmed .In March of 2008 they organized sessions for the 5 who went in 2009 as election observers in El Salvador. Several committee members participated in the building of ten houses in El Salvador. .The Hispanic Community with the Venezuelan Embassy held a successful fund-raising dinner to support Emmanuel's renovation project. Every year a Memorial Service is held at Emmanuel to celebrate the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero who was assassinated, as well as the lives of those who sacrificed theirs, supporting liberation theology. Recently the committee has been informing themselves about the operation of a Canadian mining company in El Salvador and the negative impacts on the surrounding communities, pending appropriate action to be taken

### **Social Action:**

Emmanuel is always busy putting faith into action in terms of community outreach and raising awareness about local and global social justice issues.

“When the Levies Broke” was shown at a TGIT gathering in 2008 with much discussion. Reverse Offerings were done 4 times with the fall one a school supply offering in 08, 09. Lunches for Habitat were hosted by Emmanuel and many people helped with the local habitat build.

Support for the Ottawa Mennonite Refugee Association by selling Loblaws cards was continued.

Support was given for affordable rental housing through our membership and participation in the Multifaith Housing Initiative.

There was participation in an interfaith forum through the South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre.

We participated in the Write for Rights campaign for Amnesty International in support of International Human Rights Day in 09.

Confederation Court Community House used our funds to supplement a program that provides milk and eggs to nursing mothers.

In 09 there was a very well-attended presentation, entitled “A Different Kind of Oil Crisis”. Following that we sent signatures in support of Canada taking action to halt climate change.

In the summer of 09, some members organized a “Spa Day for Women’s Shelters” and a “Sister in Song” concert which raised \$400 for the South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre.

Last but truly not the least in this reporting up to now of our history and life at Emmanuel is the participation of so many when there is a death of a member. There are those who do pastoral care, who provide a reception at the time of the funeral, who respond to memorial gifts, who maintain the memorial book; and who create banners to honour those who mourn. The office staff along with Peter pick up the remaining pieces. We are a caring family.