

# St-Geneviève United Church

## Minister's Report 2008



### 50 Years Young! HAPPY 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, STE-GENNY'S!

Marking such anniversaries is important ... especially when it affords us yet another opportunity to give thanks to God for God's steadfast presence in and with this community over the years. As is always the case in life, those years contain a myriad of stories ... some very difficult and painful to recall; but many more that bring great joy to hearts and minds.

From its beginning, and in a variety of ways over the past 50 years, this has been a faith community that has sought to respond to what God has been calling us to do in our time and place. Sometimes, that response has been expressed in very "traditional" ways which has been calming to some ever-changing, fast-paced world, while perhaps, at the same time, frustrating to others who have been searching for less conventional ways to express our common Christian faith. Sometimes, that response has been expressed through some *avant-garde* innovations that may have sparked and kindled the imagination of some relatively newer seekers, while being somewhat of an unsettling presence in the hearts and minds of those who prefer the more "traditional" expressions of our faith.

That creative tension is still part of who we are as a people of God in this faith community, but I see that to be a positive influence rather than a negative one, and I am reassured by the fact that this creative tension has been part of the Christian faith since its beginning in the circle of 12 disciples who traveled with Jesus ... and the Church of Christ has survived!

In spite of our weaknesses and challenges as a congregation, and because of our God-given strengths as a congregation, this is a community into which people can come and find the space and freedom to grow ... I know firsthand because people tell me this, and I can observe the growth happening within them and can see it shining forth from them.

50 is nifty ... and also very young! My friend, know that ...

***GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH US YET ... THE FIRST 50 YEARS  
HAVE JUST BEEN THE FIRST STAGE OF OUR ONGOING TRAINING.***

I have been blessed with the privilege of being able to serve this congregation for a little over 21 of those 50 years, and you are continually contributing to my own spiritual growth in so many ways as you join various ministries with mine and as, together, we present the one ministry of Ste-Genny's.

...

A healthy ministry always involves teamwork, and the *Ste-Genny's* team is, indeed, an awesome group! There are so many of you to thank, but I trust you will understand that I have to restrict myself to a limited space. But I especially need to thank:

**Donna Olinik**, our church secretary, for her excellent work on my and your behalf  
*(and for putting up with my idiosyncrasies)*

**Allan Locke**, the dedicated chairperson of our Official Board  
*(and a budding poet who immortalizes the work of our UCW)*

**Edgar Brown**, our church treasurer and building custodian  
*(who keeps crunching the numbers and keeping the building ready for action)*

Our **U.C.W.** for their tremendous generosity and perseverance  
*(they're always there when you need them ... and them some!)*

**Dorothy Moffat**, our Sunday School Coordinator, and our **Sunday School staff**  
and **Lisa Byer-deWever**, our Youth Group Coordinator  
*(and their faithfulness in animating vital ministry among our children and youth)*

Our **Healing Pathway Team** who offer many hours of healing presence  
*(and who have "energized" me with their enthusiasm and devotion)*

**Yves Courville**, our organist & choir director, **Robert Hargrave**, our flautist,  
our **Choir**, and "**Community**"  
*(who all continually inspire us with sacred music and song during our worship)*

**All of our committee chairpersons and committee members**  
*(some of who wear 2, 3, 4 "hats" or more around Ste-Genny's)*

...

I conclude my report by stating once again, as I do every year, that it is an honour and privilege to serve with you in Christ's ministry in and through Ste-Geneviève United Church.

***AND REMEMBER ... We are only 50 years young!***

There are many kilometres for us – and for those who follow us – to travel in faithful witness to the abundant love and life of God through Christ. We are fellow travellers as we journey in faith together!

*Respectfully submitted in the Spirit of Christ's Love, Rev. Ian. R. Smith*

The above is an extract of the four page Minister's Report – 2008, presented by our Minister, **Rev. Ian. R. Smith**, at the Annual Congregational Meeting of Ste-Geneviève United Church on February 22, 2008.