



It was Christian unity at its fullest last Sunday when seven churches in Acton participated in a mass service at Acton Legion Hall. Ministers conducting the service were Rev. Andrew Asbil, St. Alban's Anglican Church; Rev. Emrys Jenkins, Churchill Community Church; Rev. Adrian Van Giessen, Beth-El Christian Reformed Church; Rev. Claude

West, Evangel Pentecostal Church; Rev. Craig Cribar, Knox Presbyterian Church, guest speaker Rev. Dr. Mariano DiGangi (centre); Lt. Darlene Anderson and Lt. James Anderson of the Salvation Army, Rev. Tom Cullen, Acton Baptist Church, and Rev. Ella Taylor-Walsh, Trinity United Church.

Acton mass service draws crowd

By LAURA SALVERDA
Special to The Independent/Free Press

They came to worship, to sing and to rejoice, together.

The huge response to the Acton Ministerial Association's combined worship held at the Acton Legion on January 30 was a most welcome surprise to all involved.

Hundreds of Acton and area residents poured into the Legion doors checked the younger children into the nursery, the older children into their special service in the back and their coats at the door, before taking their place inside.

"I had trouble finding a parking place," and "Isn't this unbelievable?" commented many before the two-hour service commenced.

"I am overwhelmed," Reverend Craig Cribar began, as he welcomed the standing room only crowd and read the announcements.

Rev. Cribar went on to say he was very proud of this unique service that brought together all of the different denominations in Acton, calling it a "great big step in faith."

Although seven ministers of the involved churches took part in delivering the joint service, the sermon was given by special guest

speaker, Rev. Dr. Mariano DiGangi, a retired pastor, preacher, author of several books and presently teacher of pastoral studies at the Ontario Theological Seminary.

The theme of his sermon was Meet me at Calvary, and his strong message to all was that there is common ground for all of humanity



without violence, racism and wars. His eloquent speech was warmly received and many area residents made their way to the front to shake DiGangi's hand before leaving.

Four variations of music rounded out a rich program with the joint choirs of all the churches, led by

Music director of St. Alban's Church, Andrew Dewhurst, the Clarinet Choir of Trinity United Church, the full brass sound of the Salvation Army Divisional Youth Band and the room-filling swell of hundreds of combined voices in the room joined in Amazing Grace.

The children's nursery and the special children's program were organized by Baptist Church*Rev. Tom Cullen. About 30 children were cared for in the nursery and about 100 children participated in the special puppet show and interactive teachings conducted by the Seiling family.

Churchill Community Church member, Lydia Kerr, said the sermon was "very inspirational" and the event "would give the whole community a good lift."

St. Alban's Anglican Church minister, Rev. Andrew Asbil, said in an interview Monday that he "was incredibly moved to see so many people from all those different denominations coming together in one room. It was wonderful."

Knox Presbyterian Church member, Sharon Henderson summed up the joint worship in words that were already echoing around the room, "It would be so nice to do it again."

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