

New church advocates healthy living

By JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Georgetown resident Dr. Christopher Eriksson is setting up a new church in Glen Williams in April that will combine his interest in positive thinking and positive lifestyle changes. It will also deal with a person's emotional and spiritual well-being, something that Dr. Eriksson says is tied closely to our ability to effect lasting changes in our lives.

IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S ROCKET SCIENCE

"My church will focus on helping individuals to expect good things to happen in their lives," explains Dr. Eriksson, who is ordained in The Orthodox Church of America. "Secondly, it will help individuals to adopt a healthier lifestyle to improve their

health as needed. Thirdly, my ministry will encourage people to be bold and daring. Nothing ventured. Nothing gained."

Dr. Eriksson, who also runs a program called "The Art of Healthy Living" says it can be a challenge for people to make significant changes in their lifestyle, but it doesn't have to be. "Adding five servings of fruits and vegetables a day to your diet - most people can do this. It's not like it's rocket science." To accomplish this he believes people need to begin by believing in themselves and to possess the courage to make changes, something that may seem risky at the time. From there they can make the changes required to live a healthier life.

He says the key to effecting lasting change is to start slowly rather than making "drastic changes" that are generally not sustainable. It also helps he believes to have a support network of family and friends to encourage us to take those daily walks or to change to a healthier diet. But if people don't have that support network, they can find encouragement in a church congregation says Dr. Eriksson. And that's something that Dr. Eriksson says he would like to create through his ministry, a supportive atmosphere that encourages the development of a person's emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being.

Dr. Eriksson, who has worked as a scientific researcher at universities and phar-



maceutical companies, says people are not given enough encouragement to make lifestyle changes that will have a positive impact on their health. Prescribing medication isn't enough nowadays, he says, when an estimated 70 per cent of illnesses are lifestyle related. He's concerned as well that many people simply don't believe they can make the necessary changes, and often these are older people. "They say my Mom had this and my Dad had that and I can't do anything about it. Wrong."

According to a press release issued by Dr. Eriksson, most diseases such as heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, and type II diabetes are directly linked to our lifestyle. Dr. Eriksson says all of these diseases have common risk factors, including obesity, smoking, and drinking.

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And there are other common factors as well such as heavy drinking, lack of physical exercise, poor nutrition, and stress. To combat these diseases, he believes that even modest lifestyle changes - such as losing 10 pounds or walking 30 minutes every day - are effective, not only for the young but for seniors as well. "Studies show that seniors benefit equally even from modest lifestyle changes."

It also helps to belief in yourself, and he says that's where a person's emotional and spiritual life comes into play. An admirer of Norman Vincent Peale and Eleanor Roosevelt, Dr. Eriksson says he strives to promote positive thinking every day by

sending an email with a saying taken from Norman Vincent Peale, a well-known proponent of the power of positive thinking. And he's especially fond of a saying by Eleanor Roosevelt that encapsulates the power of belief that he says is so critical in our lives today: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

Dr. Eriksson says all people are welcome at his church. Services start at 7 p.m. at St. Alban The Martyr Anglican Church located at 537 Main St. in Glen Williams. The first service will be held on Sunday, April 3. Initially services will be held on the first Sunday of every month.

Dr. Eriksson can be reached at theartofhealthyliving@sympatico.ca or by calling 905-702-7304.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Dr. Christopher Eriksson, ordained in The Orthodox Church of America, is setting up a new church in Glen Williams next month. The first service will take place on Sunday, April 3 at 7 pm at St. Alban The Martyr Anglican Church. Initially services will be held on the first Sunday of each month.



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