

New York bishop thanks Canada during concert

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

Special to *The Champion*

Love, laughter and some special visitors from across the border.

Those were the key ingredients at Father Mark Curtis' CD release concert at Grace Anglican Church Sunday night.

It was standing room only for the local singing priest's fall tour kick-off. About 230 people attended the evening show, including several from New York State.

Among them was Amherst Bishop Michael Garrison — who came with words of appreciation for both Father Curtis and those he entertained during the two-hour performance.

His thanks related to Canada's support for New York victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks as well as for a

comforting concert Father Curtis delivered in his home town about a week after the horrific events.

"I've been overwhelmed by all the condolences I've gotten. You as Canadians have really been there for us," he said during the second half of the evening show. "The bond (between us) is so strong and wondrous."

He offered a special thank-you to Father Curtis, calling him a "brother" and "gift to us all."

Bishop Garrison said the past three weeks have been a colitiscope of images — which include a look of "pure horror" given by one of his staff administrators after hi-jacked planes crashed into the World Trade Centre.

"This woman had a sister who worked there," he recalled. "Fortunately, we

found out later that she was okay."

Inspirational moments have also been in ample supply, the visiting bishop stressed. Among them was an inspiring service he attended about a week after the attacks.

"It was amazing to hear both the Star Spangled Banner and Oh Canada and not be at a hockey or baseball game," he quipped.

"I've realized, it made me realize that this wasn't just about America. This was about the world."

Bishop Garrison's address was sandwiched between two hour-long musical installments by Father Curtis — who raised \$3,000 for the U.S. Relief Fund. Sunday's 'The Call' CD release concert was the first of 70 shows the local priest has lined up over the next three months.

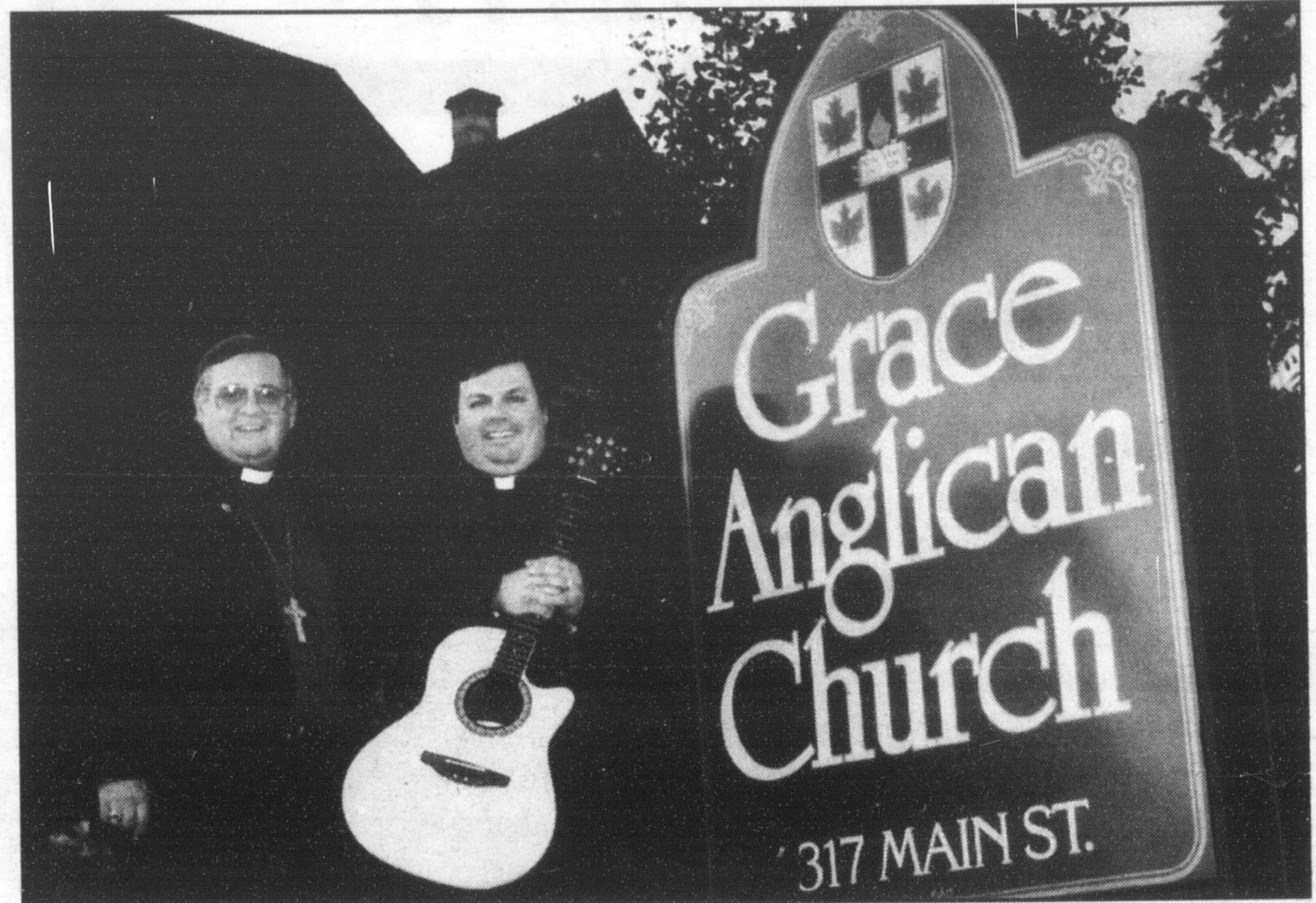


Photo by STEVE LeBLANC

Bishop Michael Garrison of Amherst, New York was the special guest at Father Mark Curtis' CD release concert Sunday at Grace Anglican Church.

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