

# United Church hears student minister's first sermon

Wanda Stride stood at the lectern of Lemonville United Church July 3, looked out over the congregation and delivered her first sermon as the church's new student minister.

Going into the ministry was something the former Whitchurch-Stouffville resident had already considered earlier in her life.

"It has been on my mind since high school," she said.

But after she had children, she couldn't put it off any longer. She went

through a year of discernment, as it's called, where a committee deliberates whether a ministerial candidate truly has been "called" or not.

When Ms Stride first arrived for classes at Emmanuel, she knew right away "this is where I need to be", she said.

Now living in Uxbridge, she is in the first year of a four-year program at Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto studying for her Master of Divinity degree. Those four

years might well take her seven, she predicted. She noted that many of the student ministers at Emmanuel College are on their second or third careers, many are women and most are in their 30s, 40s and 50s. There is also a strong gay community which has come to the United Church from other denominations.

## Our Town

with Hannelore Volpe

She will be student minister at Lemonville United for three years.

The congregation "want to help and want to be there for you", she said. "It makes you want to be there for them."

Erin Todd, the former student minister who had been at Lemonville United for four years, moved to a

church in Wawa, Ont. after being ordained this year. Lemonville United's mandate is to have only student ministers.

One of the first things Ms Stride would like to develop at Lemonville United is a Sunday School since she and her husband, John Futhey, have two young children. Six-year-old Catie Futhey and Samuel Futhey, who is four, would attend along with a few other children of the congregation. She would also like to develop faith exploration classes and discussions in the evenings.

Ms Stride is well-known in the Whitchurch-Stouffville area for her passion for music. She was music director at Stouffville United Church for more than seven years. Several years ago, she and Anne Gage started the Bach to Blues Chorus. Her achievements in music were recognized in 2003 when she received the Music Town Ontario Award in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Despite the time taken by her theological studies and caring for a young family, Ms Stride is continuing with music, which she describes as her passion. She continues to play accordion, tin whistle, piano and guitar in a band called Poor Tom.

Whitchurch-Stouffville council last week for the Show Kids You Care advocacy program.

Mayor Sue Sherban noted that information on the program, along with buttons and stickers, will be made available at town events.

Show Kids You Care was launched in May by the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness to increase positive attitudes toward children and decrease incidence of child abuse.

"We, as adults, get so caught up in our daily lives that we forget to stop to talk to our kids," Mr. Schlusser said. "It's just a helpful reminder of where our priorities should be."

Mr. Schlusser, vice-president of the local Kinsmen Club, would like to see Show Kids You Care stickers in all shop windows in Stouffville and other materials from the program around town.

The Stouffville Kinsmen raise funds to support cystic fibrosis research every year, sponsor Stouffville's Santa Claus Parade and donate money to help out local families and individuals who are in need.

Georgina is the only community in York Region to adopt the program so far.

The advocacy program is co-ordinated by Sanderson Layng, former chairman of the centre for 30 years.

The Show Kids You Care program can be reached at 905-967-0687, ext. 240.

### SHOW KIDS YOU CARE

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