

See You Next Week



*An Ecumenical
Community Ministry in an
Ontario Downtown*

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ON THE LAST WEDNESDAY in Lent, 1997, a young couple newly arrived from Winnipeg happened in at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Kitchener, Ontario. Richard offered them coffee and invited them to stay for the potluck supper being laid out on the table. At the end of the meal Daryl and Cindy said, "See you next week." But Lent was ending—there would be no "next week."

Ten years later "next week" continues, with 80 or more neighbourhood guests and volunteers sitting down to table every Wednesday. Along with various other kinds of ministry, the suppers constitute what became Community Ministry.

See You Next Week is the story—really, a mosaic of stories by both the helping and the helped—of one downtown ministry to, and with, some of the ever increasing number of persons marginalised by our pell-mell society.

It's a not untypical story. Historic mainline churches with aging buildings and aging memberships, nestled among bustling modern institutions, reach out into the neighbourhood. The personal, sometimes intimate, stories in *See You Next Week* demonstrate a response to the Bible's imperatives to minister to the poor and afflicted while also calling to mind the Bible's many calls to do justice.

"A REMARKABLE GLIMPSE of what the church can be when it engages in real acts of inclusive community. The book's inspiring stories make you laugh and cry, but above all beckon us into that space where we all need to feel welcomed, wanted, and cared for without judgement. Thank you, Community Ministry, for your courage to live out this gutsy vision of shalom!"

– THE REV. SUSAN EAGLE, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA, CHAIR, INTERFAITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM COALITION

"PEOPLE ARE THE LIVED STORIES that are their lives. Over the years Community Ministry has creatively and compassionately woven the many varied lived stories into a vibrant witness to the uniting power of God's love. *See You Next Week* retells these wonderful stories, reminding us again of the essential truth that no one is anyone without everyone else."

- DR. DAVID PFRIMMER, PRINCIPAL DEAN, WATERLOO LUTHERAN SEMINARY

"CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY affirms unambiguously that the church is to be and build community. Through the simple act of sharing a meal together and welcoming everyone by name these two churches do both. They joyously make the 'Christ' in 'Christian' stand out! *See You Next Week* is a must-read."

– DIANE BALTAZ, DIRECTOR, SOCIAL AWARENESS OFFICE, ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HAMILTON