

Partners on

Old church ... new life ... modern day pioneers

BARB ROBINSON

Not quite the same as 1845 when St. Luke's Palermo was built, or 1945 when people gathered after service, ate and started construction on the parish hall. But the same pioneering spirit is felt today as parishioners gather around an old church table discussing the hopes and challenges of moving the historic sanctuary and building a new parish community centre.

The plans are displayed, updates shared at Sunday services and the community is abuzz with excitement. Firstly the church will be transported to a critically needed new foundation on the east side of the property. This should attract lots of attention. That's 168 years of weddings, funerals, baptisms and memories being moved 100 feet to make room for the new facility.

For St. Luke's and North Oakville, the centre will be a safe, welcoming, much needed place where people can participate in and enjoy activities.

Partnerships with local community groups, clubs and service providers should bring many individuals to this bright and welcoming facility, which includes meeting and multi-purpose rooms, a sunlit gathering space, a hall and a full kitchen.

The other partnership is our new neighbour to the west ... Palermo Village Retirement Residence. St. Luke's and Diversicare plan to jointly offer outings, arts, music and fitness, plus spiritual and lifestyle activities. Socials and Sunday services can be opportunities to welcome and support new residents.

For St. Luke's, the process has been long and not without hiccups. Since 1999, while fighting to keep those big wooden rickety red doors open as the congregation dwindled, the community has rebuilt and identified its purpose as supporting

people in North Oakville.

Led by the Reverends Sue-Ann and Jeff Ward, a new enthusiasm has been unleashed. As the centre becomes a reality, new life is emerging. Vision and ministry plans are in place, exciting children and youth programs are being developed and outreach ministries to Kerr Street Ministry's breakfast, Waterford liturgy and St. Matthew's House food drives are continuing.

Even though the groundbreaking ceremony was in September 2012 and no construction yet, parishioners and partners continue to move forward, working diligently. Their spirit is unwavering. Steeped in a farming history, this country church knows about hard work. Current members, working side by side, may not use nails, wood and ladders, but rather meetings and emails with the same perseverance and faith

Evelyn Oates, a member since her baptism in 1928, recalls her family lining their coats with newsprint for their two mile wintery walk to church (1930s); the large scale Christmas and Easter productions playing to packed houses (1940s); the thriving Sunday schools (1950-60s); successful strawberry socials and Christmas Carol services (1980-90s); and most recently, Harvest Festival, Peachfest and Founder's Day celebrations. Regarding the future, Evelyn hopes St. Luke's will "be a place to build friendships and community."

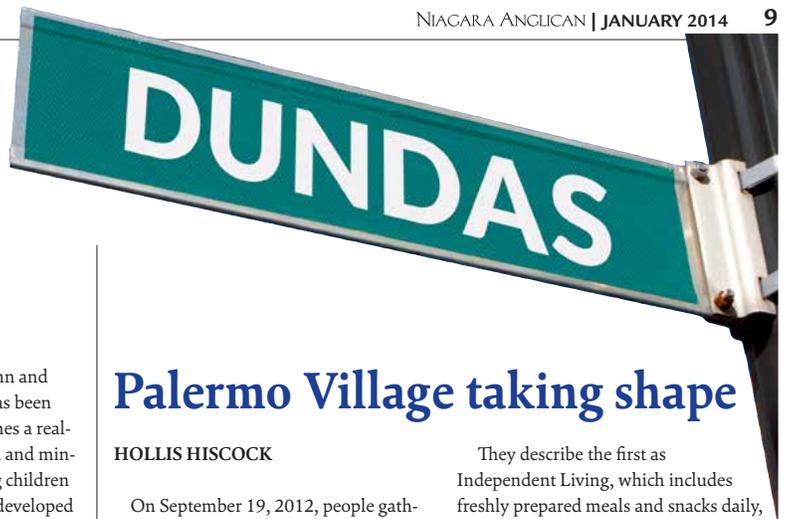
Many in North Oakville may only know St. Luke's as the quaint little white church on Dundas. Well, that's all going to change thanks to these modern day pioneers!

Barb Robinson is a member of St. Luke's Palermo. To contact the Reverends Sue-Ann and Jeff Ward, email rector@graceanglican-waterdown.org



St. Luke's, 3114 Dundas Street West, Oakville is located just east of Palermo Village, being built on church property.

Photo: Hollis Hiscock



Palermo Village taking shape

HOLLIS HISCOCK

On September 19, 2012, people gathered for the ground breaking ceremony officially heralding the beginning of a partnership between St. Luke's Church Palermo Oakville and Diversicare Canada Management Services.

The plan called for Diversicare to construct Palermo Village, a seniors' housing project, built on church land next door to the church. The project is proceeding on schedule and residents should be moving into the new complex by the end of 2014.

"We are very excited about collaborating with St. Luke's and the community of Palermo/Oakville," said Karen Kotanko, Director of Sales and Marketing for Diversicare. "We look forward to sharing our meeting space for group activities and having our residents go to the new community centre at St. Luke's to enjoy coffee

They describe the first as Independent Living, which includes freshly prepared meals and snacks daily, weekly housekeeping and linen service, social and recreational programs, daily fitness and wellness programs, brain gym and more exclusive programs, 24/7 healthcare professional staff, emergency pendant, in-suite emergency response system, monthly activity calendar and small pets are welcome.

The second, Full Service Lifestyle, includes all services in Independent Living plus personalized plan of care consultation, medication management and administration, weekly personal laundry and linen service, assistance with light personal care (dressing, showering), additional care services available to allow for aging in place and after hospital/respite stays available, maintained the Diversicare release.



and entertainment."

The six storey Palermo Village will house 116 suites (studios, one and two bedrooms), with all suites having a kitchenette, bathroom with easy access showers and 24 hour emergency response system, said Kotanko.

According to Diversicare, residents can avail themselves of a fitness and wellness centre with spa services, hair salon, media room and theatre, library, billiards room, worship centre, bistro and bar, personal mail boxes, computer lounge and more.

"All of our meals are prepared daily by our Chef and we offer flexible lunch and dinner choices with an à la carte option," stated Diversicare.

Two types of lifestyle packages and à la carte services to allow for extra care if required, continued Diversicare, will be offered at Palermo Village.

Construction of Palermo Village continues next door to St. Luke's (right)

Photo: Hollis Hiscock

For over 35 years Diversicare has owned and managed Retirement Residences and won "several awards for the excellent services we provide to our residents," according to their brochure. They reported building and opening six new residences in the GTA over the past five years, Palermo Village being their latest project.

This article is based on information provided by Diversicare.

For more information on Palermo Village Retirement Residence visit www.diversicare.ca (click on New Developments) or to register for a suite call 1-888-821-1161.