

No AIDS Stigma in Atlanta Church

At Good News Community Christian Reformed Church in Atlanta, people living with HIV/AIDS have found a place to worship and belong.

Nine years ago the Christian Reformed church plant began by reaching out to people with addictions. They found that many of the people they were reaching were HIV-positive, so their focus shifted.

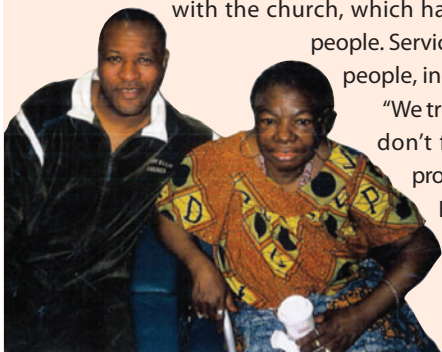
The church has five staff members and 10 volunteers who work with about 400 clients a year, helping them find jobs, recover from addictions, and get established in housing. The AIDS ministry collaborates with several other local AIDS organizations and has become known for taking on tough cases.

Dozens of the AIDS ministry's clients have gotten involved with the church, which has grown to about 85 people. Services, geared to younger people, include hip-hop music.

"We try to target people who don't fit into anyone else's program," said Rev. George Boyd. "It's a great tool for us to meet people and help them."

Read more about this church at www.thebanner.org.

—Roxanne Van Farowe



Rev. George Boyd (left) and Mary, a 68-year-old member of Good News Community CRC who lives with HIV.

Illinois Artist Uses Glass as His Canvas

The sanctuary of Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church in Sauk Village, Ill., is enhanced by two glass windows and a baptismal bowl, both created by world-renowned glass artist Charles Lotton.

Lotton's glass art is displayed in art museums throughout the world and prized by collectors. Emmanuel CRC is a recipient of Lotton's work because Lotton, 73, has been a member of the congregation for 38 years. Lotton also donates pieces of his art to Christian schools, which sell the donated pieces at fund-raising auctions.

A self-taught artist, Lotton is known for using unique colors. He makes his own colored glass, which is unusual for glass artists. Asked where he gets all the shapes and colors in his creations, he said, "I pray for them."

The furnace where he works runs at about 2100 degrees Fahrenheit. The glass is heated and reheated many times as an art



RUTH MOBILARD DEYOUNG

CRC glass artist Charles Lotton adds flowers to the vase he is designing.

piece is created. Lotton draws on his pieces with hot melted glass, making beautiful designs such as vines, leaves and flowers, or peacock feathers.

Visitors to his studio are allowed to watch him work. Lotton has a gallery at his studio and another in Chicago.

—Ruth Mobilard DeYoung

U.S. Immigration Delays Pastor's Call

No one expected that more than a year would pass from the time Rev. John Huizenga was called from Lethbridge, Alberta, till he moved to his new church in Lombard, Ill. But that is exactly what happened.

Huizenga was pastor of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Lethbridge when he received a call from Lombard CRC. He and his three children are dual citizens of the United States and Canada, but Huizenga's wife, Sandra, is a Canadian citizen. The application for permanent residency in the U.S. for Sandra led to many months of waiting on the U.S. Immigration office to act.



CAROL BOSMA

For Rev. John Huizenga, a call to a U.S. church meant more than a year of wrangling with U.S. Immigration, even though he is a dual citizen of Canadian and the U.S.

Attorneys were consulted, appeals were made to government officials, and plans for housing, leaving old jobs in Canada,

and schooling for the children were made and unmade.

Rev. Huizenga participated in meetings of Lombard CRC via speakerphone. Because of continual unexpected delays he ended up preaching three farewell sermons for the Lethbridge church. Don Engelsman, council president for Lombard CRC, now wonders whether his congregation would have made the call had they known in advance how difficult and lengthy the process would be for all concerned.

Huizenga was finally installed in his new church in March 2009. As of this writing, Sandra is still living with their high-school-aged daughter in Lethbridge, awaiting a final interview. She expects to

join her husband in Lombard this summer.

"At the very least," said Rev. Huizenga, "[the CRC] ought to get together with other bi-national denominations and approach the U.S. government about creating a more timely and just process for moving pastors between the two countries."

Synod 2004 requested that the denomination's Board of Trustees look into the matter, but the board informed Synod 2005 that the possibility of obtaining special status for personnel to move across the border was too remote to make pursuing it feasible.

—Doug Evenhouse