

# Come, meet L'Arche London



In 1964, Canadian Jean Vanier invited two men with developmental disabilities to live with him in an old house in Trosly-Breuil, France. He named the house L'Arche after Noah's Ark and gradually welcomed not only more men and women with developmental disabilities, but assistants who would live and work with them. Since then, L'Arche has grown into an international federation of more than 120 communities in nearly 30 countries.

In 1991, a small group of people with an interest in L'Arche gathered to pray and lay the ground work for L'Arche London. There are three homes, Cana (opened in August, 1997), Jubilee (opened in March, 2003) and Bethany (opened in February 2008).



L'Arche London is a non-profit corporation funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

*"In a divided world, L'Arche wants to be a sign of hope. Its communities seek to be signs of unity, faithfulness and reconciliation."*

L'Arche London  
225 Whisperwood Avenue  
London Ontario N6K 4E8  
Phone: 519 641 2262  
www.larchelondon.org

There will soon be twelve core members who form the heart of the community, and several live-in assistants. L'Arche London is part of L'Arche Ontario which includes eight L'Arche communities in the province.

By welcoming people with handicaps to a safe, stable home, L'Arche empowers them in turn to welcome others - including the assistants who are drawn to the community from all over the world, seeking a different way of life and bringing with them a wide range of beliefs, background, and qualifications. The experience of living community fosters personal growth, competence, and lasting friendships.

Just as assistants are always needed to maintain the ordinary life that has such an extraordinary effect on those who experience it, so are 'friends of L'Arche', who are willing to contribute time, skills, or financial support to L'Arche London's crucial future.

Home life is the cornerstone of L'Arche. Prayer is an important part of each day. The people of L'Arche London are enriched by the daily prayer after the evening meal and regular worship service in the home.

There are two great videos posted on the 'You Tube' website which give an inside look at this beautiful community. Simply visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type in a search for 'L'Arche London'.



## Mission Statement

- \* To create homes where faithful relationships based on forgiveness and celebration are nurtured
- \* To reveal the unique value and vocation of each person
- \* To change society by choosing to live relationships in community as a sign of hope and love

## Faith and Light Meetings:

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month  
(in October we will meet on the 18<sup>th</sup>)  
10:30 am-1:00pm  
St. Aidan's Anglican Church  
1246 Oxford Street West  
All are Welcome

Faith and Light is an International community movement associated with the L'Arche community.

It currently has 1500 chapters in 76 countries around the world.

Faith & Light brings together people with a learning disability, their families, carers and friends.

It recognises that everyone has gifts to offer - the ability to welcome others with love and affection and a gift of celebration.

The London Faith & Light Community meets monthly to sing, do crafts, listen to God's word and celebrate life. At the end of each meeting, we share in a pot-luck lunch.

For details contact Nancy Dodman email: [ndodman@sympatico.ca](mailto:ndodman@sympatico.ca) or call 519-641-0485.

*"Whatever their gifts or their limitations, all people are bound together in a common humanity" ~ L'Arche Charter*

## Traveling as a pilgrim

by Toinette Parisio, Community Leader, L'Arche London

In the first week of October, I will be traveling to India for the International federation of L'Arche in Kolkotta. Delegates from our communities around the world will gather for our General Assembly. It is the first time the Assembly takes place in India. We will reflect on our mission and identity of L'Arche in the world today. We will attend workshops and seminars on different themes such as the place and voice of people with intellectual disabilities, enculturation, belonging, and the theological understanding of community.

Every day we will pray together and listen to the Holy Spirit. We will have times of worship and will attend some which are more familiar to us than others such as Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc. Also, we will pray with our communities in India and other parts of the world which are interreligious, with our brothers and sisters in our communities who are from the Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths.

I sense that the space of my tent, my heart, is going to be expanded, cracked open, during this particular federation. I go as a pilgrim, a beggar with an open heart and open hands to welcome wholeheartedly the gift that the Spirit of Truth has

for me, for us, for L'Arche and for the world. My value system might be challenged, but I trust that it is the humbling call of the Spirit in L'Arche who calls us there for this particular federation.

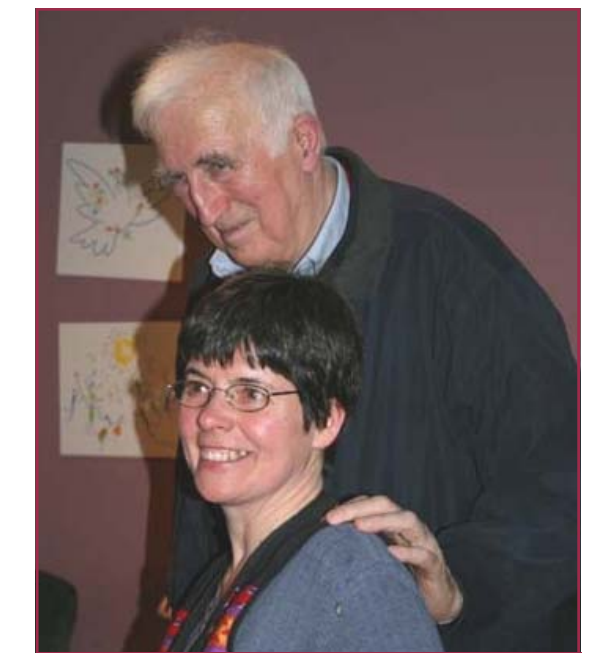
In our brokenness and vulnerability, God is present and God reveals himself. God has chosen what is foolish, what is weak in the world to confound the powerful and the strong. And one of the instruments God has chosen to show us the way like John the Baptist, is Jean Vanier.

We will also walk in the footprints of Gandhi, of Mother Teresa, of Tagore, all who have inspired Jean on his journey.

We will also cherish some time to celebrate Jean Vanier's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday which was on September 10, 2008.

Jean is a man who walks the talk, who has let the Spirit of truth and love guide his life. Many people receive life from his words, his writings, and his presence.

My heart is filled with gratitude for the mentor he is for me, for many. He has chosen life and witness to it with all he encounters small or big, rich or poor, Christian or Muslim, intellectually handicapped or PhD professors.



Toinette and Jean

*"Change the world, one heart at a time"*