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Church issues call to wallets

St. Andrew's Presbyterian spearheading efforts to build Habitat for Humanity home, challenge all faiths

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GUELPH — The congregation at one of Guelph's oldest churches is challenging other local faith communities to put their money — and their hammers — where their hearts are.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is inviting members of all faith backgrounds to join them in a project called "My Neighbour's House," which will see a home constructed for a low-income family in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity Wellington County.

Reverend John Borthwick of St. Andrew's said the theme of the church's 180th anniversary this year is "A place to call home," and during a brainstorming session someone suggested building a home to emphasize this theme.

Borthwick contacted Diane Nelson, executive director of Habitat for Humanity Wellington County, to find out how to make this idea a reality.

Nelson said as she explained to the minister, whom she calls "the inspirational leader" of the project, what went into a Habitat build, "he got excited about being involved in the whole thing, from the foundation to the roof."

Borthwick presented the idea to his congregation "and they seemed to think it was a great idea."

The local Habitat chapter plans



DAVE CARTER, GUELPH MERCURY

Reverend John Borthwick of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church is inviting members of various faith communities to participate in the construction of 'My Neighbour's House,' a Habitat for Humanity project planned for the summer of 2009.

to build two homes in Guelph this year and six next year "which is sort of a grandiose plan," Nelson acknowledged.

One of the six homes to be built in 2009 will be My Neighbour's House.

Borthwick said it was agreed the

multi-faith build will happen next year "because we'll probably need that much time to do the fundraising. I don't think we'll have any

trouble getting volunteers, but we need that much time to get the money together."

► SEE **HABITAT** ON PAGE A2

Florida real estate now a foreign affair

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GUELPH — When Florida real estate agent Paul Fox is meeting with prospective buyers, he is increasingly thinking in loonies and euros.

The Guelph native and former Guelph Police officer, who relocated to Florida with his family in 1992, said Canadians and Europeans have become crucial to the Sunshine State's beleaguered realty market, taking advantage of depressed home prices and strong economies back home.

"They're very important," Fox said of foreign buyers. "Right now we have more sellers than buyers, so obviously we're looking a little farther afield to find new buyers."

Florida has been heavily hit by the so-called "sub prime mortgage crisis," in which scores of homeowners have been unable to keep up their payments and have had their homes seized by lenders. With so many homes suddenly on the market, owners and banks have been slashing prices by 30 to 50 per cent to unload houses quickly.

"We have all kinds of new houses sitting empty and we haven't been able to sell them," Fox said.

He said Florida real estate agents used to rely on winter-weary Americans from states such as New York, New Jersey and Ohio to throw off their parkas and head south "but they're dealing with the same issues up there."

► SEE **REAL ESTATE** ON PAGE A3



RYAN PFEIFFER, GUELPH MERCURY

Dental assistant Tracy Hooper helps esthetic dentist Dr. Edward Gelfand last week as he works on patient Ian Bussey at the Dawson Road Dental Clinic.

The eazzzy approach to dentistry

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GUELPH — The pain of having a tooth pulled triggered a fear of the dentist in Ian Bussey when he was about six years old.

A dentist tried to freeze his gum, but the local anesthetic hadn't taken effect before the extraction.

"I was still hesitant to go to the dentist and, as a result, had some dental problems. So when I did go, I was having acute problems," said Bussey, now 44.

On top of that, he developed a severe gag reflex about 10 years ago. It even bothers him when he's brushing his teeth. Bussey needs high levels of sedation to get through his dental appointments.

► SEE **DENTIST** ON PAGE A2



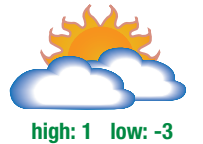
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