

## Denominations set aside for an evening of music in honour of AUC



**By Brock Weir**

When fire broke out at Aurora United Church last spring, Aurora's faith communities were quick to spring into action, cast their denominations aside, and step up to help a faith community in need.

Six months on, they did so once again recently, opening up their hearts and raising their voices to aid the church's rebuilding fund.

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church was the scene of a hymn sing at the end of the month, an ecumenical hymn sing bringing together the vocal talents of choir members not only from Our Lady of Grace and Aurora United Church, but also Aurora's St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St. Frere-Andre Catholic Mission, and Trinity Anglican Church, Newmarket's St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Trinity United Church, and York Community Choir, and Richmond Hill United Church.

"I am not hosting, we are hosting," said Father Joe Gorman at the start of the service. "It is the people of Our Lady of Grace that is hosting this tonight. How great it is to see all of us and all of the churches coming together tonight to show solidarity to helping rebuild the United Church and the devastation we all felt.

"It is here tonight that we show truly what the Aurora community is all about ? with the help of Oak Ridges, with the help of that great city up in Newmarket, where I was born and raised, and we welcome you."

Much of the service was led by Rev. Neal Mathers, who heads St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newmarket. He explained "when one part of the Body of Christ weeps, we all weep? and, conversely, the same can be said when one part rejoices. This, he said, was the spirit behind the event.

"As news of the devastating fire that destroyed Aurora United's building came across the airwaves, we were all joined as Christians, and as members of the community, in grief," he said. "Out of that grief came another reminder from scripture, the reminder to encourage one another and to put faith into action. Tonight we come as Christians from different denominations and faith communities to hear and sing common songs of our faith."

The evening featured nearly 20 hymns and readings of scripture from local faith leaders. With Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown at the piano for the service, tributes were also paid to Corporal Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, the two servicemen killed on home soil last month, with a moment of silence and a playing of The Last Post.

"What an incredible night this has been, to bring all of these incredible people together in songs and praise from all of these congregations," said Rev. Andy Comar, who heads Aurora United Church with his wife, Lorraine.

Added Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar: 'We have been, as a congregation, overwhelmed by your love and support over these six months and we cannot say, 'thank you, we love you,' enough. Thank you. We love you.'