



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL JORDAN/FREE PRESS

## SPREADING HER WINGS

Rev. Susan Eagle's congregations are everywhere  
there are injustices to be corrected

By Kelley Teahen

**I**N SUSAN EAGLE'S ministry, even plastic grocery bags become instruments of God's love.

"This is my filing system," she says with a wave toward her car's back seat littered with file folders ensconced in plastic bags. "I have one bag back there for every project I'm working on today." She pats her black briefcase and laughs her bell-ringing laugh. "I just carry the briefcase to make me look professional."

On this one spring morning, Susan already has fielded 20 phone calls; spent two hours doing administrative work for the United Church congregations she has served since 1984 in Kilworth and Delaware; and rescheduled a wedding interview from morning to evening.

By 11:30 a.m., after taking time to talk to a reporter, she's in her car, beginning her day's travels

throughout northeast London in her second job as minister for ELUCO, the East London United Church Outreach cluster sponsored by four East London United Church congregations.

In the course of one hour, she peruses her mail from Gethsemane United Church, one of the four ELUCO-sponsoring congregations; packs food in the ever-handy plastic bags for two families from an emergency supply cupboard and filing cabinet at Gethsemane (food in the cupboard, toilet paper and such in the filing cabinet); drops off posters advertising a raise-the-minimum-wage picket to the Union of Unemployed Workers office, and firms up details for several upcoming public events during a stop-over at the London and District Labor Council.

The events include door-to-door campaigns to protest against the pending federal goods and ser-

vices tax and a provincial anti-poverty awareness campaign called Walk A Mile In My Shoes. The shoe campaign, she explains, is sponsored by the London Social Assistance Reform Network — one of a multitude of social justice groups Eagle belongs to in her roles as a United Church minister and social activist.

At the labor council office, Eagle chats with the staff, picks up about 400 anti-GST postcards addressed to the prime minister, fills in the time she's presenting a brief to an NDP public hearing in her well-notated purse calendar and retrieves some documents containing poverty statistics from the facsimile machine.

Back in the car, Eagle is asked if she has a central office for her many branches of ministry. "My office?" she says, unsuccessfully trying to squelch yet another roar of laughter. "You're sitting in it! Other