

Yellowknife United Church

Fall 2012 Newsletter

Thanksgiving

When first I came to Yellowknife I was in my early thirties. I'm twice that now. I've been around the church a long time. I grew up in the days when women were called ladies and they all wore hats to church and we sang Holy, Holy, Holy to start off every service.

I've got a lot of mementos from all my years in the church.

I've still got my Five Star Memory Certificate from 1957. I was 9 years old. That certificate has stars on it for memorizing the books of the Bible, the ten commandments and a few other things. It's signed by my teacher and by the Sunday School superintendent.

I've got a plaque for helping out with the Canadian Forces chaplaincy and a mug for helping out in Montreal during the ice storm of '99.

Anybody who has been around the church as long as I have has a little collection of mementos like this.

I have a Bible given to me by a student minister at the church I was serving in Montreal. When she started with us that student minister was afraid to drive her car across the city to get to the church. She was afraid of preaching, afraid of hospitals, afraid of meetings, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of being a minister.

By the time she left us she was different. We knew she would be a good minister and she suspected the same. And she is. When she left she gave me a Bible with an inscription on the opening page. Of all the mementos I've received, maybe this one speaks clearest to me. She didn't write her name or put in the date or any explanations. All she wrote in the Bible was one word: "Thanks"

When I was Moderator of The United Church of Canada I visited widely in the church. That's what the church manual says a Moderator has to do – "visit widely in the church." You have to learn the language. When a business person is travelling he says, "I'm on the road." When a biologist travels she says, "I'm in the field." When a minister travels we say, "I'm out visiting widely."

Anyway, as I went about visiting widely I held retreats for ministers; retreats for more than a thousand ministers in dozens of towns and cities across the country. They all wanted to know the best strategies for succeeding in their work. I didn't know any strategies but I always thanked them.

They'd be sitting around in a circle, all those ministers, and I'd say, "Thank you for every meeting you've been to. Thank you for every time you stacked the chairs, turned out the lights, locked the door and walked alone out into the night. Thank you for every time you've stood over an open grave staring down into eternity. Thank you for every time you listened while someone told you at considerable length why they don't go to church, even though you hadn't asked. Thank you for living with all the caricatures of clergy and the jokes about working one day a week. Thank you for your strange willingness to be, as Yeats says, "fastened to a dying animal" - in more ways than one. Thank you for every time you heard the phone ring in the night and you got up and went."

And the room would get very quiet. All those ministers there. A lot of them had tears in their eyes.

When our baby Robert got sick shortly after his birth in 1986 we took him to the Stanton Yellowknife Hospital – as it then was. For several days we hadn't known what was wrong and when the paediatrician made the diagnosis they had to fly him out to Edmonton. Little baby on an emergency flight.

They operated and saved his life. He lives in Calgary today – a banker.

My God, I have no idea how to thank all the people that made that possible – made him possible – from the pilots and

nurses who got up in the night and went, to the paediatrician and hospital staff, administrators, mechanics, ambulance drivers, the minister who stood by us because we didn't know a soul down there in Edmonton.

When the crisis had passed and we brought him home, the hospital sent us a bill. Nothing. No charge. Every time I pay my taxes I remember all that. I remember what universal health care means to my family and I say, "Thanks"

Everybody has stories of gratitude. Here's one from a long time ago.

Ten people, diseased, came to Jesus asking to be made well. He sent them to the priest and on their way they were healed. One came back to say, "Thanks." The other nine: I don't know what happened to the other nine. Not even Jesus knew. "Where are they?" he asked, "weren't there ten made well? Where are the other nine?"

Only one came back – gratitude on his mind – and he didn't even belong to the right religion. Jesus said to him, "Be on your way. Your faith has made you well."

So, ten were made disease-free. Ten were cured but only one came back in gratitude. I suspect that while ten were cured, only one was made well.

Gratitude makes us well. Gratitude heals our life. Wherever gratitude is, happiness is never far off. It is very difficult to be grateful and unhappy at the same time.

It makes us well to say thanks. Then, when we've lived our thanks and the time comes, we will die healed. That's the good way to go, don't you think? - healed.

And to write this one word on the page of our book of life: Thanks.

Happy Thanksgiving!
Peter Short

United Church Women (UCW) News

The Yellowknife United Church Women (UCW) continues to be involved in the life of the church. A small but enthusiastic group of women hold not-so-regular meetings during the year however we do have several special activities. All women are welcome to come out and enjoy the fellowship of others while supporting the UCW.

Each year we are able to help support the life and work of the church locally and in the broader community. Last year with funds raised, we were able to donate \$3,400 to local, national and international causes. This is made possible through the generous support of the congregation. Here are some upcoming dates, mark them on your calendar and join us.

- Oct. 29/12: Antipasto, need help in kitchen beginning at 6:30, all welcome to come. We will also be looking for donations of supplies.
- Nov. 4/12: UCW will be leading worship we'll be looking for women of the congregation to help.
- Nov. 12/12: Pepper Jelly, need help in kitchen beginning at 6:30, all welcome to come help. We will also be looking for donations of supplies.
- Dec. 1/12: Christmas Tea and Sale, need help in kitchen beginning 10 am. We will be looking for donations of baked goods and crafts.
- Feb. 18/13 Kitchen clean-up, all welcome to come help.
- Apr. 27/13 YKUC Garage Sale, UCW sells muffins, bannock, cookies and coffee.
- June 3/13 Year end pot luck and penny auction, an annual opportunity for food, fun and fellowship.

Officers for the upcoming year are:

Chair: Maxine Wiseman
Secretary: Jeannette Hall
Treasurer: Margaret Henderson

The UCW would like to offer a special thank you to everyone who has supported us by donating their time, energy, and talents. Without the generous support of the congregation, UCW would not be able to function.

Steps on the Sabbath Way



Panel of Linux Developers: Linus Torvalds, Greg Kroah-Hartman, Sarah Sharp, Ted Ts'o

At the end of August I had a conversation with Ted Ts'o. “Who is Ted Ts'o?”, you might ask. In some circles you wouldn't have to ask, because the name Ted Ts'o would be as familiar as Randy Bachman (for an older generation), Gord Downie (for a middle-age generation) and Avril Lavigne (for a younger generation). The comparisons are intended because Ted Ts'o in some circles would qualify as a “rock star” computer programmer by virtue of the fact that he works for Google and is one of the people responsible for maintaining the Linux kernel (the core of the Linux operating system). I was describing the topic of my sabbatical and Ted Ts'o asked me what I expected to produce as a result of my study and research. I responded that I wasn't sure – possibly a book, but I doubt it, quite likely a report, but I'm not sure, definitely some blog entries to detail my learnings, discoveries and insights along the way.

However, I am getting ahead of myself.. I should first tell you how it was that Ted Ts'o and I were even in the same place.

They say a change is as good as a rest and if sabbath has restful connotations to it, then I would say that I have experienced both “rest” and “change” in the first six weeks of this sabbatical.

As you may know, the topic I am exploring on this sabbatical involves an exploration of the “spirit” of open source. Another way to describe this would be a look at the motivation which drives both people who are developers of open source software and users of open source software.

It is not too difficult to meet users of open source software. There are quite a few of them around. Perhaps you are one without knowing it. If you ever use the Firefox web browser, or Thunderbird email program, then you are a user of open source software. However, finding developers is a bit more challenging. Early on I decided that the best place to meet developers would be to attend conferences where developers gather.

I had to find a conference occurring in the intended time frame for the sabbatical and it so happened that the 2012 LinuxCon sponsored by the Linux Foundation was scheduled for San Diego at the end of August. I signed up with as much excitement and interest as I've had for just about any educational gathering in my life. My biggest anxiety centred around a worry that technical jargon and concepts would go flying over my head, given that I have not mingled in such circles for about a quarter of a century. I was quite relieved, as I have reported in my blog (opensourcepiritseeker.wordpress.com) to find that I was laughing in all the right places and nodding at all the appropriate times during each of the keynote addresses and the presentations I chose to attend.

The conference was all I could have hoped for. You can't be around me for too long without knowing that a critical element in my theology is the concept of “connections”. There were connections upon connections upon connections for me at LinuxCon 2012. One of them was a tremendous presentation by Christoph Lameter. From what I've heard, he is another of the rock stars. His “talk” was a reflection on twenty years of developerhood (his term). It was a fantastic insight into the passion of a young superstar programmer transforming into a more reflective middle-aged dad and philosopher. He left the programming world for a while (after selling shares from a successful startup with which he was involved) to do a Ph. D. in theology! How could anything I could have attended be any more a propos to my subject? I sat and listened with rapt attention, not believing my good fortune that I had chosen to sit in on this one! Afterwards I went up to tell him how much I appreciated his thoughts and asked if I could get in touch with him. He handed me his business card (he's back in the software business) and I promised to be in touch.

What I'm learning is that there is a kind of evangelistic zeal in the “open source” community. People are writing this software not just because it is a job, but because they have a passion for it. They believe in it. Many of the people I met claimed to be atheistic or agnostic, but when I asked them why they were involved in the “open source” community, to a person they said something about sharing, contributing to the common good, and that it was something they were just attracted to because it seemed right.

Unfortunately, some of the people who heard me describing my research project made the assumption that I wanted to talk with people of faith – like me. Now don't get me wrong, that assumption landed me some great introductions, and I am ever thankful for them, but I am actually more interested in meeting people who do not belong to a faith community. I

am very curious to find out if being part of the “open source” community is a way that some people fulfil their spiritual needs. My thesis is that they do, but I hope to keep a certain objectivity as I explore these topics with people.

As I said, the assumption that I wanted to meet people like me – people who belong and participate in a faith community, landed me some great introductions. One of them was a cyber-introduction to someone who is quickly becoming one of my heroes – another rock star programmer. His name is Larry Wall and he created the scripting language PERL, which if you've been around computers at something more than an office software level, will probably be familiar to you. Its popularity has been taken over more recently by another language called Python, but for many years, PERL was the language of choice for many programmers, system administrators and computer hobbyists. I am currently in conversation (by email) with Larry Wall to learn more about his perspective on the topics I am exploring.

That is also how I ended up in a conversation with Ted Ts'o. I was sitting on a bus by myself in preparation for travel to an evening reception (sponsored by Intel) at the Hotel Del Coronado. A fellow conference attendee boarded the bus and asked if he could sit with me. We introduced ourselves to each other. He is a developer with RedHat (one of a number of successful computer companies that use the “free”* Linux operating system as a basis for their service provision). When he heard about my project he said, “You should meet Ted Ts'o. He's very active in his faith community back in Boston”. It so happened that Ted Ts'o was sitting a few rows ahead of us, and my seat mate (I sure wish I could remember his name!) did as he promised, we were introduced.

And so it was that I had a few precious moments to talk with Ted Ts'o about the connections between his faith and his work.

Let me end by saying that this article describes but a few steps I have travelled on this Sabbath journey. It has been wonderful so far. Besides having a trip to San Diego (which by the way, based on my limited ability to spend some time exploring, is a really beautiful and interesting city) I have read a pretty long list of books so far, with many more waiting for me. I have plans to attend another conference in Toronto at the end of October (with a possible opportunity to do a presentation), and I have had many moments of connection which I am still formulating into some kind of overall impression and vision. Stay tuned!



Peter Chynoweth



The Youth Group, including Paige and Ally, planted flowers around Northern United Place again this year.

National Church News

A new Moderator, the Right Rev. Gary Paterson, was chosen at this summer's General Council. To read a pastoral letter from the new Moderator click here:

<http://www.united-church.ca/communications/news/moderator/120917>

Also, at General Council, a decision was made to change the United Church of Canada crest to incorporate Aboriginal elements. To learn more about this click here: <http://www.united-church.ca/history/crest>

For paper copies of these articles, please ask at the church office.

In Memorium

On April 28th 2012, the members Yellowknife United Church and many Yellowknifers celebrated the life and said their good-byes to respected friend and teacher Ed Jeske.

Born on January 18, 1927, Ed was the youngest of 8 children. Growing up on his family farm in Manitoba, he soon became familiar with the pleasures of hard work. After leaving home, Ed worked in construction throughout Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta eventually working his way into a job as a Construction Foreman building the Airport at East Three, which later became Inuvik.

Ed and his wife Blanche settled in Yellowknife in 1958. He was employed as a Heavy Duty Mechanic Teacher in the first year of the new Sir John Franklin Territorial High School. Ed also taught Driver Training and Automotive Mechanics for many years. Those he taught remember a caring teacher with a fine sense of humor and patience. He exemplified a commitment to the education of youth and young adults in Yellowknife and across the NWT.

Ed and Blanche had three children (Dale, Wayne, and Cindy) and were heavily involved in their children's activities, as evidenced by the many years that Ed ran various hockey programs. During this time Ed and Blanche could be found most Saturdays at the Gerry Murphy arena helping kids tie skates, and operating the concession. Both Ed and Blanche are recognized annually with the awarding of hockey trophies in their names. Ed's contributions to youth and sport were acknowledged when the City of Yellowknife named the Olympic ice arena after him in 2009.

Ed will be remembered for his generous and Christian spirit, and his contributions to the education and wellness of the youth and community which he called home. He always insisted on being addressed as Ed, despite the fact that he had more than earned the privilege of being known as Mr. Jeske. This paradox seems strangely appropriate. Mr. Jeske had earned the respect from his peers, students and the community, but his generous and welcoming nature insisted he be known as Ed.

Ian Moir



Megan Moves On

My first week as the secretary for Yellowknife United Church in 2007, I met several people who I would be working with, for and alongside. Among them was Megan Williston, a young lady who certainly made a difference to my work day and to my life. Every Friday afternoon, Megan along with her Education Assistant (EA), Jan Byrne, would come to the office and fold the bulletins ready for the service on Sunday. Megan's cheerful outlook on life infected me and I am sure, many others she met. Her love of animals, dogs and horses in particular was always a topic of our conversations along with her need to know the latest antics of my grandsons, which always caused her to chuckle. Other weekly topics included her flair for "designer" handbags.

This year, for Megan meant that high school days were left behind and she was moving on the next stage of her life journey. In June, just before the end of school, we had a "retirement party" for Meg. We had cake and juice, took photos and listened to the hopes of Megan and her parents. The biggest hope at this time was that she would be chosen to attend a school in Victoria, BC, where she would learn more life skills. Megan was excited about this opportunity because she would be nearer her sister who also attended school in BC. It is my hope that these plans came to fruition and Megan enjoys her new life. I will certainly miss her cheerful smile on a Friday afternoon, our chats about the above mentioned topics, along with school news, what movies she had watched and who can forget, her adulation for Justin Bieber! I will also miss her EA, Jan. I thank them both for all the help they gave me and all the days they brightened with their presence.



Gwyneth Davis, Office Administrator

The population of Yellowknife United Church grows.....

Yellowknife United Church is very excited to share the news
Two baby girls joined our church family this summer!

On June 28th, the Short family, Greg, Tara and big brother Peter welcomed Lucy into the world.

On Sunday September 30th, we also celebrated Peter's baptism. It was a wonderful family day with his grandfather, Rev. Peter Short presiding over the service.

Elizabeth and Jamie Brace were thrilled to share the news of their daughter, Emily's birth on July 20th. Emily was baptized in September surrounded by family and friends in Ontario.



Refugee Sponsorship

The Outreach Committee is busy working on sponsoring Abdi Adow Aden to immigrate to Canada under the Refugee Sponsorship program.

After contacting several churches in Yellowknife with no positive outcome, Abdi's sister Sadia Adow Aden breathed a sigh of relief when she approached Yellowknife United Church requesting help in sponsoring her brother under the United Church of Canada Refugee Sponsorship Program. Under the program, refugees are offered assistance to move and settle in Canada. The sponsors provide the newcomer with necessary support to integrate into life in Canada. They also provide them with financial resources and care to live in Canada for a period of one year, having a goal that at the end of the year of sponsorship the person is a self-supporting and independent member of the community.

Forming a Sponsorship Group within our congregation was one of the initial steps. In June, a group composed of Outreach Committee members Joanna Wilson, Nancy Trotter, and Suzanne Ngo Likaa, and congregation member Barb Paquin formed the group. Other interested people are welcome to join. Key to this project was the Church Board's approval; without this approval, the sponsorship could not proceed. On August 28th 2012, the Yellowknife United Church Board passed a motion that the church undertakes the moral and financial obligations of refugee sponsorship for a family of one for a period of one year.

Abdi has been in a refugee camp on the island of Malta for four years. Located in the southern part of the Mediterranean island, the camp is where refugees from African countries are first taken on arrival in Malta. Most of them arrived after a six-day boat trip, usually from Libya which is not too far away. On the boat there could be between 30 and 200 people. They're from all around: Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia and countries of West Africa like the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Burkina Faso.

A single road divides the area. On the north side of the road is the detention camp and close by, the buildings where couples and their children are housed. Across the road and on the southern side of the road is the "hanger," as the refugees refer to it. Here, couples and singles with no children are housed in container houses.



© Marios Stavrou
Most of the single men are housed in what they call the "hanger." Like the tents, the hanger can be very hot. Hal Far, Malta.

An estimated 3.7 million Somalis are now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Increasingly, Somalis are leaving their homes to escape the violence that has gripped the country for 20 years, walking thousands of kilometers in search of food, protection, hoping for a better life and ending up in either Internally Displaced Person settlements within Somalia or refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia, Malta, etc.

The most recent Somalia Briefing Sheet of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees states that Somalia generates the third highest number of refugees in the world, after Afghanistan and Iraq. Somalia is the most affected country within the Horn of Africa by the ongoing drought, widely regarded as the worst in 60 years. Consecutive seasonal rain failures have led to sky-rocketing food prices, in a country already devastated by two decades of civil war.

It is almost impossible for Abdi to settle in Malta. The latest influx of illegal immigrants entering Malta has put a huge economic strain on the country. Over the past 10 years the tiny Mediterranean island nation has struggled under the burden of thousands of illegal immigrants. The country, with a Gross Domestic Product of just €6.1 billion and an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent, is finding it difficult to absorb these people into its economy and has to finance their welfare at great cost. According to the official Journal of the European Union, asylum seekers are detained in conditions that fall far below internationally recognized standards, and where particular concerns include physical conditions, as well as inadequate or non-existent access to basic services, such as medical care or social and legal assistance.

It could take a year or more to process Abdi's application for immigration to Canada. During that time the Sponsorship Group plans on holding fundraisers to aid in getting Abdi settled in Canada. While there is no guarantee that the application will be successful, plans are being put in place for Abdi's settlement in Yellowknife. He will live with his sister and her family, take English language lessons and find work that will sustain him until he can get his taxi driver's license in order to join the family taxi business.

For further information on this project please contact Joanna Wilson at 873-6939.

Suzanne Ngo Likaa

Ron Klusmeier brings his music to Yellowknife

There may have been strong gale force winds blowing outside, but the winds were no match for the strong voices singing beautiful music inside the Yellowknife United Church on September 6th, 2012. For this was the night that Ron Klusmeier brought his music to town for his 2012-2013 "Tour of a Lifetime."

The concert was well attended by people from Yellowknife United Church, Holy Family Lutheran Church, the Anglican Church and the Calvary Church. Everyone was entertained as Ron tickled the ivory keys with some of his favorite music. Ron was accompanied by a dozen choir singers, made up of local Yellowknife talent, who sang gloriously through-out the entire night. Concert participation was encouraged and there were many opportunities for everyone to join in a sing-a-long and even hum-a-long through- out the evening.



Peter Short talking with Ron Klusmeier at the Ron Klusmeier Tour of a Lifetime in September.

During the evening, Ron took the opportunity to pay special tribute to many people who helped shape his successful and inspiring musical career over the years. Those people included his father, Heinz, his grandmother, Minnie and fellow musicians including Walter Farquharson, Fred Kann, and Shirley Erena Murray. Ron also thanked his life partner Christina Bogucki for all her support she has provided him over the years and Lonnie Moddle for being the choir director for the tour.

The evening was about more than just the music though. When planning this tour, Ron decided he wanted to give back to the Christian community. He did this by spending time speaking about the importance the United Church's magazine, The Observer, has had in shaping his career. Did you know, the Observer was a catalyst in helping getting Ron's recording career going? Ron wanted to do more, and so he decided that a portion of the proceeds of his tickets sales would be donated to the Canada Foodgrains Bank. This organization sponsored a trip for Ron to take to Ethiopia in spring 2012 to witness first- hand the amazing work this organization is doing to help eliminate hunger in the Horn of Africa.

At the end of the ninety minute concert and in true Yellowknife United Church fashion, the evening concluded with yummy home baked goodies which included cookies, squares, cake, coffee and tea that everyone nibbled as they reflected on the entertaining evening they experienced.

A special thank you goes out to everyone who helped in various different aspects of the evening. Thanks to the billets, transportation support, those who baked the desserts, those who sold tickets, those who manned the tables for ticket sales and CD sales and anyone else who played a role in helping with this wonderful event. A very special thank you to the organizing committee of Terrilyn Hayden, Sean Daly and Brenda Tittlemier who worked hard to organize and promote the event.

Delicious Desserts for Everyone!!!!

The annual Fall Supper was held on Saturday September 22, 2012. It was a wonderful evening of sharing stories, laughter, and a potluck meal together with friends and neighbours as we all get back in to the "fall" routine.

Coupled with the Fall Supper is something that is becoming an annual tradition too, the Dessert Auction Fundraiser. Fourteen luscious desserts plus homegrown Yellowknife garden produce were up for grabs! Bidding was fast and furious with a fresh, homemade apple pie being the most hotly contested. When the bidding was over one person took home the coveted pie and the opposing bidders purchased a "yet to be made pie". As well this year there was a silent auction with 10 items including a Kuerig Coffee Maker and a wall hanging from Argentina. A total of \$983 was raised to support the work of the Church...well done!

The evening's success was in thanks to those who joined us on that Saturday night. Thanks to our bakers for the tasty treats and to those in attendance who kept the bidding lively.



Margaret Henderson showing the next dessert up for bid.



Margaret Melhorn cutting up her 'purchase' to share with others.



Leslie Creed, Maisey Murray and Leslie's nephew, Brendan, watching the auction action.



Lorne Gushue as the dessert auctioneer.

Affirming Ministry

Affirming Ministries are local churches, presbyteries, conferences, education centres, theological schools and outreach ministries that **welcome** bisexuals, transgender people, lesbians, gay men, and their families in all areas of ministry. They **promote reconciliation** for lesbian, transgendered, bisexual and gay people in Church and society and **minister to and with** people of various sexual orientation and gender identities.

At the Annual General Meeting of Yellowknife United Church held on June 10, 2012, our Congregation voted overwhelmingly in favour of taking the next steps towards becoming an Affirming Ministry. These next steps include developing a Vision Statement, which will be in addition to our existing Mission Statement, and a 2-year Plan of Action for the Ministry.

It is important that both the vision and plan reflect the feelings of the Congregation and have your ongoing support. Have a look at the AFFIRM Bulletin Board which has examples of vision and mission statements from various Affirming Ministries around the country.

If you would like to assist us in these next steps or if you would like more information about the process, please contact one of the Affirm Committee members: Lorne Gushue, Donna Allen, Nancy Trotter, Janice Daly, Kathryn Walker, Kathy Burns, Sharon Chynoweth and Marg Henderson.