

Yellowknife United Church

Fall 2015 Newsletter

God has Left the Building

The headline might seem a bit dramatic, but it speaks to a theme I have heard oft-repeated over the past four years or so. Of course, church buildings are still regarded as God's house but there is a growing realization brought on by practical considerations, a multi-tasking culture and a growing anxiety with waste, whether it be time, or stuff, that we have an awful lot tied up in buildings. It is mind blowing to consider how much in financial resources the church buildings in just The United Church of Canada are worth. In a denomination which is struggling with dwindling financial resources it is natural that people would have turned to consider the real estate value of land and buildings which are taken up by churches, many of which were built in prime development locations in many towns and cities. It's not only the value of the land and buildings, but the considerable resources that are required to maintain large structures that were built for a time when congregations were much larger, Sunday School classes were bulging and when an imposing structure in town or country made an important statement about the role of faith in the community. Not so today. We quite rightly want energy efficient, space efficient, multi-purpose structures that are used during large portions of the week. The congregation of Yellowknife United Church was ahead of its time, when the church building was sold in favour of the community building we are so proud of, Northern United Place. But could we be so bold as to say that God has left our building too? I'm sure we could cite many instances which prove the general statement false, but it still remains that there is a growing realization that God is indeed calling us out of our buildings. It may seem a strange thing to say in a place where winter dominates the calendar, but I still believe it to be true. God may be calling us out of our building to other buildings where people gather in different kinds of community circles: hockey rinks, day shelters, cafeterias, and God may be calling us literally to the streets as the place where God can be seen most clearly.

Selling buildings just to realize the real estate worth is not something to be done hastily. Church buildings have undergone a reformation due to necessity – to supply space needs for community groups and to supply alternate sources of income for church programs and budgets, but in many cases the space no longer suits the use that is being made of it. On the other hand, selling valuable land is a way to realize the resource to free up money for mission and ministry.

There are many examples of congregations that have taken the step to sell their buildings and follow God's call in new ventures, in new places, in new visions of ministry and mission.

In the next few months, we as a congregation will be doing our own visioning. We will be invited to engage with God and with each other in a process that will help us to get a sense of who and what we are for this time, and a sense of where God is leading us and what God is speaking to us.

The vision of our forebears here at Yellowknife United Church may still speak strongly to us such that we will discern that God's presence can still be found in this building – it was ahead of its time after all – or perhaps their vision will inspire us to make our own leap of faith – just as they did – with visions of ministry and mission that take us out of a comfort zone, that find new ways of using the resources invested in this place in service to God in the community.

I don't know the answer, but I am excited by the prospects. I am excited by the opportunity to stretch our boundaries and think and dream beyond the walls that confine and enclose us. I am excited to be inspired by generations of younger people who have developed a whole new sense of what location means as they and we have embraced the notion of cyberspace – a place without walls, but a place where people live at least portions of their lives quite comfortably and even seamlessly.

Would you like to join me?

Peter Chynoweth, Minister

Here is a list of upcoming services that you may want to mark on your calendar:

November:

Sunday the 22nd: Anniversary of becoming an Affirming Ministry and Baptism
Sunday the 29th: First Sunday of Advent

December:

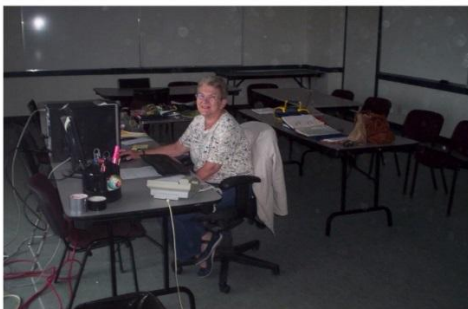
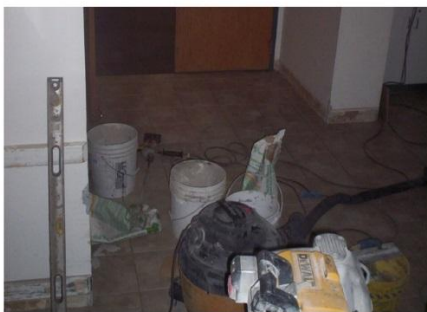
Sunday the 6th: Second Sunday of Advent and Communion
Sunday the 6th: Yellowknife Ministerial Carol Fest (evening)
Sunday the 13th: Third Sunday of Advent
Sunday the 20th: Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sunday the 20th: Service of Comfort (evening)
Thursday the 24th: Early Christmas Eve Service and Christmas Eve Communion
Sunday the 27th: Wassail Service

All services begin at 11:00am unless noted as evening services. Watch for more details as the dates get closer.

UCW

Antipasto and pepper jelly are two of our most sought after items at UCW's Christmas Tea and Sale, which will be held on Saturday, Nov. 28, in the auditorium of Northern United Place from 2-4 p.m.

If you are able to help with this event, we are looking for donations of baked goods or crafts. These can be dropped off at the church between 10 a.m. and noon on the day of the sale. We are also looking for people to help us prepare for the event or to work at it. If you are willing to give us a hand, please speak to one of the UCW members or call Marg Henderson at 873-4428.



The Northern United Place Lobby gets a fresh look

The lobby floor of Northern United Place received a much needed renovation at the end of June. Many of the old tiles were starting to crack and some of them had lifted. The new floor is much lighter in colour and many people have commented that the area is much brighter and looks bigger.

It was a dusty, noisy place for a few days, and Gwyneth was required to move upstairs temporarily. What she missed in permanent fixtures was made up by a more pleasant view out the windows. Thanks to the NWT Community Services Corporation for the adjustments to the capital budget that allowed for these changes and made our space look much brighter, better and welcoming.



United Church Women

Annual Christmas Tea & Sale

(No admission charge for the sale!)

When: Saturday, November 28, 2015

Where: Northern United Place Auditorium

Time: 2 pm to 4 pm

Cost for Tea: \$5 / adult

\$2 / children under five



Shop for some baking, antipasto, pepper jelly, and other Christmas items! Enjoy our delicious tea with sandwiches and goodies.

Sunday School News

During a church service at the end of May we celebrated the five women who taught Sunday School throughout the year: Kathryn Walker, Janice Daly, Sandy Little, Joanna Wilson and Lindsay Chiasson. Kairan Bonnetrouge Noseworthy read a poem titled “Why God Made Teachers” and the children gave each teacher a plant and a scroll of appreciation.

Also in May, we participated in the annual City Clean-up. About thirty congregation members turned out on a beautiful Saturday afternoon to clean two areas south of NJ Macpherson School. Many thanks go to returning university student Johanna Stewart for superbly organizing the clean-up again this year.

Three of our Sunday School students were featured in “In Contact”, the Alberta and Northwest Conference insert into our national church magazine “The Observer”. They were posing beside the Heart Garden they helped create in front of the church in honour of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and former students of residential schools. To see the September edition of “Incontact” go to: <http://albertanorthwestconference.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/In-Contact-Sept.-2015.pdf>



A group photo of some of the people who turned out for City Clean-up.



Sarah Walker was also featured in an advertisement produced by the City of Yellowknife. In it, she mentioned her church family as one of the reasons she likes living in Yellowknife.

We are very proud of our Sunday School students' achievements both at church and in the wider community!

Sarah Walker, NACC Volunteer, Soccer Player for Yellowknife Bay Sundogs and Member of Yellowknife United Church

I moved from Behchoko, and I've lived in Yellowknife for 5 years. I like Yellowknife because you know everybody. School is really fun, because the principal and all the teachers are really nice. I like to volunteer at NACC and help my mom scan the tickets. Since my family is far away, I kind of have a family in Yellowknife when I go to church. The people who are older are like my grandma and grandpa. You can make friends with people of all different ages. Like babies too.

Book Club

The book club is up and running again after taking the summer off. We have changed our meeting times to after church on the first Sunday of the month. We will be meeting at Javaroma. Our book for November is Mitch Albom's "The First Phone Call from Heaven" and for December is "Life of Pi" by Yann Martel. Feel free to join us at any or all of our get-togethers.



Book Club participants at a meeting earlier in the year.

Meals on Wheels – Part of our Outreach

The Meals-on-Wheels (MOW) program has been in operation in Yellowknife for approximately 35 years and is one of the community outreach projects involving our congregation. We are one of seven groups who have committed to providing volunteer drivers once every seven weeks (evening meal only).

Here's a quick re-cap of what is involved as a volunteer driver. An individual can do it alone or you can take along some helper(s). You pick up the evening meal(s) from the Stanton Hospital kitchen between 4:45 and 5:30 p.m. and deliver to those individuals on the list for the day. There can be up to half a dozen meals although for the past several months there have only been two or three. The meals are individually packaged, marked with the recipient's name and put into an insulated carrying bag.

It's quick and easy when you drop the meal at each address. This is often a highlight in the person's day and makes you feel a bit like Santa Claus! After delivering the meals, you return the insulated bag to the appreciative staff at the hospital kitchen. Again, the commitment is for less than an hour one evening every seven weeks. With lots of volunteers you may only be called every second time.

This is a very rewarding community service and if you are interested in joining our team of drivers or have some questions about it, please call Jeannette Hall at 873-3942 or Cappy Elkin at 873-5747. Our upcoming scheduled drives are Nov 21-27, Jan 9-15/16, Feb 27-Mar 4 and Apr 16-22. Thanks!

Jeannette Hall
MOW Coordinator



Christmas Bazaar!



Northern United Place



**November 14 &
December 5**

10AM to 3 PM



Report from Northern Lights Presbytery
*(This is excerpted from a report by Presbytery Chair, Gord Waldie,
to the Alberta and Northwest Conference Executive)*

The most recent meeting of Northern Lights Presbytery took place on the last weekend of September in Fort Nelson, BC. It was preceded by a covenanting service in Fort St. John, where the Rev. Louise Hart will continue to serve. She was there for an internship last year and is back to serve after her ordination. Martha Dawson and Lloyd Henderson led worship. Marilyn Carroll was the preacher and the act of covenanting was presided over by the Rev. Gord Waldie (Chair of Presbytery).

St. Luke's United Church in Fort St. John is now sharing space in the local Presbyterian Church. They formerly were in a space sharing agreement with the Anglican Church. The old building has now been torn down in preparation for a commercial structure.

The presbytery meeting proper started on Friday afternoon at Hillcrest United Church in Fort Nelson. We were warmly welcomed and well fed. A highlight of the meeting was attendance on Saturday evening and at the Sunday morning worship service by the Fort Nelson Ministerial Choir.

During the meeting, presbyters heard a report from the two presbytery people that were in attendance at the 42nd General Council in Corner Brook, Newfoundland last August. In particular we heard details about the discussion and decisions that were made in response to the Comprehensive Review. Northern Lights Presbytery despite its widely separated boundaries, with few people and only a few meetings per year is well known as a presbytery that works well and so there is some concern that a move to even larger Regions will have a negative effect on the connections that are such an important contributor to the good spirit that helps the presbytery to be effective.

One of the significant issues faced by Northern Lights presbytery is that most of the pastoral charges are served by less than full-time ministry personnel. In fact, unless some significant changes occur in the next few weeks, there will be more pastoral charges which are vacant, than those being served by ministry personnel.

The result of this is a desire and a need to find new ways of being the church – something which our Conference President Paul Walfall has encouraged us to do.

One of the ways the presbytery has responded to this challenge is to cluster the presbytery into areas. One of the areas is the Alaska Highway Corridor (Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson and Whitehorse). They have been working on a plan to offer multi-site worship – with a hope that there might be a request for a Mission in Transition grant for electronic equipment to support the plan. It is hoped this might be ready for the April deadline.

Other news:

- Fort Nelson lowered their Mission Support request by \$5000 for 2016, part of an overall reduction of \$10,000 over the last few years.
- A report from the Banff Men's Conference including some reflection on the meaning of Reconciliation in light of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Six Northern Lights participants in the St. Stephen's College Licensed Worship Leader program in Grande Prairie will received their certificates on November 2.
- Valleyview celebrated a 60th Anniversary on the first weekend of October.
- Keith MacPherson from New Brunswick, is on an eight month internship with the people of Spirit River.
- St. Paul's in Grande Prairie hosted a Blanket Exercise on October 17.
- Presbyters were encourage to write to MPS and candidates within our bounds to express concerns about the refugee system in light of the current refugee crisis.

The next full meeting of Northern Lights Presbytery will take place in February in Spirit River.

Attending the meeting in September from Yellowknife were: Nancy Trotter (Chair of Living the Faith and Member at Large), Lloyd Henderson (Co-Convenor of Pastoral Relations and Member at Large), Stuart Oldham (Member of Support and Assistance and Delegate from Yellowknife United Church) and Peter Chynoweth (Convenor of Pastoral Oversight and a Member of the Presbytery as Minister for the Yellowknife United Church).



Planting flower gardens outside NUP



CD Committee and CLAM at summer gatherings at the Paquin cabin



The Choir ready to sing at the Yellowknife Music Festival

**WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?
OUR PLANNED VISIONING PROCESS**

Why do we do what we do? What compelling vision excites us and inspires new projects? Who in the world are we at Yellowknife United Church called to serve?

These are some of the questions that congregations of the United Church are encouraged to ask ourselves periodically as a form of congregational renewal. Whether it's called a "needs assessment" or a "visioning process", it's a way for congregations to take stock, evaluate our strengths and challenges, and envision where we want to go from here.

The Presbytery Oversight team that visited us last year noted that it has been some time since we last looked inward in this way, and recommended that we "set in motion a visioning process in order to account for changing demographics in the city and the changing place of "religion" in society". At our June 2015 Annual Meeting the congregation endorsed this recommendation and called for a visioning process to be completed by June 2016. Accordingly, our Church Board has set the ball rolling, establishing a Steering Committee to guide the process. Members of the Steering Committee are Margaret Melhorn, Lloyd Henderson, Elaine Stewart, Nancy Trotter, and Peter Chynoweth.

Our first step will be to find out who we are and who our neighbours in Yellowknife are. Following recommendations of congregations that have followed similar processes, we have asked Environics Inc. to provide us with a demographic report on our congregation and our community.

The next step is to probe ourselves a bit, to identify our gifts, our priorities, and what we believe our mission should be. To do this, we will be using a survey tool developed and endorsed by the United Church of Canada called Identity Mission and Needs Analysis or IMNA. The IMNA survey, which is conducted anonymously online, will gather input from the congregation, and give everyone a chance to offer our thoughts and insights. Since this survey has been developed by the United Church, the questions have been designed to uncover the issues that are relevant to United Church congregations.

The Environics report should be available to us by January and will be circulated to the congregation before the February 2016 Annual Financial Meeting.

We expect the IMNA survey will be available for congregation members to complete by the beginning of February. The results will be compiled for us in a report, which will be shared with the congregation. The report will be accompanied by some guidelines on how to interpret the findings. Following that, there will be further opportunities for reflection, for discussion, for searching, and for developing consensus on a vision, action plans and next steps. A final report will be brought to our Congregational meeting in June.

So please stay tuned. More information about the IMNA survey will be provided at church, and through our Google Group message board. If you are not currently receiving these messages, please email ykuc_news+subscribe@googlegroups.com and you will be added to the mailing list.

For more information about the Visioning process, please talk to any member of the Steering Committee.

SOME CHANGES TO THE MULTIPURPOSE AREA

In the next few months, users of Yellowknife United Church's (YKUC) multipurpose area will see some changes to the way we lock our doors. To address security issues, the Community Services Corporation (CSC), which owns and manages Northern United Place, will be installing electronic locks on the front doors and on the bathrooms. Rather than using keys, the doors will be accessible with "fobs".

Yellowknife United Church will be responsible for programming the electronic system so that doors can be open or locked at the times YKUC might want, for example, front doors and bathroom doors can be left unlocked on Sunday morning or when there are large public meetings. Renters will be issued fobs and will have to pay a deposit. Users will still require keys to access the auditorium and other meeting rooms. Church users who have been issued keys will receive a fob to replace their key to the front doors.

The CSC does not yet have a date for the new system to be installed. Information regarding the installation date will be shared as soon as it's available.

The Church Board will establish policies concerning when doors will be locked or unlocked, taking into consideration the need to balance the vision of our church to be a welcoming place for all, with our need to ensure the safety of our staff and the users of our space.



Worship and Fellowship at YKUC