

Yellowknife United Church

February 2012 Newsletter

How Stuff Works: The Story of a Sabbatical Proposal

I've always been interested in how things work. That curiosity has helped me learn a lot, but it also got me into trouble a few times. I once took apart the lens from my father's single-lens reflex camera. It was easier to take apart than it was to put together, and paying the repair shop bill took a hefty chunk out of my teenage bank account.

Given this interest in how stuff works, it was no surprise to me that I was immediately taken with computer programming the first time I was introduced to it. Despite my father's prediction that a fascination, or should I say infatuation with computers and the software that makes them work would only last a couple of weeks, I continue to be excited and interested in the whole subject.

It is also no surprise to me that I am particularly fascinated by “open-source” software. This is software that has its inner workings revealed for everyone to see. Of course there are many people who would know no more about the particular application upon taking a look at the source code than they would before they ever set eyes upon it. However, for an interesting and most times passionate sub-culture, the “open source” movement is akin to a religion. It's a field where people engage in debate about freedom (as in free speech) and keeping their computer hardware free from being tainted by restricted, closed-source or proprietary software.

I am curious about this sub-culture and its religious undertones, but also by the ethic that is at play when people write software for no financial return and when these authors invite people to take their code and modify it to make it better or more useful. I want to explore this ethic. I would also like to delve into the spiritual makeup of people who offer these gifts and abilities to the world, for nothing more than the status of having written something useful.

I guess you could say that not only am I interested in how the software works, but also interested in how the people who write the software work - as in how their heads and hearts work while they write, and I think if I can get an idea of those parts I will have some insight into how their spirits work as well.

That's part of how I want to spend the four months of my sabbatical: reading about, interviewing, and reflecting with people who are part of the “open source” sub-culture. I also imagine that at the end of the four months I will have written some things that might lead the church to a place where it will more readily adopt the “open source” concept not only as a cost-saving measure (there are arguments that it just transfers the costs from purchase to support – which is not a bad thing to do) but also for theological reasons related to openness and support for community and community-developed software.

As part of this work I plan to keep a regular blog, detailing my research, encounters and writing related to all of this.

Thanks for supporting me in this endeavour!

Peter Chynoweth

Meals on Wheels

Are you able to be a Meals-on-Wheels driver for about an hour once every seven weeks? That's the small commitment needed to be part of the Meals-on-Wheels program that has been in operation in Yellowknife for 35 years - one of the community outreach projects that our congregation is involved in. We are one of seven community groups who have committed to providing volunteer drivers once every seven weeks.

In the past few months a number of our 'regular' long-term drivers have moved out of Yellowknife and we are desperately seeking a few 'new' recruits. An individual can do it or you can take along some helper(s). You pick up the evening meal(s) from the Stanton Hospital kitchen between 4:45 and 5:15 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. 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 quick, easy, and rewarding community service that we would like to continue to provide. If you are interested in joining our team of drivers, please call Jeannette Hall, MOW coordinator, at 873-3942. Our next week to drive begins on February 25, 2012. Thanks!

United Church Women Events

The United Church Women (UCW) have several upcoming events. Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar.

Saturday, April 28th – Annual garage sale, shopping starts at 8:30 am in the auditorium. UCW sells coffee, juice, muffins and goodies. Volunteers can also help with the set up for the sale on Friday night

Monday, June 11th – UCW pot luck and penny auction, year-end wind up, hosted by Kay Lewis

UCW welcomes all women at any or all of the events. Come join in the fun and laughter while providing service to others.

Monies raised from the fund-raising activities are donated to worthy local, national and international causes. To be successful we need the support of the whole congregation. Thanks!

For further information, contact:

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Marg Henderson | 873-4428 |
| Jeannette Hall | 873-3942 |
| Sharon Chynoweth | 873-3089 |

Affirm Study Group

The Affirm Study Group has been very active over the past year in working with the congregation to learn more about the challenges faced by lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gay people in finding a church home. We have done this through bulletin inserts, information displays, and a number of D3 (dine, discuss, dash) lunches. We have also led a worship service to educate the congregation in some of the things that we have learned in our studies. In addition we have asked Karen and Gordon Hamre, who are not part of the Affirm Study Group, to be available to hear any questions and concerns. We hope that you have seen and engaged in the various dialogues we've offered.

Look for at least one more D3 lunch, possibly a confidential poll on the welcoming of the GLBT community, bulletin inserts and some opportunities during worship to learn more about our work. Our goal is to be ready for a vote in May to determine whether or not Yellowknife United Church will officially become an affirming ministry. If you're not sure about your ability to vote on this issue, please check with Peter or Gwyneth.

Inspired by Peter's recent reflection theme of "authority" and to better prepare for these "affirm" moments during worship, we are looking at the various scripture passages which are most often used to counter an "affirming" approach to the issue of being openly welcoming and accepting. The Affirm Study Group would welcome your input in this. The study group believes that God is calling the congregation to this new level of welcome and one of the ways that we respond to this call is by addressing the concerns and questions that might arise. A clearer understanding of the word and context of scripture can help us.

For additional info please refer to www.affirmunited.ca. We would love to hear from you with your thoughts on the direction we are going. Please contact any of the members of the Affirm Study Group (Lorne Gushue, Nancy Trotter, Donna Allen, Sharon Chynoweth, Kathy Burns, Kathryn Walker and Marg Henderson) or alternatively Karen or Gordon Hamre.



Affirm / S'affirmer
UNITED / ENSEMBLE

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Traditionally, pancakes were prepared on Shrove Tuesday in order to use up rich foods such as eggs, milk and oil prior to the rigours of Lent. People often fasted and undertook other disciplines during Lent, the forty days leading up to Easter.

Yellowknife United Church has held a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper for many years. For the past ten years or so, the men of the congregation have done the set-up, cooking and clean-up, while the Community Life and Membership Committee has done the organizing and advertising.

This year Shrove Tuesday falls on February 21. The pancake supper will be held from 5:30-7:00 p.m. and admission will be \$7.00 per person while children under five can eat for free. There will be sign-up sheets for two Sundays before the event for donations of some ingredients, the loan of some equipment such as food processors and griddles and male volunteers. Peter Chynoweth will be the kitchen manager again this year. He and the other men have a very organized system, so don't worry about volunteering for the first time, you will have plenty of mentors.

Last year we had an excellent turn-out of people from the wider community and expect the same this year. The potato pancakes are becoming famous! With help from the congregation, the pancake supper is an excellent community event and an important fundraiser for the church.

Remember to sign-up for supplies or to work in the kitchen and be sure to invite your friends and relatives to a good meal and conversation. See you on Shrove Tuesday.



Declan Robinson-Spence gives the thumbs-up to last year's Shrove Tuesday pancakes.

A Trip Around the World



Picture taken at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

We are the Schlosser – MacInnis family and have recently returned to Yellowknife after a year of adventure. Dean and I (Pam), who both work at Sir John Franklin High School, took a year's leave from work and, together with our children, Ally, 12 and Mia, 9, travelled to fourteen different countries including Australia, Bali, Zimbabwe, Egypt and several others throughout Europe.

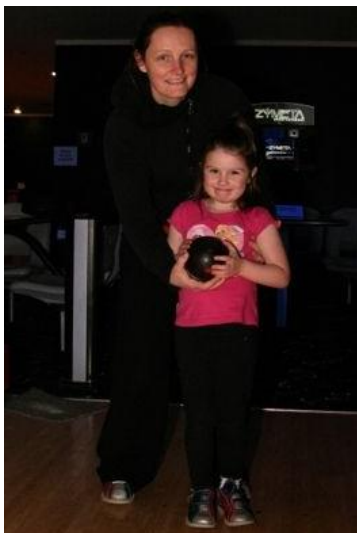
Here, in no particular order, are a few of the greatest lessons we learned during our year away:

1. "Homeschooling" is a fanciful notion conjured up by some childless professor in the comforts of his peaceful, artificial reality and should never be attempted by the outside world.
2. A temperate climate is good for the soul.
3. Cornerstones of successful travel include good footwear, decent sunglasses, a good supply of Band-Aids and, most importantly, clean socks and underwear.
4. Despite one's best efforts, VISA cards won't spontaneously combust.
5. Too much "quality" time with your children/parents brings out the best, and worst, in one another and should be cautiously measured.
6. Family and friends, whether near or far, old or new, are the greatest part of life's journeys!

We feel blessed to be back home in Yellowknife among dear friends and our United Church community.

Pam, Dean, Ally and Mia

Yellowknife United Church First Annual? Frozen Bowl



Lindsay and Mackenzie Chiasson prepare to throw a ball.

Bowling was the name of the game as three mixed aged teams vied for the title of top bowlers at the King Pin lanes on January 28. The teams sported imaginative names - The Gutter Snipes, We're shakin' it and Mackenzie's Heroes and some stylish bowling to match. Scores were kept low due to laughter and modesty. Amid the glowing shoelaces a few stars emerged. Dynamite Denis dominated, Larry the Lefty let loose and Stawberry Stuart struck them down. We all retired to the church for Sundaes and special awards for all!



Denis Bergevin concentrates on making a strike.

A conversation with Ally and Emily about their trip to the “Me to We” Conference in Vancouver.

In October 2011, two young members of the Yellowknife United Church congregation attended a “Me to We” conference in Vancouver. Emily Paddock and Ally MacInnis were part of a group of twenty-eight students from Yellowknife. Ally and Emily first became interested in the organization when one of their teachers, Madame Melanie had told them about a trip she had done to China to help build schools.

The conference took place in the Rogers Centre, the same place where the Vancouver Canucks play hockey. According to the girls it was “ginormous!” and not at all like a “business conference”. The flashing lights, huge speakers, wildly dressed party pumpers, and “The Wave” rippling through the eighteen thousand, mostly school-age youth, created an air of excitement and anticipation.

Even getting to the conference was exciting for some of the Yellowknife participants. Airport connections didn't happen the way the travellers expected, which meant an early morning introduction to the busyness of a large city.

As if it wasn't exciting enough to have eighteen thousand excited teenagers, the mood was further elevated by the likes of Shaquille O'Neal who did a rap, along with musical groups Hedley and Webster and well known people like Mia Farrow, and keynote speaker Mikhail Gorbachev.

According to the website metowe.com, “Me to We” is a social enterprise with a mission. As the site states, “It transforms consumers into world changers, one transaction at a time.” The “Me to We” motto says “Together We Can Change the World.” It is an outgrowth of the work done by child activist, Craig Kielburger and his brother Marc, and their organization, Free the Children, which receives half the profits generated by “Me to We”.

Certainly, Emily and Ally said that their attendance at the Vancouver event was a life-changing event. It has opened their minds and eyes to the way that other people are forced to live, and as they said, “the conference has made them re-think practically every decision they make and realize how easy our lives are in relation to the lives of many others.” They both wanted to emphasize that even without going to an exciting and inspiring conference, people should still make changes and think their actions through to change from “me” to “we”.

They hope to attend this year's conference. The conferences are held in different locations all around the world. In order to be involved this year, the participants are required to develop a project which has both an international and a local component. Ally is planning to travel to Kenya for the international component of the Yellowknife project. The local project will focus on seniors.

What was their favourite part of the October conference? For Emily it was Mikhail Gorbachev, who spoke in Russian with a translator. Mr. Gorbachev was sometimes so “into what he had to say” that he forgot to stop for the translator. For Ally, it was just being there, and seeing all the people that want to make a change, and who think they can!

Even several months later, the excitement experienced by these two young YKUC congregation members is palpable, and their interest in the ongoing work generated by this life-changing experience is testimony to the change that “Me to We” seeks to inspire.

Yellowknife United Church Activities



Bernice Dillman cut up peppers the night the UCW made pepper jelly for the Christmas Tea and Bake Sale.



The finished product – mmmm.



Sharon Chynoweth and Stuart Oldham cooked the pepper jelly mixture.



The Talent Auction in November featured a fine dessert buffet.



Bidding was fast and furious at the silent auction table.



Levi Davis gave a preview of his talent – live music for a kitchen party.



Fraser and Chris Dumont enjoyed themselves at the Tea and Bake Sale.



Susan Hoefler gave Robert Paddock a lesson in harp playing after church during Advent.



The annual Christmas pageant was a colourful event.