



Epiphany Explorations: A Case Study in Asset Based Mission

Some of you have heard me talking about Asset Mapping as a basis for congregational programming for well over a year. I've mentioned it a couple of times in my Sunday morning reflections, and I've talked about it in various committee meetings a few more times than that. My interest in Asset Mapping first came about as a result of further study on the issue of spiritual gifts after a retreat we held in October 2006. We spent time at the retreat talking about gifts, but I wanted to find out more. That's when I was introduced to the work of Luther Snow. In his book The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts he makes a case for asset mapping - which is just another way of talking about our gifts and God's gift of grace - as a powerful way to develop programs in the congregational setting. As soon as I read it, and talked to people who had used his ideas to great success, I wanted to try his "Quick and Simple Asset Mapping Experience". We finally had a chance at our most recent retreat in early February. You can read about it in this edition of the newsletter in the article written by Barb Paquin. In that report you will see that we are looking for opportunities to do some more asset mapping with other folks. I highly recommend it as a way to use your own gifts and the gifts of our community to live out the call of God in ways that are fun, empowering and exciting.

In case you are wondering what Asset Mapping is all about, I had a big insight when I recently attended "Epiphany Explorations" - the seventh annual symposium sponsored by First Metropolitan United Church in Victoria, BC. One of the presenters at this year's event - I think he's been at four of the seven, was Marcus Borg - an internationally known scholar, writer and presenter at events like this all over the world. Borg said at this year's event that "Epiphany Explorations" is the best event of its kind in all of North America. Remember that Borg attends a lot of these kinds of event - so his praise is not to be taken lightly.

I could go on and on about how wonderful the event is - with excellent speaker after excellent speaker - almost too many in one place at one event (but I'm not complaining) - and with so many people now attending - up to eight hundred this year - that connections with old and new friends are many and often. However, what I want to describe is the way in which this little symposium that grew is a case study in Asset Mapping - whether that's what to call it or not.

If you were to sit and think for a few seconds about some of the assets of Victoria, I'm sure you would not take long to think of the climate. If you were thinking about the weather in January on a Yellowknife street corner, I'm sure you would develop an instant longing for that particular asset of Victoria. And that's exactly what the people at First Metropolitan United Church did. They thought about what they had to offer, and mild weather was high on the list. They also had an eight hundred seat sanctuary (one of two sanctuaries that were available to them when two big congregations decided to give up one building and come together as one community - but not without a struggle - and Epiphany Explorations is one of the big things that has helped them face the struggle). They had a large congregation of people with skills and time to organize a fantastic event and a community which is often full of tourists, but not in January, and hotel owners that are willing to give good rates because of it. They also had congregation members willing to offer a bed to visitors attending their symposium so that more people could afford to come.

Luther Snow likes to point out that asset mapping is not a "zero sum" exercise. It is not something that gets done to fill a hole. Instead, asset mapping - recognizing the gifts we have from God and doing something with them, always results in more gifts being discovered, more excitement in using them, and more of God's work being accomplished in the process. I'm sure the people of First Metropolitan United Church in Victoria could tell you all about it. And if all of this makes you want to go next year, all I can say is get your registration in early! You can read all about it at: firstmetvictoria.com

Peter Chynoweth, Minister

A Brief History and Background to Northern United Place

Larry Elkin, President, NWTCS

Yellowknife United Church has several relatively new members in the congregation who may not be familiar with Northern United Place and its connection to the Yellowknife United Church.

Northern United Place was conceived, developed and constructed as the vision and initiative of the Yellowknife United Church, spearheaded by the Church's Minister, the Reverend Jim Ormiston, in the early 1970's. The Official Board of the Church, the Board of Trustees and many other members of the Yellowknife United Church congregation were extensively involved in the planning for Northern United Place.

In 1974, the Congregation of the Yellowknife United Church approved the concept of Northern United Place with the understanding and agreement that;

1. the Yellowknife United Church would own and manage Northern United Place.
2. The Board of Directors of Northern United Place would be appointed by the Church.
3. Northern United Place would include space for the Yellowknife United Church and multipurpose facilities for other functions and activities supported by the Yellowknife United Church.
4. Northern United Place was to play an important role in achieving the local outreach objectives of the Yellowknife United Church through the provision of subsidized housing for seniors, handicapped persons, small families, single persons, youth and transient persons and use of the multipurpose space by non-profit organizations.

On the basis of this understanding and agreement, the Congregation of the Yellowknife United Church approved the transfer of five Yellowknife United Church lots to the NWT Community Service Corporation. Two of these lots were previously owned by the Yellowknife United Church and the other three lots were provided to the Church by the Government of the NWT in support of the Northern United Place project. The Yellowknife United Church also, sold the Church building, located on the present site of NUP, to the Pentecostal Tabernacle in Yellowknife for the sum of \$8,000. The money from the sale of the Church building was spent on furnishings for the new Chapel and for the multipurpose area in Northern United Place.

Northern United place was officially opened on November 7, 1976. The YWCA was one of the first tenants in Northern United Place and occupied the apartments located in Tower "A" (facing Franklin Avenue). Over the years they provided transient housing, a women's shelter, a hotel and had their offices on floors 3 through 10 of this tower. The Government of the NWT also made a commitment to lease the first three floors for commercial space in Tower "B" (facing 54th Street). At various times over the years Renewable Resources, Tourism, Social Service and other departments have been house in Northern United Place. Without this support the viability of Northern United Place would be in jeopardy.

Multi Purpose Area – The Yellowknife United Church is responsible for the Multi Purpose Area - floor 1 and 2 in Tower "A" and all activities/tenants that occupy that space. As per the original agreement, the Church has a lease for the space until 2026 at the rate of \$1.00 per year.

Residential Tenants – Tower "B" has 84 housing units located on Floors 4 through 10. Each floor has 12 units- 2 one bedroom units and 10 bachelor units.

Aurora College – Yellowknife Campus – The major component of the Yellowknife Campus of Aurora College occupies the first 3 floors of Tower "B" and the third floor of Tower "A". Floors 4 to 10 in Tower "A" are a student residence for Aurora College. There are 40 units in the residence. The rent from the College for the Campus space and student residence is an important component in the economic viability of Northern United Place.

Operational Management – The overall operation and management of Northern United Place is the responsibility of a Corporation, the NWT Community Services Corporation, established for this purpose at the beginning of the project.

The Board of the Corporation consists of 9 Directors, 6 Directors from the Yellowknife United Church and 3 Directors from the Yellowknife community at large. The members of the Corporation are the members of the Yellowknife United Church Congregation plus the 3 community Directors on the Board. The members elect the church Directors to the Corporation. The Board for the Corporation nominates and elects the community Directors.

Hopefully this background to Northern United Place is informative, especially for new members of the Yellowknife United Church.

Introducing **Gwyneth Davis**, Office Administrator, Yellowknife United Church

Joyce: How are you enjoying Yellowknife?

Gwyneth: I'm enjoying Yellowknife. I find the people really friendly. Coming from Newfoundland, it's the same sort of thing-people there are the same way.

Joyce: Where did you move from in Newfoundland?

Gwyneth: I came from the NE coast in a town called Wesleyville. Our house is right on the water. My husband got work up here and we looked in Yellowknife for a place to live because we have two daughters here and two little grandsons which add to the bonus. So we really enjoy being near family. We lived in an out port in Newfoundland and there is nothing. We had an arena, two supermarkets and two or three gas bars. There's no theatre, shops or cinema. My husband says now we have a Wal-Mart! It is nice to have coffee houses and enjoy the foods that are available in the supermarkets.

Joyce: Did you live all your life in Newfoundland?

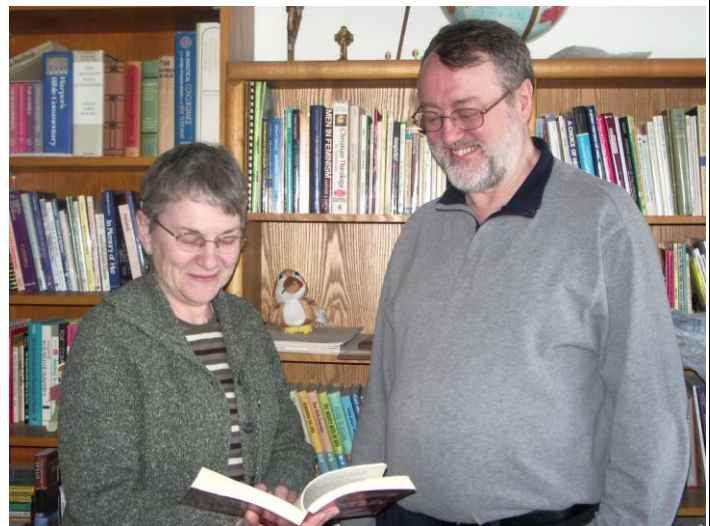
Gwyneth: No, I was born in N. Wales, lived twenty-nine years in Britain and I came to Toronto in 1964 to visit my cousin. I met my husband there and he returned to England with me where we were married. Our first child was born in England, Katie, and we decided to move to Newfoundland where my husband had a lot of family. I was an only child. I had two cousins who were orphaned so we brought them with us from England. I have two older children who are actually my cousins and they are both living in Ottawa. They were living in Wesleyville until 2007.

Joyce: How did you find out about the job at Yellowknife United Church?

Gwyneth: My youngest daughter Rebecca told me there was a job at the United Church and I thought perhaps I would apply. I was lucky in that respect. I really enjoy the job. If I'd had this job ten years ago I would have moved to Yellowknife then! I was the school secretary in Wesleyville.

Joyce: How do you spend your time when you aren't at work?

Gwyneth: In Wesleyville we had the young woman's choir and I was involved with that and there were the different church meetings. I spent many hours walking the dog. Now, I read a lot and when I've got spare time I spend it with the little ones and it's just nice. Rebecca has been in Yellowknife for just a year and before that when she was living in St. John's, Newfoundland, we just wouldn't see her as much. We had to come all the way to Yellowknife to be together-just so we could have supper together! I just like it here. I really do.



Wanted – Mission and Service Fund Enthusiast

This year our congregation approved a budget which increased our givings to the Mission and Service Fund from \$16,000 to \$20,250 – a huge 27% increase. This increase is a direct result of information and commitments made during our Stewardship Campaign last October. Yellowknife United Church needs a “**Mission and Service Fund Enthusiast**” who will help us meet that goal. This person must be someone who feels passionate about helping others to see the connection between God’s generosity to us and our thankful response to God – expressed through giving and who will keep the Mission and Service Fund in the minds, hearts, and financial givings of our congregational members. If you are interested in this challenging and vital position, please speak with Marg Henderson (873-4428).

Annual Garage Sale

Time to start thinking about spring cleaning? Remember those unwanted, unused, unneeded items could be another person’s treasure. That is why we will be holding our annual garage sale on Saturday, May 10. It’s a great opportunity to weed out your house and has the added benefit of helping the church. It is one of our major fund raisers for the year. In 2007 we raised \$1200 which was used towards local church operations. So remember now to collect your items and we hope you will mark May 9 (evening set-up) and May 10 (morning sale) on your calendar so that when the sign-up sheets come out, you have some time to help us make this year’s sale even better. If you would like more information, please call Marg Henderson at 873-4428.

PAR- Your Questions answered

Terrilynn Hayden

Many times throughout the year, during our announcements or in the bulletin we make reference to PAR. Many of you many have questions we hope to bring you the answers here. First of all, what does P.A.R stand for? PAR is pre authorized remittance and it is a way for you to give your church offering through an automatic bank deduction. The program is administered through the United Church General Council Office. No more remembering envelopes or writing cheques. Its an easy, no nonsense way to remember your church contributions each month.

How do we get involved? To register for PAR is easy. A quick call to the church office will have a registration form on its way to you. Just complete it and return it with a void cheque, (sorry, visa cannot be accepted) and we take care of the rest. Just remember to complete the portion allocating your givings. Deductions are made on a monthly basis about the 20th of each month.

What if I am already a PAR contributor and wish to make changes? Changes of any nature to your PAR registration can be made at anytime, not only at the beginning of the year. Your written request can be submitted to the church office, email is fine, and your changes will be made.

I am a PAR contributor, or would like to become one, but feel a little uncomfortable not placing anything in the collection plate when it passes by. No problem! We have small cards that you can place in the collection plate indicating your contribution has been made through PAR. Please call or drop by the church office to make arrangements to have some sent to you.

So you see, PAR is easy and simple, is one less thing you have to remember for church each Sunday and reduces paper as we have to order less church giving envelopes each year. If you have other questions or would like to make PAR arrangements, please call Gwyneth at the church office.

Local Outreach

Please continue to feed the purple box. Granola bars, small juice boxes and small non-perishable snacks that one would include in a brown bag lunch are much appreciated. Toiletry items: chapstick, hand lotion and Kleenex are other items that are particularly useful this time of year for people in need. Children in a family could contribute to the purple box occasionally instead of taking collection to Sunday school. With the severe climate we live in, the items we collect for those who are outside much of the time can bring some comfort. Thank you for your continued contributions.

International Outreach

The United for Peace Campaign was approved by the General Council of the United Church of Canada in 2006 originally as a response to the situation in Israel and Palestine. This initiative has broadened to include taking action for peace and justice in many countries of the world including Canada as well as the Middle Eastern countries. The campaign began November 4, 2007 and will end in December 2009. For more information on the United for Peace Campaign go to:

www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/unitedforpeace

Outreach is considering an event for the Yellowknife United Church to support the work of the wider church in this campaign.

Have you considered volunteering with the United Church of Canada?

The United Church of Canada has several openings for people who would like to serve on national committees. A listing of current opportunities to serve on General Council committees and task groups or to represent the United Church of Canada in work with other organizations is available at

<http://united-church.ca/getinvolved/servegc/>

Expressions of interest for these roles need to be received at the national office by March 31, 2008. For more information please speak with Lloyd Henderson or Peter Chynoweth.

Christian Development

Coordinators of Christian Development at Yellowknife United Church, Sean Daly and Sandy Little are pleased with the three week teaching sessions. This provides continuity in following the church calendar so teachers can develop a theme with the children eg. Lenten stories and activities. Thank you to the people who volunteer for this important contribution to worship: taking time with the children and youth. The children and youth have been learning about the Mission and Service Fund. Each week they study a story that highlights M&S work. Thank you to those who contributed to the new Bible program. The bibles are here and being used in Sunday classes.

Children who were Baptized at YK United Church



Harvey Browne Fells
Ida Kathleen Fells
Parents: Frank and Patty Fells

Mackenzie Jordan Chiasson
Parents: Ron and Lindsay Chiasson

Lucas Peter Inman
Parents: Justin and Lorraine Inman

Tydzeh Gabriel Lakota Kakfwi Lennie
Parents: Lance Lennie and Daylyn Kakfwi

Books and More Books

Jamie Pankratz-Friesen

Excerpt from *Harlot By the Side of the Road*:

...readers may be startled, perhaps even shocked, and – I hope – entertained and enlightened by what is to be found in the neglected and forbidden corners of the Bible. These stories reveal the complexity of the human heart and mind; they show us what human beings really feel and what they really do; and they suggest that a good and righteous life is not always a matter of simple obedience to what we imagine to be the moral strictures of the Bible...[The Bible is] a map whose creator, whether human or divine, regarded even our most outlandish passions with a kind and compassionate eye. That's why the forbidden tales of the Bible are not merely a rollicking good read; above all, the Bible affirms the essential qualities that make us human in the first place.

Jonathan Kirsch

For the past several weeks a group of five to twelve folks from our church have been meeting to discuss some of the lesser talked about tales from the Bible. Using Jonathan Kirsch's book *Harlot By the Side of the Road* as their guide, the book/Bible study group has delved into Old Testament stories involving incest, rape, trickery, and mass destruction. While the scandalous nature of the texts, coupled with Kirsch's vivid and embellished retelling of these tales make for provocative reading, the goal of the group is not to focus on the shock value of such stories. Rather the group's collective focus has developed into trying to decipher why these stories were included in the Bible, and what meaning these stories may have for us as Christians in our world today.

The book/Bible study was initiated by the Christian Education Committee who saw the study group as a way to extend their more common (yet crucial) mandate of providing Christian education for our young people, to providing an opportunity for adults to engage in faith dialogue. The response to the study group has been excellent, and the dialogue that has resulted from the gatherings has been filled with questioning, passion, openness, and honesty.

If you are interested in the study group and would like to come and check it out (even just for a Sunday or two), please come and join in – the group meets at 4pm on Sundays upstairs at the church. Also, if you are reading a book that you think would lend itself well to a group study, or are interested in exploring the Bible in general please let the Christian Education Committee know -- they are always open to ideas for future studies. Some current ideas for future Bible/book studies include exploring New Testament themes as well as the work of feminist theologians.

Sammy's Lake Retreat

Barb Paquin

On February 9th, a group of ten congregation members met for a day of fun, reflection and workshops at the Alliance Church next to Sammy's Lake on Highway #3. The weather was cold but the atmosphere in the recently-renovated dairy barn was warm and comfortable. We are very grateful to the Alliance Church congregation for letting us use their beautiful facility.

We started and ended our day with worship led by Elaine Stewart and Reverend Peter Chynoweth. We also had scheduled fun breaks facilitated by Jaime Friesen-Pankratz and Sean Daly. The fun breaks had us laughing so hard we cried.

There were also three workshop sessions. Peter led us through an asset mapping exercise where we named some of the many assets of our church and congregation members. We then grouped several assets together and came up with an action involving those assets. After six plans of action were developed, we each "voted with our feet" and stood beside the action we were most interested in working on. The top three were extending a more deliberate welcome to those that society does not always welcome, especially gay and lesbian community members; exploring the link between spirituality and wilderness; and hosting a church/community street party. It was felt that the asset mapping exercise could be repeated with other members of the church at a later time.

Elaine Stewart led the group through a review of our church's mission statement. The statement was written at least fifteen years ago and we wanted to see if it accurately reflects the church we are today. After an exercise of looking at what our church is now, we reviewed the mission statement and made comments. This process will continue with the official board for further work.

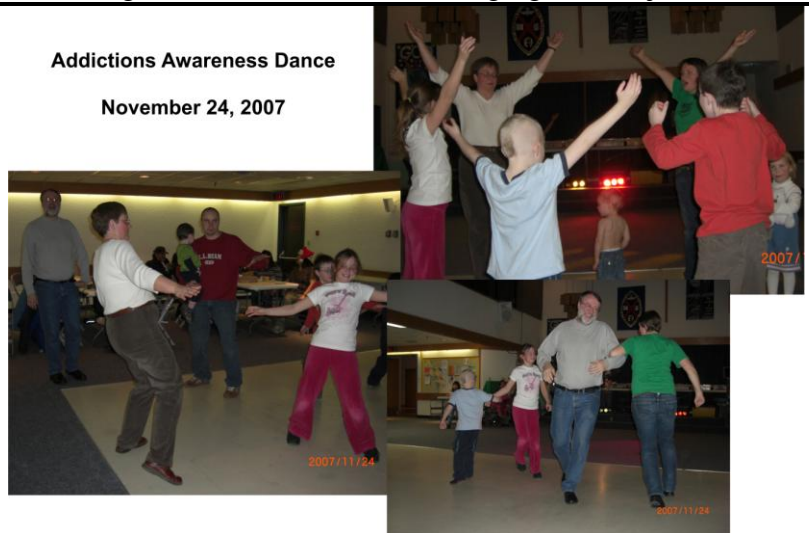
Our last workshop looked at stewardship planning. When Kathryn Hofley, a gift planning consultant with the United Church, visited us in the fall, she spoke of the need to have a plan of action for any large budget surpluses or bequests that may come our way. As a group, we discussed the split between spending right away and saving for later. Then we brainstormed ideas or a wish-list, of projects and programs the church could take on if we were to have an extra sum of money to spend. This information has been given to the Stewardship Committee as a first step to developing a more formal plan.

The participants at the retreat were grateful to have been able to spend the day together to worship, play and have meaningful discussions that we don't seem to find time for in our daily lives. The day flew by. We look forward to the next church retreat and encourage other members of the congregation to join in.

Addictions Awareness Dance

November 24, 2007

Outreach and Stewardship are hoping to join forces to plan a family dance in April. Look for the date and time of this in the church bulletin. The National Addictions Awareness week dance in November of last year was a successful event that offered good fun, fellowship and refreshments to everyone in the community.



Editor: Joyce Caines

Desktop Publishing: Melanie Dumont