

**Yellowknife United Church
Spring 2013 Newsletter**

The Gift of Story

Ralph is a gifted story teller and a wonderful writer. Even if you haven't heard of Ralph Milton you might be familiar with him if you know the title "Living God's Way". Many years ago Ralph wrote this retelling of many Bible stories for children, and I use it often as a storybook in the "Learning with Children" time at worship. Ralph Milton and his author friend Jim Taylor started Wood Lake Books and began publishing a church school curriculum known as "The Whole People of God". It had started out as a pilot project by some people in Regina more than twenty years ago. Wood Lake Books took that project and ran with it. I could say a lot more about that whole story, but I will leave that for your own research, except to say that it has been a great success, the products of which I continue to use on a regular basis each week in preparation for worship.



A number of years before "Living God's Way" and Wood Lake Books, Ralph wrote a book called "The Gift of Story". It was a plain little book with a cover that looked a lot like a brown paper bag, but for me it was an inspiring little handbook on the power and purpose of storytelling as a tool in the faith journey. I read it a number of times for the insights and methods it outlined.

I mention Ralph and that book because I think they are useful resources to describe in part The United Church of Canada. We are a church of stories. They are told fondly by people all across our country and denomination, as an insight into the faith and spirit of the people who are a part of our church.

We have been invited, in an unprecedented fashion, to once again be involved in some very important story telling. In many ways, this story telling will be the basis for a brand new take on whom and what we are as a church.

This story telling is taking place even as I write this. It began with a decision by the 41st General Council in Ottawa last summer to engage the church in a Comprehensive Review. This Review has been characterized as one in which "everything is on the table", and in order to include a broad and deep interaction with the whole church, congregations have been invited into a process of storytelling that will help to guide the Comprehensive Review Task Group in making its' report to the next General Council.

You will be hearing more about this process of storytelling in the coming weeks. If you are on the Board, or some of the committees of the Church you have heard about it already, and if you were at worship on May 5th you heard even more.

I have been recruited as one of the people who will be listening to the stories of up to ten different congregations. It will primarily (especially for me!) be mediated by technology which allows for face to face and resource augmented conversations without the need for travel. I tried it out the other day in a ninety-minute training session and I was very impressed by what is possible.

I will be encouraging a group of people from Yellowknife United Church to be involved in this process. It will require ninety minutes of time sometime between now and the end of October (originally it was hoped this could all be done by the end of June, but the logistics of getting up to eight people together in one place in over two thousand congregations proved to make this deadline unrealistic!) with the knowledge that your insights and stories will be part of guiding the ongoing story of The United Church of Canada in the future.

The changed future of the church has been pretty much part of every visioning conversation I have been involved with in the church for the last two or three years. It is a given that changing demographics, finances and interests will change the church in ways that are more significant than any other time of change in our eighty-eight year history. For me, that fact carries with it a great deal of excitement and anticipation, just as it also carries great apprehension and sadness.

We know that God has not stopped showing up in the lives of people and communities, but we know that the way God's presence is being lived out has changed. We know that our mission as a community of faith has changed. We know that we are as much a community that needs to hear of God's presence and purpose as we are a community that has a story to tell about God's purpose and presence.

The Comprehensive Review is one way to both hear and tell stories about past and future. I hope you will find a way to be part of the story.

Peter Chynoweth, Minister

Gwyneth Davis is Retiring

Our Office Administrator, Gwyneth Davis, will be retiring at the end of May. We're very happy for Gwyn, for whom this will be a chance to put her feet up and take a well-deserved break, but it also is sad news for the rest of us, who will miss her warm and cheerful presence in our church office.

Gwyn first joined our Church team in November 2007, shortly after she and her husband Levi moved to Yellowknife from Newfoundland to be closer to family. It's hard to believe that it's been almost six years.

We asked Gwyn if she would offer a few comments on her time as our Office Administrator:

"I have worked nearly all of my adult life and can honestly say I have never enjoyed a job as much as I have enjoyed working at Yellowknife United Church. It has been a wonderful way to spend the last few years before retirement.

Through work I have met many people who now stop for a chat in the stores and on the streets and I have met, again through work, people who I now count as friends rather than just acquaintances. It has been a wonderful experience and I would be remiss if I didn't mention the other man in my life (with apologies to Sharon and Levi) Peter, his warmth, understanding and patience, particularly with my computer skills, has certainly added to the enjoyment of the work experience. Also Kirk, Manuel and crew have all made for happy working conditions. I will certainly miss everyone when I leave.

However, I will not miss getting up at 6:15 every morning, especially in the winter. I found last winter very long and it will be nice to be able to stay in the warmth later this year, when the dark, cold days return."

Gwyneth counts meeting Murray McLaughlin as one of the many memorable moments working at YKUC, but by far the most memorable has been "meeting all the wonderful Yellowknifers and Northerners over the last six years and calling this city, home."

We're happy to hear that Gwyneth and Levi will be staying in Yellowknife for the near future.

We are planning to say thank you to Gwyneth after worship on Sunday, May 26th. We hope you can stay to wish her well.

Finally, we are very happy to report that we have been successful in our search for Gwyneth's successor. Diane Trottier will be starting in the office on May 15th. Diane brings many years of experience working with the public in a number of administrative roles. Please drop by and say hello to her.

Margaret Melhorn
Cappy Elkin
Ian Moir

Ministry and Personnel Committee



Affirm Committee

Part of the work of the Affirm Committee is an ongoing commitment to educating ourselves and the congregation about the issues that affect the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender community. The following article is written by our Moderator Gary Paterson and it is the story of the experience of a family and church as they grapple with the difficulties surrounding a young person changing his gender identity. To read more of Moderator Paterson's blog go to: www.garypaterson.ca. We hope that our church could be as welcoming as the one in the article.

A Resurrection Story

Posted on **March 28, 2013** by **Gary Paterson**

Like everyone, I have my blind spots and stereotypes—like, my assumption that small towns aren't all that accepting of differences, and if, just for instance, you're an LGBT person you should probably head for the big city as soon as you can. Well, let me tell you an Easter story that blows a hole in my stereotypes!

Up in northern Ontario—north as in you have to turn the map over to take a look at the other half of the province—way up there, was a young boy named Isaac. Except he didn't feel like a boy. Rather, he felt like a girl who was stuck inside the wrong body. His family knew Isaac was different, and they visited doctors, psychologists, and a whole bunch of experts. Now here, I guess, is the first miracle: nobody told Isaac he was crazy. Instead, they agreed with him—he was a girl in a boy's body. Which was going to make life very difficult, but it was his truth.

And here's the second miracle: Isaac's family said, with no reservations or conditions, "We love you!" And when Isaac slowly began to appear as Crystal, they said, "Welcome!"

Now, Crystal's family are United Church folk—members and worshippers at a little church in a small town in the north. Not the larger, liberal, affirming congregation in town but the little church that some think of as more conservative. Holy Week was fast approaching, and everyone was excited about Easter Sunday worship. Only trouble was, when it came to church, it was always Isaac who had shown up. But this year was going to be different.

On Easter Sunday, as Crystal got ready for church, she put on fancy shoes, her hairband, and a beautiful dress. And off the family went. At Children's Time, when all the kids came forward, Crystal was part of the crowd. Well, not actually a crowd—remember, this was a small church, where everybody pretty much knew everyone else. People were staring, whispering, and surreptitiously pointing at the little girl sitting on the steps at the front of the church. The minister took a good long look at this new person who had arrived for worship, and she said, "Well, hello. You must be Crystal. You're very beautiful. I'm happy to meet you. Welcome to church!" And then she proceeded to tell the Easter story just like always.

And that was that. Except, of course, it wasn't. It's never that simple. There were phone calls—lots of them—and much upset in the congregation. So the minister called folk together and said, "We're surprised; we don't understand. Of course it feels strange. Isaac isn't Isaac anymore but now is Crystal. But she's a member of our church; this is where she belongs. She has trusted us enough to let us see who she really is. She needs us. This isn't easy for her. We have to help her. We're called to accept Crystal, to love her for the person she is, the person she is becoming, the person she was brave enough and trusting enough to share with us. We need to say, 'Welcome to the church, Crystal.'"

And they did. I don't know all the details, and I'm sure it wasn't always easy. But I believe the church's welcome will be one of the reasons Crystal will thrive in adolescence, unlike so many other young transgendered people who try to kill themselves. Crystal will have known a place of acceptance in her family and her church.

Which sounds to me like resurrection occurred that Easter in a little church in a small northern Ontario town, where followers of Jesus discovered and proclaimed that "if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" for "there is no longer Jew or Greek...slave or free...male or female; for all of [us]...are one in Christ Jesus."

And here's how Easter keeps moving in our midst: Crystal's family writes:

We are also willing to communicate with others, if...the Moderator pass[es] contact information to us, we would be willing to talk, share resources, and be supportive.

Spring Clean Up

A sure sign of spring is the City of Yellowknife's Clean Up.....

This year's clean up is scheduled for the week of May 12-18th. Yellowknife United Church will be doing our part on the evening of Monday, May 13th (alternate day, Tuesday, May 14th), mark it on your calendars. If you can volunteer a little of your time or the whole evening on the 13th, all assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Watch and listen for more information on the time and route during worship services or speak with Denise Drouin.



United Church Women (UCW) News

The Yellowknife United Church Women (UCW) would like to offer a big thank you to the whole congregation for supporting us in our endeavors over the past year. With your help we have raised just over \$3,000 which will be used to help support the life and work of the church locally, nationally and internationally.

There is one more activity in our year and we invite the women of the congregation to come out and join us:

June 3/13 6:30 p.m. - Year-end pot luck and penny auction (great opportunity for food, fellowship and fun); hosted by Margaret Melhorn at 86C Morrison Drive.

Please bring a pot luck dish to share and one or two new or gently used wrapped gifts which will be auctioned off. We will also make plans to distribute the funds we have raised.

For more information, please contact Marg Henderson at 873-4428 or Jeannette Hall at 873-3942.

Doing a Good Turn for Others

As part of Christian development, Yellowknife Scouting celebrated Good Turn Week, April 13th to 21st. This was supported by the City of Yellowknife as Mayor Heyck proclaimed it Good Turn Week. You may have seen orange bracelets floating around town as people provided an act of kindness to someone. Each act of kindness was followed by the passing along of an orange bracelet. Once a bracelet was shared, the receiver was to do an act of kindness for someone and pass the bracelet along again. If you received an orange bracelet, we hope you were able to put a smile on someone's face by doing a good turn and tagging another community member to think of others.

Check out www.scouts.ca/gtw to learn more about Good Turn Week. If you are interested in Yellowknife Scouting, contact Denise Drouin at denise-61@live.ca.



Maundy Thursday Pot Luck

Ever wonder how NUP space is used?

Yellowknife United Church (YKUC) holds regular Sunday services in the Auditorium and by Agreement the use of the Chapel for Sunday services is used by the Holy Lutheran congregation.

Through the Multipurpose Agreement (MPA) between YKUC and the NWT Community Services Corporation, private office space for the Minister's of both congregations and a separate office for the Administrator is provided. The Administrator, a paid employee of the Yellowknife United Church, looks after operations of the MPA on behalf of the Church.

Without question, the community of Yellowknife at large is well served by the space provided through the MPA. Beyond the normal church services, functions such as choir practice, official Board meetings, Church fundraisers etc; community outreach was a major activity of the Church. During the 2012, the Church donated 118 room rentals to community groups considered to fall under the outreach umbrella. Examples of community groups in this category include: Alcoholics Anonymous; Al-Anon; Narcotics Anonymous; Beavers; Cubs; and Scouts.

Community organizations at large such as Ecology North, Philippine Cultural Association, North Slave Metis Alliance, YWCA and Native women's Association utilized space on seventy two occasions in 2012 by rental agreement.

Other 'renters' included small business' who provided ten rentals. Commercial organizations such as North Ways Consulting, GNWT Municipal & Community Affairs, Arctic Energy Alliance and the Union of Northern Workers accounted for fifty five rentals. In addition, fifty seven events under the heading "Special Events" were held in the Auditorium.

In 2012, the Moderator of the United Church of Canada, Mardi Tindal, visited YKUC. While in Yellowknife, she met in the Auditorium with local community groups interested in discussing environmental issues of concern in the North. At one point in the meeting the Moderator asked the group if they ever gave any thought to the fact they were meeting in a sanctuary. The discussion that resulted gave credence to the positive role the MPA plays in the community in terms of a "meeting place." There was unanimous agreement voiced that the facility played an important role in the community of Yellowknife.



The Easter Altar

REMEMBER ME FROM '73?

On March 2nd, Yellowknife United Church Theatre Troup presented “Remember Me From '73?” – a reunion theme play written by Rev. Bev Brazier of Whitehorse; adapted and directed by Sean Daly for the Yellowknife audience. The eight member cast played to a packed crowd – many of whom came dressed in 70’s costumes – on the opening (and closing) night of the play. In addition to the play, the audience and cast enjoyed a delicious meal. Thanks to everyone who made this such a memorable evening.



From left to right: Paul MacDonald, Sharon Chynoweth, Peter Chynoweth, Levi Davis, Jon Soderberg, Bernice Dillman, Margaret Melhorn, Karen Wilford, Lorne Gushue



From left to right:

Jon Soderberg as Mr. Radford
Bernice Dillman as Miss Plunkett
Margaret Melhorn as Rev. Jane

From left to right:

Sharon Chynoweth as Suzie Sizzler
Karen Wilford as Sharlene Sniffington-Smith



Annual Garage Sale

On Saturday April 27th garage sale aficionados found the auditorium jam-packed with treasures. A treadmill anyone or a four-piece bedroom set? We had it. Dishes, furniture, games, puzzles, clothing, linens, art decor, books, books, and more books – you name it, we had it. At the end of the day, \$1,527.00 was raised from the “treasures” and \$196.00 from UCW’s Café for a grand total of \$1,723.00.

A big thank you to the volunteers who made it all happen; all those who contributed items; and all the people who came out and purchased our treasures.



Items for all ages



People just kept on shopping