

Yellowknife United Church Newsletter

Fall 2014

Now What?

I recall speaking at the annual meeting last May about the fall season that lay ahead. It was going to be a busy fall, packed with three important events - any one of which would help to set an agenda for the months of fall.

The first was the arrival of Alison Mock - the ministry intern that we had arranged to host for a four month placement. The second event was the hosting of Northern Lights Presbytery on one of its "once in five years" forays to a northern pastoral charge. The third event was the most recent - the visit to Yellowknife by Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Gary Paterson, as a first stop on his short tour of Alberta and Northwest Conference.



All three of those important events have now happened. September, leaking into the first few days of October, was at least as busy as we anticipated, but it was also a very affirming and energizing time.

As I've come to expect but never take for granted, the congregation of Yellowknife United Church responded with grace and grease (of the elbow variety!) as we helped Alison, Derek, Sarah and Jamie get settled in their donated apartment and welcomed them to our community of faith.

There was no stopping us as we proceeded from those first couple of weeks of welcome and relationship building into a busy weekend of hosting and showcasing our city, our church, and our community to the folks of Northern Lights Presbytery.

With barely time to catch our breath, the people of Yellowknife United Church were once again invited and encouraged to come out to welcome and participate in the aforementioned "welcome back" potluck supper (on a mid-week evening no less!) and stay to hear from our Moderator, and then as if to show just how dedicated we could be, a healthy sized group of congregation members returned an evening later to continue the conversation.

I could suggest that it was enough to keep us going for several years - at least in terms of the energy we mustered and implemented, but unfortunately, despite it possibly being enough for three years, everything came so quickly in succession that there are probably not batteries large enough to store the energy that was expended and generated.

So we find ourselves on the other side of all that anticipated activity. The planning is over and the events have happened and despite the afterglow - because all three events went extremely well - we are probably wondering what's next, while at the same time hoping that it is nothing too intense!

Is it a touch of irony that the focus of Gary Paterson's conversations with us revolved around the challenges and the opportunities for ministry in the future, even as we were discovering (or more accurately re-discovering) at least in part, the core of what makes us tick as a congregation.

It's as if the predictions of demise that were being bandied about in the conversations and statistics described by the Moderator was being put at bay by the very fact that we had rallied together to be good hosts - not only for Gary, but for Presbytery delegates before that, and for Alison, Derek, Sarah and Jamie before that.

Thank goodness that Alison and her family will still be here for three more months to help keep us on our toes, and to prevent us from a complete collapse into our easy chairs to catch our collective breath after all this activity! It's been good! Really good! Really, really good!

But we have to try and store up some of that energy into whatever high capacity and slow to discharge batteries that we can find.

There is a challenge in the words that Gary repeated with us, and we won't always be able to rely on a series of events to

spur on our motivation and to coalesce our energy into a set of skills that would help us qualify as event planners. We're good at it, but there is more to ministry! There is more than that calling to us in these days of the changing church.

That's about all I can say right now! I, too, am basking in the afterglow, hunkering down into my own easy chair, and attaching the voltmeter to my own inner battery.

What I know is that I cannot stay too long in this position, because God does not stop calling us in new directions, to new adventures, with new situations to address and new ministries to fulfil. I could not help thinking and reflecting when Gary told stories about fresh expressions of faith community in places around our country and around our world, that Yellowknife is different, and the same - probably in ways that break stereotypes and expectations on all sides. I'm excited, and nervous - alternately sometimes and often at the same time - as I consider what God might have in store for us - if not in the next few months, at least in the next few years.

It will be quite a ride! Hang on!

Peter Chynoweth
Minister



Sink or Swim!

It didn't take long for me to get my feet wet at this job – literally!

When Sarah and I first arrived in Yellowknife, we stayed a few days with my Aunt Cynthia on her houseboat. The night of our arrival, I attended my first meeting of the YKUC Board, but I left early, anxious to get back across the water while it was still light. The arrangement was that I was to phone from the dock, and Cynthia would paddle across to collect me. This was a good plan, but thanks to a technological glitch, I had her number stored incorrectly in my phone. Sharon drove me to the dock, I dialed, no answer. Retry, call failed, lather, rinse, repeat. I was stranded.

There we stood, getting eaten alive by mosquitoes, as I cast madly about in my head for a solution, an idea that would allow me to retain some shred of pride out of an increasingly embarrassing situation. Some first impression I was making! My first night in new town, my first day on a new job. We all like others to think we have it together, that we are collected and competent – and I was failing spectacularly. What to do? I looked at the water, looked at the houseboat, and looked at Sharon swatting bugs. There was only one option. Thank goodness the water level was low. I hiked up my jeans, took off my shoes, tossed my dignity aside, and waded across. Sharon was a model of compassion: she snapped a photo, and the Board had a good-natured chuckle: “Her first day, and the intern is already trying to walk on water!”

Though I cringe a little to remember it, that walk across the bay did get my internship at YKUC off on the right foot (even if that foot was a little damp). It's the perfect metaphor for exactly the kind of learning that is supposed to happen here. Of course, I hope to make some waves at YKUC. As we get to know one another, we will challenge each other with new ideas, and energize one another with shared wisdom. We will make an impression on each other, and hope that the ripple effect lasts far beyond the short time we have together. But I also know that this learning environment is safe enough for me to make mistakes. That assurance came right away, on the dock that first night. Though I may sink a time or two, I know I will never drown, because there is a whole community ready to lift me up again.

The welcome that Derek, Sarah, Jamie and I have received at Yellowknife United Church has humbled us beyond words. You have been gracious, generous and thoughtful. You furnished an apartment for us and moved us in, you thought of every detail, and embraced us into your community, each kind word reflecting just how much this congregation cares for one another. Hardly a day goes by without someone asking how we like Yellowknife, how Sarah and Jamie are doing at school, whether we have all that we need. We do, indeed. Some days, I can't believe how fast the time is going, that we are almost halfway through our term already. Other days, we feel securely at home, already part of the family.

I look forward to the rest of our time here – to fall activities, the season of Advent, and our first Christmas under the Northern Lights. Thanks to you all, and cheers to the road ahead.

Alison Mock
Ministerial Intern

Moderator Gary Paterson visits Yellowknife and Yellowknife United Church

We were pleased to welcome the Right Reverend Gary Paterson, Moderator of The United Church of Canada, on October 1 and 2, as the first stop on a short, but busy visit to Alberta and Northwest Conference. Although he was only in Yellowknife for a total of thirty-eight hours, we managed to pack in a full schedule of presentations, meetings and a little bit of sightseeing.

Arriving just in time for our annual "Welcome Back" CrockPotluck supper (which had been especially scheduled to coincide with his visit) Gary had supper with us before he addressed the congregation with an update on his work with the Comprehensive Review Task Group which has been busy working at a new vision for the United Church of Canada in light of the financial crunch that is facing the church. It was a presentation punctuated with the realities of a church in transition and the excitement of new ministries and fresh expressions of faith communities that are emerging across the country and within and on



the edges of the denomination. Thursday was a very busy day of meetings, sightseeing and familiarization with the Yellowknife context. The day began with a continuation of the driving tour of Yellowknife before a scheduled interview with the "Yellowknifer" newspaper. This was followed by a tour of the Northwest Territories Legislature.

Arrangements had been made for the Moderator to meet with members of the Yellowknife Ministerial Association and representatives from other community agencies and organizations during lunch. The small turnout of two Ministerial members and three others led to a very animated and interesting conversation about life in the north and some of the issues that both inspire and concern people who are living here. This was followed by a meeting with members of the Yellowknife United Church Affirm Committee where there was a chance to tell the story of the congregation's journey to becoming an affirming ministry and to plan some steps on the continuation of the journey to be an inclusive and radically welcoming community.

After a tour of Northern United Place, Gary was a guest on the CBC Trails End radio program and then had an opportunity to view the city from Pilot's Monument. After dinner with worship leaders from Yellowknife United Church, the visit ended with a circle conversation about the state of the church, the state of the Yellowknife United Church congregation, what it is like to be a Moderator and what it is like to live in Yellowknife. The evening ended with Gary offering a reflection on one of the scripture passages. Gary's reflection was recorded on video and shared Sunday morning.

It was a short and busy schedule, but the turnout by members of the congregation was very heartening, as was the inspiration and excitement that was generated by this opportunity to meet with Moderator Gary.

We were blessed by the opportunity to welcome him to our city and our community of faith and to give him enough of a taste of life here in Yellowknife to possibly welcome him back on a slightly more leisurely schedule.

Peter Chynoweth
Minister

Northern Lights Presbytery

Yellowknife United Church was thrilled to host Northern Lights Presbytery for their September meeting. A bus left Grande Prairie at 6:00am Sept 18th, and picked up people on the way north, while a contingency of six drove to Yellowknife from Whitehorse picking up two more adventurers on the way through Fort Nelson. In total we played host to 52 people including YKUC members and some extra visitors. By hosting I mean feeding, billeting, providing child care, arranging activities and lodgings. Our guests were not disappointed by our great northern hospitality and the weather. The Northern Lights even cooperated!

This was a team effort. Beginning in May, Peter (Chynoweth), Nancy Trotter and I started meeting to make plans. We greatly appreciated Lloyd Henderson adding his expertise, we needed it as well! The planning group sends a big thank you to Marg Henderson for her organization skills and unflagging energy in the kitchen. Thank you to the many helping hands from the congregation - everyone was well fed.

This trip was not just for fun, although we had quite a bit of that - Northern Lights Presbytery meets twice a year to conduct the work of the church, discuss questions presented to us from local congregations, Alberta Northwest Conference and/or the National office. The work involves discussions, perhaps voting on a specific matter or hearing about the work of other congregations, including achievements and challenges. Some items brought forward might be to consider support from Presbytery to a congregation through a variety of means.

The time together is filled with fellowship and opportunities to build and strengthen connections with like-minded people with a singular purpose... continuing to minister to people in our communities and support stewardship on global issues through our strengths and talents with the guidance and love taught to us by Jesus.

Cynthia Creed
Presbytery Representative

Music Matters (September 5-6, 2014)

Thanks to the financial support of the YKUC Women's group and the Christenson-Dryburgh Memorial Fund we were able to spend the first weekend in September at a wonderful music workshop, Music Matters, in Red Deer. We are so grateful for the opportunity to join fellow music leaders. The weekend was packed with many musical sessions including a hymn sing on Friday night followed by another one to get us off on the right foot on Saturday morning.

The organizers had thought of many ways for us to consider music as part of worship. Sessions included a 'tour' of *Gathering*, a resource used to guide weekly planning of service and music connected to biblical messages and ways pianists and organists can accompany hymns and not feel 'tied' to the four part choral style.

One of the highlights was the opportunity for the whole group to sing through a number of pieces of music. What a thrill to sing together as an impromptu choir! We came away with a list of new music to purchase and share with the congregation.

Finally, two other sessions gave us a chance to be creative. The first was a music writing workshop, we chose a bible verse and wrote a refrain. We began singing the words along with what we wrote and before we knew it we had created our own little 'song'. The second creative occasion was a wonderful learning opportunity on different drumming techniques and realizing that drums can be used with any music including the 'golden oldie' hymns.

The weekend wrapped up on Sunday morning with a worship service that saw us all drumming and singing many of the new pieces we learned over the weekend.

Again, we give our gratitude for the support to enrich our music knowledge and experience and look forward to sharing with Yellowknife United Church.

Elizabeth Brace
Choir Director

Sharon Chynoweth
Pianist/Accompanist



Christmas Bazaar!



Northern United Place



**November 15 &
December 6**

10AM to 3 PM



Sandwiches for the Homeless

Yellowknife's homeless day shelter provides people with shelter and a space to rest and socialize during the day when the Salvation Army shelter is closed. It also provides food to clients during the day. From June to September 2014 the day shelter was closed and these services were not available. Yellowknifers were asked to help fill the gap during the summer by providing free sandwiches that could be distributed to people who needed lunch or a snack. Suzette Montreuil coordinated a schedule of volunteers and Yellowknife United Church (YKUC) was one of many groups that were asked to help.

YKUC Outreach Committee was able to provide sandwiches four times over the summer (and I think others in the congregation did some as well). We got together to make the sandwiches, which was easy and fun. It gave us a chance to socialize, and after the first time we got pretty efficient at making and bagging 30 sandwiches at a time, assembly-line style. The kids really enjoyed it and decided we weren't allowed to make the sandwiches without them!

Brian Fletcher of the Roman Catholic Diocese picked the sandwiches up the following morning and distributed them downtown during the day. He tells us that the people who received the sandwiches enjoyed and appreciated them. For myself, I appreciated the chance to do something easy and tangible to help meet a need in the community. On October 1, 2014 the homeless day shelter re-opened at a new location downtown.

Joanna Wilson
Outreach Committee



Sandwich makers at work (L-R: Sarah Walker, Anya Smillie & James Smillie).

United Church Women

It's time to start filling up your calendar with important dates from the United Church Women's group.

Monday October 20th at 6pm - Antipasto making in the church kitchen

Monday November 17th at 6:30pm - Pepper Jelly making in the church kitchen

Saturday November 20th at 2pm - YKUC Christmas Tea and Bake Sale on in the auditorium **(NOTE: preparations begin at 10am all volunteers will be appreciated!)**

Everyone (men and women) are welcome to join us! Contact Marg Henderson at 873-4428 for more information.



United Church Women

Annual Christmas Tea & Sale

(No admission charge for the sale!)

When: Saturday, November 29, 2014

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.

Youth Group donation to Betty House

Over the years the Youth Group has raised funds for two local programs: “Warm Feet for the Street” and YWCA Shelters for Women. In order to better understand issues related to homelessness the Youth Group invited Julie Green, a staff member at the YWCA, to help in their learning and share that learning with the congregation. At that time, the group made a commitment to raise \$2000.00 for Betty House, now known as Lynn’s Place. This spring, that goal was realized. Many youth helped in the fundraising activities (which ranged from bake sales and refreshment stands to delivering flyers). Great job, Youth!



Pictured with Julie Green in this photo are: Ally MacInnes, Martha Hamre, Johanna Stewart and Mia MacInnes.

Youth Group Summer Garden at NUP

This is the seventh year that the Youth Group has planted a community garden in the planter boxes outside NUP (thanks to the Community Services Corporation for funding this project!), and this may have been the best summer yet! With the support of Kathryn Walker, the youth worked with the residents of NUP to plan a garden that would have the residents’ input and participation. With that input, the amount of harvestable plants increased from the usual two herb boxes, to several additional boxes that included onions, kale, potatoes, carrots, lettuce and tomatoes. Of course, there were several flower boxes as well. A big thank you to Martha Hamre who worked with the whole group to organize the planting and watering schedule. At the beginning of October, when we worked at digging up the plants to prepare the beds for winter, we had a chance to hear from one of the new students at Aurora about the impact the gardens were making. She thanked us profusely for the garden and said that its presence had been ‘life changing’ for her. As she arrived in Yellowknife for school early in the fall, she had been chatting with other students outside, when she noticed the plants in the box she was leaning against. She recognized all the plants as ‘harvestable’ and immediately knew that whoever had put those plants there, had done so for the benefit of the students and residents. She felt thrilled with this recognition of ‘someone’s generosity’, and said the moment represented both a huge welcome and an epiphany! The light of a loving community – even though it was a community unseen – was very present to her! They were amazing words to hear! Thanks to Robyn for her story. And thanks to Kathryn, Martha and all the youth for their wonderful work!

Elaine Stewart
Youth Group

Scouts and Yellowknife United Church

The Christian Development (CD) Committee is responsible for liaising with the Scouting group that our church sponsors. The church has sponsored Scouts for many years by providing free space for their weekly meetings; currently there are Beavers and Cubs that meet at the church on Monday evenings.

In an effort to strengthen the relationship between the church and the Scouts, the Scouts were invited to help out at the recent fall supper. Six Scouts and their leaders cleaned the tables and did the dishes following the supper while the Moderator spoke. The congregation was very grateful for this help and gave the Scouts a long ovation when they were finished their work.

The CD Committee will look for other ways to increase the interaction between the Scouting movement and the church. For more information on Yellowknife Scouts, check out their Facebook page.

Barb Paquin
Chair, Christian Development



YKUC Activities

