

Yellowknife United Church Newsletter

Spring 2011



Easter is an example of a moveable feast. It can happen as early as the end of March or as is the case this year, almost at the end of April. I did some checking and it is only one day ahead of the latest possible date. With so much time to get ready for Lent, we should be well prepared. As you may know, Lent has traditionally been a time to engage a spiritual discipline. This is most often manifested in the practice of denying ourselves something. Many people still mark the season of Lent by giving something up. I've known people for example who have given up chocolate, alcohol and even Facebook as their Lenten discipline. The idea is similar to that of fasting - something we find more commonly in other faith traditions. Emptying ourselves of something we enjoy can have several helpful consequences. We may have more time on our hands (by giving up Facebook for example), or we may be drawn by a craving (for chocolate for example) to think about what we miss and thus be drawn to reflect on the reason for this denial of something pleasurable. This leads us, albeit in a somewhat circuitous way, to be drawn to reflect on God's presence in our lives. It is similar to the way that religious icons are meant to work - a symbol draws us to reflect on something else. Responding to a craving we are drawn to reflect on the reason for that craving and thus think about our relationship with God. Have you ever noticed that the word discipline comes from the same root as disciple? There is a guiding and directing aspect to the practice of denying ourselves something valuable or desired as we seek a closer and deeper relationship with God.

You may have heard me offer an alternative to the tradition of denying ourselves something during Lent. Partly I've offered the alternative to get away from the fun that has often been made of the giving something up. Have you ever heard a student say they are giving up homework for Lent, or someone else give up doing the vacuuming? Of course these ideas, hopefully in jest, completely miss the point of a discipline which involves fasting or the denial of something nice. I realised a number of years ago that instead of giving something up for Lent it is also possible to add something as a discipline during Lent. It might actually be a more difficult practice. As I mentioned earlier, the denial of something might actually result in more time, whereas adding something without a compensatory subtracting of something can mean that a decision to add a spiritual practice to our lives can create more busyness. Whether we add or subtract, the principle is the same. A regular ritual is a way to focus our minds and hearts on a particular goal. We don't eat chocolate or consume alcohol and we resolve to deepen our relationship with God. We deny ourselves time on Facebook and we have more time to deepen our relationship with God. We engage in centring prayer during Lent and the ritual and activity of the prayer focus our minds on God's presence in and around us. We write something every day in Lent as a way of deepening our relationship with God.

There are many ways we can engage in a spiritual practice. There are no right or wrong ways to do it. There may be ways that work better for you and some that don't work as well for you. Certainly some ways of engaging in a spiritual discipline can create a certain amount of resistance for us - and that is part of the method and purpose. Others can simply be a longed for complement to the day. I can imagine that some people have used a particular practice during Lent and found it so helpful that it became a regular part of their spiritual lives in all seasons of the year.

Last year as my spiritual practice I decided to write a blog entry for every day in Lent. It was great at first, but as time went on it became sometimes a large millstone around my neck. However, it did leave me grateful for the experience. I began the process with a good deal of helpful reflection on just what the point of a spiritual discipline is and so as part of this year's practice I am going to read what I wrote last year. I also know I had some other insights into possible alternative ways of observing Lent. I am looking forward to re-reading them, and perhaps engaging a few different spiritual exercises this year during Lent. After all I have had time to think about it - with Easter being so far into April, and so I get the feeling it is not going to sneak up on me in quite the same way that it has in other years.

May whatever Lenten discipline you take for yourself be one that accomplishes the goal of taking part in it, namely of deepening your relationship with God. I look forward to being with you on the journey that is Lent!

Peter Chynoweth

In November 2010, the Stewardship Campaign was held with the theme of “Our Changing Church”. The Campaign report identified a number of recommendations, one of which was that as a congregation we need to be reminded of our Mission Statement so that we can reflect on who we are and what we are meant to do and be. This Statement was developed many years ago and still has much to say to us today.

Mission Statement

Yellowknife United Church is a community of Christians
who enjoy fellowship grounded in a common growing faith.

The opportunity for worship and reflection
offers the strength and spiritual development we need
to live and minister in our society.

We value the Christian education of our children and adults.
By exploring our Christian heritage
we understand our faith more deeply.

We seek to be enriched
by spiritual traditions of the northern peoples.
As a congregation of the United Church of Canada
we accept a calling to share our gifts,
to work for a just and peaceful community
and to exercise faithful stewardship
of the life and health of God’s creation.

Affirm Study Group

Recently at Yellowknife United we’ve been invited by a few people and occasions to reflect on how welcoming a congregation we are. The Affirm Study Group is an effort to continue that reflection.

The purpose of the study group is to invite the congregation on a journey to explore whether we want to officially become an affirming congregation. Basically it’s about deciding whether Yellowknife United Church would officially and visibly welcome all people regardless of sexual orientation (gay, lesbian bisexual, straight) or gender identity (whether a person is transgendered or cisgendered, a term meaning essentially non-transgendered). If those terms are confusing or unfamiliar to you, don’t worry; there’ll be lots of time for learning and discussion.

Part of the process is to also reflect on how welcoming the church is to other marginalized groups within society. If you’d like more detail on what that means you can talk to any one of the members of the study group, or visit the web site www.affirmunited.ca

We recently hosted lunch and a movie called “For the Bible Tells Me So” after worship. It’s available if anyone would like to watch it at home with their family or friends, and is a great focus for discussion.

The group consists of Marg Henderson, Lorne Gushue, Janice Daly, Kathy Burns, Sharon Chynoweth, Nancy Trotter, and Donna Allen. Please feel free to approach any of these people to ask questions and discuss the issues. We’re also in the process of identifying two people who are not part of the study group just in case you’d like to approach someone outside the group to ask and discuss. The names will be confirmed soon.

We’re also embarking on D3 (dine, discuss, dash!), which is a series of simple lunches after worship to discuss some questions about the journey mentioned above.

This is a process, and the outcome is by no means predetermined. We welcome all input, and hope the discussions, events and reflections on these issues will be fun, faithful, and responsive to God’s call to us.

Recipe Roundup!

At the lunch and movie afternoon hosted by the Affirm Study Group in February, a number of people expressed interest in having the recipe for one of the soups provided that day.

Thanks to Donna Allen for both making the soup for the lunch and sharing the recipe with everyone!

Baked Potato Soup

Ingredients

4 baking potatoes (about 2 1/2 pounds)
1 medium onion diced
6 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled (save the drippings)
2/3 cup all-purpose flour (about 3 ounces)
6 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
1 cup (4 ounces) reduced-fat shredded extra sharp cheddar cheese
2 teaspoon coarse salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup reduced-fat sour cream
3/4 cup chopped green onions or chives
Cracked black pepper (optional)

Preparation

Preheat oven to 400°.

Pierce potatoes with a fork; bake at 400° for 1 hour or until tender. Cool. Peel potatoes; coarsely mash.

Cut bacon into a dice and fry until crisp.

If not making soup vegetarian, sauté onion in bacon fat until translucent, otherwise use 2 tbsp vegetable oil

Add flour to fat and onions and cook a few minutes

Gradually add milk, stirring with a whisk until blended.

Cook over medium heat until thick and bubbly (about 8 minutes).

Add mashed potatoes and blend briefly with a hand blender – not too long or it will get gluey

Add cheese, salt and pepper, stirring until cheese melts. Remove from heat.

Stir in sour cream and chives or green onions.

Cook over low heat 10 minutes or until thoroughly heated (do not boil).

Sprinkle each serving with bacon and additional cheese and chives if desired.

Garnish with cracked pepper, if desired.



Annual Garage Sale

Starting to think about spring cleaning? Remember those unwanted, unused, un-needed items could be another person's treasure. Mark Saturday April 30th on your calendars!

YKUC is holding the annual garage sale. It's a great opportunity to weed out your house with the added benefit of helping the Church. The annual garage sale is one of the Church's major fundraisers each year. In 2010, \$2,061 was raised and used towards operational costs of the Church.

The event starts by putting items aside now, dropping them off at the Church the night before (Friday April 29th) with the grand finale, the morning sale on April 30th.

With your help this year's sale can be even better! If you would like more information, please call Gwyneth Davis at 873-6291, the Church office.



Annual City Clean Up

Looking for an opportunity to help the Church and the community while getting a little exercise and fresh air? Join other congregation members and be part of the Annual City Clean Up in May.

The City provides this fundraising opportunity to community organizations each spring. YKUC's participation earns approximately \$1,000 for the Church while beautifying Yellowknife.

At the little cost of a few hours for one or two evenings many things are gained:

- The City gets a spring 'face lift' from the garbage that has been hidden under the snow all winter.
- Families get to spend time outdoors together, providing stewardship to the community and the earth.
- The Church raises funds for the Sunday School program.
- Memories are created as the congregational members spend time together.

Mark the Annual City Clean up on your calendars during the month of May....stay tuned for more information on the specific dates!

Property & Maintenance Update

Property and Maintenance has been busy on the latest project, the manse. The manse is a valuable asset to YKUC and we need to take care of it!

In 2010, it was identified that the manse required attention in a variety of areas including: painting the deck, replacing the toilet in the main bathroom, installing new trim, repairing the 'fox fence', replacing the chimney, re-doing the basement bathroom due to mould and moisture and replacing the outdoor siding.

Church volunteers have been busy completing many of the smaller tasks on the list. Thank you for your gifts of time and talents. Many hands make light work!

The large issue of mould and moisture in the basement bathroom is currently being addressed. A contractor has been busy over the past month redoing the bathroom. The bathroom has been 'stripped' of the old fixtures and mould damaged drywall. We are happy to report that this project will soon be crossed off the list!

The next major project is to upgrade the insulation and replace the aging siding. This is a major financial undertaking for our small congregation and we hope that you will show your support for this project by remembering the Capital Fund in your weekly offerings.

Property and Maintenance can always use an extra pair of hands for smaller maintenance projects that arise throughout the year. If you have time or talents to offer please let Terrilyn Hayden know. There is always an opportunity to lend a hand.

Youth Group News

The youth group would like to thank the congregation and community for their generous support of our fundraising events. The sales of Christmas re-usable cloth bags, ornaments and baked goods earned more than eight hundred dollars. This year, the money we raised has gone towards three causes in which we took interest. We put two hundred and fifty dollars towards stuffing ten socks for the outreach program “warm feet for the street”. Another two hundred and fifty contribution went to the YWCA’s Allison MacAteer house, the local woman’s shelter. Combining the remainder of our funds with money saved from last year, six hundred dollars was sent to the Mexican village where Jaime and Bruce Friesen-Pankratz have been working for the past two years. They bought a printer for their community newsletter, which is published by the youth in the community. The village also used some of the money we sent to start a water project to filter rain water and grey water into clean, useable water.

This is the third year that the youth group has sent money to the village where Jaime and Bruce, and their three children, are stationed for work with the Mennonite Central Committee. The first year, after learning that the children in the village had only one soccer ball to share among them, the youth asked Jaime and Bruce to use the funds for sports equipment and art supplies. In the second year the money sent was used to buy a Rosetta Stone learn to speak English program, which has been used by villagers of all ages for community classes and a laptop computer to start a regular publication of the village’s first newsletter.

Thank you again to everyone who has generously responded to our fundraisers!



Members of the Youth Group leading a church service

Hello from southern Mexico, the heart of much more than just the drug stories you see on the news. We are in our last four months of our three year community development contract with the Mennonite Central Committee. We live in a small community (255 people) in rural Guerrero. There is electricity in our community but no running water, telephone or cellular service or Internet access. People here are primarily subsistence farmers (maize, beans, chilies, pumpkins) that also rely on income from family members illegally working in the United States.

Along with community members (and help from the Yellowknife United Youth Group) we have been working on a number of initiatives that fall under the very encompassing theme of watershed management. Jaime has been working with a group of women that have formed their own pizzeria and bakery. They transformed an old abandoned community building into their kitchen and now sell their ware every Friday evening. Jaime also mentors a group of aspiring young artists that meet twice a week to work on their creations. Other things Jaime is involved with include an Internet class (taught in a nearby town), a children's computer and craft class (sponsored by the YKUC youth group), as well as adult literacy and mathematic classes.

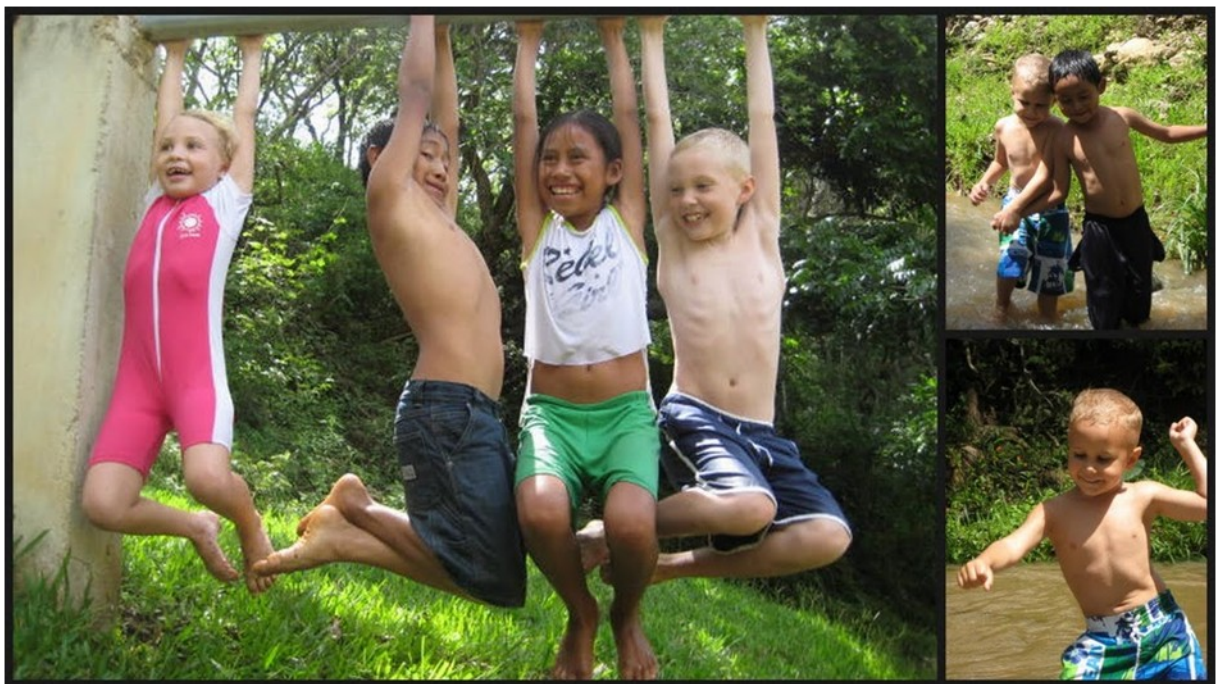
Bruce has been working with community members to develop their own newspaper which celebrated its first anniversary this past January (Jaime also helps in this process). The purchase of a laser printer was made possible though a donation of funds from the YKUC youth group! The printer is now used to print out 60 copies of the paper every month. The newspaper is the only newspaper in the entire municipality of Olinale (population of 60,000). Bruce has also been working with two community groups, the Zacango Watershed Management group (ZWM) and Agua Para Siempre (APS). The ZWM group has been monitoring their water quality for a year. They are also currently developing a waste management plan for the community. The APS group is involved with constructing rainwater collecting cisterns and dry latrines in the surrounding communities.

Zam, Hizee, and Ziko continue to enjoy life in Mexico. All three enjoy hanging out with their friends and speak great Spanish (they are often called upon by their parents to translate.). Zam enjoys drawing and playing volleyball. Hizee is a true animal lover and helps take care of our donkeys, pigs, chickens, dogs, cats, rabbits... Ziko is now more Mexican than Canadian. He is a man about town and loves spicy food. All three of the kids also participate in the local luchalibre league which holds community events on a monthly basis.

We really appreciate the support (both financially and spiritually) we have received and continue to receive from the YKUC. We plan on returning to Yellowknife when our contract is up. One of the reasons we want to return is because we miss the fellowship of YKUC (hint: If you know of any jobs that fit our skill sets we would love to hear from you).

Thanks again for your support. Viva Mexico y Viva Yellowknife United Church.

Ziko, Hizee, Zam, Jaime, Bruce



Pictures from Yellowknife United Church



Sharon Chynoweth and Jan Stirling prepare to sell antipasto and pepper jelly at the UCW Tea and Bake Sale.



Two of the animals on the Ark painted by Janice Daly in the nursery.



Upper left: Sean Daly cooking up a storm at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.



Upper right: Brad Elkin Hall making pancake batter for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper with his Grandpa working behind him.

Right: Hungry people line up for pancakes and sausages.



How To Plant Your Garden

First, you come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses.



FOR THE GARDEN OF YOUR DAILY LIVING,

PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS :



1. Peas of mind
2. Peas of heart
3. Peas of soul

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH:



1. Squash gossip
2. Squash indifference
3. Squash grumbling
4. Squash selfishness

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE:

1. Lettuce be faithful
2. Lettuce be kind
3. Lettuce be patient
4. Lettuce really love one another



NO GARDEN IS WITHOUT TURNIPS:

1. Turnip for meetings
2. Turnip for service
3. Turnip to help one another



TO CONCLUDE OUR GARDEN WE MUST HAVE THYME:



1. Thyme for each other
2. Thyme for family
3. Thyme for friends

WATER FREELY WITH PATIENCE AND CULTIVATE WITH LOVE. THERE IS MUCH FRUIT IN YOUR GARDEN BECAUSE YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.