

Yellowknife United Church

Spring 2016 Newsletter

God's Mission in the World Has a Church

I first encountered the statement at a meeting I attended at the "Star of the North" retreat centre in St. Albert, Alberta. I don't even remember what meeting it was, but the speaker was Steve Willey. Steve Willey did not come up with the statement, he was repeating it from a book written by someone else. The statement resonated with me and continues to do so. "God's mission in the world has a Church".

There have been lots of meetings since then, and quite a few of them have had, if not as the main topic, then certainly in the background, a concern for the future of the church - the Comprehensive Review, Pastoral Care discussions and a workshop, visits from our Moderator, Joint Needs Assessment committee work, Presbytery meetings, Pastoral Oversight meetings, Worship Committee, CLAM, Affirm, Outreach and Christian Development meetings. Different agendas, but some of the same background.

We are currently embarked on another set of meetings – our own version of a needs assessment – to discern some future direction for ourselves as a community of faith.

All of the meetings I have listed, and the ones in which we are encouraging people to consider in our own review, have an assumption behind them that is often not questioned, but which really forms the basis for everything else that we do.

And what is that assumption?

That we have an attractive mission. That there are good reasons why people would want to be a part of who and what we are. That the purpose and value of the community is a given and that what is missing is the right question to ask, the right words to say, the right advertising campaign, the right packaging, that would demonstrate the goodness of who we are and what we do, and bring people in, in droves.

But what if our assumption is wrong? What if, despite our best efforts to attract, to frame the questions in just the right way, to say the precise words, and wrap it up in the perfect packaging, people just aren't interested anymore?

Of course there will always be a few, and even more than a few, who will remain interested, but we all know that we are not all alike. We know that some things go viral for some reason and other things that seem to be just as compelling, or inviting, or interesting, or purposeful, are left to be consumed by just a small audience.

And so, yes, there are good reasons why people would want to be a part of who and what we are – but perhaps they are all already here, or perhaps we are seeing them not in droves, but in the people who come by for a while and then move on, or drop in and receive what they need for a while before they leave and return again at some point in the future.

Should we even aspire to attract people in droves? Could we handle it? Would it change us too quickly? Would the time between invested resources and return on investment be too long?

I don't have answers to all these questions. I'm not even sure I have answers to many of these questions.

What I do know is that the statement which gives title to this article is one which we need to keep considering.

It is not our mission.

God has a mission.

Do we believe it?

And if we believe it, then what do we do?

I wish it was easy, but it's not. It involves some careful listening, some wise discerning, some hard questions, and difficult answers.

We have resources. We have faith. We have connection.

Do we have the openness? Do we have the courage?

What is God's mission in this place for this time?

How sure are we in stating it?

We have a church – let's make it ready to receive direction.

Peter Chynoweth, Minister

Looking for Committee Members

The “work” of the Church does not just happen. It is a direct result of the commitment and caring that the Minister and the Congregation bring to worship services, church meetings, and special events.

To support the “work”, the Church has six standing committees:

- Worship is responsible for arranging all worship services;
- Christian Development is responsible for arranging Sunday School and other Christian education activities;
- Outreach is responsible for promoting activities to support societal activities outside our church, both locally and globally;
- Community Life and Membership (CLAM) is responsible for welcoming people to our church and coordinating activities that help people feel they belong;
- Stewardship is responsible for the financial health of the church; and
- Ministry and Personnel provide support to the Minister and administrative staff and is the liaison between the staff and the Congregation.

In addition to the standing committees we have an Affirm Committee whose role is to educate the congregation about issues related to being a welcoming community with special emphasis on inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Committees and interested members for 2016/17 will be presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for May 29th. Additional help is needed on all committees.

If you would like to help with a Committee or would like more information about a particular committee or position please contact Margaret Melhorn or Lloyd Henderson of the Nominating Committee, or speak with Rev. Peter Chynoweth.

Visioning and Mission Development

Thanks to everyone who completed the Identity Mission and Needs Analysis (IMNA) survey that was available to us during the month of February. The insight provided by the survey responses and accompanying analysis, along with demographic information from Environics will be invaluable resources to the Visioning Steering Committee which has been given the responsibility to take the information provided by these and other resources and weave it into a report that will propose some directions for our faith community in the months and years to come. You can look forward to a report from the Visioning Steering Committee at the annual meeting of Yellowknife United Church which has been scheduled for Sunday, May 29th following worship. The members of the steering committee are: Margaret Melhorn, Lloyd Henderson, Elaine Stewart, Nancy Trotter and Peter Chynoweth.

Pastoral Care Workshop

The Community Life and Membership Committee (CLAM) was pleased that Rev. Kirk Tastad of Holy Family Lutheran Church was able to work with us as an interested but outside facilitator in a Pastoral Care Workshop on January 16th, just before Kirk and his family left Yellowknife and Holy Family for a new call in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. A total of ten people, including the members of the CLAM committee and other interested members of the Yellowknife United Church congregation attended the workshop and spent several hours defining and naming the pastoral care that occurs as part of the work and program of our faith community.

The workshop generated lots of interesting and insightful conversation, along with some helpful ongoing discussion about ways that pastoral care can happen even better in our faith community. Further discussion and planning has taken place at CLAM meetings since the workshop and follow-up sessions are in the planning process.

Both of the above processes are a direct result of recommendations that were offered in the report from the most recent Northern Lights Presbytery Oversight Visitation.



Do you know where you fit in the chart below?

Yellowknife United Church Offering for 2015

| Weekly Range | Number of Givers in Range | Total Yearly Givings per Range | Avg./Week per Giver | % of Total Number Givers | % of Total Amount |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| \$1 to \$10 | 23 | \$4,724 | \$4 | 38% | 5% |
| \$11 to \$20 | 11 | \$7,540 | \$13 | 18% | 8% |
| \$21 to \$30 | 6 | \$7,458 | \$24 | 10% | 8% |
| \$31 to \$40 | 3 | \$5,575 | \$36 | 5% | 6% |
| \$41 to \$50 | 6 | \$14,095 | \$45 | 10% | 15% |
| \$51 to \$100 | 10 | \$35,209 | \$68 | 16% | 38% |
| Greater than \$100 | 2 | \$18,083 | \$174 | 3% | 20% |
| Totals | 61 | \$92,684 | | 100% | 100% |

Here are a few interesting facts:

- The amounts shown include the money allocated to Local Expenses, the Mission and Service Fund, and the Capital Fund.
- Our givings exceeded the project budgets in all categories.
- 12 givers (19% of total givers) contributed 58% of the total amount received.
- Many people choose to use church envelopes. There is another option that has become quite popular which is the use of a monthly Pre-Authorized Remittance (or PAR) where the amount is automatically taken out of your account. If you are interested in signing up for this, please contact Gwyneth at the church office (873-6291).



The Canadian Diabetes Association's 'Clothesline'

In the fall of 2015, YKUC was approached by the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) asking if we would be interested in partnering with them to bring the 'Clothesline' to Yellowknife.

'Clothesline' refers to placing red clothing collection bins within the city. With the support of congregation members we rolled out the program in January. Not the warmest time of year to launch a new initiative but the project has been warmly received by residents of Yellowknife!

Red collection bins have been placed at:

- Trevor's Independent
- Multiplex
- Ruth Inch Pool

We are hoping to have a fourth bin at the YK Coop in the near future.

Volunteers check the bins on a weekly basis to collect the donations and they are brought to our storage trailer in Kam Lake. When the trailer is full, the CDA will arrange for it to be shipped south and YKUC will receive money based on each pound of clothing collected. The funds raised from this project will be used for the local church and its initiatives.

Thanks to our volunteers – without you we would not have been able to enter into this partnership!

We currently have volunteers scheduled to the end of June. If you would like more information or are interested in volunteering please see Marg Henderson or Terrilyn Hayden.



Christian Development Committee Happenings

Book Club – The church book club meets the first Sunday of each month immediately following church at Javaroma. Our May selection is “For Joshua” by celebrated Ojibway author Richard Wagamese. He shares the traditions and teachings of his people, entwining them with an account of his own life-long struggle for self-knowledge and self-respect. Copies are available at the Yellowknife Book Cellar under Barb Paquin’s name.

Spring Clean-up – Each spring the City of Yellowknife provides community groups such as YKUC with a fund raising opportunity through the City’s spring clean-up. Groups are given an area within the city to clean up the ‘treasures’ that found once the snow melts each year. This year YKUC’s cleanup will take place on the evening of Monday, May 9th. If required, we will finish our area on Saturday, May 14th.

People of all ages are welcome to join us in this important event that beautifies our city and raises funds for the church.

Truth and Reconciliation Workshop – In October we will be hosting an event on the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We will look at the history of northern residential schools, the work of the TRC, the national United Church’s response to the Calls to Action and what we can do in response as a local church. Stay tuned for more details.

Bowling Night



The annual YKUC Bowling night was a great success! We had five lanes of bowlers and for the first year there was a "Kids Team". We had a lot of fun bowling, dancing, laughing and spending time together. There was some friendly competition among the adults with Elaine and John Stewart being crowned the "King and Queen of the Lanes". We look forward to the next bowling night to whether they can keep their titles! We ended the night sharing ice cream sundaes and awarding fun prizes to everyone. We hope you can all join us again next year!

Yellowknife United Church Choir

The YKUC Choir participated in the Yellowknife Music Festival on March 1, 2016. This is the second year that the choir has entered the festival. We had a great evening with our adjudicator Paul Grindlay (from Calgary) and Aurora Chorealís (Yellowknife Choral Society). It is always nice to work with another conductor. He had many positive things to say about our small but mighty choir, and gave us a few tips and pointers to work on in the future. Our choir received a gold award, which is given when a group earns a mark of 90 and above.

The YKUC Choir practices at NUP on Wednesday evenings Sept-May from 7:30-9:00pm and sings most Sunday mornings during the church service. If anyone is interested in joining us please speak with Elizabeth Brace (elizabeth.brace@yk1.nt.ca) or any choir member. If you'd like to check us out and observe a practice or two to see if it might be something you're interested, please join us!

Family Games Night

Our annual family games night was a lot of fun! We got together the last Saturday night of March Break and played a variety of games for all ages, had some yummy snacks and enjoyed some friendly competition. Twelve people ranging in age from 3 to ?? joined in to play Blokus, Trouble (the Frozen version), and Apples to Apples. New friendships were formed as our young people partnered up with the ??-aged people and there was much laughter and enjoyment all around.

Yellowknife United Church Annual Garage Sale
Saturday May 7, 2016

Are you starting to think about spring-cleaning? Remember – those unwanted, unused, un-needed items could be another person's treasure!

Yellowknife United Church's annual garage sale will be held on **Saturday, May 7th**. This is a great opportunity to weed out your house and has the added benefit of helping the church.

The garage sale is one of YKUC's major fundraisers of the year. In 2015, \$2,019 was raised and used for local church operations. Please start now to collect and put aside items and mark **May 6th** (evening set-up) and **May 7th** (morning sale) on your calendar.

With your help, this year's sale can be even better! If you would like more information, please call Terrilyn Hayden at 765-0514.

United Church Women (UCW) News

We realize it is already the beginning of April however the Yellowknife United Church Women (UCW) would like to offer a big thank you to the whole congregation for supporting us with our Annual Christmas Tea & Bake Sale, including the donation of supplies and/or the making of our antipasto and pepper jelly in the lead up to the Tea. With your help we raised approximately \$3,500 which will be used to help support the life and work of the church locally, nationally and internationally.

Additionally the kitchen has been cleaned with the help of some very industrious workers! Thanks.

There are two more activities in our calendar for the year and we invite anyone who is interested to come out and join us:

May 7th 8:00 a.m. - Garage Sale (UCW sells muffins, bannock, cookies and coffee) – If you are interested in helping out please contact Jeannette at 873-3942 or by email at: ykhalls@theedge.ca.

June 9th 6:30 p.m. - Year-end pot luck and penny auction. This is a great opportunity for food, fellowship and fun for the women in the congregation. This year's evening will be hosted by Jeannette Hall. For more information contact Jeannette at 873-3942 or by email at: ykhalls@theedge.ca.

Caring Connections



Volunteers from across the City of Yellowknife provide a weekly Foot Washing and Free Socks Program for the homeless.

The Program is offered at the Salvation Army on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Each foot washing station provides guests with a soak to help ward off significant health concerns.

Volunteers spend time with each guest during the foot clinic to listen to each person's story, offer support and empathy, and share laughter. Often there are between 12 to 15 guests served each week.

Each guest is provided with free socks which is a wonderful benefit for the participants. We must remember many are walking around all day; having healthy feet is important for these guests.

In addition to the free night clinic, on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. a Doctor comes on site at the Salvation Army to address any follow-ups volunteers recommend for more serious foot concerns.

The foot clinics are a prime example of how people and organizations can use their talents to serve. Feel free to approach Audrey MacDougall (873-8827) or Nancy Trotter (92-2104) to receive more information on this valued volunteer opportunity.

The Outreach Committee has been very busy! Committee members have participated in four projects over the last year.

Warm Feet for the Street Sock Project

This project, which helps men who are living on the street celebrate Christmas, continues to be well supported by the congregation. We received more donations than usual from the congregation this year including 35 filled socks, plus \$440 in donations (including \$200 from the youth group). The sock filling party at Joanne and Matt's house was fun and productive, especially because of the enthusiastic efforts of our junior Outreach Committee members- Jamie, Anya and Sarah. In the end, after filling 50 socks, we had several extra pairs of socks left over which were donated to the Caring Connections Foot Washing program. Thank you to everyone who donated or helped with the Warm Feet for the Street project; it is greatly appreciated by those who receive the socks.

Coldest Night of the Year Walk

The United Church team, the Arctic Snow Bunnies, led by our fearless leader, Janice Daly, once again had fun and raised needed funds in the 3rd annual Coldest Night of the Year Walk on February 20th. Our small but mighty team of seven raised \$1,715 with the help of 35 generous donors. All the money this year will go to renovating the kitchen at the Salvation Army. Thank you to Janice Daly, Elizabeth and Emily Brace, Sarah and Kathryn Walker, Lindsay and Mackenzie Chiasson and Arlene and Kieran Cliffe-Phillips, and to all the generous donors, many of whom are United Church members, who helped contribute to this successful event.

Refugee Sponsorship

We remain committed to the refugee sponsorship of Abdi Adan Adow. Our co-sponsor is not currently in Yellowknife but remains committed to the sponsorship as well. After a long wait, there was movement on Abdi's case in 2015, including immigration interviews and medical exams. However, we are still waiting for Immigration to make a decision on the case. In the meantime we are exploring ways of providing support to Abdi, if and when he should arrive in Yellowknife.

We have also been involved in discussions with a Yellowknife resident about another possible co-sponsorship of refugees. This is in the information-finding stage.

Gardens

Every year the youth group plant and tend the deck boxes on the NUP deck for the enjoyment of NUP residents. This year we grew our gardening efforts with a new initiative - the Intergenerational Garden Project.

The goal of this project is to provide a space to garden for both NUP residents and students at Mildred Hall. A garden committee was formed to include members from Mildred Hall School, YK 1, NUP, the Outreach Committee, Ecology North and residents from NUP. With funding from the department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, soil, lumber, manure, compost, tools and plants were purchased. Thank you to Kirby Marshall and the Rotary Club for constructing seven garden boxes in the Mildred Hall playground. Students and teachers from the school, as well as two NUP residents as well as staff and residents from Lynn's Place planted vegetables in the boxes. Over the summer the boxes were watered by volunteers from the church, NUP residents, Lynn's Place staff and residents and a couple of Mildred Hall students. The gardeners and students feasted on a bountiful harvest over the summer and in the fall.

Thanks to Clark Builders, ten more boxes were constructed in August and most of the boxes were filled with soil. This year planning has already started for this summer's garden. We are planning to have the ten new boxes planted and hope for more involvement from the Mildred Hall parents and also NUP residents, as there is lots of space to garden. We will also be making the garden more accessible by installing a waist high garden box for those with physical disabilities.

If anyone is interested in helping with the garden, in any capacity, please speak to Kathryn Walker (446-4860) or Nancy Trotter (873-2104).

Supporting Syrian Refugees

Donate your beverage containers to help welcome Syrian refugees to Yellowknife!

It's easy!

1. Bring your beverage containers to the Yellowknife Bottle Shop in bags or boxes.
2. Visit the new Drop and Go kiosk at the depot. Follow the instructions to print labels for the account called Yellowknifers Welcome Syrian Refugees (account number 6880423).
3. Attach 1 label to each bag or box of beverage containers.
4. Leave your beverage containers for later processing and go!

The refunds from your containers will be donated into the bank account dedicated to helping welcome Syrian refugees to Yellowknife.

Walking the Labyrinth

The theme of walking has been prominent recently at Yellowknife United Church. Members of the congregation's worship committee created a temporary labyrinth in the sanctuary on several occasions, including the winter solstice, and the spring equinox. The event was promoted as an ecumenical opportunity to engage in the venerable form of walking prayer, or meditation, or whatever tradition people wished to attach to the experience.

With masking tape, candles, strings of white LED lights, and some ethereal musical selections, the organizers created a powerful transient experience. The room also offered an arbor for candle lighting and prayer, as well as a table and supplies at which drawing, writing, and mandala colouring, happened in response to the insights gained while walking the labyrinth. Greeters offered a brief welcome and orientation to the space, with some suggested guidelines to help newcomers get the most from the labyrinth experience. During the evening of the winter solstice labyrinth, soup, bread, coffee and squares were offered to take the chill off, and to entice people to drop in on their way home from work and not have to worry about their dinner.

Each event attracted a number of people from the broader community who heard about it and were intrigued. Many had never walked a labyrinth before, and others were old hands. Feedback was very positive, and participants appreciated the experience.

Even local Cubs and Scouts who meet in the sanctuary had a chance to use the labyrinth the day after the equinox, and by all accounts they also enjoyed it.

Organizers of the labyrinth were invited to present at an event at the local museum in January. An evening of Pecha Kucha talks on the topic "Why we walk" was built around the NWT Recreation and Parks Association's Annual Walk to Tuk campaign. Yellowknife United Church was invited to present on the topic of walking for reasons of a spiritual nature. Other talks included walking for tourism, environmentalism, activism and awareness, solidarity, and the event was the first Pecha Kucha night in Yellowknife. Twenty slides, each for only twenty seconds, makes for focused and refined presentations, which were quite engaging, and are available on YouTube. In an increasingly secular world, it was affirming and inspiring to be invited to participate in the series of talks.





Campus Ministries

Is sponsoring a

Guatemala Pilgrimage



August 4-24, 2017

For Post-Secondary Students ages 18-28

For more information and details please contact

Denise Davis-Taylor @ 780-906-8870 or

Email; uccm@ualberta.ca

Information night; May 29, 2016 from 2-4pm

St Paul's United Church 11526 76 Ave Edmonton



Becoming More Inclusive
Workshop and Special Service
May 14th and 15th

All are welcome! So says the hymn and the Vision Statement of Yellowknife United Church. As an Affirming ministry, we make that commitment. In an effort to live it, to learn with each other, and to celebrate, YKUC's Affirm Committee is planning a special workshop on the afternoon of Saturday, May 14th. We are delighted to welcome Pam Rocker from Hillhurst United Church in Calgary as our guest for the workshop. Pam will also give the reflection at worship on Sunday, May 15th.

Although still in development, it's safe to say that the as-yet untitled workshop will focus on the intersection of spirituality, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

If you'd like more information about this exciting upcoming workshop, please contact a member of the Affirm Committee, or the office of Yellowknife United Church.

Thank you

Many thanks to our newsletter Editor Extraordinaire (aka Gillian Moir) and our Layout-Publishing Lady (aka Melanie Dumont) for their hard work in getting our newsletter to print several times a year. Your skills and talents are greatly appreciated!

Thanks also to all those who take the time to write articles for the newsletter – without your submissions, our Editor Extraordinaire and Layout-Publishing Lady wouldn't have anything to do!

