

# Yellowknife United Church

## Winter 2015 Newsletter

### *An Update on Alison*



A good deal of the ‘conversation’ that Alison and I shared during her internship in the fall was done via text message. It was a way to avoid long distance charges (she didn’t change her number to a local one because she was only here four months) and exchange messages when we weren’t in the same place. So, with that in mind, I thought I would share a few of the text messages I’ve received in the weeks since the end of the internship. These text messages will serve to keep us informed of how things are going for Alison and her family. I’ll add some context to fill in the gaps.

**Alison:** Good news: Toronto Southeast E&S (*Presbytery Education and Students Committee - added by Peter*) is satisfied with my internship as is. Hooray and thanks for the good report. Hope you guys are well.

**Peter:** Hooray back! We are well. Thanks!

**Alison:** We have settled in ok. Took a few weeks, I must admit, but I am liking the sunshine! Jamie hardly said a word about Yellowknife for the first two weeks back, but recently there has been a lot of talk about the snow castle, Peter & Sharon, and especially Heather. He really was quite smitten with her.

*At the presbytery meeting in Dawson Creek at the end of February I noticed a photo on the wall that showed the handing over of the presbytery banner that took place at the worship service in Yellowknife when the presbytery met here in September. One of the photos featured Alison. I sent it to her knowing it would be of interest to her, especially because it was during a presbytery meeting. Being part of Northern Lights presbytery was one of the highlights of her time here.*

**Peter:** Thought you would be interested in this photo on the wall at South Peace United Church in Dawson Creek. Look closely! Several people have asked about you. I’ll bring greetings from you, if you wish.

**Alison:** Yes, please say hello to everyone for me. I have a job interview tomorrow in a nearby presbytery. Not the same as Northern Lights, I’m sure!

*And then when she saw the photo, after I remembered to attach it.*

**Alison:** :)

*There is more to read in the email we received from Alison which is posted on the bulletin board wall at NUP. She sent it to us when she received a copy of the photo book we prepared for her. Please take a moment to read it and find out more!*

*Stay tuned for more information about Alison’s successful search for a call and soon-to-be ordination. Details will be announced when it is all “official”.*



*Third Annual Yellowknife United Church Intergenerational Bowling Event 2015*

A fantastic evening of fellowship and fun was held on January 31st at the King Pin Lanes and the Church. Thirty four church folks enjoyed mixed team play at the lanes. Teams featured an all-boys group “boys to men” led by Levi Davis and an all-girls group “the friendly femmes” with Barb Paquin at the helm.

After the bowling, all headed back to the church for the ‘build your own sundae’ event and of course, the crowning of the King and Queen of the lanes - Matt Smillie and Barb Paquin. When asked for a comment about Barb’s win, Emery was heard to say, “She is already Queen of my house, I mean Heart.” Prizes, smiles and laughter filled out the evening.

Sean Daly  
CLAM



## *Yellowknife United Church Choir*

Music is an integral part of worship services. A choir shares their faith through the music they sing and supports congregational singing. Participation in choir ministry provides another relationship within the church community.

Our choir is made up of many different people with varying levels of musical ability. Some have a lot of performance experience, some are able to easily read music and others have had no experience at all but their love of singing has brought them to the choir.

We meet every Wednesday evening from 7:30-9pm at NUP preparing music for worship. The choir actively participates in church services between September and May. The choir practices regularly with the goal to have an anthem prepared for every Sunday. A typical choir practice involves singing through the upcoming Sunday's hymns and moving onto rehearsing anthems. To pull an anthem together we often begin by taking it apart. This process may involve focusing on the rhythm, dynamics and expression or singing through sections in small groups until we are comfortable and ready to tackle the next part within the piece. One of the keys to our success is our flexibility. With the busy lives that many of our choir members lead, practicing anthems over a number of weeks provides opportunities for those choir members who may not be able to attend each week. Our choir members love to sing and enjoy the comradery within our choir family.

We are always looking to welcome new voices into our choir. If you enjoy singing, please consider joining us!

Elizabeth Brace  
Choir Director

## *Everything is on the Table*

At the 2012 General Council meeting in Ottawa, a Comprehensive Review Task Group was formed to gather input on the future of the church. From the very beginning the Task Group let it be known that their review was one which could be characterized by the statement "Everything Is On the Table". The Task Group has been consulting with members and adherents of congregations, presbyteries and conferences throughout The United Church of Canada, gathering information and visions of how we need to change and re-form in response to the changing demographic, cultural and financial situation that faces the church in this time.

The Task Group released its report to the 2015 General Council on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. This report will be a resource for discussion and consideration between now and the 2015 General Council in Cornerbrook, Newfoundland in August. The report and the changes it outlines will form the major theme of the General Council and will have a profound effect on the future of The United Church of Canada.

Hopefully you have been aware of this "everything is on the table" review group and its work. Prior to this summer's General Council, there will be a number of ways in which the wider church can offer feedback, analysis and response to the report and the changes it recommends. You can find the report by following the link on the web at: [united-church.ca](http://united-church.ca)

## *Richness Through Reading*

About three years ago, I met my good friend, Molly. During our first coffee date, we discovered that we were both Christians who had become frustrated with what we viewed as traditional Christianity and "the Church". Neither of us had had a church to call home for a number of years. What we did have, though, was a shared love of reading, and Molly introduced me to several Christian authors who examined the Christian faith in a meaningful way. We would pick books to read and then get together to discuss them. These books challenged me and helped my faith to grow richer.

In October, 2014, my husband, Peter, and I completed an incredibly stressful move to Yellowknife. It was our second move in six months, and it had been a very challenging year. Out of a need to feel more connected to our new community, we sought out a church, and I believe God lead us to Yellowknife United Church.

Due to an injury, I spent the majority of 2014 recuperating at home, which took an enormous toll on my mental health. I felt extremely isolated and alone in our new city. I missed having meaningful conversations with people. I also wanted to read more books by real people with a real faith that challenged me, and I wanted to discuss them. I suggested a book club to a couple of ladies one Sunday. Their enthusiasm encouraged me, and it was suggested I talk to Barb Paquin from the Christian Development Committee, who was equally enthusiastic.

Our first book club meeting was on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, where we discussed "The Red Tent" by Anita Diamant, a fictionalized telling of the life of Dinah, daughter of Jacob. In February, we challenged ourselves by reading "Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth" by Reza Aslan, a book that discusses the historical Jesus. This month, we look forward to some lighter reading with "The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow The Bible as Literally as Possible" by AJ Jacobs.

I am extremely grateful to Barb Paquin for supporting this idea and becoming my partner. Not only has she suggested some fun ideas and excellent titles to read (as well as ensuring we have a room to have Book Club every month), she has provided some incredibly tasty snacks! I am also thankful to each person who has come to the meetings each month, and I so look forward to upcoming meetings!

Sarah Bath

## *International Anti-Homophobia Day Film Night at NUP*

In June of 2013 Yellowknife United Church completed a four year process of learning, exploration and discernment and voted to become an Affirming Ministry, joining many other United Churches in Canada.

Voting to become an official Affirming Ministry was only the first step on the path. Now we are called, as a congregation, to persistently work on becoming more inclusive and welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, two-spirited, queer and questioning individuals in our services, our physical space, and our presence in the community of Yellowknife.

One of the ways we will be doing that this spring is by celebrating International Anti-Homophobia Day with a movie night at NUP on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. We are thrilled that NWT Pride, the group that organizes the Pride Festival, has agreed to partner with us at this event. The plan is to open with a musician or two, have two or three films, and refreshments, as well as some information tables. As the only official Affirming Ministry in Yellowknife, we have an important role to play in starting a public conversation about sexual orientation and the church. We are arranging to show *Love Free or Die*, an award winning documentary about Gene Robinson, the first openly gay man ordained as a bishop. We also plan to show some shorter films on an LGBTTQ theme.

If this event interests you and you would like to be part of it, please talk to Kathryn Walker or email her at [kwalker\\_nwt@yahoo.ca](mailto:kwalker_nwt@yahoo.ca).

Kathryn Walker  
Affirm Committee

### *Open Table*

Open Table is a new venture to provide an alternative worship time and experience. It is progressive in theology and has been scheduled at a time and frequency that is hoped will be attractive to people.

The first gathering of "Open Table" took place on Sunday March 1st. There were nineteen people present. Thanks to the generous provision of food by some members of Holy Family Lutheran Church and some of the participants, we were well fed. The format for this type of "supper church" is still in the planning stages with the expectation that those who are part of the gathering community will play a significant role in how the gatherings will unfold. In recent years, fresh expressions of Christian community and Christian worship have been springing up in many places. These new Christian communities have developed in response to very busy lives, a mistrust or disinterest in too much organization, and wide circles of social connection mediated by technology and face to face encounters.

Kirk Tastad, the pastor of Holy Family Lutheran Church, must be given credit for the idea to start this northern and Yellowknife version of an "emerging faith community", but it has been a project that has been fully supported and participated in by Peter as a partner. We look forward to how this fresh expression will get lived out in the months to come. We will be meeting once a month, on the last Sunday of each month - continuing into the summer. 4:30pm to 6:30pm. Stay tuned for more details.

### **Prayer Writing Workshop**

The Worship Committee has arranged for a Prayer Writing Workshop on Saturday, March 21st beginning at 11:00 am. Lunch will be included. The workshop will be facilitated by Ray McGinnis, a former national staff person with The United Church of Canada. Ray has skills in helping people "Write from the Heart" He has developed workshops that help people to write Psalms - sacred poetry based on personal experience, Prayers in response to spiritual quest and response to the presence of grief.

The opportunity to host this workshop has come at a good time. Several people have indicated that they might be willing to prepare Prayers for worship, but that training or examples of how to do that would make it easier to volunteer. This is your chance. There will be a small charge for the workshop to help cover costs, but we don't want the price to be a barrier to participation. If you would like to attend, please let us know so that we can make sure there will be enough food for lunch. We look forward to this opportunity to search our souls and write about it. Saturday, March 21 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Northern United Place.

### *The Awesome United Church Walkers*

On Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup>, the Awesome United Church Walkers, a small but mighty team of four, participated in the second annual Coldest Night of the Year walk. Our team was made up of Anya Smillie, Janice Daly, Sarah Walker and Kathryn Walker. We all finished the whole five kilometer route in good spirits, ending up at the Salvation Army where we had a warming meal of chili with the other walkers. Thanks to the generosity of friends, family, and our church community, we were the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest fundraiser out of the 12 Yellowknife teams, raising a total of \$1,285.00. All the money raised will go towards helping the Salvation Army hire a wellness worker to support the men who use their homeless shelter.

Thank you to our team members and to everyone who donated!

Kathryn Walker



### *Holy Week and Easter Worship*

Details of all the worship services for Holy Week and Easter have not been finalized, so please consult the Yellowknife United Church web site for more information as the dates get closer ([yellowknifeunitedchurch.ca](http://yellowknifeunitedchurch.ca)). However, we do know this:

**Palm and Passion Sunday:** Sunday, March 29th at 11:00 am

**Maundy Thursday:** We have had a variety of gatherings of different forms in the past few years. Watch for information about what we will do this year!

**Good Friday:** Friday, April 3rd at 11:00 am

**Easter Sunday:** Sunday April 4<sup>th</sup>: Ecumenical Sunrise Service at Pilot's Monument at 7:00 am.  
Easter Communion at 11:00 am



Northern United Place – December 30, 2013

**YKUC Activities**

