

Yellowknife United Church Newsletter

Winter 2017

From Pastoral Care to Spiritual Health: The Story of a Journey

This journey does not cover geographic distance, but rather a terrain defined by perceptions and definitions. It is a word journey and a definition journey. I want to tell you about it, because I think it makes a connection with our own journey as a congregation as well.

Several years ago, I was invited to serve on the Pastoral Care Committee at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. At the time the committee had places for two members of the Yellowknife Ministerial Association and I volunteered to serve as one of the representatives. The committee was not very active at first. However, a regular agenda item at these meetings was what seemed to be a never-ending discussion around hospital visitation by the clergy in Yellowknife. Privacy and confidentiality concerns and legislation meant that a former practice which involved clergy simply dropping in to the hospital and then going from room to room to look for patients who were part of the congregation they served was no longer an option. This was compounded by some unfortunate situations where ministers from some denominations saw the hospital and particularly patients who were experiencing some very traumatic situations, as a fertile ground for bedside evangelization. Needless to say, this was very much frowned upon by the hospital community and resulted in an even stricter adherence to the need for permission before visiting could happen.

Over time, and with the appointment of a new committee chair, the advantages of pastoral visitation were recognized as part of a holistic approach to health and healing. Spiritual care became an important contribution to the physical and emotional requirements. This was an active time for the committee to raise awareness of spiritual care not just for patients but also for health care workers as they went about their work in a place which is often characterized by life and death decisions and outcomes and which affect people at a very deep spiritual level. A change in definition from “pastoral care” to “spiritual health” evolved and the committee name also changed to “Spiritual Health”. The goal of the committee is to play a role in the Spiritual Health of everyone involved: patients, staff and administrators.

Oh, and what about that tension between the need for privacy and desire for spiritual care? Well, policies and practices were slowly implemented to allow for questions to be asked of patients so that they could make their request or give assent to visits from ministers, priests, pastors, and trained lay visitors from their church community. Of course, it is also always possible for patients to make the request on their own – simply by talking to a nurse and asking them to be in touch.

It's been a hard nut to crack and changes to well established traditions and culture are difficult for people to accept and adopt – but I feel that some positive changes were put in place.

Of course, all of this is but a small window on the many challenges that arise when spiritual care and spiritual health are part of the conversation. For the past year, the CLAM committee has been working on a recommendation that was part of the last Pastoral Oversight visit by Northern Lights Presbytery. Two workshops later, and a special worship service in the season of Lent, have helped to move the issue forward for Yellowknife United Church. Please watch for more opportunities to be part of an ongoing connection with this important part of the work of any church congregation.

Peter Chynoweth

Dates to Remember

Sunday, March 12

- Special Worship Service – Pastoral Care

Friday, April 14

- Good Friday (more information to follow)

Sunday, April 16

- Ecumenical Sunrise Service – Pilot's Monument 7:00AM
- Easter Morning Worship – 11:00AM

Sunday, April 23 (after worship)

- Annual meeting of the NWT Community Services Corporation

Saturday, May 6

- Annual Garage Sale

Monday, May 8 (to May 15 as needed)

- Annual City Clean-up (more details to come)



Blanket Exercise

In response to the “Walking a Path Towards Reconciliation” workshop held in October, the Christian Development Committee is planning a Blanket Exercise to be held this spring. The Blanket Exercise was developed by KAIROS, an organization of Canadian churches working together for justice and peace. According to the KAIROS website, the Blanket Exercise is:

“... an interactive learning experience that teaches the Indigenous rights history we’re rarely taught. Developed in response to the 1996 Report of the [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#)—which recommended education on Canadian-Indigenous history as one of the key steps to reconciliation, the Blanket Exercise covers over 500 years of history in a short participatory workshop.

Blanket Exercise participants take on the roles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Standing on blankets that represent the land, they walk through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. They are directed by facilitators representing a narrator (or narrators) and the European colonizers. Participants are drawn into the experience by reading scrolls and carrying cards which ultimately determine their outcomes. By engaging on an emotional and intellectual level, the Blanket Exercise effectively educates and increases empathy.”

Stay tuned for more information on the date and time of this event.

UPDATE ON OUR VISIONING PROCESS

Yellowknife United Church members are being invited to participate in the next stage of our visioning process. By way of background, in 2016 members of Yellowknife United Church were asked to participate in a survey designed to help us assess our current gifts and identity and discern a vision for future mission and ministry. The survey, known as the IMNA survey (for Identity, Mission and Needs Analysis) is a tool especially prepared for United Church congregations.

A second report (the Environics report) was also commissioned. This was a report on the demographic makeup of the various areas and communities in Yellowknife. Although primarily prepared with marketing in mind, the report may be useful in determining the kinds of outreach and programming that might be helpful for a church community to provide.

The IMNA survey report, the Environics Report and a number of other related documents were posted on the Yellowknife United Church website last May and were briefly discussed at the June 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting. The documents can be found at:

yellowknifeunitedchurch.ca/visioning

The results of the IMNA survey did not show any glaring areas of concern. Although it would appear that major change is not required at this point, further discussion within the congregation of these results would be valuable to determine where we go from here.

The church Board has asked each committee (Christian Development, Outreach, CLAM, Worship, Stewardship and Ministry and Personnel) to review and discuss the IMNA report from the perspective of their mandate to discern what actions or changes they would recommend as a result

A summary report on the visioning process was presented at this year's Annual Financial Meeting on February 12. This summary report can be found at:

<http://www.yellowknifeunitedchurch.ca/visioning-report-february-2017/>

Which brings us to the next steps. At the February 12 meeting members of the congregation were asked what the next steps in the visioning process should be – how do we determine where we want to go as church, and what actions are needed to achieve that vision? It was agreed that church members would have an opportunity to respond in writing to these and other questions.

Starting the week of March 6, a survey will be made available that will ask:

- What do you feel we are doing as a church?
- What are the good things that we are doing?
- What do we need to be doing that we are not doing already?
- What, if anything, needs to change in what we are doing?
- What can we give up so that we can do something new or differently?
- Do you think that we do enough to help people feel included?
- What would help you feel more connected to Yellowknife United Church?

An invitation will be sent via Googlegroup to respond to the survey online or you will be able to find the survey on the church website:

<http://yellowknifeunitedchurch.ca/visioning-survey/>

Responses will be anonymous. For those who would prefer to answer the questions on paper, there will be copies of the survey questions available on Sundays, and a box where the surveys can be returned confidentially. The Visioning Committee is asking that the surveys be completed by April 9, 2017.

Based on the responses, as well as the work of the church's committees, the Visioning Committee will develop a draft Vision and Action Plan and present the drafts to church members for reaction, discussion and input. Depending on the nature of these discussions, the goal is to provide an Action Plan for approval and presentation at the June 2017 congregational meeting.

If you have any questions please feel free to ask any of the members of the Visioning Committee: Margaret Melhorn, Lloyd Henderson, Peter Chynoweth, Elaine Stewart and Nancy Trotter

Baptism

On Sunday, February 12th, we celebrated a very special event, which was the baptism of Sophie Marie Tamblyn Beauchamp. At the service, to welcome and celebrate Sophie were her mother, Elizabeth Brace, her father, Michael Beauchamp, her sister Emily Brace, and many other family members and friends.

All who were present, including her godmothers, Tracey MacLean and Allison MacDonald, promised to "take this child into our love, our prayers, and our daily lives, striving to build a community rich in the spirit of God in which to nurture her".



It is evident that Sophie is already very loved by her family, friends, and church family, and that she will indeed have many people to love and support her as she grows.

Welcome, precious Sophie!

Sophie Call
New Sunday School Superintendent

The Christian Development Committee is pleased to announce that Sophie Call is our new Sunday School Superintendent. She will be coordinating the Sunday School and providing support and guidance to the teachers.

Sophie grew up in church and has been involved with Sunday School for as long as she can remember, happily attending it throughout her entire childhood and then becoming a Sunday School teacher soon thereafter. She is happy to be joining the strong existing team, and is eager to collaborate in finding the best ways to support our children's growth in their faith, knowledge, sense of self and sense of belonging to our church community.

Welcome Sophie!



Sophie on an outing with her dog, Henri.

Update on Abdi

Abdi recently moved into a bachelor apartment at NUP. He is very pleased with his new home. It has been fully furnished by donations from church members and is very clean and bright. His latest home furnishing is a TV complete with access to free CBC programming for him to enjoy and provides another way for Abdi to practice his English comprehension.

He is currently working three days a week at the Fat Fox, where his hard work and friendliness are appreciated by staff and customers. He continues to work on his English with his tutor, Doris. They have just begun focusing on the English skills he will need to qualify as a cab driver in Yellowknife, which is his dream.



Christmas Pageant

The children of the congregation staged a musical Christmas pageant called “Las Posadas” in December. Las Posadas is the name of a nine-day Mexican Christmas observance and translates as “lodging” or “accommodation”. The pageant told the story of the nativity juxtaposed with modern day homelessness. Sarah Walker and Kairan Bonnetrouge-Noseworthy bravely took on the leading roles of Mary and Joseph while Anya Smillie and Juniper Falvo also had singing roles. Several of the other children performed in speaking and non-speaking roles.

Many thanks go to the children of the congregation, Joanna Wilson for directing the play, Peter Workman for piano accompaniment, Mark Cliffe-Phillips for reading, Kathryn Walker for narration and all who helped with costumes and set.

The pageant was an ambitious project for the Sunday School and our young people certainly rose to the challenge. Congratulations on a job well done!



Emily Brace and Kieran Cliffe-Phillips enjoy a tea party while waiting to perform in the Christmas pageant.



The Christmas Pageant – Los Posadas

Coldest Night of the Year

The Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk was on Saturday, February 25th.

The small but mighty Amazing Affirming Church team consisted of: Joanna Wilson, Anya Smillie, Sarah Walker, Kathryn Walker, Nancy Vail and Janice Daly.

Thanks to all of our generous donors, the total raised so far by our team is \$1,485.00!

The money raised will go to the Salvation Army for a very worthy cause. This year they are using the funds raised by the walk for building a ramp for their shelter, which will make it more accessible to the many homeless people in Yellowknife who have nowhere else to sleep every night.



Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Nearly 100 people from Yellowknife United Church and the community of Yellowknife gathered together on Tuesday, February 28th to enjoy regular fluffy pancakes, sausages and the ever-popular potato pancakes.

While it is impossible to know exact statistics, we estimate that well over 600 pancakes were flipped and about 38 dozen sausages were cooked.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the supper happen – donors of ingredients, the food prep team, the pancake flippers, the servers and the clean-up crew.

We raised \$674.00.



**5th Annual YK United Church
Intergenerational Bowling Event 2017**

A great evening of fellowship and fun was held on February 11 at the King Pin Lanes and the Church.

Forty-one church folks enjoyed mixed team play at the lanes. This annual event had its biggest attendance yet with eight full lanes of bowlers. Fancy moves, lots of smiles and strengthening friendships were the end result.

After the bowling, many 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, Chris Dumont and Grace Whitelock. Prizes, smiles and laughter filled out the evening.

