

Lynn Valley Herald

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MOLLIE'S MUSINGS

A few weeks ago I attended a valuable continuing education event for clergy and lay leaders held at the United Church's Naramata Centre in the Okanagan. Based on the book "Never Call them Jerks- Healthy Responses to Difficult Behaviour," the three-day event helped the thirty of us present to focus on our own responses and reactions to the conflicts we have all encountered in congregational life. Arthur Boer, the author of the book and the leader of the course, reminded us that the church is not "a community of similarity" but "a community of diversity".

Boer's advice, by the way, to "never call them jerks" comes from his many years of working on the deep issues of peace and reconciliation. "In a difficult situation, be aware of the toxicity that is present for you. But do not call people 'jerks' because that label will settle in your

brain." It will then shape how you respond and react to that person in ways that will be unhelpful both to you and to the other. Boer introduced the course with some teaching from Thomas Merton:

"As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering by our very contact with one another. Even saints cannot live with saints on this earth without some anguish, without some pain at the differences that come between them. There are two things that people can do about the pain of disunion with other people. They can love or they can hate."

At one point in the course we talked about the challenge of forgiveness. Art told us a story about an Amish community in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania which suffered terrible grief and loss in October 2006. He directed us to the work of Donald Kraybill who is the coauthor of the book "Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy."

One day a man stormed into the tiny Amish community's one room school, dismissed all but ten girls, and then shot them execution-style, killing five of them. He then killed himself. While the killer, Charles Roberts was not himself Amish, he was well known as the milk truck driver who made deliveries.

Within hours the Amish community forgave the killer and his family. That evening they went to the home of his loved ones to speak words of forgiveness and support. A few days later members of the Amish community - including those who had buried their own daughters the day before-- attended the killer's burial service at the cemetery. They hugged the widow, wished her well, and hugged other members of the killer's family.

News of the seemingly instant forgiveness stunned the outside world. When someone asked one of the Amish grandmothers if the forgiveness

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was orchestrated, she laughed. "You mean that some people actually thought we had a meeting to plan forgiveness?" A young Amish carpenter said, "It's just standard forgiveness." As the father of one of the slain girls explained, "Our forgiveness was not our words; it was what we did."

Donald Kraybill wrote about the event one year later, after interviewing the members of the Amish several times. He wrote, "For most people, a decision to forgive comes -if ever-- at the end of a long emotional journey, which may stretch over months, if not years. The Amish invert the process because their faith is grounded in the teachings of Jesus to love enemies, reject revenge, and leave vengeance in the hands of God." They firmly believe that God's long arm of justice removes the need for human retaliation.

Forgiveness is not a new issue for this community. When the religious ancestors of the Amish were torched at the stake

for their faith in the 16th century in Europe many of them echoing Jesus on the cross, praying aloud that God would forgive their executioners. Still like the rest of us, the Amish find forgiveness to be a long emotional process. And in Nickel Mines the deaths of those five girls brought deep pain, tears, and raw grief.

But as a father who lost a daughter in the schoolhouse said, "Forgiveness means giving up the right to revenge." As one farmer put it, "The acid of bitterness eats the container that holds it."

The Amish forgave the killer, Art Boer reminded us. Not because they "felt" like it, but because of the principle. They have only one prayer and that is the Prayer of Jesus/the Lord's Prayer which they say several times a day. Clearly they believe "we are called to live out that prayer."

Mollie Williams - Interim Minister



WHY GO TO CHURCH?

If you're spiritually alive, you're going to love this! If you're spiritually dead, you won't want to read it. If you're spiritually curious, there is still hope!

Why Go To Church?

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this.. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!" When you are DOWN to nothing... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!

Alice Strilchuk

GARAGE SALE

Our annual garage sale is on Saturday 25th April.

Request for workers

- Thursday 23rd - Strong Setup Persons
- Friday 24th - Pricers
- Saturday 25th - Sales Persons
- Saturday 25th after the event - Strong Tear Down Persons

All people requesting a job please contact Ray Boucher.

Donnations

Gently-used & "loved-but-no-longer-needed" items for the upcoming Congregational Garage Sale. Contributions need to be clean, in good repair, and in working order and complete (ie: appliances, puzzles, games).

Gems, jewels and fancy bits (costume or otherwise)~ Helen Preston is gathering items to clean and ready for display and would like items brought in by April 17th. Donations can be left in the library.

OUR NEW MISSION STATEMENT

To nurture our faith by learning about, celebrating, seeking, and sharing God's love in the world

Adopted by the congregation
February 2009.

TWIGS

After 35 years - half a lifetime ago for most of us - The Tuesday Women's Interest Group (Twigs) decided to disband. During those years, many crafts were mastered and enjoyed from the first baby quilt to the last knitted toque.

Many in the congregation will long remember the "cookie room" that Twigs ran at the Christmas Bazaar that later became the Fall Fair. For most of the years, the group made all the cookies that were sold and in the beginning, they saved coffee cans, covered them with wall paper and gave them to cookie lovers to fill and keep. Often, the same cans came back year after year to be filled and filled again.

Crafts were the main interest of Twigs who learned to quilt, macramé, knit, crochet and paint along with learning to make many saleable items from unwanted junk - like empty milk jug ghosts and bottle top pincushions. Every year, creative

members in the group would come up with new ideas.

Funds raised by selling crafts were donated to North Shore community groups and Lynn Valley United church which was also provided with daffodils at Easter and poinsettias at Christmas. First United in Vancouver received funds and benefited from Twigs homemade sandwich donations. Other methods of raising funds were the sale of more than 800 "Magic" cleaning cloths, catering for teas and the Men's Club dinners. The money left when disbanding took place was donated to LVUC for new carpeting.

One member has passed away and many others have moved away from North Vancouver. Hands have stiffened and eyesight is no longer sharp. However, friendship remains strong and although there will not be any more meetings, Twigs will be friends for life.

Judith L. Bolam

CHILDREN'S NOTES

Dear God,

I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that OK?

Neil

Dear God,

Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why dont you just keep the ones you got now?

Jane

MONEY MATTERS

In the last Newsletter, I reported that we had an effective year-to-date surplus at the end of December of \$3,667. In the past two months, this has become a year-to-date deficit of \$3,200. However, this was anticipated and is only \$345 over plan. Our full year budget anticipated a deficit of \$5,000 as at June 30th, so we will need to remain vigilant to maintain our revenue and manage our expenses to achieve this target.

The recent harsh winter resulted in higher heating bills in January and February along with \$700 paid for snow removal in our parking lot. A change from our previous janitorial service resulted in additional equipment and supplies purchases of \$900. These expenses, along with many other regular costs that were anticipated, account for the \$6,867 swing in our bottom line for the year.

Our donations continue to lag behind last year due to the drop of almost \$2,800 in December total offerings and another \$1,900 in Sunday Cash Donations. Why this latter amount has dropped by over 50% from last year remains something of a mystery, as we have not seen similar gains in other areas of givings.

Our overall February 28, 2009 results are as follows:

Revenue:

Donations	\$ 62,321	89.1%	of Year-To-Date Budget
Rental Income	\$ 31,722	98.6%	
Fund Raising	\$ 9,522	119.0%	
Interest & Other Income	<u>\$ 442</u>	<u>71.8%</u>	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 104,007	93.9%	

Expenses:

Staff Compensation	\$ 69,653	90.3%
Office & Property	\$ 24,406	103.1%
Program & Other Expenses	<u>\$ 13,148</u>	<u>102.6%</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 107,207	94.4%

YEAR-TO-DATE DEFICIT \$ -3,200

Over the Advent season, we collectively donated \$1,971 for the Mission at First United, together with many socks, blankets etc. Other Helping Hands donations have recently seen us support the U.B.C. Campus Ministry Building Project in Nicaragua (\$741 including \$200 from the U.C.W.) and the Lookout Emergency Shelter (\$273).

Thank you to all who support our work locally, nationally and internationally with financial contributions. Without your donations, we would not be able to operate as well as we do or support the outreach projects and organizations that rely on us.

Roger Eastwood - Treasurer

ANYTHING BUT BORED

As I sit here tonight, it is the end of Spring Break for most families and a reminder of how quickly the year passes. In the church there is a sense of happening in the air as this time of Transition comes to an end and we look forward with some apprehension and lots of excitement to the events about to unfold over the next few months.

In January we started off our Anniversary Celebrations with our Potluck lunch and we continued on with the planning with the formation of A.C.T. (The Anniversary Celebration Team).

Our Centennial Celebration will be held on the weekend of May 30 and 31 which is the same weekend as the annual Lynn Valley Days. There will be a number of different events going on over the weekend to give our congregation more exposure to the community as a whole and also provide an opportunity for reunion and remembrance with old friends. Invitations are being sent out to former members and attempts are being made to reach as many people as possible.

Many of us will walk in the Parade proudly wearing our new Lynn Valley United Church T-shirts sporting the lovely Centennial design created by Lori. Vintage cars and other automobiles are being secured to give a ride to those of our seniors who would like to participate in the Parade. Maureen Bruce will keep us up to date on how to join in.

Ray Boucher is coordinating a Booth on the grounds of the festival where information about our church will be available and tickets for free cake will be given out.

Anna Sanders will be organizing the cake and coffee on the front lawn of the church where we will set up our usual tents and tables to invite folks to sit and chat for awhile.

At 3:00 we will be hosting an Open House. Darlene Dreger and Mary Yan will be organizing a program with music and speeches from some of our former ministers along with a whole room full of mementos in the Lounge where folks can meet and chat over photos and items sure to inspire memories and smiles.

There will be a special Worship Service on Sunday and afterwards we will all share in a traditional Potluck Lunch downstairs. Alice Strilchuk will want to know what you plan to bring so start thinking through your favorite recipes. And of course, copy the recipe out for our Centennial Cookbook!!

February was busy with Congregational Meetings. The Long Term Planning Discussion Paper was presented which outlined different scenarios for our future and there was overwhelming support for proceeding with discussions towards the future redevelopment of our site.

The Joint Needs Assessment Committee report was also presented and accepted and the Joint Search Committee struck to receive applications and

begin the formal search for our new minister. The members of this Committee are Ariel Creighton and Phyllis Bottomer from Presbytery, Jennifer Eastwood, Jason Haight and Neil Jorgensen from the JNAC, Ray Boucher, Bud Sobotin and Myrna Pearce from the congregation at large. This Committee hopes to be able to interview applicants throughout April and have a Candidate to propose in May. If you could all help out with your prayers, it would be greatly appreciated.

The Transition Committee is winding up their work together and has asked everyone for their evaluations to help with the understanding of the work we have done over this two year period. I would like to remind everyone of the huge debt of gratitude we all owe these folks. Roger Eastwood, Shirley McKeen, Anna Sanders, Steve Lund and Don Preston were initially asked to stand on this committee for a three month period. When Don's health required his resignation Al Fitch stepped up to the plate and they have been overseeing the Transition Work and Interim Ministry for this past two years instead of just three months. I would like to thank you all again on behalf of the congregation as a whole.

The Board had the opportunity to share an evening with Jane Harding from the National Church. Jane is hired to provide assistance to anyone in any congregation who would like to make provisions in their will and estate for Planned

Givings to their church. This means that she will meet with you privately to consider how you might provide for our congregation after you are gone. We would like to invite Jane to come and discuss this issue with the congregation as a whole. She has suggested that this be considered as part of a whole Stewardship program and the Board is hoping that a committee could be set up in the Fall to look at this ministry and support for our congregation.

Our AGM will be held on June 7th. We will be looking for folks to fill the following positions: Chair, Secretary, Property Counselor and Groups and Communications Counselor. If you feel that you would like to participate on the Board, please contact me or any other members of the Board and we will put your name up for nomination.

On that note, I will sign off and let you savor the sunshine and dream of plans for Spring. May you walk with the knowledge of the blessings of God always close at hand,

Myrna Pearce
Chair of the Board

WHAT'S UP??	
Sunday, April 5	Palm Sunday
Friday, April 10	Good Friday
Sunday, April 12	Easter Sunday Special Service Helping Hands Sunday - SAGE
Sunday, April 19	Sandwich Making
Saturday, April 25	Garage Sale
Sunday, May 3	Pre-Budget Review Meeting and Property Development Meeting after church in Sanctuary
Sunday, May 10	Mother's Day Helping Hands Sunday- Camp Fircom
Sunday, May 17	Sandwich Making
Wednesday, May 27	Cedarview Service @ 10:45 a.m.
Saturday, May 30	Lynn Valley Day Centennial Celebration Saturday
Sunday, May 31	Centennial Celebration Sunday
Sunday, June 7	A.G.M
Saturday, October 24	Fall Fair

