

Lynn Valley Herald

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Musings From Mollie

"What exactly is Interim Ministry?" I hear people around Lynn Valley United asking from time to time. I suppose the most accurate response to that question is "You'll know at the end of our two years together." I say that not to be flippant, but to let you in on a little secret. Each Interim is different from all the others, and yet there are some things that most have in common. Together as a congregation we look at and celebrate the past. We consider and honour the present, and we prayerfully envision the future to which God is calling this particular congregation. At the Covenanting service on September 23rd I was presented with three symbols to formally begin our Interim time together. I received a lovingly decorated candle which the children made and presented, plus a compass and a large umbrella. These symbols were chosen after conversation in the Transition Team: "What ought we to offer to this Covenant making, as an expression of what we hope to achieve together, while we work to keep our minds and hearts open to what God wants us to discover and learn along the way? And what might reflect the uniqueness of Lynn Valley United Church?"

On behalf of the Board, Myrna Pearce presented a large umbrella, playing with the image of the Interim Minister as someone who is like a tour guide. "Tour guides use umbrellas to help their flock stay together in a crowded city. Holding the umbrella high for all to see, the guide stops at designated spots to discuss, describe and allow tourists to experience the wonder of the encounter. Some will quickly glance around and move on while others will dawdle to savor the moment. When they have seen enough others will look up, locate the tour guide's umbrella and find their way back to the group." During our Interim Ministry we will experience some or all of this as we pause to notice what is on our Interim path."

"Opened up, the umbrella also provides shelter in stormy times, yet because of its open sides anyone can come and go from the circle created by the umbrella. This circle is like God's love which offers openness and acceptance without creating barriers."

The other symbol I was given came from the Transition Team itself. Roger Eastwood wrote the following reflection: "The compass is an ancient device that was invented, or perhaps that should be discovered, before the time of Christ. It is consistent and easy to read to

those trained in its usage. With a compass you can determine your present location and it will help to guide you to a destination, even if the destination is one you cannot see or have not visited before. It can be used with or without a map and some can even be read when darkness descends. However, if the owner of the compass does not have training in how to use it, it is just a couple of pieces of plastic and it will seem to have little practical use."

"The task of the congregation in the coming months is a journey into the unknown future. We need a guide who is consistent and keeps us on course, even though, at times, we may not be sure of where we are heading. We need someone who can help us establish where we are and where we should go. And we need that person to provide guidance on how to get there. We need someone who has been well trained in the use of our spiritual compass."

I share these words in the hope that you will take pride in the creativity of your congregational leaders as they approached the task of presenting these symbols to me, your Interim Minister.

And now a bit of an update. Some 49 of you were present at our first congregational gathering on Saturday Nov. 3, when we focused on

"Celebrating the Past as We Prepare for the Future." Much of the time people worked together in table groups remembering highlights of the decades past here at LVUC while also acknowledging some of the lowlights. From the feedback I have received, those attending were reminded as they listened to the reported reflections from the other table groups that the church has been through times of transition before, and that God has always given you the strength and insight that you needed to find your way. When we began to think about the future, it was interesting to see what commonality there was around the room. While many of you have real concerns about the financial challenges that may well emerge, many of you said in effect "it's time we looked at the hard yet exciting questions that need to be addressed about the future of both our building and property."

A frequent comment from the written evaluations was that people appreciated the level of honesty and openness that you offered to each other that day. Others of you were impressed that so many people came to the event and stayed right through to the end.

Our next Interim workshop has already been scheduled for Saturday March 8, 2008. I hope you will plan to attend. On that occasion we will focus on whatever information we have been able to gather regarding the demographics of both the congregation and the community. Other things we are focusing on to help us move ahead with our Interim work include making sure that a few people from

LVUC attend the two day Emerging Spirit "Living the Welcome" training session at Parksville. While we can't yet predict the outcome of this event for Lynn Valley United, we trust that the five of us will gain a greater understanding of what the Emerging Spirit research has to say to the Church about how people between the ages of 30 and 45 approach questions of spirituality. We may also come home with some other ideas that challenge our assumptions about how the Church should consider its mission and ministry in the future.

Soon we will enter into the season of Advent, that time in the church when we prepare for the coming again of Christ. In a sense, Interim Ministry is always an advent time, as we remember and yet look forward to what God has yet to reveal. May your Advent season be one that is blessed with times of reflection, quiet, peace and joy.

*Mollie Williams,
Interim Minister.*

First United

First Gifts

Advent is the season for First Gifts, the annual request for financial support from Lower Mainland United Church congregations for First United Church. First United is a mission of Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery, of which Lynn Valley United is a member.

This church is a place of refuge for many in the downtown eastside of Vancouver who have no other place: a warm dry place for sleep, food, clothing, showers, mail and telephone service, advocacy, education, and most of all for a caring community.

LVUC supports First United in many ways throughout the year: through our in-kind contributions of clothing and blankets, our upcoming chili dinner, the efforts of several volunteers, and our "Helping Hands" offerings. During Advent, we put our major effort into the financial contributions that allow all of the services to continue to be provided.

First Gifts offering envelopes will be available at LVUC throughout Advent.

A New Vision

This is a time of transition for First United. In the past year the congregation disbanded, there is new ministry leadership (Reverend Ric Matthews and Reverend Bob Burroughs) and new organizational structures, and a visioning process under the leadership of Michael Clague that involved extensive consultations with the community on the future of First and how it can best serve that community as it evolves.

A few months ago, First got a fresh new look for its website. Clean up and renovation of the building are being planned. Watch for future developments. <http://www.firstunited.ca/>

Judith Clark

Children's Worship

The children and I have had a fabulous fall exploring the lectionary stories using the 'Best of Whole People of God' curriculum with a bit of Godly Play sprinkled in.

The children enthusiastically helped out with preparations for the children's area at the Fall Fair and despite the rain, many of them came out and helped run the fish pond, games, crafts and pumpkin patch.

The children who attended the Saturday transition workshop were very insightful and their input to the theme of the day was appreciated by all.

It took awhile, but finally the children's choir resumed, and after only a couple of rehearsals the children shared the African song, Siyahamba, with the congregation during the children's Sunday service in mid November. The children's choir is planning to share lots of singing with the congregation during the month of December!

The children participated in leading the service in mid November. They got together and brainstormed what a service should have in it and helped to inspire the prayers and message. During the service the children showed a confidence and maturity that surpassed my expectations. I would like to thank all the children and their families as well as all the others who were such a great support to

me as the preparations for this service were being made.

The next big event for the children is the Christmas pageant. This will happen on the fourth Sunday of Advent - December 23rd. I look forward to hearing the Christmas story through the eyes of our children and I am sure that we will all be able to feel the children's excitement of the Christmas season in the coming weeks.

Thank you to you - the supportive congregation - for helping to nurture our children. Our children are not only the future of our church but active members of our congregation and it is exciting to see their enthusiasm each week.

"Our church is us and we are it. Our church is where we want to be, and it looks like all our dreams."

Christine MacDonald Davis

She Shares

Great News!! She Shares is pleased to welcome Christine Davis as the newest addition of "young moms" (no- don't laugh... that's apparently our demographic!!). There aren't any secret handshakes or code words to learn to become a part of this group- any and all who'd like to join are welcome. We try to meet once a month, sometimes on the last Sunday, but more often the group determines the meeting dates electronically, based on what's available after we collate our busy schedules.

It's difficult to say what exactly we "do", and what our plans are because we really just make it up, as a group, as we go. We have the common desire to belong to a like-minded circle within the church community; a spiritual sorority, if you will. Our next meeting is December 2 and we'll be doing something to celebrate Christmas together... location TBA. If you are interested in coming to this meeting, please contact Mary Yan.

PS... Just a little "shout out" to the amazing job everyone in the group did with the Fall Fair: Teisha for the absolutely incredible Silent Auction, Lori for her magic with the bbq, Christine for pulling together the Pumpkin Patch (and the rest of the kids area!), Anna for haunting the Halloween corner, Myrna and Kelly for doing their best to pull it all together and Mary for selling the cookie mix, keeping the group focused and helping us celebrate after it was all over- that's us... "sharing!"

Kelly Jenner

Knitters

Attention all Knitters! The cold weather is upon us again and it is time to think of the folks downtown who may not be warm enough. In the past we have knitted squares for blankets. This year we are going to knit toques. They don't take as long as a blanket to make and are also more portable! If you can help, please contact Sheila Fee at 604.988.0457. I have plain toque patterns and lots of wool, or you can use your own. Thanks so much!

Transition Team

What is it? What do they do? How does it relate to me? These are some of the questions I hope to answer in this article.

The Transition Team was formed in April of 2007 to hire an Interim Minister for Lynn Valley United Church following the retirement of our minister, Sharon Copeman. Upon completion of the hiring process, it was determined that the Transition Team works with the Interim Minister until a new minister is hired.

The current Transition Team consists of congregation members Roger Eastwood, Shirley McKeen, Anna Sanders, Steve Lund, and Al Fitch; and two Presbytery Representatives Ariel Creighton and Phyllis Bottomer.

“Transition” as defined in the dictionary is “The act or state of passing from one place, condition, or action to another; change”. Change can be a challenging time because it often means letting go of familiar ways of doing things and moving into the unknown. However, we believe that people will change if change leads them where they want to go. It is the goal of the Interim Minister, Mollie Williams, and the Transition Team to work along with the congregation members to determine where we want to go as Lynn Valley United Church.

A Covenanting Service for our Interim Minister, Rev. Mollie

Williams, was held on Sunday, September 23. At this service Mollie was presented with symbols on behalf of the children, congregation and Transition Team. These included a candle, a red and black umbrella and a compass. The symbols represented light for our future, guidance, protection, inclusiveness, leadership etc. The umbrella has since been used when members of the Transition Team speak to the congregation about the interim process.

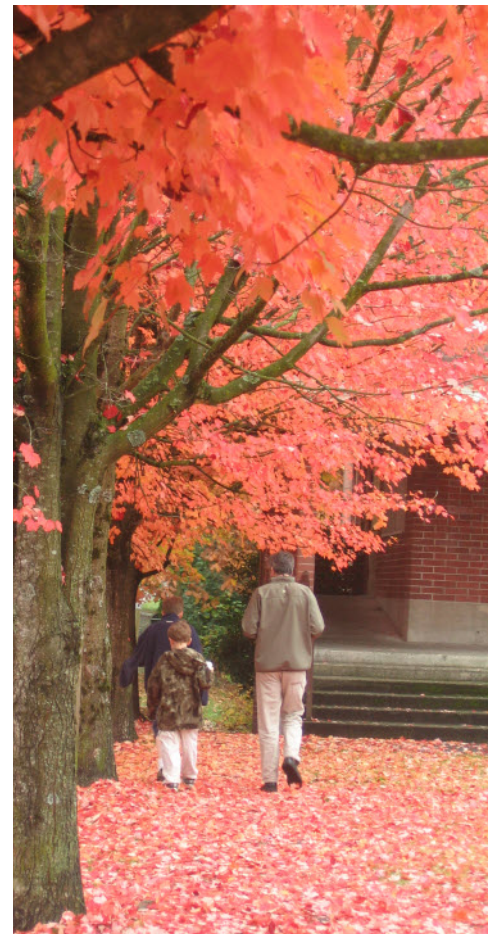
The two year Interim Ministry position reflects the length of time we believe is needed to discern what we, as a congregation, need. It takes into account the summer holidays, preparing for the Fall Fair, and Christmas and Easter celebrations. In order to hire a new minister for July 1, 2009 the vacancy should be advertised in February or March of 2009. Prior to advertising the vacancy there will be several congregational gatherings to provide for open communication about our feelings of change, our hopes for the future, and our goals for Lynn Valley United Church. In addition to our congregational gatherings, there will be time spent gathering historical and statistical information about Lynn Valley to determine how we can develop a stronger link to our community.

The Transition Team was very excited about the participation at the first congregational gathering which was held on Saturday, November 3rd. Approximately 50 congregation

members were in attendance to “Celebrate the Past as we Prepare for the Future”. We learned from one another about what was happening at LVUC over the decades and why each one of us stayed at the church. In the words of the children, “We stayed because the people are nice”.

The Transition Team is working in your interest! Please feel free to contact any member with concerns, feelings, ideas you may have about the Interim process or the future of our congregation.

Anna Sanders



Financial Update

My regular financial snapshot this month is as at October 31, 2007. We are progressing as expected with revenue slightly ahead of

budget and expenses slightly behind – a situation that is always good news for a treasurer!

In the summary below, the Fund Raising line under Revenue stands out. The over-budget situation is due to almost \$7,900 from the Fall Fair and \$870 from the Guess Who's Coming To Dinner event that generated funds for upgrading our sound system. In total, our Revenue is about \$2,700 ahead of this time last year, which again is a positive trend.

On the Expense side, we have spent about \$4,000 more than at the same time last year, all due to increased staff compensation, but this was anticipated in the budget. We have not incurred any major property expenses so far this fall, but some are anticipated as we continue to struggle to maintain an aging facility.

In summary, our financial status is as follows:

Revenue:

Donations	\$ 35,075	99.1% of Annual Budget
Rental Income	\$ 15,130	101.6%
Fund Raising	\$ 8,793	117.2%
Other Income	\$ 322	169.5%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 59,320	102.3%

Expenses:

Staff Compensation	\$ 33,907	100.0%
Office & Property	\$ 9,484	94.7%
Program & Other	\$ 4,969	103.3%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 48,360	99.2%

OPERATING SURPLUS \$ 10,960

The Operating Surplus is primarily due to the impact of the Fall Fair proceeds, half of which will be going to the U.C.W. in the near future.

Our financial records as at June 30, 2007 were audited in September and a copy of the complete financial statements is located on the notice board next to Mollie's office. If you would like a copy, please see Kelly during office hours, or let me know, and we will be pleased to provide one. While this information is not relaxing reading for many, it is important that it be readily available to the congregation. If you have any questions about our finances, this year or last, I will be happy to provide answers.

As usual, my thanks to everyone who has worked hard to help us maintain our present financial position. This includes everyone who worked so hard on the Fall Fair and those who committed to increase their givings to help us fund the North Shore Youth Initiative program - and who have met their pledge.

Roger Eastwood - Treasurer

Let's Make a Date of It

Nov 23/24- Emerging Spirit Workshop in Parksville

Nov 24- LVUC Sponsored Chili Dinner at First

Nov 25- Newsletter Distribution

Dec 2- First Sunday of Advent- First United Church Appeal Month

Dec 9- Second Sunday of Advent/ Blue Christmas Service

Dec 16- Third Sunday of Advent

Dec 23- Fourth Sunday of Advent- Possible Children's Worship Service

Dec 24- Christmas Eve services

Jan 13- Seekers Soup and Bun Lunch

Feb 10- Multicultural Potluck Lunch

March 8- Congregational Workshop- "Where are we now?"

March 16- Palm Sunday

March 21- Good Friday

March 23- Easter Sunday

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