



*Wheat that waits in winter...*

## **SLT Report, December 2015**

### **An Advent poem**

*If, as Herod*

*We fill our lives with things*

*And again with things;*

*If we consider ourselves*

*So unimportant that we*

*Must fill every moment*

*Of our lives with action,*

*When will we have the time*

*To make the long, slow*

*Journey*

*Across the desert as did the*

*Magi?*

*Or sit and watch the stars as*

*did the shepherds?*

*Or brood over the coming*

*child as did Mary?*

*For each one of us*

*There is a desert to travel*

*A star to discover*

*And a being within ourselves*

*To bring to life.*

*Anonymous*

### **Membership Structures:**

This year the DMC has been contemplating our structures around membership at GoW. A survey was done in the spring revealing many concerns regarding our present structures. The DMC is now reviewing a new membership structure called 'Ways to Engage'. Essentially, this proposal completely separates membership from which meetings you attend. If you have strong feelings or good ideas regarding this subject, please talk with a Servant Leader or DMC member, so that we have better information with which to make a decision. For all those who completed the survey in the spring, we still have the responses that you gave us, and have gone over those results with the DMC.

## **Sexual Orientation Conversation:**

In November, the Sharing & Learning Circle started viewing a series of presentations led by Dan Epp-Thiessen and Michael Pahl from a conference entitled "Seeking to be Faithful together: The Bible and Same Sex Relationships", sponsored by Mennonite Church Manitoba. The event was organized in response to a request that Mennonite Church Manitoba declare a position on homosexual people in the church. The conference attempts to offer opportunity to learn what Scripture says and how it is used to support, bolster, or defend all positions.

While going through this series of presentations may not bring us to a clear decision; it is giving us shared experience and shared learning. It is giving us words and opportunity to push the limits of our understanding of who God is and where God is leading the church in the 21st century. As we learn and listen, we are also becoming gentler and less defensive, more willing to listen and try to understand. We are finding more and better language to explain our own thoughts and thereby hearing and understanding one another better. We know that this has been a difficult conversation at times, and that this has been hard work for all of us. We are hopeful and optimistic that the hard work is leading us closer to one another, and to God.

These times of learning through the generosity of Dan & Michael are open to anyone in GOW. So, come join us in January and March. Become part of the discussion, part of the discernment into God's future for GOWCC.

The next steps in this conversation will involve the SLT taking a proposal to the Advisory Team in February and then to the DMC in March or April. We encourage all members to attend the above sessions and also to approach Servant Leaders and DMC members with their thoughts and feelings about the conversation.

## **Youth Connector**

As many of you will know, we have a new Youth Connector. Sarah Deckert has accepted the position and has already immersed herself in the role with David also playing an active part. They have begun to have small groups of youth over to their house for meals and have already hosted one larger event. Sarah has also been busy looking at our youth mentoring program and is formulating some plans around that. This is an exciting development for all of Grain of Wheat!

We will be blessing Sarah and her family at our January 10<sup>th</sup> worship service, so come and join us as we bless our newest GOWCC Youth Connector.

## **West End Commons**

The West End Commons is a big project that GOWCC has made a long-term commitment to involvement and action. Although the construction has ended, the work continues. Rob Dueck's two terms on the board of WEC are coming to an end. Keeping with our commitment to have at least three members on the board, we will be proposing a new board member to the DMC on Dec. 16th.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> is the WEC Christmas Feast, which we have been asked to help host and serve at. The feast is for the tenants upstairs and those people who frequent the Drop In Centre. We want to make this a special event for those who are attending and it is a great opportunity to meet some of the people with whom we share the building. We are still very much in need of food items and people to work on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please contact Lynda Loeppky to help out.

## **A Most Excellent Way**

### **An adaptation of 1 Corinthians 13**

If we speak the language of Christian love, but do not show that love to others; we are just another group, living on the surface of what can be possible in Christ. If we have critical thinking skills, understand GOW's vision, history, and 13 commitments, have a desire to be part of a community, but do not love; we are nothing.

If we share generously of our possessions and wealth, open our homes to various GOW events, but do not love; we have gained nothing.

Love is patient, persistent against all odds.

Love is kind, genuinely caring for those in need.

Love is conscious action – accepting change, taking time to listen, rejoicing in the good deeds of all.

Believing the best in everyone and in all of God's creation.

Taking every opportunity to be optimistic and confident to learn and grow in relationship with all those around us

Love is not envious or jealous. It does not boast of its accomplishments

Love is not rude, arrogant or loud in the face of another's struggle

Love does not trample the fragile.

Love never fails or disappoints. Love never ends.

While traditions we value may end, others will begin anew. Supper clubs change. Children's Ministry will adapt and alter. We are sad to see winter retreat be lost and hope we can find a new way to gather together. Wednesday meetings are imperfect. We mourn the losses; remember the laughter and the memories of shared times together.

Creator God does not change. We have left the ways of our childhood behind us. We move forward in faith. The rough edges are smoothed; the reflection in the mirror becomes clearer.

Our truth is revealed by God, step by step.

And now faith – in each other

In our leaders

In God

Hope – in the good around us

In the completion of God's perfect plan

And love – the care and support of friends

The kinship and romance of family

The agape relationship of creation

And the greatest of these is love! Love is more than words can say!

