

Whoever you are, Wherever you are at, Join us on the Journey.

An Affirming Congregation in the *Heart* of Kensington



Financial Call from the Minister October 2009

This past month I led two workshops in Banff for the United Church, titled, "Old Church- New Church ." Approximately 150 people attended from Western Canada. What struck me was how people described their churches...using words like, "desperate, sad, irrelevant, lifeless, poorly attended." I was saddened. I was asked to speak about Hillhurst United Church and how it is emerging in a new way. I see our community as "thriving, joyful, and relevant ." We are what I call the NEW church. We didn't get here by accident. We've been intentional in our planning.

Hillhurst has increased our staff to appropriately meet our needs. We have over 75 registrants in our Sunday School and have hired excellent, forward-thinking staff to ensure children and youth are challenged and inspired. Our worship attendance averages 250 congregants each week, with a large demographic in the 25-35 year old range, the largest of any United Church in the city, perhaps the country. Hundreds of people have participated in our adult education courses. Our outreach ministry attracts many with a passion for justice in our city and beyond. Clearly, we are an emerging NEW church. Many churches would love our reality to be theirs.

However, at this time, we lack appropriate "givings" necessary to sustain the work we have begun. We are not meeting our present budget needs. We lack financial commitment to our work. To be honest, I am disappointed.

My dream is to see our financial givings match our lived experience.

Many of you do contribute generously, others have been hit by the uncertain economy and make a modest commitment at this time. I ask "Can YOU make Hillhurst part of your monthly expenses and commit to our congregation's work or could you increase your givings? Your ongoing financial commitment tells us you support both my work and the vision set forth by the Church Board.

It isn't about equal giving, it is about equal sacrifice to ensure we have enough to continue.

This may sound cranky and a tad hard hitting. It is ! I hate to see our success mired by a lack of funds. I hate to see passionate people unable to do great things because we don't have the money. I believe the resources are there. We are a privileged and grateful people. The question is, are we willing to reflect that gratitude in our financial giving? How does your contribution match your lived experience? I hope our potential will be realized.

I give thanks for the hard work of so many who daily inspire me and support the church by all they do. Our church IS new in its living. It is a "thriving, joyful, relevant community."

May you sit softly in the Spirit as you consider your financial commitment to this great NEW church.

Peace John