



SLT Report July 2015

Year in Review

It has been a full year from last summer until now. Tessa Nussbaum joined the Servant-Leader team just before last summer, and took very little time getting into the flow of things. Tessa's thoughtfulness, attention to detail, and love for GoW were immediately clear.

We started the year by looking at Ephesians 4: 1-16 in two homilies, as well as at some of our S&L meetings. This small bit of scripture brings up five of the great words of the Christian faith; humility, gentleness, patience, love and peace (or unity). These qualities were presented as what we, as beloved children of God, are called to portray. These five great qualities do not exclude us from being in conflict with one another, but rather guide us in how we should deal with that conflict. We started with this Ephesians scripture, because we suspected that conflict could arise, and it did.

Another theme for the year was "Time, Talents, and Treasures". The meetings that we spent on this were valuable to some, for the times of personal reflection that we so often do not allow ourselves to do on a regular basis. The information gathered was quite helpful to SLT members as we tried to realize the 'bigger picture' of where GoW is at, and where it might be going. One of the big intentions of this focus, that is still unrealized, was to end in a discussion around how we do our finances as a community, and why. The likelihood of this happening during the next year, is fairly high. Unfortunately, we (the SLT) were remiss in reminding the community on a regular basis, what the reasons were for being engaged in these exercises, which led to some confusion. For this we have apologized.

The conversation began last summer around financial giving has continued with members of the finance team, the SLT, Personnel, Advisory, and DMC all playing a role. This has brought on a few new ways of doing things. Firstly, the finance team, or a portion thereof, now makes quarterly reports to the DMC, which has become a very positive addition to our usual routines. Also, the finance team is now putting in brief monthly updates on our finances into the GoW announcements. Please keep your eyes open for this information.

In May, the DMC returned to the conversation around the question of being an "affirming" church, in regards to LGBT+ followers of Christ. It became clear in these two meetings that we as a community need to spend more time talking with one another and processing our beliefs and stories. In the conversations, learning and story-telling to come, we will need to be aware of those five great words in the Christian tradition from Paul's letter to the Ephesians (as mentioned above).

For further thoughts on Ephesians 4 and GoW see <http://www.grainofwheat.ca/road-map-to-unity/> and <http://www.grainofwheat.ca/were-all-in-this-together/>



Summer Plans

Over the summer, Linda and Andrew will be taking the opportunities that are provided by a slower pace at GoW, to engage in planning and visioning for the next year. This work has already begun, and both of us are excited to use our time for reflection, looking at the bigger picture, and discovering how we might use our strengths in new ways that will hopefully add to the life of the community.

We are planning a SLT retreat in August, which Tessa is planning on partially attending, time and family permitting. We are hoping to include Tessa as much as possible in our times of planning for the year, so that her return from maternity leave will not leave her feeling on the outside. Also, her contributions to the team are highly valued, and we miss seeing her as often as before her leave.

After our retreat we will be working on another SLT report which will outline the big themes and conversations in the 2015-16 GoW year. Look for this to be released in early September.

Both of us will be taking some of our vacation time during the summer. Linda's vacation will be from July 5th to 19th. Andrew will be on vacation from August 11th to 25th. Please keep this in mind if you are needing to be in contact with an SLT member during these times.

Lord's Prayer for GOW

Below is a version of the Lord's Prayer written by Linda as she reflected on the past year at GoW. She was inspired by a similar version written by, and for, people who have been living in war zones for much of their lives. Please feel free to use (or alter) this in your personal prayer times.

Creator God in Heaven
Maker of earth, sky and sea
Holy be your mighty name
May your Kingdom come

Because in your kingdom coming,
There will be no Jew or Gentile, no slave or free, no black or white
There will be no fear of vulnerability, rejection, of speaking the truth
in love and with compassion
We will remember and embrace that we are all your beloved
children, made in your image

Your will be done (on earth as it is in Heaven)
That there may be freedom & acceptance for each of us
That we have the courage to reach out to the poor, the sick, the lonely, the
hungry, and those struggling with health and addiction
That we reach out with caring & courage to love one another within GOW
and in our community
Give us this day our daily bread
The bread for our table
The bread for our heart, mind and soul
The bread to live in peace and harmony with the community around us
Forgive us, Creator God
For not knowing how to share what we have received from you
For the times we speak without listening to you and to those you place in
our lives
For taking each other for granted
For our lack of respect and love for our brothers and sisters
As we forgive
Those who haven't heard us
Those who do not understand us
Those who have heard and continue to unintentionally hurt us
Those who intentionally inflict pain on us and those we love
Lead us not into temptation
The temptation that assumes 'I know' and 'I understand'
The temptation to ignore and go my own way
The temptation to ignore Your leading and guidance offered through Your
word and through my brothers & sisters
But deliver us from evil
Help us to remember that compassion (and gentle questions) creates
safety and acceptance to explore and grow
That words spoken in anger and fear create dissention and distrust
For yours is the Kingdom, the power, the glory forever. Amen.

Worship Team

The worship team has seen a number of changes during this last year. After serving actively on the worship team for two years, Albert stepped down from his role in March. His insight and wisdom will be missed, and our thoughts and prayers are with Nettie, Jess, and the rest of the Labun family.

New to the team are Sarah and Randy. Sarah will be taking on the important role of worship scheduling from Paul. Randy will take on the coordinating of readers, which had been Albert's job. Both Randy and Sarah have brought some fresh energy and good questions to the team.

Both Lynda and James Kornelsen will continue in their roles as Communion Leader Coordinator and Music Team Leader. Paul has given up his scheduling duties, but will remain on the team as a connection to children's worship and as Coordinator of Homilies. Andrew is staying on as the Chair of the Worship Team and as Coordinator of Worship Leaders, but has given up the job of coordinating homilists.

Children's Ministry Report

This past year has seen many changes in how we are doing Children's Worship. We started the year with Atrium (ages 3 – 5) and Children's Worship (grades 1 – 6). There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm in the two groups. It soon became clear that

changes in structure would improve the teaching time and make it easier to channel the energy. We have now divided the grades 1 -6 into two groups. Paul Langel is putting leadership into the grades 4 – 6 and using lectionary readings as a guide for the worship time. Grades 1 – 3 are using the Shine curriculum put out by Mennonite Church Canada. Energy and enthusiasm are plentiful and we are looking for a few more adults to develop relationships with our wonderful children.

The Nursery/Toddler aged children have not had structured time this past year. That is in part due to their young age and their reluctance to stay with someone other a parent. As these children mature, parents are requesting some structured programming. We are working on making the Child Care room a safe space for these little ones to play and experience community. Parents are putting tremendous energy into what they would like for their young children. Discussions continue as possible songs, stories, and structured activities are planned.

Seed Groups

Sensing the Sacred: Beth, Andrew, Lloyd, Norm, Dorothy, Nancy, Peterjohn, Lynda

Night Songs: Larry, Noelle, Jane, Roger, Toni, Al, Luisa, Kathy, Gord, Lorraine

Voluntary Simplicity: Bill, Tannis, Linda, Rob, Ian, Wendy, Aisha, Sarah, David

Rhor: Kerry, Craig, Rachel, Elfrieda, Irene, Paul H., Jacquie, William, Marvin, Michelle

YBWBC: James Krahn, Esther, Tony, Clara, Lena, Dave, Janie, Scott, Jana

Parenting: Nettie, Owen, Carolyn, Melanie, Jason, John, Gabrielle

Mustard Seed: Randy, Saori, Jake, Annie, Paul, Tabitha, Tessa, Aaron

MAST Report

The Missions and Services Team's (MAST) main objective is to provide opportunities for Grain of Wheat members, children and anybody connected with the church to do Christian service in the community. Lately we have not been very active mainly because the committee is short of people to serve on the team. Melanie needed to withdraw (temporarily we hope) in order to concentrate on her Ph.d studies and Nettie has needed to devote as much time as possible to supporting Albert. This has left only Lloyd and Linda (our servant Leader representative). We will need new members if MAST is to become active again.

We ask you to think and pray about this carefully and contact one Lloyd if you feel so led."

