



TRUMPET NEWSLETTER

May 2018

SPECIAL EDITION

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY!

Exeter United Church looks to the future with Open Arms, Open Hearts and Open Spirit!

Exeter United Church recently held a series of Town Hall meetings to explore who they are as a faith community and identify priorities moving forward. Central to the motivating vision of Open Arms, Open Hearts and Open Spirit is a desire to be an inclusive, welcoming and accepting faith community, working to meet the needs of the broader community through outreach programs and developing and strengthening relationships. Values celebrated focused on community, this was defined as a sense of belonging, being supported; a social and spiritual community.

Priorities identified included outreach programs, being flexible and open to change, creating a faith community that is open and inclusive for everyone, exploring ways to meet the needs of the community, and developing relationships with other faith communities. Some of the ideas discussed included using the space in the Sanctuary for more musical and cultural events, leveraging the wonderful acoustics and facilities that we have available; taking "church" out into the community by having small groups meet at other public locations for discussion groups; exploring different styles of worship; building upon our existing programming such as free movie nights, collective kitchen etc.; working collaboratively with other area churches for special activities. There is a strong desire to continue to find ways to "live, follow and do" our motivating vision Open Arms, Open Hearts, Open Spirit. Part of this journey will be to continue to explore what this means for Exeter United Church as a community, and for the congregation as individuals.

The last question asked was "Why Are We Here?" Exeter United Church is here for community; for outreach; to provide a place where people can gather to worship God together; a place where people can ask questions; be challenged; a place to take your curiosity; a place to grow. Exeter United Church doesn't have all the answers but we are a community of people who come together to explore and know God better.

Everyone is welcome, come as you are!

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Open Arms, Open Hearts, Open Spirit



OPEN ARMS...OPEN HEARTS...OPEN SPIRIT

"One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing."

— Jean Vanier, *Community And Growth*

I came to Exeter United Church 7 years ago, unchurched, and unfamiliar with what it meant to belong to a community in this sense. It was both frightening and overwhelming to walk through the door, and although I knew I was looking for something, I wasn't prepared for all that I would find here. Exeter United Church is my church community, it is a place where I feel encouraged, supported and cared for. I have had the opportunity to explore and develop spiritually, socially and emotionally through personal connections, involvement with groups and projects, and taking part in various activities in my time here. I have found confidence and courage here, to try new things outside of my comfort zone, always feeling supported and encouraged by the smiling faces and loving arms of my many new friends. I know we have our challenges, like any family, but I have come to trust in the community that I have found at Exeter United Church.



WHAT COMMUNITY MEANS TO ME

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OPEN ARMS...OPEN HEARTS...OPEN SPIRIT

The concept of community is an interesting one. While we can learn something of it by seeking its definition in a dictionary, it is more clearly grasped by how we feel. That is certainly true in my case vis-a-vis Exeter in general and Exeter United Church in particular. For the 15 years before I arrived in Exeter I lived something of the life of a nomad, being in a place but not of a place. Upon arriving in Exeter I went from being a nomad to being an immigrant, that is I decided to become part of the community, and equally importantly, permit the community become part of me.

I am fortunate in having a faith community in my past. This permitted without too much stress (since I am somewhat shy...really!) to make my port of entry Exeter United Church. Since my arrival I have met many people, more than I know, since I am often greeted by name on the street and in shops by people I don't recognize. So my transition is still a work in process! In this entry, this church community has welcomed me and gave me many opportunities for service. I see that the government of Great Britain has formed a department to deal with loneliness since being socially isolated is both a social problem and a public health issue. I won't be needing such a service. I have found my own.

"As the church, we are in community together trying to fulfill this Great Commission that Jesus left us with. As we gently press into each other, we form one united thing, His church. As we work together, sharing the space God gives us to do His work, we all become shaped a little different. We all become a little more like Him."

— [Jennifer L. Lane, Faith Adventures: Stories of Learning with an Unseen God](#)



Why Impacting Community Should Be a Church Priority

Growing a church and impacting a community are not mutually exclusive. In fact, these two complex endeavors are highly interrelated. However, a strategy to grow your church may or may not have an impact on your community. In contrast, an intentional plan to impact your community will highly likely help your church grow.

I don't think this is an ecclesiastical "chicken or egg" conundrum. But it is often an unintentional strategic error on the part of many churches to allow these two to become prioritized incorrectly.

The first goal of community impact is not church growth. Church growth is a natural by-product of serving the community and giving yourselves away.

It was probably 10 years ago, or more, that I read this question for the first time. I don't know who first posed it, but it's powerful. "Would your community miss you if your church no longer existed?" That has stuck with me ever since.

Are we as Christian leaders doing things that matter? Do our actions and investments make an eternal impact outside the walls and halls of our churches? That's a significant question we all should have the courage to answer.

Here are some observations to consider as you reflect on where your church stands in light of this idea:

The majority of Jesus' ministry was in the community, not in the temple. Jesus consistently took His ministry to the people. The gospel accounts are filled with His interactions out among the people. It's true that he didn't have a modern church to lead and organize like you and I do, but He certainly had His own pressures to deal with and yet always remained with the people.

There is a great tension here because it seems like the larger and more successful our churches become, the more we are drawn inward to manage the daily affairs and programs of the church. It is true for me and perhaps for you too. It's important for us to intentionally leverage our time, energy, and resources, along with whatever "success" God grants us, back out into the community rather than become fully consumed with those who already know Jesus.

The greater potential your church has to make an impact in the community, the greater the potential you will receive resistance. The enemy loves it when churches become a little comfortable or inwardly focused. These churches are not much of a threat in the spiritual realm. But when a church begins to make a big impact in the community through dozens of possibilities from compassion to justice to simple intentional acts of kindness, the enemy notices and problems seem to increase. It's amazing how many battles can arise when you are attempting only to be kind and generous to those around you who are in need.

When your church gets involved in the community, the people are more receptive to your mission and your message. There is a huge variety of possibilities including options like a local food co-op, or a foster care agency, or Habitat for Humanity, or support of a local elementary school, or addiction recovery house, or a homeless shelter and that just scratches the surface.



The bottom line is that when people begin to see, sense and experience that you care about them their perspective changes about who you are. That impacts their receptivity to your mission and the gospel message. Perhaps many individuals may never attend your church, but observation and experience says that God is pleased with this kind of ministry and ultimately it does draw people to your church.

You grow a church on your terms, you impact a community on their terms. You get to decide what structure and programs make up the foundation of your church. The key leaders have the privilege and responsibility to make the major decisions that determine the culture of your church. But when it comes to impacting the community around you, people require that you meet them on their turf, on their time and their terms. For example, rather than create your own church sports league of some kind, why not go out into the community and volunteer to lead, coach and invest financial resources into sports leagues that already exist?

You can grow a church on history and tradition, but you must become relevant to impact a community. Don't confuse relevance with style. Relevance is not about your choice of worship or how casual you may or may not be, that is about style and preference. Relevance means what you do matters. Relevance means that your ministry changes things, people are different and the surrounding community notices that they matter to you. They experience that you care first hand.

It's true that Christians in particular will come to your church because what you offer is tried and true and comfortable. There's nothing wrong that. It's a simple reality that when churches get larger and really good at what they do, they often attract more Christians. But when you serve people who are hurting, and/or far from God, that expression of compassion may not directly help your church, but you are definitely aligning with the heart of God.

Reaching the un-churched and impacting your community requires out of the box thinking, compassion, challenging the status quo and change.

So, what do you think? What would God have you do differently to make a greater impact in your community?

Dan Reiland is the executive pastor at 12Stone Church in Lawrenceville, Georgia. He previously partnered with John Maxwell for 20 years, first as executive pastor at Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego, then as vice president of leadership and church development at INJOY.

For the original article, visit danreiland.com.

The following article is provided by the Board and Finance & Stewardship Committee who are working together to raise awareness and educate the congregation regarding the Minister having access to congregational givings.



It is a perennial question -

Should clergy know what people give?

A brief sketch of the continuum looks like this¹

Clergy should know because ...

They are the CEO of a \$ ###,000.00 operation and responsible for its care.

Giving is a pastoral issue – giving patterns are signals, like others, of a state of the soul, mind or body.

Money is a HUGE spiritual matter in the life of the church.

They hold on to very sensitive information – why not this kind of information?

Knowing overcomes the false split that exists between the financial life of the congregation and the spiritual life of the congregation.

It begins to 'shatter the conspiracy of silence' for the spiritual health of the people in the congregation.

The reality could be startling!

Clergy should not know because ...

We (congregational leadership) don't trust the clergy or have confidence in their leadership.

Could lead to favouritism in pastoral care and other forms of ministry.²

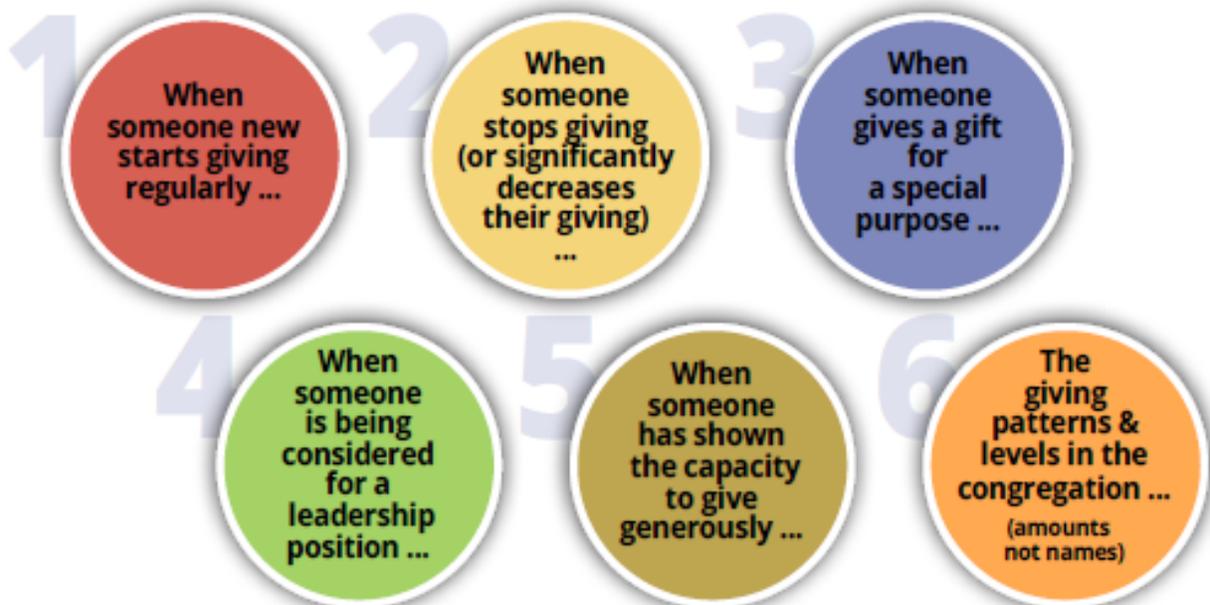
They (and/or congregational leadership) believe that money is a temporal NOT a spiritual matter.

It could cloud their judgement; they might treat big or small givers differently.

The reality could be startling!

A better question, according to Brian Kluth, is -

What should the clergy know?³





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What should the clergy know?

1 WHEN SOMEONE NEW STARTS GIVING REGULARLY -

Clergy then know that this is someone making an intentional effort to become connected to the congregation. These are ideal people begin to talk with and find out about their needs. It might also lead to deeper involvement and faith formation.

New givers can also be sent a short note of appreciation for their gifts that could include some helpful information about the congregation's ministry and other information to help deepen their understanding of the mission of the church and Biblical giving principles.

2 WHEN SOMEONE STOPS GIVING (OR SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASES THEIR GIVING) -

This usually happens in someone's life for two primary reasons. First, the person is going through personal challenges or a great hardship (sometimes even unknown to others). Secondly, the person is upset with the church or someone and is making a statement. *Either requires pastoral attention.*

3 WHEN SOMEONE GIVES A GIFT FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE -

As in 1, this is an opportunity for gratitude from the community.

4 WHEN SOMEONE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR A LEADERSHIP POSITION -

If they aren't giving faithfully to the mission of the church, their hearts are not with you and their hearts are actually far from you! These are not the type of people you want in your key leadership positions.

5 WHEN SOMEONE HAS SHOWN THE CAPACITY TO GIVE GENEROUSLY -

If someone is a great singer, we encourage them to sing. If someone is a great teacher or youth worker, we encourage them to use their gifts. But if someone is a great giver, we ignore them! Don't all people need to be encouraged in their God-given giftedness, including generous givers. *Other organizations will get in if you don't.*

6 WHAT ARE THE GIVING PATTERNS AND LEVELS IN THE CONGREGATION (AMOUNTS NOT NAMES) -

Most clergy and church leaders have no idea about the giving patterns within their congregation. *This is basic information that should be routinely available - with annotations from the person who does have all the detail.*

KEYS WAYS CLERGY CAN SUPPORT A HEALTHY, MATURE STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY ⁴

- Articulate a theology of giving
- Develop an ethos of transparency by discussing their personal pledging practices
- Empower lay leadership to serve
- Invite others to join them in giving
- Model a spirit of gratitude by thanking often

1 Ask, Thank, Tell - Charles Lane + generally accepted reasons.

2 "My standard answer to this is that if your pastor would structure pastoral care around giving levels, then you have much bigger problems than what the pastor does or doesn't know." Charles Lane

3 <http://kluth.org/WhatShouldPastorsKnowAboutGiving.htm>

4 Various Sources



GOD'S MISSION OUR GIFTS

The United Church
of Canada

Philanthropy Unit

INSPIRE! ASK! THANK!





The Life of Our Church Community!

EXETER UNITED CHURCH PRESENTS



**COMMUNITY
GOSPEL
SERVICE IN
THE PARK**

Sunday, June 24 @ 10:00 am
MacNaughton Park Pavillion, Exeter
Bring Your Own Picnic Lunch following service
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!
519-235-0860
www.exeterunitedchurch.com

Enjoy music all afternoon at:

Jessica's House Music
Weekend Gospel Sunday



ROCK OF AGES
Sunday June 24, 2-4 PM
Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash
Patsy Cline and Little Jimmy Dickens

To purchase tickets or learn more, please visit
JessicasHouseMusicWeekend.ca
ALL FUNDS RAISED WILL BENEFIT JESSICA'S HOUSE RESIDENTIAL HOSPICE

**South Huron
Free Community Meals**



Sunday, May 27th 5:00 pm Exeter United Church
Sunday, June 17th 5:00 pm Exeter United Church
Sunday, July 22 5:00 pm Huron Park Fire Station
Sunday, August 19 5:00 pm Huron Park Station

Everyone is Welcome!

10 @ 10

**STARTING
JULY 1ST**

Join us in the
Air-Conditioned
Primary Room
for summer worship
10:00 am
until September 2



JOIN REV. LAURIE AND HEATHER AS WE

*Get into the
groove.. Wednesdays at noon*

*Wear comfortable clothes and come for 1/2 hour dance
inspired movement, suitable for all abilities!*

South Huron Foodgrains Service
Sunday, May 27th 10:30 am
Exeter United Church



A partnership of Centralia-Zion West United Church,
Thames Road Elimville United Church, Exeter United
Church, and Precious Blood Catholic Church