



jacob'sWELL

March 2014



In this issue, we want to highlight the diversity of our community and the strength that it brings. "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others..." (Romans 12: 4 – 8)

Theological Diversity at Jacob's Well *by Beth Malena (& Alberto Jaramillo)*

Beth and Berto have been on staff at Jacob's Well for the last 7 years, and they continue to serve and walk with the community and neighborhood with as much passion as when they first started.

"Until we are one, the world will not be won." Our founder Pauline Fell recites this almost every time we visit her. She reminds us that when folks see different kinds of Christians working together in love, despite their disagreements, the Kingdom of God is announced and outsiders are drawn in.

When Pauline first came to the DTES, she helped out with several Christian ministries that were each connected to only one particular church or denomination. She learned a lot from them, but also hoped to find a place where all Christians could belong and seek friendship in the DTES whether they were Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, or from any other church background. So Pauline founded Jacob's Well as an *ecumenical* community – in other words, a community of people from all sorts of churches.

When I think about the Jacob's Well community, I'm reminded of a quote from a 17th-century archbishop: "In necessary things, unity; in uncertain things, freedom; in everything, compassion." At Jacob's Well, the "necessary things" include our common love for the living Christ, our common values, like mutuality, and our common call to seek friendship in the DTES. But even though we all take the Bible seriously, there are a lot of "uncertain things" we differ on. Our community includes Calvinists and Armenians, adult-baptizers and child-baptizers, creationists and evolutionists, people who pray in tongues and people who pray silently, straight people and gay people, pacifists and just war theorists, Christians who are wealthy and those who think we're called to give everything away.

This is where "in everything, compassion" comes in. Although we do believe that truth exists, we also believe that none of us has a perfect grasp on it, so we try to hold our views with humility and grace, and we try our best to understand people who disagree with us. We keep our eyes on Jesus, who wasn't afraid to make friends with people as diverse as revolutionary Zealots and Rome-serving tax collectors, and who often criticized self-proclaimed "guardians of the truth."

After thirteen years of life together, Jacob's Well still has a long way to go towards being broadly ecumenical... *(continued on page 2)*



Above: After January's Variety Show.

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(continued from page 1) We have had only a few brave people from Catholic, Orthodox, and mainline churches join our mostly Evangelical Protestant community. I would love for us to be more diverse than we are. But even though our diversity is limited, it's still hard being part of an ecumenical community! Usually we tend to either overemphasize or underemphasize our unique flavour of Christianity. Sometimes we overemphasize the things that make us different, and this becomes a barrier to potential friendship because we only end up interacting with people who reinforce what we already think and do. Other times we underemphasize these different parts of ourselves, because it feels risky to worship in our own particular way, or to talk about our unpopular beliefs, and we end up missing out on potential chances to be authentic and learn from other people. Being ecumenical is a fine balance!

I believe we are all part of the body of Christ, and we each have gifts and ideas to offer to the whole community. Dawn brought us her Vineyard emphasis on worship and healing prayer. Tim brings us the teachings of Father Seraphim and others in the Orthodox tradition. Ron brings his experience of being unconditionally loved in a Korean Canadian church. As these distinct, diverse parts are knit together in community, we start to get a fuller glimpse of what Christ intended the Church to be. This diverse unity sometimes seems impossibly crazy, but with our guide Jesus as the Head of the Body, we hold onto hope that someday, we will be one.

Below: Wednesday night Praise & Worship



Dear Friends,

I am writing on behalf of Jacob's Well and our Wednesday night praise and worship time which starts at 7:30pm on Wednesday nights. I really like to praise and worship with others on Wednesday nights. Sometimes I share my spiritual growth and pray for others as well as learning and sharing my knowledge of the Bible and the Spirit.

Love, Ron H.

Sweet Fragrance by Jean-Christophe Andrez

Jean-Christophe, or as we call him, "JC", has been on the Wednesday Praise and Worship team since the beginning of 2013. He brings his gentle spirit along with his homemade goodies to share.

Feeling tired, proud or lacking direction? This is often how I feel on Wednesdays. It is "hump day" after all.

But the knowledge that I will be meeting with Jesus in the evening at JW helps me to start every Wednesday with joy. What I appreciate during the worship time is the freedom of our gathering, which allows the Spirit to transform worshippers present and to nudge us to re-centre ourselves on our Lord (I'm grateful someone always requests the song "Jesus Be the Centre"!). I am very thankful to be able to praise the Lord, to share stories amidst struggles, and to have the chance to pray for one another. The cherry on top of our wonderful time of worship is the addition of a coffee/tea time before worship (thanks to Dave) during which we can talk and get to know each other better.

An uplifting evolution for me was seeing attendees contributing and serving each other, and also discovering that many Jacobswellians attending Wednesday worship can speak French, my mother tongue. This reminds me of a quote by Nelson Mandela: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." Being French, I also know that one's mother tongue is not the only way to another's heart – food also serves the same purpose (albeit reaching a different destination). Thank you to everyone who has been gracious enough to try my experimental cooking recipes during our tea time! I think this new cooking aspiration came from my time spent with Colleen on Wednesday afternoons baking the best baked goods you could ever eat at JW!

Finally, I want to thank God for his unfailing love, mercy and grace. May His light continue to pour out in our hearts as we awake from our slumber and sing praises to His name!

Community News

Welcome to: Shaun, Luc, Norman, Joana and Katie who have joined our community since our last newsletter. Yolanda also joined the staff team in November.

Congratulations to Harmony and Jonathan Ng on the birth of their second child, a son, Hiero Nouwen Ng. He was born on January 22nd, at 6 lbs and 1oz, a brother to Aylar.

A goodbye to Dawn Humphreys, who has finished her time on staff here at Jacob's Well, but we expect her to be visiting us often!

Praise: Our old fridge finally gave out in mid-October but we were able to replace it with a newer version of the exact same one for only \$250! Praise the Lord! Thanks to Berto's brilliant idea, the old fridge has been converted into a waterproof book shelf for the office, and a bulletin board for the storefront.

*Right (From top left clockwise):
Shaun & Luc, Norman at the variety show, Hiero Nouwen Ng, and old fridge as a waterproof book shelf.*



*Above: Joanna, Brenda, Katie and Ron during Praise and Worship.
Left: Tony and Mai Loan celebrating Mai Loan's birthday.
Below: Neil, Bree and Stan at December's Variety Show.*



10 Questions, 6 Perspectives

We had the privilege of sitting down with 6 members of our community and asking them ten fun questions. Here are their responses.



Micheal Spiers (MS) John Delong (JD) Susan Elliot (SE) Sue Tony Doan (TD) Ron Harvey (RH)

1) How long have you been coming to Jacob's Well?

MS: Since 2002; I was living upstairs at the Jubilee then and needed a break from my room.

JD: 10 years; I walked past and there was a worship service.

SE: 3 years. (Susan brings Tony's kids to the Well weekly)

Sue: 4 years. I was working as a TSW upstairs at the Jubilee.

TD: 7 years. I was living upstairs then, and started going to community kitchen.

RH: 10-15 years. I was living upstairs; I came for worship.

2) If you could only eat one thing for a whole month, what would it be?

MS: Perogies. Even if they're plain!

JD: Cheesecake. (Cherry!)

SE: Spaghetti and meatballs.

Sue: Pasta! You can eat it so many ways.

TD: Phở! (pronounced "fuh", not "foh")

RH: Chicken, 'cause you can have it so many ways!

3) Where is your favourite place to go in Vancouver?

MS: Maybe the airport, watching planes fly by.

JD: I don't have a favourite place.

SE: At home, 'cause I'm out all day.

Sue: Jericho Beach!

TD: Thai Son. (A Vietnamese restaurant)

RH: Stanley Park, because of the trees, scenery, greeneries...!

4) What's the first thing you notice about a person?

MS: Nothing...

JD: Their face.

SE: How they talk to another person.

Sue: How someone carries themselves; their composure.

TD: Don't know.

RH: Eyes.

5) Who would you most like to meet someday? (It could be anyone, dead or alive)

MS: Mikhail Gorbachev. I wrote to him in Junior High School, but he never wrote back; I want to ask him why...

JD: Jesus!

SE: My great grandmother; she was the one that raised me.

Sue: Pierre Trudeau.

TD: My kids!

RH: Sir Elton John.

6) Do you have a favourite Bible verse?

MS: Not really, but I like the book of Ezekiel.

JD: No, but I like the book of Revelation.

SE: Psalm 23 and Isaiah 40:31.

Sue: No.

TD: No, but I like the book of John.

RH: All of Psalms.

7) If you were to have one super power, what would it be?

MS: Don't want one, I don't want anyone worshipping me like a god.

JD: Omniscience.

SE: To heal the sick.

Sue: To heal.

TD: Swimming.

RH: The power to spread peace, love and joy everywhere.

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8) Do you have a favourite moment at Jacob's Well?

MS: The 10th Anniversary because I didn't think Jacob's Well would last that long!

JD: Can't think of a particular one.

SE: Yeah, I enjoy coming in, meeting people and seeing [Tony's] kids get excited when they are doing art or baking.

Sue: Yes, when Marie is here!

TD: Tuesday nights! I get to meet a lot of people then.

RH: Praise and worship time.

9) What do you think you bring to the Jacob's Well community?

MS: Nothing. (He was too humble to say "humour"!)

JD: Emotional/social needs.

SE: Free tickets (like Cavalier!), and extra food. I like sharing.

Sue: A bit of connectiveness.

TD: Peace. (With a big smile on his face!)

RH: Love and service work, like helping out around the Well.

10) Are there other things you would like the community to know about you?

MS: I am right-winged.

JD: I like words!

SE: I like crocheting, knitting and canning!

Sue: I wish I could sing!

TD: I like to listen to Vietnamese music.

RH: Nope.

Mutual Friendships

by Jonathan Ng

Jonathan has been part of our community since 2010. He just recently became a father of two and continues to bless our community with his musical talent.

I grew up in Richmond to a fairly typical Chinese-Canadian family. My family were devout Christians, but my religious upbringing didn't have much to say about urban poverty, even though the DTES was only a half-hour commute from my house. I implicitly understood that the DTES was an area that mattered little to my faith.

Thankfully, these preconceptions didn't last as I began to learn in university about the critical importance of social justice to the Christian faith. After graduating from Regent College I joined Servants Vancouver and Jacob's Well, communities that placed an emphasis on life-giving relationship as key to a person's journey of healing and recovery. My friendships have been the source of some really joyful memories. For instance, a few summers ago I jammed on an improvised blues number with Ricky Lavallie (RIP); the wit, creativity, laughter, and joy from that collaboration remain with me to this very day.

My time in the DTES has taught me that life change can arise from mutual friendships, and that I'm not the benevolent one blessing "the poor" who only meekly receive and offer nothing in return. Rather, my friends bless me through their laughter, amazing stories of God working in their lives, and their perseverance.

I'm a father of two young sons. They are my pride and joy. I would want them to grow up to know communities such as Jacob's Well that strive to live a deep and attractive vision of God's kingdom, particularly in hard places. I believe that God would want them to be friends with people who have a diversity of incomes and experiences. Overcoming the stereotypes and suspicions that come from social isolation can only be done so deliberately and wisely. Preferably over a lot of coffee.





In late January, Jacob's Well had the opportunity to participate in a community art project at Regent College called Square Foot Prayer.

It was an artistic prayer labyrinth with artwork created by 34 members of the Regent community (and a few from ours!). Each square foot prayer "window" was a visual symbolic representation of the artist's prayer.

The goal was to get people engaging in creativity and prayer, and help a specific organization in the process. This year Regent chose Jacob's Well as their beneficiary. Students & artists collected food and raised about \$320 for Jacob's Well.

Thank you Harry, Yolanda, David, Mallory and Kirsten for participating, and the Regent College community for your gifts!

I Want to See *by Kirsten McAllister*

Kirsten has been leading art time since her involvement with JW last October; here's her reflection of art time in poetry.

I want to see
Like the laughing man
Whose slow hands inscribe stars onto the canvas night
Declaring their worth by eyes alight
As if worlds like ours will turn around each fleck
I want to see.

I want to see
Like the free spirit
He pours out his pigments and they splash about
Towards all four corners he stretches them out
Without blueprints to ensure his success
I want to see.

I want to see
Like the little child
Who doesn't hold up her picture to mine
She doesn't know about outside the lines
Or the price of the paper she smears her dolphin onto
I want to see.

I want to see
Like the vagabond king
Whose hands molded mountains yet reaches for ours
Who has seen galaxies born yet would rather look at us
than his stars
Who looked away only once
I want to see.

I Dream of This *by Robyn Livingstone*

Robyn loves art, poetry and theatre. His art is often displayed at Gallery Gachet, and his poetry is featured in the Carnegie Newsletter. He often joins us during the last 15 minutes of our gatherings.

I dream of one and all;
As a universal whole.
Blazing, Brightness.
Shining, hard, yet even.
Within each and everyone,
Stardust, priceless, irreplaceable.
Loving, sharing, blending in
Perfectly into the great big
Sea of humanity, with honesty and
Contentness, as like a bundle of blissful
Sleeping kittens...
Unified seeking the truth and the way
In splendid diversity; and
Yet already knowing,
Sharing, caring,
Comparing, cultures,
Ethnicities, differences;
With inclusion, and
Loving tolerances on
All levels. Absolute
Acceptance of all of
our brothers and
Sisters, forever
and ever;
I dream of this,
Endlessly...

Back into the Real World *by Jacqueline Dewar*

Jacqueline has been part of our community since September and is a student at Regent College. She contributed to write part of JW's Christmas liturgy in December.

As a student at Regent College, I am often squirreled away in the library with stacks of books as I navigate the world of graduate-level theology. I am grateful for my involvement at Jacob's Well as it forces me to emerge from the library and step back into the real world. It is easy to get caught up in the writings of the Church Fathers, to spend an alarming amount of time contemplating the effect of Platonic thought on the development of early Christian doctrine, and to walk around with blinders on as I try to force my uncooperative brain to learn a passable amount of Greek and Hebrew.

For me, going to Jacob's Well drags me out of the clouds and brings me back to reality. It helps me to put aside my own ambitions, insecurities and obsessions and be fully present with people who sometimes lack the social veneer that so many of us put on to present that false picture of "having it all together." It is a place where I feel at home, accepted and loved even when I don't look the right way or say the right things. It reminds me that it's OK that I don't have life all figured out, and that I make the same mistakes over and over again. My new friends at Jacob's Well live in the real world, and help me to do the same.



Above: Christmas Display 2013

Sustaining Friendships in Lent *by Andrew Stephens-Rennie*

Andrew has been part of our Wednesday afternoon team, and spends much of his time these days taking care of his son, Jacob.

For many Christians throughout the world, the season of Lent (this year, March 5th to April 17th) is traditionally a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Of course, popularly, it's seen as that time when you give up chocolate or coffee (as if that's even possible!) for a few weeks. But why do we do it? Perhaps it's rote. Perhaps it's habit. Perhaps it means something more.

More than anything, Lent provides us with a focused time to join Jesus on his journey towards Jerusalem, the triumphal entry, and ultimately, his self-sacrifice on the cross. We know about this journey, and we also know the other side of this story: the reconciliation we experience with one another, through Christ, each and every week we meet at The Well.

And so this year, I'm inviting friends and family to join me in raising funds for the Jacob's Well community as a part of their Lenten practice. Give up chocolate, coffee, or Downton Abbey. Pray with conviction and intent that God's kingdom would be made manifest amongst us. And give, as though lives depend on it.

During the 40 days of Lent, I've committed to put aside at least \$2.50 each day to support Jacob's Well. Perhaps you can do less. Perhaps you could do more. Would you join me?

We all know that Jacob's Well is unique on the landscape of the Downtown Eastside. It's this place where we seek mutually transformative relationships between those of us who have been pushed to the margins and those of us who live with more privilege. This community is sustained by God's grace. It's also sustained by our offerings of time, energy and money.

Together, we have the opportunity to help sustain and grow this community where such unlikely, transformative friendships take place. By joining together, we have the opportunity to help the Jacob's Well community deepen its presence in the neighbourhood. In addition to our time, these financial resources will help make staffing more sustainable (and eventually allow additional staff to be hired), contribute to paying our rent and stocking our pantry, support friends in the neighbourhood, and make sure we have all we need for the various community events we hold each week.

I hope that you'll join me on this Lenten journey. It's a new one for me, and I hope that we can do it together. If you choose to participate, please join my Giving Page on www.canadahelps.org, (go to Giving Pages, and search for my name). You might also set up your own giving page, and invite your friends and family to join you in taking up this ancient practice during this season of Lent.

In Christ,
Andrew Stephens-Rennie

About Jacob's Well

Jacob's Well is a faith community located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, Canada. This neighbourhood has complex difficulties, some of which are extreme poverty (the poorest postal code in Canada), drug addiction (more than five thousand needle users), widespread disease (highest HIV & AIDS infection rate in the western world), and prevalent mental illness (estimated more than 50% of area residents). It's also a neighbourhood full of beautiful, resilient, caring people who have much to give.

We have a relational approach to sharing life with the residents of our neighbourhood. We seek meaningful friendships where we both give and receive from one another. This guiding principle we have inherited from Pauline Fell, who founded our community in 2001. She is a remarkable ninety-eight year-old woman who has spent over thirty years building friendships with countless people in this neighbourhood.

We spend our days visiting people, gathering around the table, worshipping, praying and serving. If you would like to know more about our community, we encourage you to visit our website or Facebook page, or give us a call and arrange a visit in person.

Life in the Margins Workshop

This is a weekend workshop where we explore God's heart for people on the margins of society.

We will examine stories from the Bible and talk about the theological mandate to seek relationship with marginalized people, who bear God's image. While we will speak out of our experience from life in the Downtown Eastside, we will discuss how these principles apply to all the various places where we live and work.

Next Workshop:

Friday, May 23rd 2014 (6:30 – 9:30 pm)

Saturday, May 24th 2014 (10:00 am – 4:00 pm)

Cost: \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door.

All participants must pre-register by emailing workshop@jacobswell.ca.

Please join us!

Our Information

Visit our website:

www.jacobswell.ca

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Address:

239 Main St.

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Giving:

Visit our website for more information about donating. We are a registered non-profit charity.



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