

Upcoming Events at Jacob's Well:

Simple Party - Friday
March 10th, 7pm

All TEAM Dinner
Thursday March 16th,
6pm. Jeff Ferrey is cook-
ing - you don't want to
miss it! The AGM will
follow the dinner (more
on this inside!).

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Do you dream of getting published??

The Jacob's Well news-
letter is now taking sub-
missions for the next
edition. Please send arti-
cle, photos, poems, art-
work etc. to
shanbillows@yahoo.ca



jacob'sWELL

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The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Roll of Pennies

by Ryan Schmidt

This past fall I volunteered at Jacob's Well every Thursday, and I didn't save the world. I didn't save the Downtown Eastside, or Main Street, or even - as far as I know - a single person. What I did do was count pennies and nickels and dimes and put them in paper rolls for the bank. I fixed the trim around a door, put soup into bowls, and re-organized a room. I scraped paint and carried lumber and hammered nails and dug dirt. I did things, in short, that anyone could have done, things that required neither the valor of a hero nor the hands of a healer. I was ... ordinary.

There is a perception in the minds of everyday people that those who work for charities and non-profits and 'street ministries' are more heroic, more saintly, more compassionate than other people. Perhaps this is sometimes true, but unfortunately too often we who plunge into such work ourselves hold in our minds an idyllic vision of miracles coming true on our watch, of scars being healed by our hands, of lives being changed through the penetrating truth of our words. So when we show up full of such promise at Jacob's Well and are asked to count pennies instead, we gasp in disbelief, we feel abused and undervalued. To think that we've even been asked to do something so completely beneath the glory of our daydreams!

But we are dead wrong. And if we are followers - or even admirers - of Christ, we are in danger of ignoring his most essential lesson.

We know the story. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Heroes saved nations and holy men saved souls and Jesus Christ did the job of servants and slaves. This should stop our dreams of greatness in their tracks. When there is a nation to save, washing feet is a job on par with, say, sorting change when we all know the 'real' work is freeing the downtown addicts from their various hells. But the secret of this, perhaps the most ignored secret of the universe, is that service even in the smallest thing - *especially* in the smallest thing - is a sign of the highest devotion, of the most committed love. Heroes may raise flags where they never flew before and preachers make thousands fall to their knees, but nothing, nothing has or ever will change the world like a Love so strong it is willing to wash feet or count pennies when those things must be done.

We were never told to go out and be great. We were told to serve one another in love, and more often than you'd think this means rolling dimes, scraping paint, and digging in the garden. So do not complain when you are asked to sort the change or take out the garbage, do not think that you are better than that, for in these acts you join Jesus on his knees and do nothing less than bring about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Monday Nights at Jacob's Well - by Jeanette McKay

My relationship with Jacob's Well began 2 years ago after I attended an orientation. As I walked through the doors at 239 Main Street for the first time, I was immediately drawn to the stories of Jacob's Well and wanted to start my own story there. When I first began volunteering I was a part of the "Wednesday Team" (shout out to my Wednesday homeboys, Stephen and Dave). But then I got a job and had to move over to the Monday night team. Monday's gig is all about creating a space for people to encounter the living God - for us to encounter His spirit through sharing stories, sharing our desire, pain, joy and, of course, to share our voices in song!

We are there every week praying for our community, neighbors and friends. We are waiting for a passer-by who will stroll in, someone who needs to be heard or needs prayer or just needs to rest in a safe and peace-filled place. It's a unique night at Jacob's Well because it's one of the only nights when Jacob's Well is open to whoever happens to be walking by, sees us in the window, and opens the door.

I have learned a lot about prayer on Monday night. I'm not sure if you can relate but I've never found prayer to come naturally to me...I find it hard to know how to pray and how to be prayed for. Monday nights have been rich and profound in my understanding of prayer and I'm so thankful for my friends who join me there as we learn together!

Last week a guy who is new in the neighborhood came in. He picked up a song book and chimed in singing. I found myself surprised at the ease with which he seemed to join us - as if he had been coming in for a long time. When we broke off into small groups to pray, he prayed for us, specifically for the staff at Jacob's Well and he thanked God for creating this peaceful place for people. I was touched by his openness and when he asked for us to pray for him, particularly that God would continue to pursue him and make himself known to him personally through Christ, I was filled with such hope for our new friend.

What started out with two people hanging out, sitting on the floor with guitars sharing stories, has truly become an evening that many of us look forward to every week. We wait with anticipation; curious to know whom God will bring through our door.



Another great friend Mihn



Our dear friend Donny

Thoughts from an Intern...

by Jen Davison

Each week of interning at Jacob's Well leaves me feeling my time is well invested, even if it is spent in simple cleaning. The sense of an interdependent community runs through J.W., causing menial tasks to take on dignity and meaning. I've enjoyed the quiet days of steadily working, chatting with neighbourhood friends that drop in. My favourite part of interning at Jacob's Well has been the exposure to new ideas about what God-following looks like. I resonate deeply with the Well's emphasis on a non-condescending relationship between Christians and non-Christians. It is refreshing to be allowed to just "do life together" as a ministry, free from holding a separated and higher position. Joyce's emphasis on living a life of love rather than a life of "saving" people hits a strong chord with me.

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A Seed in the Gutter - *by Dave Aupperlee*

It was one of those days when the rain let up for about 15 hours straight. Long enough for the ground to change color and even long enough for the litter on the street to resurrect off the wet ground and begin to take short trips with the wind across the sidewalk.

I was walking to Jacob's Well from Hastings and was stopped to wait for cars to pass when I saw him. It appeared as if this man had just gotten off of work from the repair shop down Cordova. Before the "Walk" sign lit up, between the cars racing by, before my eyes, I saw this man dip down to the street with his bare hands and pick up the vast amounts of trash that seem to proliferate in the corner crevice of the city curb. He moved it from the street to the trash can. Eleven trips back and forth: a pendulum of clean and unclean.

As the pedestrian light cycled through two or three times without me noticing, the fellow had essentially cleaned the SE and SW corner's of Main and Cordova; sacrificing his hands to the unknown assemblage of trash. He finished and walked on down the street, around the corner to his destination.

I was taken away.

The women in the third car back behind the red light was turned in her seat.

The man in the truck in front of her didn't see the light turn green.

The display was gutsy, some might even say weird, yet it had to be the most gratuitous and creative demonstration (without it trying to be) that occurred in the city during those few minutes of between space. To all the "good deeds" done in the city, at that moment, that act was the most influential, the most memorable, the most creative; at least it was in the perspective of his audience of automobiles and pedestrians.

Jesus picked up a mustard seed from the ground and said that the Kingdom of God begins small like the seed. It is not a transplanted tree. The Kingdom shows its face when we don't expect it, and it grows into something larger: its story is spread via word and it branches into more creative acts: it brings life and takes away darkness from a city curb: it redefines "important" and forces paradox: it is eternal as it is present: it is simple and consistent, and its growth is beautifully complex.



Photographer: Kara Pecknold

AGM - March 16th

The Jacob's Well Annual General Meeting is open to everyone. It will take place at Jacob's Well on Thursday March 16th at 7pm.

PAULINE TURNS 90!!

Pauline Fell, founder and friend of Jacob's Well is turning 90 at the end of the month. We are going to celebrate her life at Jacob's Well on SATURDAY FEB 25th from 1-4 pm. It's an Open House and all are welcome.



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NEWS:

Joyce and Jane recently attended Breakforth 2006 in Edmonton, AB. We want to say thank you to all the people who attended our intensive workshop and electives. We were deeply encouraged by your questions and comments. Welcome to our newsletter readership!

We had the privilege of having a team of women from Willowpark Church in Kelowna come and spend a week with us. Seven women came to do our Immersion Studies and learn more about the Jacob's Well community. We loved spending time with them and are so thankful they choose to 'do life' with us for a week.

My least favourite part of interning at the Well has been that I never quite stop feeling "out of place." I feel this awkwardness partly because I am an introvert who tends to feel shy and unsure of myself, and partly because I really don't fit into the neighbourhood. However, I feel that even this less enjoyable part has served me well, helping me to identify with those who are marginalized.

So far, J.W. has taught me that you don't need to wear a "God-suit" when you show up for "ministry". Setting a God-filled example does not mean you must be nicer, smoother, or more professional than you really are. People prefer the genuine, quirky, opinionated, and flawed, and God seems to show up anyway, if not more. It seems that, in the end, love is best communicated when it comes from a life that is approachably human. In short, I am learning more and more that it is okay to be just me.

LIFE IN THE MARGINS

A weekend workshop at Jacob's Well

What: A free weekend workshop geared to introduce you to effective relationships with people on the margins of society. We will cover the theological mandate to be toward those on the outside as well as practical ways to build friendship with folks who struggle with addictions, mental health issues, loneliness, handicaps, terminal illnesses etc.

Where: Jacob's Well - 239 Main Street, Vancouver
(Corner of Main and Cordova, across from the courthouse)

When: Friday Mar 24 from 7 pm - 10pm
Saturday Mar 25 from 10 am - 4 pm

How: You must **pre-register** to ensure your space. Please e-mail: info@jacobswell.ca to register or call 604.681.4898.

Why: Because we all have people who cross our paths and we feel uncomfortable because we don't know how to relate to them, we are afraid or we simply want to ignore them. As Christians, we know that these are not the responses we are "supposed" to have but we don't know how to change. Come learn how to see those on the margins of society differently and become equipped with basic pragmatics of relating to marginalized people.