



# TRANSITION TEAM UPDATE

Transition Team Newsletter : Issue 3

June 19, 2016

## **“A Congregational Day of Discovery for All Ages – Who are we as a Congregation?”**

The Congregational Day of Discovery for All Ages was the first event designed to engage the congregation in the process of self-discovery, discernment & make decisions regarding the future mission and ministry of Trinity United Church (Goal #1). The event took place on November 1, 2015. The exercises of the event were to create a profile of who we think we are as a congregation and to uncover the history of Trinity United Church, focussing on the last 60 years. The event was successful with 96 people participating in the event. Some comments shared included:

- \* *Learned about the history of Smiths Falls*
- \* *Learned about the history of Trinity*
- \* *Met new people and new details of their lives... Details about our church's journey*
- \* *I met some members I had never had a conversation with before*
- \* *My table group was terrific. Got along well and enjoyed each other's company*
- \* *Enjoyed the "Who is Trinity" as a person exercise*



### **Our first goal:**

*“Review our history, consider the present, and define a vision for the future.”*

## **Snapshot of who we are (and who we have been) as Trinity United Church:**

- ◆ We are a friendly and family orientated older congregation (with an even balance of men and women that explores our faith through scripture, prayer, and music. We feel scripture is very important in our lives and we have a willingness to grow in our faith. We value friendships and enjoy fellowship through a variety of ways, bible study, baptisms, potluck dinners, concerts.
- ◆ We live our faith by caring for one another—mainly in our church family, and local community, but we do extend that further. We do this in a variety of ways not just through the church but also through a call to civic duty and civic responsibility.
- ◆ Our positive attributes such as compassion; commitment; generosity; kindness; out-going empathic attitude, and civic mindedness, promote our involvement in what we value both within and outside the church.
- ◆ We struggle with aging, loneliness, lack of energy, losses including death, moves, change in ministry, and addictions. At present there are unresolved issues and concerns around control issues, burn-out, and lack of resources, which includes money; lack of leadership, micro-management, and lack of involvement. We lament the loss of young families and youth. All these things, creates a fear for our future.
- ◆ However, we have demonstrated in the past a willingness to take leadership roles both within and outside the church on a large number of issues such as the environment, arts and culture, social justice and homelessness and poverty, inclusiveness. We have stepped up every time there is a demonstrated need for help and support whether it be the provision of financial resources, or time and talents whether it is within the church or otherwise.
- ◆ Building on our positive qualities and strengths is the key to addressing issues that sap and frustrate us within the church family. Effective communication, encouragement and support of those in leadership roles will be key factors in this process.
- ◆ We would like to focus on the present and work towards acceptance and open mindedness. To move forward, we would like to see change. However, moving forward proactively will also involve recognizing our personal and congregational limitations.



**TRINITY**  
**UNITED CHURCH**  
Smiths Falls, Ontario, Canada

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**From the Information gathered during the “Wall of Wonder” exercise, The Transition Team looked *for* trends, observations, and evolutions.**

## **From 1955 to 1975 there seems to be growth in Smiths Falls**

and the surrounding communities. Expansion of the industrial base resulted population growth, schools, hospital and retail and social services all on the increase. The resulting increase of economic wealth within the community revealed itself in the life of Trinity as church facilities were expanded; participation in church life and church supported activities was high.

## **From 1975 to 1995 a time of significant realignment of the industrial base of Smiths Falls.**

Plant closures and job losses resulted. Notwithstanding, the church was able to make improvements to its facilities, make its facilities available to meet a local community and social need; for a period of time employ a staff associate to help provide and

coordinate church activities both within and outside the church. However, several youth supported groups namely, the Boy Scouts and GCIT stopped meeting at Trinity. Another, significant event took place in the life of all Ontarians during this period. On a national level the Lord’s Day Act was repealed and the Ontario Sunday Shopping Ban was lifted. People began working on Sundays removing the ease for people to attend Church service. First large terror attack in North America changed how we viewed our safety in the world. Ice storm also changed our view on how well we would manage in a disaster situation.

## **1995-2005 - This was a period of relative calm and stability on the economic front.**

The OPP opened a new Regional Headquarters, but the South Unit of the Smiths Falls

and District Hospital closed. The workforce was reasonably stable during this period.

This was a period of social activism at Trinity as social justice, environmental, community health and poverty issues drew the attention of congregation members who provided leadership both within the church but the larger Smiths Falls community. The church also undertook renovations of the church parlour and purchased a new organ for the sanctuary.

## **2005 – Present - However the most recent decade has seen another period of uncertainty for the Smiths Falls economy with increased industry closure.**

The closure of Rideau Regional Hospital and the downloading of social services to the Municipalities by the Provincial Government impacted the economic climate of Smiths

Falls. Notwithstanding, a new high school and a new Via Railway Station was built. A shift in thinking of Smiths Falls as an industry based town to a tourism based town and a retirement destination has gained some traction as reflected in the openings of Station Theatre Museums and the transformation of the old Rideau Regional Hospital into a multiplex of retirement housing, commercial, recreational and arts facilities. Trinity undertook a major renovations project to the front entrance of the church. The Church continues to participate in SF community initiatives while also supporting mission and mission trips outside of Canada.

## Appreciative Inquiry

**The following points, which are recognized strengths of Trinity, provide the focal point for further inquiry into exceptionally positive moments for the congregation:**

- ◆ Trinity is part of the fabric of Smiths Falls and the surrounding community. Trinity has a tradition of service and leadership both within the congregation, and to the local community and beyond.
- ◆ Even in tough economic times, the congregation of Trinity has answered the call for help in redressing issues of inclusiveness, poverty, social injustice, environmental challenges.
- ◆ Being more intentional at bringing the church community together with a welcoming, enthusiastic, friendly and collaborative spirit.
- ◆ Address the fears of the congregation so we can move forward with vision and enthusiasm.

**The Transition Team needs Council and the congregation to continue to take ownership of the process, so we will have an outcome that will be enthusiastically supported, in thought, word and deed.**