

Urban Outreach Conference – Feb. 11, 2017

Small Scale Outreach Programs

Program Name: Following Up with Visitors

Presenter: Linda Hummel

- using the visitor book, Linda contacts visitors to follow up, offer rides and other supports
- creates a feeling of connection with the visitor
- a challenge is getting people to sign the guest book and leave their contact information
- others mentioned having a visitors' package that would be given to visitors containing (for example) church times and events, and a small gift cross
- another church uses communion registration cards to solicit guest information

Program Name: Small Groups

Presenter: Mark Verlinden

- spoke of the Catholic Church program called "Renew" – a 6-week program of small group meetings in members' homes.
- the groups were arranged by the Church
- the program was well-received, but had no follow up program – any connections that were made were then not kept
- also spoke of the Meeting House idea of Home Churches
- you would find a local Home Church on the internet and just show up on the appointed day and time
- if you found you didn't feel that there was a good fit, you can find another Home Church to try
- some meetings involve a meal, while others don't
- there may be an issue of what to do if a group gets too large
- benefits include being safe, loving and welcoming, and ensuring people don't fall through the cracks
- someone else mentioned small group bible studies being started in Seniors' residences

Program Name: Precious Moments/Beginnings

Presenter: Louise Gondosch, Pastor Syens

- these are 2 different programs with similar characteristics
- small groups of parents/babies meet once per week for stories, singing, snacks, crafts and prayer
- Precious Moments keeps parents and kids together, while at Beginnings the children are in one group and the parents are in another
- Precious Moments has had about 3 families join the church over about 10 years, Beginnings has had none
- but both groups stress that the members learn about Jesus, and the groups can be stepping stones to VBS, Sunday School
- both groups provide a way for parents to connect with other parents
- challenges include having enough staff (need staff to plan, do crafts, read stories, prepare snacks)
- other attendees spoke of having a small group bible study based on Portals of Prayer, held at Oshawa shopping centre, and of a "free prayer" time held by a Pastor at Tim Horton's

Program Name: Everyday Evangelism

Presenter: Pastor Flohr

- moving to a new neighbourhood offers new opportunities to introduce yourself, keeping in mind that you don't know who will be "fertile soil"
- there are always opportunities to sow the seed of God's word

Program Name: Regular Church Events, Add an Outreach Slant

Presenter: Pastor Mohr

- use regular church events as opportunities for outreach
- put an outreach spin on all regular church events
- eg have a Christmas Eve dinner for food bank clients and church members, then invite all to attend Christmas Eve service
- eg Nativity Scene display in front of church with a self-guided tour of each part of the display and a response/prayer request card – can also have a draw from all the responses for a gift
- eg display nativity scenes inside the church and invite people in to view them
- eg Lenten service soup dinners
- eg VBS – publicize in area immediately surrounding the church
- the Creche Society – museum of nativity sets, needs churches to display its nativity sets

Program Name: Prayer Ministry

Presenter: David Chant

- a list of names of people who are willing to pray
- was telephone based originally, but now internet based
- prayers are sent by email to all members of the chain
- it is important to have people's permission to pray for them by name (privacy concerns), but can pray for people anonymously
- this is an outreach tool, as prayers are said for non-members as well as members
- can also be used as feedback of God answering prayers
- one church does a weekly prayer meeting where all the needs on the prayer list are prayed for
- prayer is a powerful tool, and can be performed even by the physically weak
- the East District EN3 is also used to share prayer needs
- one of the pastors in attendance suggested that a lay person, rather than the pastor, should be in charge of this, in order to ensure that prayer requests don't fall through the cracks

Program Name: Coffee Sales

Presenter: Lois and Greg Munz

- raises money for the children's ministry in Nicaragua
- the coffee is purchased from Nicaraguan farmers and processed by a Nicaraguan family in Ontario
- \$5 from every pound sold goes to the children's ministry, the rest goes to the growers and processor
- program allows good conversations about Christians' motivations to help others

Program Name: Motorcycle Helmet Collection

Presenter: Greg Munz

- collected helmets from the motorcycle club he belongs to
- gave them to Nicaraguan pastors, whose primary mode of transportation is motorcycle
- provides an opportunity to discuss faith with people you solicit donations from

Program Name: The Value of Introverts/How to Evangelize to Introverts

Presenter: Pastor Mohr

- much of the evangelism skill set is seen as geared to an extrovert's personality
- introverts tend to have the following qualities: good listeners, focussed, inward-focussed, easy to please, eager to please, observant, but often won't talk about their observations, trustworthy, committed to goals, good writers
- can make use of introverts in supporting/caregiving roles, for prayer support of ministry, non-verbal communications (emails, websites, blogging, writing articles)
- extroverts need to think about introverts in the wider community – i.e. who you're evangelizing to
- how do you treat visitors, be careful of who you introduce visitors to (don't want to introduce them to an introvert/don't want to introduce an introverted visitor to a major extrovert), how much personal interaction should you have with introverted visitors
- notes from Pastor Mohr are attached*

Neighbourhood Outreach

Program Name: March Break VBS

Presenter: Pastor Yeong/Pastor Syens

- had 15-20 kids ages 5-10
- partnered with other churches in order to get enough volunteers
- 2-3 weeks before March break, they distributed flyers in the neighbourhood, and had registration flyers on the gate at the front of the church
- program ran from 9:00 to 4:00 for 5 days – would have been better running from 8 to 5, but volunteer fatigue was an issue
- no fee (materials and food were provided by Holy Cross Kitchener)
- since the program is during the school year, it can include a push to attend Sunday School immediately following the week, rather than waiting for a month or more as is the case with summer VBS
- this program would not work in the summer, unless it ran for at least 3 weeks, due to the availability of government programs available to parents in the area during the summer
- follow up contact found that most parents were not interested in Christianity for themselves. They had made use of the program because it was free
- the program may be the only introduction the kids get to Jesus
- a church from Hamilton mentioned checking with the local newspapers to see if there is free event advertising available

Program Name: Free Garage Sale

Presenter: Jane Ford

- held at a community centre
- all items are free, take what you need
- could tie in to the “Grace Alone” theme of Reformation 500
- could donate leftover items to clothing bank/shelter

Program Name: Outdoor Pictures

Presenter: Prince of Peace, Burlington

- these were created by church members
- they attract the interest of children by displaying simple, bright images
- these are used along with an electronic message board to convey information about the church
- it was suggested by another attendee to have a baptismal font with bible story pictures on it

Program Name: Burlington Christmas Bazaar

Presenter: Lois Munz

- advertising is important, although a “sandwich board” advertisement in front of the church worked well
- make sure there are people at the bazaar intentionally handing out information about the church
- invite people into the sanctuary for prayer time
- could tie it into a Nativity display
- could donate leftover items to clothing bank/shelter

Program Name: Christmas/Santa Claus Parade**Presenter: David Chant, Martin Prusha, Richard Mueller**

- three churches worked together – could get to know some members of the other congregations
- could use costumes already on hand (Sunday School pageant costumes)
- got a flatbed trailer donated from a friend of the church
- picked a different theme each year (God's Gift to You, God With Us, In a Stable Born)
- had music playing so float was visible and audible
- challenges included transportation to the parade site, co-ordination between churches, burnout of volunteers, need to start planning early in the year.
- benefits include the ability to have the float in multiple parades over the season (involve many churches)
- it was noted that it's important to have a handout – with service times, perhaps a QR code and a treat

Program Name: Church Signs**Presenter: Richard Mueller**

- a sign is "prime real estate" though most drivers have only 1.5 seconds to read/digest the message on the sign – providing the church website and/or telephone number is important so drivers can follow up if interested
- scrolling signs shouldn't scroll too fast, or the message becomes unreadable
- one church did a survey and found that what attracted drivers' attention was the current temperature. Use to get frequent looks.
- trees need to be cut back to make the sign visible
- provide a "thought for the day"
- the usefulness of signage depends on the location of the church – busy road vs a neighbourhood street

Project Name: Neighbourhood BBQ**Presenter: Richard Mueller**

- printed and handed out approx. 800 brochures throughout the neighbourhood
- hamburgers/hotdogs, chips, drinks, bouncy castle, face painting
- various congregational groups had tables providing information
- challenge to ensure that there are enough congregation members in attendance to welcome visitors
- weather can be a challenge, especially for having a bbq and bouncy castle in the rain

Program Name: Food Drive

Presenter: David Chant

- drop off 1000 grocery bags and fliers in the neighbourhood
- flyer talks about the church, food needs in the community, and provides instructions regarding where and when to leave food donations out, or where and when to drop them off
- the drive is usually tied into activities surrounding the World Vision 30-hour Famine
- it was suggested to have the youth write messages on the bags (eg "we'll pray for you"), before the bags are dropped off. It was felt that this may help to create connections between the church and the community
- a challenge is the low response rate (though it was noted that generally the biggest response comes from the smallest houses)
- benefits include getting the church's name into the community, the opportunity to speak with people in the community (while dropping off bags or picking up food), helping the less fortunate in the community
- getting the youth involved gives them an easy opportunity to share their faith when neighbours who are outside ask them – why are you doing this? Who are you?

Community Service Outreach

Program Name: Food Bank at Our Saviour Lutheran Church

Presenter: Pastor Singh

- the food comes from Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank
- we are the largest member of Daily Bread
- we provide roughly 120 food hampers per week (feeding one family per hamper)
- we use the shopping model i.e. the clients choose the food they want rather than simply get a pre-filled basket of food
- no one is denied food – no discrimination based on lifestyle, culture or any other factor
- clients are invited to come 30 minutes early to preregister and join a hymn sing, but this is NOT a requirement in order to receive food
- the volunteers do a devotion during the hymn sing time, giving an opportunity to form a close community with them and church members
- challenges include the availability of volunteers, church members need to take ownership of this ministry – i.e. it's an Our Saviour outreach ministry, not a Daily Bread ministry
- the food bank organizers are not supposed to evangelize during the operation of the food bank, but Pastor Singh makes himself available to anyone who wants to talk
- there is not much evidence that clients have started attending Our Saviour, since many of the clients are Iraqi and have their own places of worship already.
- it is important that any literature available in the narthex (newsletters, Canadian Lutheran, etc) have the church name and address on it. These items tend to get passed around among people, so it's good for them to know where it comes from in case they have questions.

Program Name: ESL classes

Presenter: Jane Ford, Udi Scott

- this is done at Historic St Paul in Kitchener, which is an urban church
- they have many "down and out" people coming to their door on a regular basis
- they have been doing free ESL since 2011, but also offer a Community Cupboard which distributes 275 hampers per week, a service providing free clothing, and were offering a "Manna" dinner evening involving a bible study for kids, and choir which appealed to more elderly clients
- they had a pastor on site, plus 60-70 volunteers (some from other non-Lutheran churches and some from other circuit congregations)
- for ESL, they run a Monday morning program and a Tuesday evening program
- the Tuesday evening class resulted in 6 or 7 people being baptized and attending the church.
- for a while they were also running a handbell class on Tuesday evenings as well
- the ESL used Scripture as well as other sources for teaching the language
- they had LLL pamphlets and bibles available for those who wanted them
- a requirement is to have trained ESL teachers to run the classes and to help the volunteers
- it was suggested to contact local settlement houses to let them know you want to run a program and to find out the interest/need for ESL in your area

Program Name: Nursery School

Presenter: Sharyn Thibault

- has been running since 1972
- currently offer mornings only for ages 2 ½ to 4, but historically offered full-day as well as Kindergarten
- use CPH material
- have prayer at the start and end of each morning, and at snack time
- visit the seniors' home next door every second week
- ask the children who they can tell about Jesus
- the church provides advent and lent packages for families, featuring devotions and activities that can be done as a family
- the church supports this ministry through prayer and funding
- a major challenge is government regulations – these regulations would be even more strict if we were operating a day care as opposed to a nursery school
- a benefit is that connections are made between the church and the neighbourhood.
- the school acts as a feeder for VBS, and gives opportunity to speak with parents/grandparents of the children

Regional Outreach

Program Name: Urdu Radio Ministry

Presenter: Kanwal Dean

- radio program to reach unbelievers
- presenters speak Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi
- the program has been running weekly on Sunday mornings for 4 years
- it preaches the Gospel, and offers free bibles, CD's and prayer
- the show airs live, so it also accepts callers into the program who can ask questions/make comments
- they also announce Christ Our King's worship times (Christ Our King provides governance over the radio ministry)

Program Name: Fusion of Taste

Presenter: Richard Mueller

- Fusion of Taste is a neighbourhood festival run by the Thistle town Business Improvement organization
- we rent a booth and provide information on the local Lutheran Church (Our Saviour) as well as the Radio Ministry
- we promote Sunday School, worship times, the Food Bank, DVD's, bibles, pamphlets
- it is important to provide something that's kid-friendly, eg colouring, and the parents will follow along
- we put people in front of the booth to draw people in
- it was suggested that all churches look for local festivals that they can join in (especially during year celebrating reformation)

Program Name: Alternative Language Services

Presenter: Pastor Singh

- at Our Saviour, there are Punjabi/Hindi/Urdu services every Sunday at 1:00
- 9-15 people usually attend this
- uses Divine Service setting 1 with the 1-year lectionary
- at Christ Our King, there are Urdu services on the 1st and 3rd Friday nights of each month, with a dinner following
- the attendance at these is around 25
- we have had 14 people join our membership by profession of faith
- at Christ Our King, there are services in Korean every Sunday at 2:00, as well as Korean prayer meetings during the week
- Burlington has a Nuer (South Sudanese language) service, along with a choir
- a benefit is that each culture can learn from the other cultures
- it is important that we care about other cultures, but a challenge is integrating the alternative language group with the pre-existing English group
- make sure all groups from different language services are considered members of your congregation. Invite them to social activities, church board and voter meetings. Encourage all to work together to benefit from perspectives

Program Name: Bus Stop Bible Readings

Presenter: David Chant/Youtube video

-video is found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78Q3bwhDB8>

-advertising in buses, bus shelters, subway cars

-it was pointed out that several GTA churches could share in this – share the cost and share the church information provided on the advertisement

-challenges include cost, where to advertise (what transit system)

-could be used as part of the Reformation 500 celebrations

-Pastor Mohr offered to set up a website for GTHA churches

Social Media/Everywhere Outreach

Program Name: Facebook

Presenter: Judy Obelnycki

- can post prayer requests, re-post items from other Pastors/other Christians
- with Google Translate, can communicate in other languages
- can have different pages for different groups, eg youth, bible studies, etc
- studies have shown that most millennials read the bible on screens, so this may be an effective way to communicate with them.
- need to make decisions surrounding privacy of the page – who will be able to see/access the page
- need to watch whether items being posted are appropriate/doctrinal
- can have a wide reach – world-wide

Program Name: Websites

Presenter: Pastor Flohr

- can link to sermon teasers/newsletters
- can use webpage stats to get information on how many page views, how many downloads, etc.
- for Twitter how-to's, should contact Ian Adnams (ian.adnams@gmail.com) at District
- Canada Helps for receiving donations on-line

Program Name: Webcasts discussions on Christianity, Topics of Interest, Services/Prayer Groups

Presenter: Javed Ahkter

- webcast in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, but any language can be used
- it allows communication across generations – both to the very young and to the old
- it is a way of using young peoples' talents and time
- within 6 months of starting this, they had people waiting to preach online, and thousands of viewers
- a challenge is how to advertise the service

Other Ideas Presented

Newspaper/Magazine Boxes

- putting a free newspaper box at a bus stop to provide free copies of literature, e.g. Canadian Lutheran
- this could be used by churches that have a transit stop or a lot of foot traffic in front of their church

Grant Opportunities

- watch for Canada 150 grant opportunities, although it may be too late to apply for them

Programs Available for Use

- Alpha.org – free, videos discussing life's big questions
-could start up a small discussion group
- Griefshare – this is a non-threatening environment, no special training required

Introverts

Characteristics

- Good listeners
- Self-sufficient
- Super focused
- Easy to please
- Very observant
- Trustworthy
- Committed to their goals
- In touch with their feelings
- Have very thought provoking ideas
- Choose their friends very carefully
- Form deep and meaningful relationships
- Avoid small talk

Dislikes

- Don't like talking on the phone
- Don't like ice-breakers
- Don't like crowds
- Don't like talking about themselves
- Don't like brain-storming sessions

Skills

- Enjoy 1-to-1 conversations with those they trust
- Thrive on working out details in the background
- Excellent in support-caregiver roles
- Excellent prayer support for ministry workers
- Ask them a question, give them time to mull it over, expect a creative response in an hour, a day, or more.
- Excellent writers