

**GILMORE PARK UNITED CHURCH
ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA
February 26, 2006**

1. Luncheon & Call to Order
2. Opening Devotions
3. Enabling motions:
 - a. **that adherents be given voting privileges, except for the election of Council members and Trustees as per United Church polity.**
 - b. **that Carol Warner act as recording secretary for today's meeting.**
 - c. **That the Agenda, as printed, be approved**
 - d. **That the minutes of the 2005 AGM be approved as circulated.**
4. RRSP holders report, and recommendations [Note: only those holding RRSPs are allowed to participate]
5. Council Report on Governance
 - a. **That, after having received permission from the Presbytery of Vancouver South to "keep on experimenting with the model", that the Congregation continues to do so, while maintaining close contact with the Presbytery.**
6. Council Report on Ministry Policy (for information)
7. Report of the Finance Team
 - a. **That the report of the Finance Team, and Financial Statements for 2005, be accepted.**
8. Project 21 Report and recommendation.
9. Adoption of the 2006 Budget
 - a. **That the Budget for 2006 be approved.**
10. Election of Trustees
 - a. **That the Trustees for 2006 be Anna Christie (ex officio), Ian Moody, Bill Wallace, Maggie Wallace and Thomas Forbes.**
11. Election of Council Members: **That the following people be elected to Council: Bill Wallace (for a 3rd year, in lieu of Sally Houston's resignation), Pat Heslop, Shelby Everitt, and Jodi Gilmore.**
12. Election of Secretary: **That Carol Warner act as secretary of the Pastoral Charge until the Annual Meeting, 2007**
13. Election of Congregational Meeting Chair for 2007: **That the Chair of Council, Esther Trasolini, be elected as Congregational Meeting chair.**
14. Exchange of symbols, and thanks to retiring Council members and Chair.
15. Closing devotions.

Council Chair's Report: 2005

When I was first approached to sit on Council, two years ago, I thought – Who, me? Now, after one year as Chair of Council, I am thinking: Why *me*??

The community of Gilmore Park United Church has undergone such an enormous amount of radical change, in such a phenomenally short period of time that I'm sure I'm not the only one whose head is spinning! In only two years, we have undertaken to transform our church from a traditional, "membership" model of organization, to a discipleship model. Alongside that, we have initiated a new form of governance, called Policy Governance, to help drive the new discipleship model. Truly an overwhelming task. And yet, in amongst all this change, some truly remarkable and wonderful things have happened in our congregation: our flourishing small group ministries, our pastoral care team, our Leadership and other adult education courses, service events like the incredibly successful Dream Auction and Camp Outreach, the amazing Day of Discernment, and those already existing ministries that continue to do so much for our community: Children's Ministry, the Choir, Finance team, greeters, ushers, coffee makers, Seniors' Tea volunteers – and many more.

But change is hard, and we have been faced with the doubly challenging task of moving from a well-known governance structure, to one that is a virtual unknown, while at the same time dissolving the committee structure which was the backbone of the "membership model", in order to move to discipleship. We have had **no** other United Churches to ask questions of, **no** other congregations who could share their mistakes with us, **no** other United Churches who could give us advice. We have literally put ourselves on the cutting edge of church governance, with the consequence being that the only mistakes we have to learn from are **our own**. And yes, we have made mistakes.

Confused? If so, you are not alone!! Council over the past two years has literally been in the process of learning by doing; it's been an arduous process, involving hours and hours of time and commitment on the part of the people who have been asked to do this on the congregation's behalf. We've all been on an extraordinarily steep learning curve, but Council members have persevered with integrity – asking questions, searching for understanding, having the strength to admit our confusion, mistakes, and frustration, while holding firm to our belief that God is our centre, even in the midst of sometimes cutting and hurtful criticism of abilities and integrity.

BUT – the light is beginning to emerge at the end of the tunnel. In recent months, under the leadership of Rev. Anna, (who is also "learning by doing" and has done a remarkable job), the model has been adapted so that we are now seeing something take shape that might very soon become a smoothly functional model for us all.

In light of that, I think it is very important that all these new ideas be made **very clear to everyone** in our church family, so that we all understand what is going on! And so, even though this might go down as the longest Council report in the history of the church – I would like to take this opportunity to try and explain and clarify the various changes that have gone on in our community over the past couple of years. Hopefully in doing so, many of the extremely valid concerns and criticisms of Policy Governance and the Discipleship Model can be adequately addressed. Here goes:

At the 2003 AGM, the Council (of whom I was not one) put forward a motion that our church constitution be set aside, in order that we might develop a new governance

structure using the Policy Governance model. The Policy Governance model is a somewhat new form of governance, used extensively in the non-profit sector and in Unitarian churches, but has never before been adopted by a United Church congregation.

So, the newly elected 2004 Council set to work. After hours of reading, questioning, study and day-long workshops (!), the following was the **initial** incarnation of the Policy Governance model:

In the PG model, the mandate of the Council of the church changes **completely**. **It is a complete paradigm shift**. In the previous model, the Council's mandate was to oversee and manage the mission, direction, programs, finances and other affairs of the church. In the PG model this all changes. **And this is where a lot of the confusion around the PG model exists**. In the PG model, the Council's mandate is no longer the management or the running of the church. The Council's job is to discern and articulate the mission of the church, and to establish broad mission goals for the church to meet. For example, at GPUC, our first goals include people "experiencing the transforming love of God", and people "committing to a life of discipleship". (Our mission statement).

In that way, the Council tells the people of the church what the church should try to achieve. It is the Council's mandate, first and foremost, **to discern our church's purpose in existing**. A heady responsibility indeed!

On the other hand, **how** the people of the church meet the mission goals, or carry out their ministries, is **not within Council's mandate**. How people carry out their mission in ministry depends on the people themselves and their gifts – people who are called to sing, sing. People, who are called to feed the hungry, feed the hungry. People, who are called to write letters, write letters. **None** of it is initiated by Council, and none of it is approved by Council. **Council does not run the church, council leads the church**.

So that's why it was that the people nominated for this year's Council were selected for their gifts of faith, vision and discernment. Our financial experts are on our Finance Team. Our caregivers are on the Pastoral Care Team. Our communicators are on M&P, etc, etc. People with still other gifts may hopefully be called to some of the new ministries and teams, which I will describe later on.

That being said, there are two more "jobs" that Council undertakes to guide the direction of the church. The first is to set guidelines (called "policies") within which all ministry must occur. In other words, in this model people are free to follow their hearts and their callings, but within certain boundaries. It's probably best to clarify this with an example. In our Governance Document, we state that we do not allow any practices that are unsafe, disrespectful or inhospitable. So, a ministry group or committee may decide to, say, take food to the homeless. They may do this however they feel is best, provided that both the homeless people and the church members are treated with respect. The policies of Council, then, do NOT dictate to people how to do their ministries, but just ensure that all activities and programs are carried out within the bounds of good ethics and Christian principles.

Well, that's a lot of information and I still haven't answered the question – Who, then, runs the church? **This is where even more confusion has existed around the model – read carefully!**

This is one area of the PG model that has **since been adapted** to better fit the needs of Gilmore Park. Originally, the running of the church was delegated to the Minister, who was accountable to the Council for working towards Council's goals, and

was bounded by Council's policies or guidelines. One huge mistake I believe we made in implementing this model was in using the language of business to try and explain this model; the Minister was referred to, metaphorically, as the "CEO", to help explain her responsibilities. Unfortunately, some people found this term unhelpful, and it seems to have become a bit of a lightning bolt for discontent. Maybe I should just clarify – Gilmore Park United Church does NOT and never will, have a CEO. The CEO term was meant as metaphor for the Minister's responsibilities only...Personally, I think we should just let the whole "CEO" thing go! We just have a highly accountable minister!

That being said, the original model did indeed delegate the running of the church – programs, finances (although there are specific policies in place around finances – more later on this), etc – to Rev. Anna. The reasoning behind this was that in order to have accountability in the model, it would only be common sense to delegate responsibility and accountability to the person who was actually **paid to be here!** If you think about it, the rest of us (other than the other staff, of course) are volunteers – we could pack up and leave tomorrow. The difficulty in this task for Anna was that it made her both responsible for running the church and also accountable for the outcomes to Council, all by herself.

Please note that the key exception to this was the financial management of the church. According to Council policies, the Minister was not to make financial decisions on her own, but rather, **the finances of the church were (and are) managed by a team of financial experts.** Financial statements were prepared by the Finance Team monthly during the first year, and then quarterly in 2005; reports and statements were presented to Council by the Minister. To further monitor finances, Council member Nenita Bonifacio (an accountant) directly inspected the church's books and financial records, and reported back to Council. Financial management of the church has been **taken very seriously, and thus responsibility for these matters has been delegated to the members of our church who are experts in the field.**

Nevertheless, the key idea was at this point, to have Anna and the other paid staff make decisions regarding the running of the church, while we, the lay people, created new ministry teams that would undertake activities, projects, service, etc. That is, our **paid staff would carry on administrative functions, while the congregation carried out the church's mission in the world.**

We still don't really know why, but this idea of new ministry teams foundered. As the months went on, there were few, if any, new ministry initiatives from the congregation, with the result being that, unfortunately, the activities of the church became very "staff-centered", the workload became burdensome, particularly for Anna and Kerry, and it was clear that something wasn't working.

Even more difficult was the perception that rapidly circulated through some members of the church, that the Minister held all the decision-making ability, and hence **all the power** – as if this was the intent of the model! And, you know, in a certain sense, it was true that the minister was making many of decisions, but the funny thing is that this was intended to be a positive, helpful change, rather than a negative one. The whole idea of turning over the running of the church to the paid, accountable ministry staff was to free people up from sitting on committees to run the church, and to **fully empower them to pursue their areas of passion for ministry.** The thinking was (and please do remember that this came from the 2003 Council under the "old" model) that people shouldn't be tied to onerous tasks like attending long meetings, or worrying about the details of church administration, but should be freed up to make a difference in the world.

Well, whatever the case, something didn't work at that stage.....which brings me to the issue of **communication**.

Oh dear, oh dear. I have to take responsibility for this issue, which I have to admit I didn't understand until just recently. We on Council **thought** we were communicating as effectively as we could – given that at times we were still struggling to learn things ourselves and so did not have much to communicate! We published letters describing our work and describing the Policy Governance model. We held a fireside chat. For 6 weeks in November and December, members of Council made themselves available at a table in the coffee room to speak to anyone who had questions or concerns. We sent out questionnaires asking for current impressions and concerns, and ministry priorities. As well, all Council members are regular Sunday attendees who stay for coffee to chat. We thought we were being as proactive and approachable as we could.

But, an evident strength of the “old” model was that lines of communication flowed from Council fairly seamlessly through committee chairs to the people on various committees. In that way, everyone who wanted to be “in the loop”, could know what was going on in the church effortlessly, or would most likely have a friend who would fill them in. I now believe that it is that sense of being “in the loop” that is missing for some people in our congregation, and I certainly do understand how the feeling of disconnect could be upsetting. Improving lines of communication, particularly around finances, is an area that Council is addressing, and recommendations will be forthcoming. Although I must say that I do believe that in the immediate future, until things become streamlined, we're all just going to have to work a little harder on communication; both proactively reporting out, and, when that doesn't work – we need to ask.

(Just as an aside, this is not a concern for many other people in the congregation who are flourishing, growing and enthusiastic in this new model, as was made clear in so many of the questionnaires. However, I do want those people who are concerned to know that they have indeed been heard.)

Ok.....now the good news!! The PG model has further evolved in a way that I really believe will very soon become an effective governance structure for our congregation. Rev. Anna developed this (really fantastic) idea, and worked collaboratively with Council before beginning its implementation.

In this newer PG model, everything up to the point of the Council delegating the running of the church to the Minister remains unchanged. The Minister is still accountable for running the church. BUT what changes in this new model is that the Minister **further delegates** her responsibilities for the running of the church **to its working groups and teams**, including two new groups: the **Ministry Group** and the **Stewards Group**.

All of these groups are “decision-action” groups, in that they are **fully empowered** to make decisions in regards to their areas of ministry, **without seeking permission from either the Minister or the Council**. Because they are delegated by the Minister, these groups are also responsible for respecting the policies/guidelines set down by Council. As long as these guidelines are respected, and new ministries are in line with the mission of the church, these groups may meet and make decisions, independent of either the Minister or the Council. Now – we have the beginnings of a church with **shared decision-making**. (Keep in mind that ideas requiring \$\$ must also be approved by the Finance Team).

This is because, under the PG model, the Minister is given “free reign” to run the church, as long as she does not violate any of the guidelines (policies) set by Council in its Governance Document, (which of course includes the policies on financial

management). When the Minister delegates responsibility to groups, including the Ministry Group and the Stewards Group, these groups in turn **are bound by the same guidelines**. As long as the groups do not violate these guidelines, they are given complete freedom **to make any decisions that fall within their mandate**.

Here is an overview of the 2 new ministry groups:

1. **Stewards Group** – this group is fully empowered to make all decisions regarding **the physical plant of the church**. They may take action on certain issues themselves, or they may recruit volunteers to form a ministry team around a particular issue. Anyone with an idea regarding the physical plant can bring this idea to the stewards group for support and advice. As long as new ideas fall within the guidelines set by the Council, the Stewards Group can only give support and advice, they may not withhold permission. (The only exception is when there is a budgeting issue – then the idea must be forwarded to the Finance Team for consideration). **The Stewards Group is open to anyone who is interested**, although it may be most appealing to people with gifts in property management issues and “hands-on” skills.
2. **Ministry Group** – this group is **fully empowered** to make all decisions regarding the ministries and activities of the church. The Ministry Group is a very exciting place to be – **and it is open to everyone**. It would be appealing to anyone at all with more action-oriented or organizational gifts, or to anyone who would like to start to or get involved in a ministry, activity or program. To date, the Ministry Group has only met a couple of times, but has already begun to brainstorm ideas for new ministry initiatives. For example, a team is just in the process of being initiated, which will tackle the issue of affordable housing for low-income people in Richmond. Still another team just getting going is the Adult Fellowship team – a ministry team to plan and implement fellowship activities (child-free!) Just for fun and friendship. Other ideas that are brewing include a healing ministry, a Sri Lanka outreach group, and the planning of a Silent Retreat. **Everyone is welcome to become a member of the Ministry Group, or to bring an idea to it**. Again, as long as the idea falls within the guidelines set by Council (and approved by the Finance Team if necessary), the Ministry Group does not give “permission” – just support (like help with start-up, recruiting volunteers, etc.), and advice.

As new ministry teams/groups/committees – whatever – are established, they will be advertised to the congregation at large, so that you will not need to come to the Ministry Group or to start your own team – you can just sign up for whatever ministry you feel called to or see a need for, or join in the planning of a one-time only event. Shared decision-making creates flexibility.

Then, we are fortunate to have up and running our brilliant **Finance Team**, whose responsibility it is to manage church finances with wisdom, our wonderful **Pastoral Care Team**, who are responsible for hospitality and care of our members, and our dedicated **Worship Team**, responsible for ensuring that our worship furthers our mission. All in total, then, we currently have five ministry groups/teams who are **empowered as decision-making entities**; we are developing a model in which decision-making is truly shared – **with everyone being bounded in their decisions by the mission and policies of the Council**.

And to ensure that shared decision-making does not also create chaos – the Ministry Group, Stewards Group and others are still accountable to the Council via the Minister for their work, and must work collaboratively with the Finance Team when budget is a consideration. (Council is also looking at ways to facilitate direct communication between ministry teams and Council members). You can see how in this “new and improved” model, the Minister’s role has changed from that of a decision-maker, to a facilitator role – the Minister oversees the running of the various church programs to ensure that they are (a) in line with the mission of the church and (b) not in violation of Council policies. Otherwise, the Minister is there in a supportive, rather than authoritative role. Then, the Minister is in turn monitored by the Council, which examines the running of the church and its programs up against the policies and mission, and holds the Minister to account if guidelines have been violated.

So, **this entirely new Council has 3 main duties:**

1. to discern the mission, and broad mission goals for the church
2. to establish guidelines within which ministry must occur
3. to monitor church practices to ensure guidelines are being respected

Now, this new and improved version of the Policy Governance model is only **just beginning its implementation stage**. There are still **many** wrinkles to be ironed out. At the time of writing, Council will soon be meeting to discern how best to get the lines of communication flowing again, to make sure that transparency is maintained in all aspects of its work, and to look at other modifications and improvements as needed.

In support of that, I would **strongly encourage** members of the congregation to come to Council with questions and concerns, or use the suggestion box in the narthex. The only way that a Council can correct its mistakes is by hearing about them directly in the first place. It is only through the caring efforts of our wonderful pastoral care team and m&p committee that Council has become aware of the current concerns of some people, and thus is able to address them in as timely a matter as possible. I do believe that the gifted people now serving on our m&p committee will help us all out with conflicts and concerns as time goes on, and as we become more established in our new structures. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and children of God; we all deserve to have our voices heard and respected, and to be valued and affirmed in the myriad of gifts we bring to our community and to the world.

To sum up, we at Gilmore Park United Church have a wonderful, caring, committed Christian community, with a leadership centred on God and God’s mission for us in the world – to share the transforming love of God, and live as Christ’s disciples in the world. It is a community that has daringly embarked upon the very risky business of rapid and radical change. But God’s grace is with us, the Holy Spirit is working through us, we have leaders, paid and volunteer, whose focus is on our mission, and I truly believe that our community will come through this time of transition with flying colours, to remain the beacon of love, justice and care that it has always been in the city of Richmond.

Respectfully submitted
Diane Newton, Council Chair

MINISTER'S REPORT 2005 "A Growing Congregation"

2005 has been a year of incredible growth for Gilmore Park. Now I realize that as soon as I say that, many of you will begin to question it. Growth? It seems more like we've declined! And while it may be true that our total worship attendance numbers in 2005 were less than in previous years, I still hold that we have grown, because numerical growth is only one measure of a congregation's growth. Loran Mead, one of the great writers and speakers on congregational life in our time says in his book *More than Numbers* that there are four kinds of (equally valuable) growth for congregations: incarnational, numerical, maturational, and organic. I sit on a national committee for Discipleship and Evangelism for the United Church of Canada, and we are in charge of creating resources and national events that help congregations transform into "discipleship" congregations, and reach out into the world with the "good news" of Jesus Christ (Evangelism means literally "good news"). One of the things stressed over and over by members of this committee and our National staff people is that church growth is not just "bums in pews". (Honestly – they actually use this expression, many times over!)

Bums in pews were the goal of the church immersed in a "membership model" since the mid 1960s – get more members, as many members as possible. With the new millennium has come a wider focus for the church however: *meaningful ministry*. This is the centre of the discipleship model of congregations, of which Gilmore Park is one of the congregations on the leading edge in our nation. I have been honoured to have been asked to share our congregation's story, in one way or another, along with my own theory on leadership in several settings this year including: Sessional lecturer at Vancouver School of Theology – 2nd year course on "congregational leadership"; one of 10 speakers at the United Church's "Urban Ministry Consultation" in Toronto in November (I will also lead a workshop in Vancouver in June at the next UMC); All-day workshop leader in Nanaimo in September on "Gift-based Ministry" – an ever-growing trend in churches all over the world. (Recently, when I entered "gift based ministry" into Google, over 7 MILLION websites came up...every denomination on the planet, it seems, from Baptists to Presbyterians to Unitarians and United Churches in America, Australia or Korea are making the move to gift-based ministry, as opposed to simply asking for volunteers to serve on committees); United Church resources writer on the topics of Small Group Ministry, Gift Discernment, Leadership Development, Multimedia Worship, Welcoming Congregations, and congregational "marketing" including advertising.

Incarnational Growth

"Incarnation" means literally "to be made flesh", and it is normally used to describe Christ as God "in flesh" or "in human form". For a congregation, growth in this area means that the congregation is actually becoming the body of Christ in the world; growing more into the likeness of Christ. One of our favorite United Church hymns says "we are the hands and feet of Christ". Gilmore Park has grown incredibly in this area over the last year. People are working for peace and justice in the world and reaching out in love to help others. This is evident in the doubling of attendance at our Peace Vigil, the social justice table, the plethora of Project 21 services dedicated to awareness of world peace, economic justice and care for the earth, the Fair Trade Coffee House, and the recently formed Ministry Group fighting for justice for tenants being evicted from low-rental housing in Richmond. Our Dream Auction has once again been a huge success for charity, and popularity of this event within the city, coupled with awareness of the issues has grown by leaps and bounds. Smaller mission projects are similarly springing up all over the church including small groups creating "Christmas in July" and children making

soup for the homeless, birthday packages for the food bank, and many other projects. Project 21 has also generated an interest in creating a mission to the homeless here in Richmond.

Maturation Growth

This kind of growth is about people maturing in their faith. 2005 saw the largest graduating group from three leadership/discipleship classes. To date, 85 people have gone through the program. For an overwhelming majority, it was a growth experience. Biblical literacy in the worshipping congregation has greatly increased, and this continues to increase through participation of approximately 80 people in small group ministries. Two new groups were formed in early 2006, and another “advanced level” leadership program was begun with 12 participants. Even our Finance Team has read four books on stewardship, which are discipleship-based. The Team now has clear theological language with which to articulate stewardship and finance issues. Our children’s ministry has moved from teaching children Bible stories to facilitating children *experiencing the Divine* through not only the stories but other activities in the Godly Play program.

Organic Growth

Organic growth refers to how the church has grown as a community of people, and as a system itself. We have seen this growth dramatically over the past year, as our new governance model goes through the difficult “labour” process of birthing a new system entirely. Labour is not only difficult, but painful as well, and we have felt this pain as a small group of our membership expressed their dissatisfaction with the leadership of the congregation, and its model of governance. Some people have left the church angry, and others have drifted away over the past few years. This is normal and natural for a “growing” congregation. Once a group of people clearly *defines itself*, then this action in and of itself will both a) draw others to it and b) cause some to emotionally react against it. It is as though the congregation says “*This is who we are. This is the journey we’re on. If you’d like to join us you’re very welcome.*” Some people have reacted to our congregation’s newest definition of itself. They feel the journey the congregation is on is *not* one that they would like to be on. When these people are our friends and we love and care for them, there is much sadness indeed. Part of growing is grieving and learning to calmly and maturely move through the grief process. I am very proud of the depth of wisdom, maturity and faith shown by not only the Council but hundreds of others as well.

Numerical Growth

I like numbers. Don’t ask me why – it’s just sort of a hobby I suppose to count things and calculate percentages and such. Our congregation has not grown numerically over the past five years, but it has not declined either. In fact, since I became your minister in 2001, approximately 75 people have died, moved or left the congregation, and approximately 75 new people have come and stayed. It may not look like this is true, because the 75 newcomers, like the rest of the 225 congregants, do not attend worship every Sunday. And many of those who are now gone were indeed every-week regular attendees. Our congregation is blessed with many young people, however we are “cursed” with the absence of a large group of seniors which most United Churches enjoy. Seniors are a very committed demographic group who are usually weekly attendees. Baby boomers and their younger siblings, the “Gen-X” generation is notorious for attending once every two or three weeks only, even if they describe themselves as active, regular members. We also have the reality of many congregants who travel extensively.

My belief is that we are indeed a growing congregation, and that once we fully embrace these other three measures of growth, and celebrate them among ourselves and with those who come to visit with us, that numerical growth will inevitably follow.

Our Mission

Our congregation's mission, for which I am accountable to the Council, is that

People at every stage of their lives will experience the transforming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and commit to a life of discipleship.

I have seen the experience of the transforming love of God in so much of this congregation's life and ministry over the past year:

- In the vital, vibrant and meaningful celebration of worship every week, morning and night
- In small groups and classes where people share their faith together, discuss the Bible, care for one another, and uphold one another in prayer
- In leadership classes where people hash out Biblical/theological concepts, learn about human relationships, and are transformed through this interaction for service in the world.
- In the numerous nursing home, hospital and home visits made by laypeople in the name of Christ to the sick, elderly and alone.
- In our children, youth and family programs as people come together to celebrate their Christian faith and express love and joy to one another, modeling this to our children.
- In our growing number of outreach, mission and justice programs which reach out with the transforming love of God to others outside our walls: hungry families enjoying food from the food bank; poor children having a birthday party for once; low-income senior and disabled tenants rejoicing in victory over their eviction notices for the first time; people of all religions joining together in songs for peace; a young man we've never met waving his cigarette lighter to the music of Project 21:

“Dream God's dream
Holy Spirit let us dream
of a world where there is justice
and where everyone is free
to build and grow and love
and to simply have enough
the world will change
when we dream God's dream.”

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE REPORT

Kerry Child

2005 began year two for my ministry at Gilmore Park as the Congregational Life Minister offering up ministry with children, youth, families, seniors and volunteers in the congregation. I work full-time three quarters of the year within these amazing ministries of the church. In 2005 I took half of June, July and August off. It's been an exciting year of exciting growth, new programs, enthusiasm and discipleship for all ages.

Children's Ministry

This year we completed our first full year of Children's Worship, following the Godly Play Curriculum. Godly Play is about children *experiencing* God while *learning about* God. Children's Worship is offered every Sunday morning for children of all ages. Kara Martens has been the faithful, committed leader of Discovery Place, the program for our 3-5 year olds. Michael Yap & Greg Brady have been regular teen leaders. The Discipleship Group was birthed in 2005, for children Grades 5 & older to hang out and discuss the scripture story of the week. Jan Brady, Rita Francis, Lisa Yap and Judith Stredulinsky have taken this ministry on and the children love it! Laurie Baignee, Tanya Martens, Lauren Martens and Diane Newton continue to offer up their storytelling gifts and leadership to all the children on Sunday mornings, leading the Godly Play program.

Children's Worship involves 50 children on a regular basis. In 2005, the Children's Ministry team worked hard at building up the Children's Library and incorporating a quiet space where children can write letters to God and pray. Rob Stredulinsky and Phil Newton have continued to offer up their skills in carpentry, creating many of the figures used in storytelling. This program wouldn't be as successful without all those involved! Thank you!

Nursery Ministry

The Nursery really struggled during the first part of the year, not because of the lack of infants and toddlers but due to the lack of volunteers interested in helping on Sunday mornings. In the fall, Joanne Dennill, Tanya Martens and Meaghan Grant helped with the interview and hiring process and successfully hired Amanda Drozda to work each Sunday morning. 9 infants and toddlers regularly visited the nursery along with many visitors from week to week.

Youth Ministry

The Junior Youth Group, Grades 4-5-6 kick-started this year and had really good weekly attendance through the months. The Senior Youth Group, Grades 10-12, has struggled with attendance and met twice a month through the year. South Arm United & Gilmore Park United Youth Groups have done many events together which has been a good for community building and group development. Some of our youth attended May Retreat at Camp Fircom and most of the Junior Youth participated in Camp Outreach in January. Many of the youth have also been involved with Project 21 and leadership in Children's Worship. In 2005, Gilmore Park supported 40 teens between Grades 8 & 12.

Ministry with Seniors & Retirees

For ten months of the year, the Retiree's Tea was held with 30 people regularly attending. This tea is offered by a great team of volunteers including Dorothy Dawson, Stewart & Nadine Tait, Betty Coles and Maggie Wallace. Mary Francis & Cynthia Sun provide the baking and Donna Treptow calls each participant from month to month to remind them about the tea. In 2005, we

explored many themes including storytelling, church policies and governance, seniors in the church, wills and estates. The tea happens on the second Monday of each month and it involves a devotional time with Rev. Anna, activities, visiting, singing hymns and, of course, drinking tea! A number of new folks have joined us this year too.

Volunteer Ministry

The other half of my ministry at Gilmore Park involves working, coordinating and organizing everything to do with volunteers in the church. In 2005 the SUPERGRID was created in order to provide one list of all the opportunities at Gilmore Park. These include scripture reading, ushers, greeters, money counters, coffee makers, children's ministry folk, flower providers and candle lighters. The SUPERGRID has been a huge success and is available for all to see, posted on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Church Family Ministry

Gilmore Park continues to offer an exciting Church Family Ministry which has developed so well over the last year.

Camp Outreach kicked the year off in January with 60 children & adults participating in an overnight, outreach event for the community. See the attached brochure for all the details!

February brought the annual presbytery **Young Adult Retreat on Bowen Island**. 6 Gilmore Park young adults attended, making it the largest group from one congregation. **Project 21** kicked off with a burst of energy. The Moderator of the United Church of Canada came to town and 5 of us attended the worship service at St. Andrew's Wesley-United in Vancouver to hear him speak.

In March 25 people participated in the **Temples of Faith tour** where we spent a day visiting a Buddhist Temple and a Muslim Mosque. As a gift, the church received an English version of the Koran. March brought an early Easter to us all which involved a wonderful community **Easter Dinner**. 30 people attended, bringing items for the meal while Rev. Anna, Charlie and I cooked the turkey and the ham in the church kitchen. It was a very enjoyable evening of great food and fellowship.

In May, **BC Conference Annual Meeting** happened in Courtenay, BC. Betty Coles, Alex Bois, Anna Christie and I attended as delegates. Alex Martens was chosen to participate in the Children at Conference program. **May Retreat**, a presbytery youth event happened at Camp Fircom and 6 Gilmore Parkers attended.

June brought a wonderful celebration on Father's Day, recognizing the work and **retirement of Gail Nichols** and a celebration of **16 high school and university graduates**. We also enjoyed a wonderful **Church Picnic** with South Arm United.

September was kick-started with a fantastic country-style **corn roast luncheon** and great fun was had by all. David Bove was chef-extraordinaire BBQing 100 locally grown corn for us all.

October involved the **Harvest Dinner, Dance & All Saints Celebration** at South Arm United, an event for both Gilmore Park & South Arm congregations, planned by Jen Cummings and I. 30 Gilmore Parkers made their presence known, wearing incredible costumes and dancing out the spirit! Barb Child taught one-hour of dance and the evening closed with a short service to recognize the saints in our lives.

The **Dream Auction** was a great success in November involving a number of volunteers as young as 8. I worked with the children & youth volunteers which involved about 25 young people from Gilmore Park. It was a very fun day!

The **Happy Birthday Jesus Party** was coordinated by the Martens Family and was a superb event for the 30 children and adults who attended.

The Wrap Up!

As the Congregational Life Minister I have the joy and challenge of making sure child, youth, families and seniors are cared for and empowered to participate in the life and work of Gilmore Park. In 2005, many new ideas were explored and new programs were offered. It was a good year. Thanks to everybody in the church family who has connected, worked, helped, volunteered, supported and been involved in the last year.

To end, here are some “highlights”.....

2005 Do you Remember.....

- ❑ Muriel Hemmes sharing her sermon about the children in India and the Families for Children organization she volunteers with?
- ❑ Having a luncheon for the General Council Executive of the United Church of Canada in April?
- ❑ When the Social Justice table kicked off? Or when the church started selling Fair Trade Coffee?
- ❑ When James Ng sang at the Retirees Tea?
- ❑ The night of the Peace Vigil, the full house, the high energy?
- ❑ Making Advent Wreaths?
- ❑ Erica Heslop presenting her quilt to the church? A project that Erica worked on with the children.
- ❑ When Alec, Amanda and Anne Marie were hired?
- ❑ The 5 bottle drives that youth group held in the church parking lot?

Dream Auction 2005

Our dream is that no child in Richmond will suffer from poverty.

Gilmore Park United is committed to this dream and the fourth annual Dream Auction with this particular focus was held on November 26, 2005 at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel. Over three hundred guests came for lunch and a great shopping time. With three hundred silent auction items, twenty-five live auction items and the very popular Air Canada Plane Flying Contest all of our participants were able to contribute to our fund raising Community event. Our young people with their balloon sales and our empty lunch bag collection also helped our cause. The youth also provided a beautiful vocal grace and enthusiastically distributed door prizes. Many community organizations were pleased to attend as well as representatives of our Federal, Provincial, Municipal Governments and our School Board. The Gilmore Park Team has enjoyed working with St Albans Community Meal Team for the past two years.

The success of this important anti-poverty initiative is due to the over forty Gilmore Park United members, the St Albans Team, the generous community members, merchants and individual donors of Richmond who share the dream.

At the conclusion of the Dream Auction we were able to distribute our funds in the following manner: **\$5,000.00 to the Richmond School Board** to fund breakfast programs in Richmond Schools. **\$13,000.00 to the Richmond Food Bank** for children's necessities (baby food, formula, diapers, snack pacs etc.), **\$6,300.00 for the Community Meal at St Albans** and **\$2,300.00 to Nova House-** a transition home for women and children. **TOTAL RAISED: \$26,600**

Thank you for all of your hard work and your generosity. We hope you will join us for the 2006 Dream Auction on November the 25th.

We wish we could say that the poverty has lessened. We can't! We can say it is no longer invisible.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Houston

REPORT FROM GILMORE PARK UNITED CHURCH
WORSHIP WORKING GROUP
FOR - 2005

The Worship Working Group meets quarterly, or whenever Rev. Anna calls a special meeting.

The Group has 13 members namely:

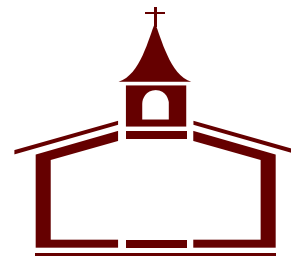
Rev. Anna
Kerry Child
Dorothy Dawson
Jan Brady
Edith Bitcon
Moirra Anderson
Stewart and Nadine Tait
John Carter
Ian & Merrylin Moody
Gail Nichols
Carol Warner (Chair)

We are responsible for the arranging of the Sanctuary for Sunday Worship - the Hymn Boards, Candles, Banners, Communion and Communion Servers, Baptisms, Certificates, Advent Wreath, Angel Tree, Figurines of Nativity, Creche, Changing the colours of the Communion Table and the Pulpit Fall for the appropriate seasons.

The sound system is staffed, and help with arrangements for special services – Lent – Holy Week – Good Friday – Easter – Pentecost – All Saints/Remembrance Sunday – Advent, Christmas, joint Services with St. Anne's (readers and Communion servers) and intergenerational Services.

During Rev. Anna's and Amy's vacation period, we ensure that the Church and office are open and accessible to the supply Ministers. We ensure the supply Ministers are supported and given hospitality.

We also take our turn at making coffee on Sunday mornings.



Annual Report Ministry Group February 2006

1 John 3:18

Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

During the past few years as our disciples graduate the leadership class', we are blessed with many spiritual gifts.

A vehicle for using these gifts is the newly formed Ministry Group. This group was formed to move forward in new ministry initiatives for Gilmore Park United Church. The first members of the Ministry group were invited by Anna, with a letter of invitation in October 2005. The first group meeting was Sunday November 26/2005.

This was the only meeting of 2005 as we approached the holiday season.

This meeting was basically to appoint a chair, secretary and go over some ideas on "New Ministry".

At this first meeting The Ministry group reviewed a letter from the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (which encompasses 4 task forces: Families and Food, Security, Housing, Advocacy and Access). The letter was to inform Gilmore Park United Church of the mass evictions of low -income tenants at the Richmond Garden Apartments and to advise that the people of the apartments, were in need of legal assistance to fight the evictions.

The ministry group reviewed the letter and a motion was set forward to help the tenants with some of the legal costs of fighting the eviction.

One of our new ministry initiative ideas is to create a team/group to address the issue of affordable housing in Richmond.

The ministry group will work with Rev. Anna, on ministry initiatives and with Kerri on congregational life, as well as working with our congregation and community.

A few points about the group:

- **We are delegated by the Minister –Anna**
- **We will follow guide lines from council**
- **We are a brain storming group who will form new ideas for our ministry**
- **We will be a structure that enables people to become involved**
- **We encourage all new ministry ideas brought to us**

Sincerely,

**Shelby Everitt
Chair**

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT DAY
January 7, 2006

Facilitator: Rev. Anna Christie

Co-facilitator: Alex Bois

*Note: The facilitators did not participate in any of the discussion.

Attendance: 25 people, including all of Council

PURPOSE OF THE DAY

To discern spiritually and in community,
an answer to the question “where is God nudging us?”

AGENDA FOR THE DAY

- 9:00 Framing:** Intro to the process, the generic question, Council input
[see attached for an explanation of the process]
- 9:45 Grounding:** Discernment Listening Guidelines, Questions
- 10:00 Shedding:** Throwing rocks in the pond .
- 10:20 ~~~break~~~**
- 10:30 Rooting:** Scripture exercise in 2 groups – Isaiah 58
- 11:00 Exploring:** Art, walking, reading, praying, solitude.
- 12:00 ~~~lunch~~~**
- 12:30 Improving:** sharing insights from “exploring”
Discerning: “wild design” – answering the generic question “Where is God nudging us?”

DISCERNMENT LISTENING GUIDELINES

1. Take time to become settled in God’s presence.
2. Listen to others with your entire self (senses, feelings, intuition and rational faculties).
3. Speak for yourself only.
4. Do not challenge what others say.
5. Do not interrupt.
6. Do not formulate what you want to say while someone else is speaking.
7. Pause between speakers.
8. Leave space for anyone who may want to speak a first time before speaking a second time yourself.

SHEDDING EXERCISE: Rocks in the pond

Today was a day to discern *God’s* will, God’s direction, God’s mission and vision for our church. It is NOT a day for people to bring what *they think* the church should be doing. It is a day of listening, in various ways – to God, and to one another. In order to do this, participants must let go of the various things that hold them back from fully “letting go” and “letting God.” This “letting go” was channeled into a rock, which was then thrown into a pond. Participants said aloud what was “in” their rock. Some of the responses were:

- I need to let go of the anxiety I have that more people aren’t here today
- I need to let go of my fear of public speaking
- I need to let go of the ideas I brought – directions I thought the church should be going in.

- I need to let go of any desire to control the process
- I hope I don't get too tired and not participate fully

COUNCIL "FISHBOWL" EXERCISE

Council members sat in a circle, and others sat in a circle around them. Each Council member spoke briefly about their response to the 50 questionnaires that were received. Below are notes both from this day's reflections, and the reflections at the Council meeting itself:

Carol Warner: - each one was unique; glad that people are talking about these things now – they never used to; people could “feel the warmth” when they entered this church.

Esther Trasolini: - this church is visionary; it want to be something in this world; this church *cares*.

Diane Newton: - hard to separate my own bias for social justice; there is much caring here; in the context of discerning a mission which means “a group of disciples *sent by God* to do God's work in the world”; this models the kingdom in our own community (belonging, sacredness) *then* sends us out; a nudge not to forget the “models the kingdom” part in terms of the “sending out” part; overwhelming passion of “service to others” – a clear call to this; lots mention Richmond; some commonalities, but many that are our own passions

Rita Francis: - lots of passion; we have everything we need to go there; this was a good way for us to know what others think about these things

Nenita Bonifacio: - it really is a response to God's call; instead of taking a “vote” with highest numbers, should we explore *why* people would answer and give low scores.

Bill Wallace: - service to others was the “top”

Sally Houston: - a positive experience to read them; one word: “discipleship”; amazed at how well people were thinking as disciples; everyone has a talent as a disciple; service and justice was talked about a lot; one paper points to the need to affirmation – this is a call for it

Ivor Barnbrook: - desire to do service, with widespread ideas;

Ian Moody: - how people perceived words such as “corner” or “evangelism” (I never would have put that); a real penchant to do something big within the community

SCRIPTURE EXERCISE: “Lectio Divina”

Two groups of 12 were formed. Isaiah Chapter 58 was read and people were invited to respond first beginning with “I wonder” and secondly with “I notice”.

I wonder....

- if the Lord knew about sports and shopping on Sundays
- why the glory of God is our rearguard, rather than up front?
- why this passage was chosen
- if it were chosen to give us direction re: outreach?
- about “bring the poor into your house”
- where people in 3rd World countries get their faith, when they have nothing
- about v.(8) – the sad, negative part of our history (Crusades)
- about the teaching of peace in this reading
- If this points to “keep the Sabbath holy”
- why is it easier to be covered in sackcloth and ashes than to let your light shine?
- why is it easier to give up money rather than ourselves (i.e., time) to place like First United, etc.
- is it easier to trample the Sabbath rather than worship, to let things like sports take over instead of going to worship? Is it turning a “back” on God?
- what would it be like to ride upon the heights of the earth? What would that look like?
- what actions does God want from us?
- for ‘us’ (those who worship) how ‘easy’ will it be to preserve the Sabbath?
- I wonder how we have moved away from the ‘meaning’ of the Sabbath? - let the big businesses dictate for us ... buy/work instead of rest?

I notice...

- contrast - false/true, self/selfless
 - is it just between God and us, or is it about all of us?
- just as we teach children, there are consequences to our actions/behaviours
- Isaiah is saying that God has given us the guidelines
 - God’s going to reward us for doing
 - God will be delighted
 - so just go out and do it
- there are parts in this scripture
 - first, how do we understand the Sabbath and fasting
 - then, we are given things that are acceptable for the Sabbath and fasting
 - finally, he tells us the rewards/benefits – what they will be should we follow
- giving up the yoke sets you free to do God’s work/ ways, when you give up the yoke, it does feel like a spring of living waters, however, it is a struggle as long as you live – it doesn’t get easier.
- the question: If you? every time we are asked or have ‘if you’ pop up, God gives us a choice/ the right to choose.
- feelings of heavy guilt but when I hear “Here I am” the heaviness is replaced with hope.
 - imagery is so powerful – this replaces heavy feelings by the end
- when I ask for guidance, I get it. When I don’t ask, that’s when I stumble.
- OLD vs NEW T. – continually we are asked to give ourselves over, to give up control – this is difficult
- feeling overwhelmed by the list. There is so much to follow/do

- the list looks scary – I do not feel I am in a position where I could bring a homeless person into my house, but is that how far God wants me to go? Be completely selfless? It will take a long time for me to get there.
- how wonderful it would be if all this could happen
- we (here as a group) are struggling – not for food or survival – we are not struggling the same things as others (e.g., Iran) but still struggling/suffering
 - maybe that's part of life
 - maybe God wants this from us for all of humanity
- the writer started with wondering and continued asking God
- there were many choices
- different things paralleled what we saw in the questionnaires – senses of direction perhaps today is our “fast”
- that if you serve/do justice with prayer, God will help you – no matter how big or small
- God promises us that if we do His work, we are the bread that will fill the gap.
- we're supposed to lay down our yokes, stop pointing fingers and doing evil
- it's honest outreach and not for show
- the passage is like the song “Come In, Come In and Sit Down” (come and be... go and do)
- maybe it's the outpouring of God's Spirit to humanity: he blesses us – God's Spirit shines
- we are not left alone to do/complete these things. We have permission from God and he is with us and since he is with us, our actions, combined with God's presence, will bear fruits.

SOLITUDE EXERCISE

Each person spent 45 minutes in solitude – walking, praying, working with art materials, reading questionnaires, reading about the discernment process, reading Scripture. Then the group gathered again and each person shared what they discerned at this time:

- every Bible reading I flipped to was about justice – Isaiah and Matthew and Is 58
 “God will not forsake us”
 “ Shout out!”
 “is not this fast ... to loose the bands of injustice”
 - clothe the naked
 Ps 32/8 I will instruct you in the way you should go
 Ps 33 justice 103:6 justice
- fasting – sackcloth, but also in joy
 - mingle with your family; joy and openness with your family
- I drew a tree with an empty nest - then I saw an eagle outside
 Sabbath leads to prayer, care, affirmation, time together
- mind map: light and darkness – we are co-creators with God (includes ourselves and one another.. care for one another)
- organ music – tranquility, serenity – more people singing – spontaneous community
 1. we can grow community (hymn sing)
 2. channeling our efforts in outside community
 3. encourage others to come and join

- sat where I've never sat (I notice the power of God ...)
- remembering the "we"; "you" is inclusive – no "I" in "you"
- "the ancient will be remembered"
- reading the Qs – good feeling when together with others doing the same thing
- Is 58 again – God calls us to do whatever you can / please God, promote His Kingdom
- Is 58 paraphrased
- share with hungry, our homes, our families as well
- refrain from (evil)
- darkness will disappear! We'll be a garden
- reshape foundations of life
- mandala as relates to Isaiah: inner circle is like me – shed fears, anxieties ... outer circle = others ... Outermost = God
- to walk in the Light (not hide from challenges) - get out there and do
- mandala – added phrases from Is. 58 "if you ask God for help, He'll continually support you"
- mandala – window in Church – Light, beauty, wonder
- Qs / rocks/ recognizing gifts within the church
- sort ourselves out first before "going out"
- why were we "reborn" (GPUC)?

WILD DESIGN

Now it was time to address the original question: "where is God nudging us". Participants offered short words or phrases that were written on index cards, and stuck up on the wall in random order.

Cards were then organized, and grouped together. The largest grouping was later entitled "IN OUR HOUSE".

Participants were given 3 "votes", and the results, in order of "votes" are listed below. In brackets are the words/phrases on the various cards.

WHERE IS GOD NUDGING US?

1. IN OUR HOUSE (embrace and celebrate all generations; affirmation; encouragement; pastoral care; celebrating each other; hospitality; support church programs even if we disagree; enthusiasm; not speaking evil, pointing fingers; be willing to admit mistakes, examine, reassess; more kindness, tolerance, less criticism; don't be stopped by doubt; care for one another)

1. SERVICE TO OTHERS (mission/outreach with God's assurance; feed the poor; self-less sharing)

2. JUSTICE (justice not charity; don't pass it by)

3. COMMUNICATE WHO WE ARE (evangelizing – the United Church creed)

3. PERSONAL INVITATION TO OTHERS

4. KEEP LISTENING TO GOD

4. WORLD PEACE

5. TO LIVE OUT THE SABBATH

6. KEEP ON TRUCKIN' BUT ALSO.... (pressing forward)

Gilmore Park United Church

100 Council Policy Statement

Ministry Policy

Policy Type: Ministry
Adoption Date: April 13, 2004
Modification Date: October 12, 2004, November 2, 2004, February 14, 2006

Global Ministry Policy (Our Mission)

Gilmore Park United Church exists so that:

- People at every stage of their lives will experience the transforming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and will commit to a life of discipleship
1. “A Life of Discipleship” means:
 - a. Daily prayer
 - i. Committed to listening to God, and to discerning God’s direction for us as a people
 - b. Study of Scripture
 - c. Weekly worship
 - i. Worship will be culturally relevant, innovative and meaningful while honoring the traditions of the United Church of Canada.
 - ii. Living out the sabbath will be encouraged.
 - d. Proportional Giving
 - e. Service
 - i. Committed to serving others (the hungry, sick, homeless, victimized, marginalized)
 - ii. Committed to working for social justice
 - iii. Committed to world peace
 - f. Spiritual Friendships
 - i. Growing in our faith
 - ii. Communicating who we are, as a United Church, to others
 2. The CONGREGATION will be an intentional community centred in God’s mission that models the kingdom of God.
 - ✓ A diversity of ages, races, sexual orientations, economic conditions, abilities and theological perspectives will be embraced, respected and celebrated
 - ✓ People’s gifts will be discerned, affirmed, encouraged and equipped for a variety of ministries.
 - ✓ People will experience tangible loving care, acceptance and help with living.
 - ✓ The truth will be told in love

FACTS & FAQs

- Over 30 people take part in the retirees tea monthly, with attendance of 15-25
- Kerry Child worked very hard to organize a young adult mission trip to the Philippines which was later cancelled due to lack of support from both the National church and our local congregation.
- Bill Wallace led a book group this year that studied “The Pagan Christ”
- Our Administrator, Anne Marie Kelly, works from 8:30-4:30 Monday to Friday.
- “Collection of Plates” fundraising dinners raised approximately \$4000 this year.
- Our building is rented out and used so much that sometimes meetings have had to be held in Anna’s office and even the back of the sanctuary
- Of the \$75,000 raised and designated for Project 21 capital expenses, not all has yet been spent. There are still major renovations to the sanctuary sound system that have not yet been completed.
- “Project 21” capital funds were used not only for the evening service. They also were used to bring us into the 21st century. Such things as:
 - a portable sound system for the Activity Room/Learning Lounge/take to the Retreat/Dream Auction
 - renovation to the storage room off the Activity Room for storing tablecloths, vases and coffee house supplies
 - a grand piano for the sanctuary
 - educational A/V equipment for use by children, youth, adults and user groups
 - 5 new computers and a networked printer for the various offices
- Two community kitchen projects use our kitchen weekly to help new immigrants and/or people with low incomes to learn to cook wisely and to save money by cooking together.
- Our church was on Global TV Breakfast show in August as we hosted the Children’s Technology Workshop, who rented the Music Room
- Ellen Russon has led two successful Christian Meditation small groups
- Rev. Anna offered the program “Extraordinary Relationships” for couples and other adults interested in enhancing their relationship.
- Council studied the book “Missional Church” over several months and discerned what it means for a church to be *sent* into the world.
- Council approved Alexandria Bois as an Inquirer, headed toward discerning a call to ministry process.
- Rev. Anna volunteers 3 hours a week at Richmond hospital – 6N surgical and paediatrics. Beryl Mackleston works on this floor as an educator!
- Rev. Anna is completing her 3rd year, and clinical residency in Marriage and Family Therapy at Living Systems, North Vancouver. She continues to offer counseling for free to anyone from within the congregation, and volunteers up to 5 hours a week of counseling to people outside our own congregation (her fee is a donation to our church, on a sliding scale).
- We launched a new website in August, 2005. The webmaster (creator and maintainer) is Adrian Bois, Rev. Anna’s son. www.gilmoreparkunited.org
- Project 21 website launched in December. The webmaster is our Minister of Technology, Alec Holowka. www.project21.ca
- Murray Speer joined us in January as a first-year field placement student, and then in September as a second-year. In the fall he was required to spend 10 hours/week with us

learning about worship and liturgy as well as pastoral care and teaching. Murray is here Thursdays and Sundays.

- Murray's Reflection Group is made up of Bob Poole, Terry Dougan, Ruth Tunstall and Maxine Howarth
- Dorothy Dawson and Carol Warner have a wonderful, unfailing ministry of worship to the Gilmore Gardens people. Every second week they participate in either a Worship Service or a Hymn Sing.
- For a complete list of all our outreach projects, check out the brochure (attached)
- Our Annual Spiritual Retreat was attended by 24 people, and music was provided by Linnea Good
- A "straw vote" was taken one Sunday morning this year for two issues: paperless worship and gay marriage. 80% of people responded positively to continuing with the "big screen" format, and 20% voted to go back to having bulletins. 70% of people agreed with the United Church of Canada's support of gay marriage, and 30% disagreed. No action has been taken on the discussion of a marriage policy as yet – Council would have to decide on this and write policy.
- Rev. Anna's work-hours are as follows: Sundays 8:30 am – 9:30 pm; Mondays – at home, working on Sunday services (8 hours); Tuesdays 9 am – 9 pm; Wednesdays 9 am – 6 pm; Thursdays 9 am – 9 pm; Friday and Saturday off. These 54 hours include 8 hours of volunteer work (hospital and counseling). I have various appointment times to meet with people throughout the week, and in a crisis I am available at any time. Wednesdays are often heavily booked with meetings and appointments, as is Thursday afternoons. Tuesdays morning and afternoon and Thursday mornings and now evenings are generally free.
- There is now an "**affirmation and suggestion box**" in the narthex. Fill out an orange form to affirm someone's ministry in the congregation – affirmations will be posted! Fill out a blue form to make a suggestion – all suggestions will go to the **Ministry Group** for action or direction to another group, team or staff member.¹

¹ Note: please don't put both an affirmation AND a suggestion or concern on the same form, or it will be sent in as a suggestion only and not posted.

FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE NUMBERS!

Thanks to Anne Marie spending countless hours developing a database of information that we can sort in many many ways, we have access to all sorts of numerical information, at just the click of a button. Here are some statistics you may be interested in: (as of February, 2006)

Active, regular attendees ²	295
Total members and adherents	480
Adults involved in mid-week programs (teams, groups)	147
Adults involved in discipleship groups/classes	84
Children (includes 9 nursery-aged)	40
Youth	15
Choir members:	19
Adjunct choir:	13
Joyful Noise:	15
Project 21 “regular attendees”:	125
Attend evening service only:	27
Age 15-25	36
Under age 30	66
Band members	10
Drama team	15

Note: A list of the names of all the various people/groups listed here are posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Worship attendance – 10:30 am service (monthly average)

Jan	110
Feb	133
Mar	153
Apr	115
May	106
Jun	108
July	68
Aug	75
Sept	110
Oct	106
Nov	115
Dec	147

² The term “regular attendee” these days means attends once a month or more, and considers themselves to be active participants in the life of the congregation.

Project 21 attendance – weekly 2005

Feb	100 50 56 60	July	Low -11 High - 25
Mar	86 48 55 66	Aug	24 27 32
Apr	36 56 36 36	Sept	27 25 45 32
May	58 49 36 36	Oct	34 23 40 29 32
Jun	34 36 30 47	Nov	185 48 30 40
		Dec	30 36 65

Note: a count was also taken weekly as to how many attendees are within the target age group of 15-25Y, and how many are under the age of 30Y. As well, in 2006 a new statistic is being recorded known as “net a.m.” which means the total number of people present in the evening who did not attend in the morning. For interest, here are the early 2006 statistics:

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE 2006

Date	10:30 am	7 pm	Under 30Years @ 7 pm	Net total (am + pm not attending am)
January 8	90	36	17	104
January 15	122	35	15	142
January 22	120	49	22	151
January 29	122	33	18	139
February 5	111	79	36	163
February 12	100	22	9	113

ANNUAL REPORT FOR M&P COMMITTEE

As there was no working M&P Committee during the year 2004, the current M&P team consisting of Susan Johnsen, Glenn Stutt and Maggie Wallace started work in May of 2005 by familiarizing ourselves with the Policy Governance model, GPUC's Conflict Resolution Policy and the requirements for M&P committees, as stated in the Manual of the United Church.

Once again, 2005 was a transitional year for the church with the retirement of our Church Administrator, Gail Nichols, and the hiring of our new Administrator, Anne Marie Kelly, and one of M&P's first jobs was to organize (and delegate) a retirement luncheon in June as a 'goodbye' to Gail and 'hello' to Anne Marie. M&P have met with individual staff to review job descriptions and renew contracts., and then in November we met as a group for a 'staff evaluation' meeting.

We feel that one of the important jobs of the M&P Committee is to help Ministry Personnel, staff and members of the congregation build and maintain healthy relationships, and we will be working hard to achieve this goal during the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie Wallace.

PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

TEAM MEMBERS:

Nenita Bonifacio
Betty Coles
Dorothy Dawson - Chair
Mary Francis
Cathy Martin
Gail Nichols
Loreen Robertson
Jeanne Stradling
Esther Trasolini
Freda Walker
Maggie Wallace
Carol Warner

STAFF:

Rev. Anna Christie
Kerry Child

The purpose of our team is to ensure that the people of our congregation are cared for through visits to their homes, the hospital or care facilities. We are also responsible for sending out cards as appropriate, making sure food is arranged when illness or misfortune strikes and also finding transportation for those in need. Another aspect of our work is to be in touch with those who have disappeared from worship attendance. When necessary we refer our people to the Minister for spiritual help/counseling. If you have the gift for caring, you would be a welcome asset to this team. Just contact our Minister or the undersigned.

We met several times during 2005 to offer our own personal gifts to this team and to establish our goals.

During November and December we noted those who do not or sporadically attend Sunday services and agreed to 'phone or meet with them to establish what it would take to bring them back to Gilmore Park. This has been a revealing and sometimes difficult task. Our findings have been presented to Council and are under discussion.

We also have a PRAYER GROUP of nine members coordinated by Cathy Martin. Should you have a personal prayer request, you can contact either Cathy or myself.

Cards are sent out on behalf of Gilmore Park by our member, Jeanne Stradling. Please advise Kerry Child when you know of someone whom we would want to be in touch with in this way.

We also note any new persons visiting via the PINK SHEETS passed around on any given Sunday morning. If their intention is to stay with us, their names will be added to our CARING GROUPS list. This list is used as a 'FAN PHONE-OUT' when our congregation needs to hear news quickly or to advise of special events.

You can help us help you by keeping us informed. We are here for you.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Dawson
Chair

MUSIC MINISTRIES REPORT – Amy Stephen

CHANCEL CHOIR:

This year the choir lost one of its dearest and most committed members: Al Dawson. Al is still very much missed at practice every week, but we keep fond memories of his good humour and good singing in our hearts.

Choir attendance fluctuates with the seasons, but we had a big number out for Christmas again this year, including a number of people who came out just to sing specifically for Christmas. In January, in lieu of our usual Christmas party, the choir enjoyed a potluck feast in the fireside room that included beautiful hot dishes and yummy deserts - along with a generous serving of fellowship that we had been missing. Recently we had a guest, Mr. Eric Dozier of Victoria, in to lend some gospel music on one Sunday morning. He brought singers from his weekend gospel workshop and, joined also by the chancel choir, fairly rocked the church. On the few Sundays when I am not able to be in church to direct, Alec Holowka (techie from Project 21) usually steps in to play and does a wonderful job. Dorothy Dawson faithfully attends the annual Northwest Music reading sessions to check out new publications of choral music and passes on the info to me so I can use the resources for the choir. Carol Warner takes care of the choral library - a daunting task every week but one that she always manages to smile through (you know Carol!)

Many of the choir sing with the Joyful Noise group led by Patricia Lynn every month or so before the service, which adds a spiritual singing presence to the pre-service time in the sanctuary.

Switching to paperless worship was fairly seamless for the choir - the visual monitors cue us for everything - the main difference for us is getting used to seeing everyone in the congregation looking up instead of down! Actually it's a lovely feeling, much more connected as a church than before when everyone was always looking into the hymn books. We still use the hymn books to sing the harmony, but we can feel you all looking up!

We have welcomed a couple of new members this year, and we are welcoming anyone new who wants to come and sing on Sunday mornings. Meaghan Grant, one of our choir members, often plays flute with the hymns in the morning, and Alex Bois and Alvin Bonifacio also come occasionally to offer their musical talents on the flute, saxophone, trumpet and drums. Another great addition to the Sunday morning worship is the guitar playing of Diane Newton.

PROJECT 21:

The Project 21 worship band began one year ago with the new evening service, and has grown collectively in both numbers and abilities. The band presently consists of myself on piano, Alvin Bonifacio on drums and vocals, Meaghan Grant on flute and vocals, Katie Yeats on flute and vocals, Gracelle Bonifacio on vocals and percussion, Alex Bois on saxophone, flute and vocals, Petra Warland on vocals, and Anna Christie on guitar and percussion. Our guest musical director when I am away is the talented Julian Pattison who plays piano, sings, and provides us with a lot of great music which we use regularly in our repertoire. Those of you who have been on worship committees, planning committees, or in the choir know what a bonding experience it is to make music together, and to plan worship creatively together. The musicians in the band devote two hours every Sunday afternoon to rehearsal for the evening service, then they play and sing their hearts out every Sunday evening. Although one or two of them came to the group with confidence in

leading music in worship, most of them were new to this set of skills and I simply cannot believe how much they have all come out of themselves over this past year to enthusiastically lead worship. Some of them have composed and arranged their own songs based on their faith experiences. And the friendships they have developed have sprung out of their natural inclinations to help each other out learning the music and figuring out who's doing what in which song - we look forward over the coming year to welcoming more new young musicians to enjoy worship and fellowship with, and to learn from and with. I am so pleased to be working with such a committed group of musicians who share an open attitude towards music, worship, each other, God, and all God's children.

THE PEACE VIGIL: This event, originally the brainchild (and heart child!) of Jodi Gilmore, has grown steadily over the past few years. Held on the Sunday evening before Remembrance Day, the Interfaith Peace Vigil was hosted by Project 21 this year. There were choral singers from four different musical groups participating: Gilmore Park's Chancel Choir, the Project 21 worship band, Vancouver's Aurora Celebration Choir (whose membership includes singers from many religious backgrounds), and the Northern Lights Baha'i Choir. I put together a program of short inspirational readings collected from the world's various religions and songs also from many traditions. The result was 80 choral singers together with a congregation of around 125 people from the greater community praying and singing together for peace.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC: Well I have not been holding a children's choir practice since September, mostly because there didn't seem to be much interest in one. Last year we had four or five kids who were wonderful singers and who came out pretty regularly, but we saved up all our steam this fall for the Christmas pageant which was a really fun event and which included acting and dancing as well as singing. I would like to see a children's choir next year - so I'm putting out the word now! A good age to sing in a children's choir is anywhere between the ages of 6 and 11, and I also welcome children who play instruments - no level is too beginner as long as someone wants to play along! I would love to include the youth ages 12-15 in a morning worship group as well. Church is one of the traditional arenas where children can express their faith and gain confidence through music so I would like to encourage people to ask me about involving their children musically in worship. I don't know who plays what instrument, or who likes to sing, or even which children come to Sunday school regularly, so if I don't manage to contact you or your child personally, please come and find me after a Sunday service and let me know that you're there!

INSTRUMENTALISTS:

I would like to mention Maya Zhang and Lisa Yap in my report - they both play the piano so beautifully and both of them offer to play occasionally in a Sunday morning service. I love it when they play, and I know you all love it when they play. It adds such a beautiful dimension to the service when people other than myself play music - or if we play together. I want to openly encourage more of you to follow Maya's and Lisa's example to offer up your musical talents to the morning service. Once again I should say that I don't know who plays what instrument unless you tell me - I'm listening! God loves music, especially when offered as a prayer.

TECHNICAL TEAM:

I can't talk about music at this church without mentioning and thanking the techies who run the sound system and all the equipment. Charlie Bois, Phil Newton, and Pat Heslop who volunteer for probably the most stressful job on Sunday morning! Thanks guys!

PROJECT 21 REPORT 2005

History

Project 21 had its start in January of 2002, with a 2-year-long discernment process involving 30 members of our congregation in a cross-section of ages. The group studied, researched, and prayed about various forms of alternative worship services, as the Council at the time had showed interest in offering more than one worship experience – perhaps holding a service for youth in the evenings. The research conducted included visiting several other churches' alternate worship services, the presbytery's "AWE" service for young adults, watching a video of Bill Easum, congregational consultant talking about worship, attending a seminar (open to the whole congregation) by the Rev. David Anderson on "indigenous worship", and exploration of our current demographic as well as the community surrounding us. Each committee member also read various books, articles, or internet research. Several types of worship were discussed as possibilities. The group decided that we would try a hi-tek, multimedia service with particular appeal to young adults age 18-29, and this was presented to [the "old"] Council in late 2003 and approved.

Steve Brady, who ran the very successful \$75,000 capital campaign, came up with the name "Project 21" as it refers to both the target age group, and the 21st century. The capital campaign ran throughout 2004. About \$55,000 was raised, and the other \$20,000 was taken from surplus funds and the New Ministry Initiative fund.

A Minister of Technology (Alec Holowka) was hired by a search/interview team of John Yap, Pat Heslop and Phil Newton. Our music minister, Amy Stephen, was hired for double time to implement the difficult task of researching and/or creating a unique kind of music: a sound that would appeal to young adults, with a theology that is consistent with the United Church of Canada – distinctly Christian, yet open-minded, inclusive, and with an emphasis on social justice, peace, and caring for the earth. A technical team was formed in August of 2004 headed by Phil Newton to acquire all the audio/visual equipment. This team is still operating, and the work is near completion only now. Project 21 purchases were *not only* for the evening service. We also purchased the following which is not related to the evening service:

- A grand piano
- Choir microphones
- Taping equipment for worship services
- 5 new computers for the staff/offices
- Networked laser printer
- Shelving for kitchen equipment, tableclothes
- A portable sound system for the Activity Room, upstairs lounge for seniors' teas, or to take to retreats, Dream Auction, etc.
- A/V equipment for children's and educational ministry

A steering committee (Diane Newton, Will Dennill, Erica Heslop, Kelsey Hanna, Alex Bois, Alvin Bonifacio, Ruth Tunstall, Doug Sherrett, Esther Trasolini, Ivor Barnbrook) was formed who brainstormed the various aspects of young adult ministry. Erica Heslop, a long-time member, masterminded and saw through to completion the set up of our Fair Trade coffee house.

The logo, designed by Alex Bois, is a west-coast, youth-oriented symbol of the Holy Spirit. "Gettin' Air" is a snowboarding term that refers to lifting off over a jump into the air: soaring to the heavens, feeling the rush of wind, experiencing the thrill of new life. The logo, including the

decision to include it on the outside sign and the letterhead was approved by the Council under the “old” governance model in January of 2004.

Project 21 launched on February 6th, 2005 with a beautiful multi-media service on the theme of “Following Jesus” (the lectionary reading for that day). This service was attended by 95 people in a mix of ages. Every person under the age of 30 was surveyed and the overall response to the content was overwhelmingly positive. Only one negative response was given, which was that the service was “too much forcing Jesus on you” and the music was “too evangelical”, and that the person’s teenager felt that “religion was being shoved down their throat – the service should be more geared toward humanitarian virtues or recent headlines in the paper.” This person has never returned to Project 21.

The worship planning team meets every week on Thursdays for two hours. The team is Anna, Kerry, Amy, Alec Holowka, Meaghan Grant, Alex Bois, Alvin Bonifacio and Murray Speer. The Bible reading for the week is presented, and everyone reflects on it from a young adult’s point of view. Planning is done a month ahead. The team then comes up with creative ideas for how to plan the service. Rev. Anna writes the liturgies and drama scripts, and occasionally uses pre-written scripts.

The band, now known as “Justus” rehearses for two hours every Sunday afternoon. It consists of Meaghan Grant (vocals/flute), Alex Bois (vocals/flute/saxophone), Alvin Bonifacio (vocals/trumpet/drums), Gracelle Bonifacio (vocals/percussion), first Matthew Jacobs (bass) and then later Jared Merrill (vocals/bass), Anna Christie (guitar/percussion). Katie Yeates joined us part way through the year on vocals/flute, and Petra Warland filled in on vocals in the summer and then stayed because she had so much fun with the young people! Judith and Eva Stredulinsky have occasionally joined us on vocals or keyboard/violin. Sometimes Alec Holowka fills in for Amy on piano, but mostly we are pleased to welcome Julian Pattison from Highlands United in North Vancouver whenever Amy is away. The band is open to anyone who would like to sing or play an instrument. Amy is always on the lookout for new members – she has sent invitations to many other musical people both within and outside the congregation on several occasions.

Alec Holowka does a great job of creating technologically the atmosphere or the point we’re trying to get across. Alec is also a talented musician and likes to take part in the drama. He has filmed and edited three feature-films over the past year including Computer-Generated work which is fantastic. Everyone enjoyed the films and each one had a theological meaning.

Our drama team has increased from 4 to over 14 in the last year. We are especially thrilled to have Zachary Bowe join the team on a regular basis. Zachary is only 15 years old, but has a bright future in acting. Katie Yeates is also an excellent addition to the regular team. The other team members are:

Alex Bois, Alvin Bonifacio, Meaghan Grant, Gracelle Bonifacio, Jacob Bardell, Keith Mewis, Jared Merrill, Judith Stredulinsky, Eva Stredulinsky, Murray Speer, Lauren Stutt, Alec Holowka, Daisy Yuen. For special services such as the play “The Unicorn” we added another 8 actors including Lisa and Michael Yap, Kara Martens, Lauren Martens, Claire Martin, Charlie Bois, Emma Hammond, Megan Macdonald and Rev. Anna. We also were pleased to have the entire chancel choir join us for a really funny musical written by Amy and Alec.

Attendance/Support

Project 21 has made a good start in its first year. Approximately 125 people like to attend Project 21, although they do not attend every week. Our normal attendance is about 35, rising up to 50 at times, and down to 20-25 at times. Our “highs” have been over 100 and our “lows” (in July!) from 11-20. **Attendance is carefully counted each week – see the statistical sheet in this report.** Attendance includes not only young adults and youth but also families and some very dedicated seniors and middle-aged people as well. We have been pleased to welcome several newcomers to our church through Project 21, and some of them are quite regular attendees now.

In 2006 the Project 21 community is moving into a second phase of the project: planning a **mission/outreach project** together to help young people bond more with one another, as well as put their faith into practice. We think it will also help us welcome more young people who don't necessarily want to act in dramas or be in a band!

Thanks to all of the congregation who supported us through this first year. Special thanks to Ruth Tunstall for being a “hostess” every single week in the coffee house – and helping to clean up, lock up, and count the coffee money. Also thanks to the long list of baristas, table servers, ushers, counters, and those who set up tables weekly.

Wider Church Support

The most disappointing thing about our first year of Project 21 is the lack of support from other United Churches. Several youth attend from South Arm United, which would be the exception. However, it was anticipated that each week there would be an *equal number of worshippers* from other churches, even if that's just “checking us out”. Kerry has sent constant invitations to other youth leaders. Kelsey Hanna, who is heavily involved in the Presbytery's young adult ministry, has also been a great “promoter” of Project 21. However we must face the reality that this “project” is all ours.

Future of Project 21

Project 21 is more than a program within our church – it is the planting of a new church community for young people. The quality of the music, technology, and worship creation is unparalleled in our city and in our United Church. The appeal of Project 21 is that it is a faith community for young people that has a “United Church theology – not fundamentalism, but serious commitment to the gospel as it is alive and at work in the world: in social justice, world peace, caring for the earth, inclusivity of all people, openness to ideas/discussion, interfaith dialogue. There is nothing like Project 21, anywhere.

It seems to follow that this worshipping community should grow, although we must face the reality that it will grow proportionally from where it is now (66 people under 30, 1/3 who attend any given week OR 32 youth/young adults, 1/3 of whom attend any given week.) A normal pattern of growth for a United Church that is stable or flourishing would be doubling in 10 years. Occasionally it has been known for United Churches, under specific circumstances, to double in 5 years.

That's if all we do is continue with what we have. However, the second phase of Project 21, the outreach project, could well increase that rate of growth as more young people are included. *It is important to remember that the target age of 15-25 is the most difficult age group to reach with the Gospel.* We may therefore experience less numerical growth. On a positive note, it is a well-

known fact that most United Church attempts at a *Sunday evening* service fail within one year. “Fail” usually means less than 10 people attending including worship leaders.

The other reality we have discovered is that Project 21 is an enjoyable and helpful **alternative worship service** for members of all ages in the congregation. Approximately 100 people “use” Project 21 to supplement their worship experience in the morning – either when they can’t make it because of travel, sports, etc. or because they desire to worship twice. An increasing number of families attend Project 21 as children and parents alike enjoy the worship experience. On the same trajectory of growth, this number would also double in the next 5-10 years.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Project 21 be continued for the year 2006, and that the Steering Committee bring to the 2007 AGM criteria for evaluation of the “success” of Project 21.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Christie
Amy Stephen
Alec Holowka
Kerry Child
Meaghan Grant
Alex Bois
Alvin Bonifacio

RRSP REPORT FOR 2005

for Gilmore Park United Church

Review of 2005

RIFs paid	\$2,139.93	
Fees Paid	\$5,735.20	
Fees collected		\$5,831.32
RRSP withdrawals	\$75,363.49	
RRSP deposits		\$57,010.30
Rate	6.3%	

Year End Market Value Total \$895,406.79
(December 31, 2005)

The RRSP trustees for 2005 were Rob Ogden and Gail Nichols

Presbytery Report 2006

Gilmore Park is one of 20 churches in Vancouver South Presbytery.

Four people from our congregation represent our church at presbytery meetings:

Ministry representatives Rev. Anna Christie and Kerry Child

Lay representatives Alex Bois and Betty Coles.

Following a recommendation from a task force on presbytery structure, Vancouver South Presbytery has made some changes in the way we conduct business. Last June, we adopted two recommendations:

#1 The mission of Vancouver South Presbytery is to model good leadership, provide effective governance, and give support and care to congregations and Paid Accountable Ministry Personnel.

#2. We meet as a full court once in the fall, winter and spring.

We entrust to the Executive all matters requiring decisions by the Court.

We invite our Divisions and Committees to use the time freed up by fewer full Court meetings to continue training and equipping the Saints to do the work of the wider church according to their giftedness

We commit to our Court meetings as times of fellowship, worship, accountability, learning and discussion, all founded in respect for one another's journey in faith.

Members of the presbytery all receive the minutes of the executive meetings in a timely manner. This is a trial year to see if this new format will work.

My own involvement within presbytery has been with the Pastoral Relations and Congregational Nurture division. We meet once a month to discuss the issues (happy and troubling) of the various churches. We work with churches that request presbytery presence.

Last March, I completed a term with Vancouver Japanese United (English Speaking) as a member of their Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC).

In June, I completed almost four years of interaction with Marpole United Church – the first two years as a member of the interim ministry committee, then as a member of the JNAC, as a member of the Joint Search Committee, and finally as one of two “accompaniers” walking with the congregation and the new minister, attending Marpole Council meetings, meeting regularly with the minister and occasionally attending worship services at Marpole.

In July, I was one of two appointees to the JNAC at St. Stephen's United Church in Vancouver. This extra involvement in our wider church has been fun and interesting. I have met so many wonderful people. Each church in our presbytery has its own unique personality, its own joys and concerns.

Respectfully submitted
Betty Coles