

## **DISCERNING THE CALL OF GOD TO YOU MINISTRY, MISSION OR OUTREACH IDEAS**

*"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*<sup>1</sup> *Pet 2: 9*

*"Ministry should be done anywhere, any time, by anybody"...* *Bill Easum*

### **Preamble**

All ministry begins from and is sustained by Jesus Christ. The work, worship, witness and fellowship of the church gathers, equips and sends out all people to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world. Ordained Ministers are called to *equip* the laity for the most important work of all in Christ's name – ministry to the world. All members of the church are called to follow Jesus – by sharing the Gospel (making disciples of others) and building the kingdom through works of social justice and charity. May God bless you as you discern Christ's call for your own ministry through this project.

### **Your Name & Short Title of the Project:**

"Eating With": A Community Meal  
Meaghan Grant, chairperson + young adults from the Project 21 congregation

### **Date (or duration), Time, Location of your project.**

Every Thursday evening: 5:30 pm January-November.  
Here at the church  
Ongoing  
Hopefully beginning July, 2006.

### **My idea is: (give a brief, one-paragraph description)**

A new ministry initiative of the Project 21/youth and young adult congregation, we are hoping to start a community meal on Thursday evenings, here at Gilmore Park. It is our intention that this ministry would be planned and organized by youth and young adults. Our idea is to "eat with" people rather than just serve them food. It is about building community with those who are economically-challenged, and learning about life from them.

### **Theological Reflection: (What does this idea have to do with your faith, or your calling to be a disciple of Jesus? What is God calling you/us to do in the world that leads you to have this idea?)**

"I was hungry and you fed me....whenever you did this for the least of these members of my family, you did it for me." (Jesus in Matthew 21)

"The Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them'" (Luke 14)

"As he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came *and were sitting with him and his disciples*. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn

what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice". For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." (Matthew 9: 10-13)

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to love and care for one another, and share in community. At our recent Congregational Discernment Day, it was determined that one of our top callings as a congregation is to care for others. This community meal would not only be a great way for us to care for others, but would also provide us with an opportunity to enrich our faith. Just as Jesus ate with the sinners and tax collectors, our vision is not for "us" to serve "them", but rather for us to eat with them and share in community together. We are called to live out our faith through action, rather than by simply proclaiming to be Christians.

- "the gifts of God for the people of God"
- The role of the faithful Christian is to make God's love known.
- "The evidence of true faith is God's love shed abroad" (John Wesley)

**In your opinion, how does this idea fit in with the core values/mission of this congregation and of the United Church of Canada? Please include in your answer *your understanding* of our mission and core values.**

In our Global Ministry Policy (100 – Mission), it states:

- People will experience the transforming love of God
- We will commit to a life of discipleship
- A life of discipleship includes *service to others* (1e)
- 1-e-i: "committed to serving others (the *hungry*, sick, homeless, victimized, marginalized)
- 2-c: "people will experience tangible loving care, acceptance and help with living"

**Is anyone else in Richmond doing something similar to this? If so, who? What research have you done to find out the answer to this question?**

See attached research

**What will "success" look like to you? What people or how many will be affected by this?**

Success will basically be that hungry people will be fed, and community will be formed. People in the community who attend the meal will also be affected positively through their experience.

In order to be successful at *this*, there will need to be ownership by a large percentage of the congregation. We will also look to the community for support. The entire congregation will be affected in some way by this ministry, in particular those people directly involved in planning, organizing and attending the meal.

**How many people are needed to implement this idea? Name the gifts/skills/knowledge that is needed from each. Have you found these people, or do you need help in identifying them?**

People	Gifts/skills needed
Coordinator/chairperson	Organizing, overseeing. I am volunteering for this at this time (Meaghan Grant)
Cook/meal planner/shopping We are thinking of talking to Gilmore Gardens about having some groceries delivered with theirs. But there will need to be additional food shopping done weekly.	This would be a paid position, as it is at St. Alban's. The person should be a gifted cook and meal planner and be able to give direction to others.
Greeters – 2/week	Hospitality! Should be outgoing, helpful people
Eaters! – 10/week	Just come and eat with people, listen to their stories, talk, get to know them, learn about life from them.
Prep – 5/week + paid cook	Food preparation from 2-5 pm. Preps could then become “diners”. These people will be the trickiest to get, as you cannot work or go to school to be a prepper.
Set tables, serve, clean up – Minimum 6, maximum 15/week....hopefully youth. We can get these people from our own youth/young adults, or community youth (high schools) as well as other churches. We plan to go out to high schools and to other churches and talk to them and get volunteers for this.	Put on tablecloths, get plates and cutlery out, help serve the meal, clean tables, do dishes. 4 pm – 8 pm.
“Security” – 2 people	We are thinking of asking the renewed Men's Breakfast Group to arrange this.

## **What will be required of the Ministry Personnel and/or support staff of Gilmore Park?**

Kerry has stated she is too busy to become involved in anything more, so will not be able to coordinate volunteers for this.

Rev. Anna will be there for support and help weekly, especially greeting. She will not take an organizational role.

Anne Marie – may be needed to phone volunteers. At this time I (Meaghan) am willing to get names, etc. and set up a volunteer roster, then Anne Marie can phone people and remind, etc.

Hans – gets paid hourly – we will need him to set up tables and chairs and tear down weekly. If we have volunteers for this, great – he won't be needed. But he will be our default!

## **How much money will it take to implement your idea? (A brief, simple “budget”)**

See attached budget.

## **How will/might this money be raised?**

There are several ways to raise this money, or a combination:

1. A “Miracle Sunday” pledge drive in the congregation – we pledge the money ourselves
2. Designate some of our own Dream Auction money to it (Sally says we should raise more this year than before, or we could allocate a percentage to the meal)
3. Designate funds from Gilmore Gardens to it
4. Hold Project 21 once per month, rather than once per week and re-direct the funds to the community meal.
5. Use the new ministry initiatives fund (currently designated for capital or seed money only) to operate the meal for the first year.

## **How much of your own money are you willing to contribute to this project?**

The organizing committee is able to make a monthly donation of \$10 to \$20 per person.

## **What other resources are necessary to carry out this idea? (Advertising, marketing, publicity, other human resources, special conditions, etc.)**

We hope to network and/or form partnerships with various organizations and individuals in the community (i.e.: RCMP, Richmond Food Bank, SPARC, etc) The organizers and volunteers of St. Alban's Community Meal will also be a valuable resource to us. We will advertise the meal on our church sign, perhaps in the local papers, and we may wish to create pamphlets or posters to display in various locations throughout the community.

**Have you prayed about this idea, asking God to bless it and prepare the hearts and minds of those involved?**

- Yes**  
We have!
- No**

**How long have you been praying?**

Informally, since January. We have not had a formal prayer circle thus far.

**DRAFT BUDGET**  
CAPITAL

Shelving/storage improvements	\$1000
Pots, pans, bowls	\$ 700
Additional plates and cutlery	\$ 300
Additional chairs	\$1500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3500 (from New Ministry Initiative funds)</b>

OPERATING  
10 months/year

Item	Cost	St. Alban's Budget	Notes
Food	\$10,000	\$8000	St. A's gets some food donated monthly...we may not.
Cook	\$4,800	\$4800	
Supplies	\$1,400	\$1400	
Rent	-0-	\$8656	St. A's designates money toward their own congregation's budget as "rent" for their church – we would not.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$16,200</u></b>	\$22,856	<b>Our 150 givers would need to donate \$108/year or \$9/month each</b>

**Other questions we've considered:**

**Q: What about putting out a basket for donations?**

**A:** This is not respectful in a community meal. It makes people who can't afford to donate feel bad by "passing it by". If people want to make a donation, they can slip an envelope under the office door. Those "eating with" will be encouraged to do so.

**Q: Can't we use plates from the thrift shop, etc?**

**A:** Our vision is to have a community meal that is hospitable and respectful. These people deserve our best dishes and tablecloths. We hope to put flowers on the table as well. Our chair of the Stewards Group, Virginia Lesiuk said it best: "a plate can get broken just as easily at a \$100,000 wedding".

**Q: Will we still support St. Alban's meal through our Dream Auction?**

**A:** This is up to the Dream Team/Ministry Group each year – but we have no plans to stop supporting St. Alban's either with money or the volunteers who currently go there.

**Q: Will this be exactly the same as the St. Alban's meal?**

**A:** No. We have got ideas and support from them to frame the overall vision, but this will not just be a clone of St. Alban's. We have a slightly different vision.

**Q: What about the Scouts who use the AR on Thursdays?**

**A:** We have talked to the Scouts, and they were very supportive. There are only 6 Beavers currently "swimming up" to Cubs, and the leader we spoke to said they can easily join another pack. (An alternative would be for them to use the Learning Lounge/Music Room for a small group) The Scout leader also said that the older boys might be very interested in volunteering as part of their Scouting.

**Q: Why stop in December/January?**

**A:** There is a huge need for a meal in July and August, as everyone else doesn't serve then. The need to take a break seems important, however. Since food banks, etc. are full in December/January and Christmas bureaus are busy, we thought of not operating in December and January, but going through the summer. We have several university students and high school students who have time in the summer to volunteer.

**Other Thoughts**

- We will set up a table for children's activities (crayons, etc.)
- We may look to enhancing this ministry with games night, movie night, or some other music or worship ministry

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Rev. Anna Christie

*I was pleased to do this community research for Meaghan, who doesn't like approaching people she doesn't know!*

### **Corporal Kate Anderson, RCMP Community Police**

Kate attended our Dream Auction and is a big supporter of the St. Alban's meal. The Project 21 group's original interest was in feeding the homeless in Richmond.

She said the homeless are often paranoid, suspicious and mentally ill. They are transient and generally will not accept help. Some groups are violent. It was Kate who suggested us doing another community meal, as there is only the one in Richmond and a lunch by the Salvation Army which serves a different sort of a crowd. She says that the main function of a community meal is to serve those who cannot afford *social activities* and thus face isolation and loneliness. So this is not a "soup line" for the completely hungry (as in the downtown eastside) but rather a way for the working poor, retired poor and those on social assistance to meet with other people and get out of their house.

I said to her that I thought we were in the wrong location to do a community meal and she said "absolutely not". "There are homeless people sleeping in the ball diamonds in Steveston and around the dikes. Also on Railway in the underbrush." "People from all over Richmond will take the bus, ride their bikes or walk for miles to come to a community meal."

Kate gave me the names of several other people to contact.

### **Margaret Hewitt – Richmond Food Bank**

- "what a terrific idea"
- "The community meal at St. Alban's is wonderful. To have another one in Richmond would be fabulous"
- The need is legitimate for isolation more than absolute poverty
- Margaret gave me the names of some others to call for information and ideas.

### **James Musgrave, Chair of Food Security Task Force, Richmond**

- totally in favour of us doing another meal: "there's a real need for this"
- James was also interested in community kitchens
- James has put us on an email list for the Food Security Task Force
- Directed me to internet information

### **Michael Goldberg, Manager of Social Planning and Research Council of BC ("SPARC")**

Michael was an interesting, pleasant man that I had a great conversation with more about social justice than charitable works. He basically said at the beginning that doing a meal is a necessary Band-Aid approach, and we don't have enough Band-Aids these days. But his real interest is in social justice.

He was instrumental in the "Richmond Poverty Report Card" done in 2000 which showed that the greatest need of the poor in Richmond, after justice, is recreational activities and the need to form community with others. He stressed than anything "social" we could do would be great – such as arts & crafts, a coffee house, whatever. The poor in Richmond are isolated and cannot afford any sort of community programs, as they all have user-fees.

He asked about Project 21 (when we started talking about social justice) and I said we get about 30 people/week and we sing and do liturgies about economic justice. He said, "that's a lot!" which I thought was funny and interesting...

He was also very impressed with our social justice table (letter-writing) and our fair housing involvement.

### **Kim Tang, Salvation Army**

*Here is Kim's email answering my question about us doing the meal Thursday nights:*

Hi Anna, Thanks for your enquiry. We serve a light meal with beverages and dessert to between 40 to 60 people during our community lunch. The main menu varies from week-to-week...which could be one of the following: spaghetti, chili, burger, hot dog, chicken...with salad, buns or rice. It is good to know that you are interested to start another meal program in Richmond. Since it is a dinner, I don't think it will affect our program in terms of timing or attendance. If Thursday night works for you, go ahead. We will gladly help you promote and make known your services to the crowd that attends our lunch.

God bless and best wishes to your new program.

**Rev. Margaret Cornish, Rector, St. Alban's**

- "the more hot meals the better"
- "you'll get the same people – they go on the bus everywhere"
- "you won't find one person at St. Alban's who feels threatened by you doing this"
- "we'd be happy to meet with you. We might like to discuss "handing it over" and us not doing it anymore...our people are tired.

Margaret gave me the name of Tia Moras who is the coordinator. We have met briefly with her at St. Alban's, and will sit down soon for a longer meeting (we're setting that up now.)

**Attending St. Alban's Meal**

On April 18<sup>th</sup> Petra Warland and I attended the meal and on April 25<sup>th</sup> Meaghan Grant, Alvin Bonifacio, Kim Sorensen, Thomas Forbes and Ivor Barnbrook also attended, for the express purpose of speaking with other *participants*. We met up with Peter Carson, Sandy Jolly and Edith Bitcon (from our congregation) who were serving/helping in the kitchen the first week and spoke to them as well. We will report orally at the congregational meeting about our learnings those nights, but basically the idea of us doing another meal was met with great enthusiasm by the participants, as they often travel out of Richmond other nights to get their dinner.