



# CROSSINGS

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## HIGH RIVER UNITED CHURCH

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**Welcome** to our December 2007 *Crossings* Newsletter. We would like you to know what's happening and how things are going. Inside, you will find articles from the Building Team, a report from the Facility Stewardship Team and our Finance and Stewardship Committee. There's a piece about Housewarming, an update from the Golf Tournament and a note from our youth group leaders. But first, here's a word from our Ministry Team.

**Dear Sisters and Brothers:**

*We are a people on "The Way". Having read through the whole book of Acts this Fall, it has become even more apparent that we hold a lot of things in common with the early followers of Jesus. We are living in a time when nourishing our spiritual lives is even more important than ever before.*

*Recent Environics research for our region, suggests that many people in our area experience a sense of feeling "lost". As Pastors, we hear the feeling of being "lost" in many conversations and we notice its energy on our streets as people strive to find meaning and purpose for their lives in a consumer-driven economy. At times it feels like an aimless and ungrounded energy that's hard to figure out. The ministry of Jesus offers an antidote to "lost". We call it "found" or in other words, "a sense of belonging".*

*Jesus talks about the lost coin that is found, and the lost sheep that is found. All through his ministry, Jesus talks about how God looks for the lost, finds them and jumps up and down with joy, when the lost is found. Just like our son Noah did when his Nintendo DS game was found after being lost for several weeks.*

*Our congregation is about "belonging". We are intentional about creating a place of home—a spiritual landmark—where those who are lost can receive hospitality, discernment, and direction. These*

*are gifts of God's spirit for our time. Our building project is an extension of God's vision for ministry in our midst...a meeting place where God finds us and touches our hearts with healing and joy. May this Season of Advent and Christmas be a time when we are mindful that God notices when we are missing and comes looking for us. How beautiful is the One who comes searching for us. One born among us called to place us in relationship with God again and again.*

*May we all carry with us the hope, peace, love and joy of being "found" in Christ Jesus.*

Rev. David and Rev. Susan

**A House-Warming Story**

With the growing anticipation of the opening of our new church building, some members of the congregation have been getting into the old community spirit of a house warming gift. As a result, a number of special donations have recently been given to the building account as a "house warming gifts", for which we are truly grateful.

**A little story from the Building Team**

While shopping for light fixtures we came across some we especially liked that would go well with the ones we had chosen for the sanctuary. The wall sconces and exterior fixtures have bands of metal trim with facing horizontal arcs. We all recognized the ancient symbol of the fish which early Christians made in the sand to determine if it was safe to speak openly about their faith in Jesus. The symbol seems so appropriate for our congregation who have been on "The Way" (the early Christian term for followers of Jesus) and we pray that as we transition into our new space we will be identified as a people who are "on the way".

Jo Parsons,  
Chairperson, Project Building Team

## *High River United Church in Transformation*

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, a group of 10 gathered to review, examine and contemplate the “stewardship” portion of the building project. Out of our candid conversation, questioning and looking to the future, there came to me a huge sense of the blessings that surrounds us. I was reminded of a lovely song we use to sing ‘*Count your blessings, name the one by one...*’ and during these past 15 months of transition amazing things have taken place through the energy and commitment of all involved. Rev. Susan, Rev. David and Melanie have maintained their professional strengths in the midst of turmoil, with grace and humour! We have been generously supported by many organizations and individuals within the community. The construction site has been a place of fellowship as well as hard, hard work.

I wish to share with you the “facts of the matter” as we worked through the financial position and offer a comparison to the financial position that was presented and approved on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006 at a Special Congregational Meeting.

### **June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006**

Donations received or pledged:	\$853,200
Manse and property sale proceeds:	97,500
Special Gifts Fund	180,000
Presbytery funding available	5,160
Congregational Development Fund Loan (UCC)	500,000
Debenture Funding	<u>325,000</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,960,860</b>

### **November 2007**

#### *Money Received to Date*

Pledge receivables to date:	\$566,604 (better than 65% thus far)
Special Gifts	20,000
Presbytery funding	5,160
Debenture Funding	325,000
Non-pledged contributions	130,561
Memorial Fund contributions	2,730
Community Enhancement Grant (AB Gov.)	125,000
Interest Income	14,378
Golf Tournament Profits	23,240
Garage Sale & Miscellaneous	3,290
GST Rebates	<u>4,270</u>
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>\$1,220,233</b>

#### *Money Yet to Come*

Special Gifts	\$160,000 (available when needed)
Manse and property sale proceeds	97,500 (currently invested until required)
Congregational Development Fund Loan (UCC)	500,000 (approved – available when required)
Outstanding pledges due within next 12 - 18 months	<u>286,428*</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,264,161</b>

*\*We are grateful to all of you for submitting your pledges on or ahead of time to allow us the cash flow needed to keep the project moving.*

**Building Project Costs** have been running under budget in some areas and over budget in other areas. The Building Team meets weekly to ensure that costs are thoroughly reviewed and the best approach is being taken (what a gift of time and energy from this team). **Currently** they anticipate the project will be just over budget but as you can appreciate this is an ever-changing target thus difficult to put a figure on.

***What does this mean to us, members of High River United Church?*** Firstly it is wonderful how the pledges have come in. An even greater story is the amount of ‘non-pledged’ funds to date.

The terms of the Congregational Development Fund Loan are such that repayment begins one month after we have moved into the premises, likely April or May. This loan is to be paid over 15 years but has a most attractive clause that reimburses the interest (4%) should it be paid before that time. These monthly payments will be approximately \$3,800.00. Yes, a big sum to add to our operating budget. Yes, it will be necessary to continue with fundraising initiatives to diminish this loan/mortgage. In fact, recently some members of the congregation have been thinking of a ***‘housewarming gift’*** in anticipation of the opening of our renewed facility.

There is excitement as we anticipate our new home; what will it be like when we “knock” on the door and cross the threshold for the first time!! May the life we create within and outside the walls of our new home continue with the enthusiasm and spirit that we have witnessed during this period of transition. This is OUR Church – a place of hope, home and help.

***“Miracles take place in the cherishing of ordinary acts.” Blessings,***

Bonnie Hewson,  
Facility Stewardship Chairperson

## **15 Months of Blessings!**

When I reflect upon the last 15 months of life within the congregation of HRUC, I am in awe of the many, many wonderful things that have taken place:

- a sing-along Messiah that drew hundreds more people than we could have anticipated
- volunteers who have worked tenaciously in the demolition and now resurrection of our new church home
- a wonderful study group focusing on “Living the Questions” – held in various homes
- choir practices at the Medicine Manor and the warm greeting we receive each week from residents there
- a reduction of our debt as well as continually reaching our monthly finance goals
- services at The Wales Theatre and how magically that space is transformed every Sunday
- meeting and welcoming newcomers regularly as High River grows
- the second annual Golf Tournament that saw twice as many register and attend a wonderful dinner and auction
- sharing in conversation over coffee and watching young ones enjoy the Parent Link Centre – their worship home
- a Fall Fair that truly surpassed any others, a fantastic community event
- a delightful evening of entertainment and fellowship with Dr. Phil, Linnea Good and cast
- Christmas and Easter Services in the Memorial Centre
- ladies making bags to support Grannies in Africa
- prayer shawls being created with love and shared with those in need within our own and broader community – a very powerful gift
- and to top it off we work, watch, make cookies, coffee, a casserole and marvel as our new church home takes shape!!

And, Rev. Susan, Rev. David, and Melanie who graciously maintain their professional strengths in the midst of turmoil. --Bonnie Hewson

## **Building Team Report**

There is a new jewel in downtown High River and yet, it looks somewhat familiar. The tower, which anchored the 1950’s building, has reappeared in new trappings and the community has

been very complimentary. The main entry to the church is through the base of the tower and will be finished upon arrival of a custom-made arched window to crown the entrance doors.

Many individuals have taken on projects within the new church and one fine example is the louvers in the tower. Jake Klassen, of our congregation, is a retired tinsmith and accepted the challenge to make the six louvers for the tower. His former employer in Calgary provided shop space after their regular hours and provided materials at cost. When Jake had carefully crafted the louvers, they were sandblasted and then subjected to a process known as powder coating. This provides a permanent color finish that should not deteriorate.

Progress was slowed in the summer due to the difficulty in finding workers to employ. Since then we have had a most interesting “family” on site. Three Francophone men from the Gateneau region of Quebec joined us and two continue to help out. Two brothers from Nova Scotia came on board for a few weeks and then moved on to Edmonton.

We were told that we would wait nine months for a stucco crew. “Ned” then came on site and asked if he could give us a quote. His quote was good so he brought his crew, Turkish gentlemen of Muslim faith, who did a superior job and were a pleasure to have “on board”. Ron Powers, our project manager, plus his son Gord and friend Matt Long have been the nucleus of the work crew from the beginning.

The crews have enjoyed the cookies, muffins and other treats at coffee breaks and the wonderful Saturday lunches. Thank you all who have contributed.

Work within the structure is moving right along. Most of the interior partitions are framed. Wiring is underway for electricity, telephone, data, audio, video, security, fire protection and heating. The hope is to have wiring in place for all potential needs before closing in the walls although some of the wiring will not be used immediately. Plumbers, electricians and heating people are on site. Next comes insulation and dry walling

Volunteers are insulating, pulling wires, moving materials and dealing with the ever present need to

clean up the site. Visitors are welcome. Keep in mind the uneven and sometimes cluttered walking surfaces and please leave lots of room around active work areas.

## ***Crossings Golf Tournament Recap***

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golf Tournament was held at Cottonwood Golf & Country Club on Thursday August 30. We were able to augment the Building Fund by just \$84 short of \$13,000. Our day at ‘The Wood’ netted us \$12,916.

I would like to thank all the participants, volunteers, and banquet attendees who joined us at Cottonwood for the day. Also, I would like to thank all who donated to the silent auction-which contributes so to our financial end. A big thank you to Bruce Masterman for sharing the day with us, and capturing some ‘Kodak’ moments, as well as MCing the banquet.

We had some of our trade people and Building Crew join us, and we had a great showing from Red Deer Lake United Church with three teams. We had a younger generation of some long standing members of our church family. And they all seemed to enjoy themselves.

The consensus of the day seemed to show that we had another success. To take a quote from the well known MasterCard commercial:

Number of Corporate Platinum, and Silver sponsorships – **Eight**

Number of Personal sponsorships – **Nineteen** (up from 11)

Number of Golfers – **ninety three** (up from 48)

Number of Banquet attendees other than the golfers – **Fifty Six**

Interest in our revitalized facility created by this tournament – **Priceless**

On our day at Cottonwood, church met corporate – and they liked each other. We had six generous platinum sponsors, and they in turn, will encourage others. Three people came up to me and said that we may have to put a cap on the tournament at 144. Judging by the response this year, I do not doubt that we will make that our goal.

I was thrilled to see such a variety of persons join us in this fundraising endeavor. The day gave people from our congregation a chance to show others a good time. Rev. David commented on the sense of energy that was prevalent at 'The Wood', and I, too, felt that we had a great group.

That sense of energy has been with the building team and volunteers since the beginning of our journey to a revitalized facility. And all this is happening when we are in transition, without a permanent home. Just think what we can do when we are in our new church building. We are not only going to have a revitalized facility, but also a revitalized congregation.

We have already done some brain-storming, going over what worked, and what will work better. Last year we set the ground floor, this year the walls went up, and next year, we will work on the roof... and hopefully meet our goal of a full roster of players and sponsors.

This past tournament has brought attention to our 'work in progress'. I am sure that many more people will drive by and take note of our volunteers' efforts in the constructing of our church building. Next summer, we will proudly display our new facility. We are good people doing great things.

God Bless us all.

Bev Gordon,  
on behalf of the *Crossings* Golf Tournament  
Committee

### **We would also like you know, "Where We're At Regarding our Local Mission Budget" ...**

We are thankful for your prayerful financial gifts to local ministry and mission. Your gifts clearly reflect a vision and investment in ministry at home and around the world. Stewardship and Finance wishes to share the good news of our current financial position.

As of the **end of October**, your generous gifts of approximately \$139,000 towards local ministry were **short approximately \$10,000 of our giving goals.**

Furthermore, your faithful gifts to **Mission and Service Fund** were within \$2400 of our goal. With your prayerful generosity, we can achieve our goal for the year. **Please help us realize our dream to come into 2008 free of any operating deficit.**

Your additional gifts are also helping to eliminate our line of credit this year and establish a healthy pattern to pay our mortgage in the coming years. Over 50 households are participating, resulting in over \$19,300 towards our line of credit with an additional \$1500 projected by year-end, leaving our current line of credit of just over \$42,000. **It is truly amazing what can be accomplished when we work together.**

We are also thrilled to report that the evening with "Dr. Phil" and the HRUC Fall Fair realized approximately \$11,000. The spirit of generosity truly surrounds the life of High River United Church!

Thank you for your continuous spirit of generosity and commitment that truly makes *High River United Church a place of help, home and hope.*

Trisha and Darren Metcalfe,  
Stewardship & Finance

### **Youth Group Builds Benches**

Two weeks ago, the High River United Church Youth Group met in the Church Hall to build furniture for their new youth room. They are making storage benches to be placed under the Youth Room windows and a foot stool, too! Once they are built, they will be adding cushioning and fabric. Ron Powers our project manager was kind enough to donate the use of his tools. Michelle provided hot chocolate, Doug brought his technical expertise and the youth created a hands on beautiful project that will serve them well. Congratulations youth group on a great, creative (and cold) day!

Doug Elliott and Michelle Parker  
Youth Group Leaders