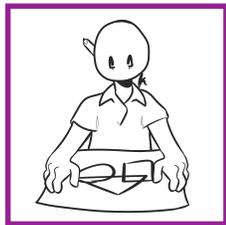




**WHO ARE OUR  
INGLEWOOD  
NEIGHBOURS?**  
HENRY BOSCH



**MINISTRY  
COORDINATOR  
POSITION**  
JIM JOOSSE



**LEADERSHIP  
TRANSITION  
PLANNING**  
JANET PAQUETTE



**CHILDREN'S  
MESSAGES  
USING CREATION**  
KRIS OOMS

# BETWEEN THE PEWS

## Learning together

By Pastor John Ooms



I share Council's desire for us to keep growing together in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have a history of working with different formats within the realm of adult education to address this goal. It is Council's task to nurture adult faith formation.

In October 2017, Council adopted a recommendation to sponsor an Adult Education Program consisting of two educational streams. One stream would be "topical" with a focus on current affairs and life issues. The other stream would be "historical/doctrinal" with a focus on the Reformed church and its teachings. The topical stream explores how we live as disciples. The historical/doctrinal stream investigates who we are as disciples.

Council commissioned an online survey at the end of January. Twenty-eight people responded

over nine days. The survey listed a sample of topics that Council heard people speak of as being of interest. Here's the list:

- Creation care
- What does it mean to be "Reformed"
- A survey of Reformed Confessions
- Worship in the church
- Christians and fertility issues
- Evangelism and defending our faith
- Bible studies

Two-thirds of the respondents selected "Bible studies" and one-half selected "Evangelism and Defending our faith." Close to half also chose "What it means to be Reformed" and "Creation Care." One person wrote "it would be a good idea to start a biweekly or monthly adult



Bible study comprised of adult and senior members. . . . The biggest focus of a Bible study is to study the Word, pray with one another, and strengthen each other in our walk of life.” Someone else expressed a wish for something for parents. “We have a lot of young families and little time to get away from the kids and focus on the word of God.... The respite from the kids is crucial. Right now I go to another church for this as we don’t have anything.” Someone else wrote, “...it would be fantastic for adult education to focus on practical ways that people can apply their faith. For example, how to focus creation care on specific strategies, or how to walk alongside someone who is grieving or going through a hard time.”

Council’s goal is to have four to six adult education events per year. One “event” could be a four to six week study of a Bible book, or of a Reformed Confession, or of a social issue. One “event” could be a one-day seminar on Mental Health First Aid, or on the challenges of being a refugee newcomer to Canada. One “event” could be a series of two or three presentations and discussions about social issues that intersect with our faith.

The formats will display variety. Some events might happen in homes as people gather for four weeks to study and discuss together. Some people may want to use the format of a local coffee shop or a community hall. Other events might happen at the church in one of our rooms. If we bring in a speaker, the event might happen in our Fellowship Hall.

What we need to help us along is for someone to take on the role of Adult Education Coordinator. Our search is still ongoing. Such a person will be responsible for planning the topics, logistical planning, and securing resources (books, speakers, videos, etc.). Our Intergenerational Ministry Advisory Committee (IMAC) and I will work closely with the Coordinator.

I believe this Council initiative will have positive effects on the faith formation of the adults of our congregation. I trust that as we learn together and sharpen each other’s discipleship, the fruit of the Spirit will grow within us and affect how we relate to the world around us.

## Who are our neighbours?

By Henry Bosch

This question emerged as a result of a council retreat in September of 2017 that prompted a close look at our long-term needs in the areas of planning, education, staffing, and community engagement.

The term “community engagement” means two slightly different but related things. In the first, “community” refers to the ICRC membership. The other refers to the wider Inglewood community in which we find ourselves. This is a brief look at the latter.

While there are always challenges facing a neighbourhood, there are also “assets” or God-given gifts by which the community is blessed. Rick Abma, a CRC Neighbourhood Pastor, says, “let’s see what God is already doing in the neighbourhood—perhaps we should just learn from our neighbours before we breathe



**Inglewood has many vibrant businesses, homes, ministries, and more**



*Photos by Henry Bosch*

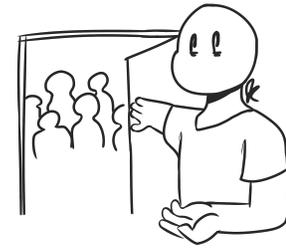
1. Inglewood School
2. A street in Inglewood
3. Local Businesses
4. Inglewood Community League (Site of the Neighbourhood Table)
5. Native Healing Centre
6. Charles Camsell Hospital

any life into their lives.” I believe this is part of the rationale for our inquiries.

In Scripture, to the question “Who is my neighbour,” Jesus responded to the lawyer of Luke 10 with the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus says “loving God and loving neighbour” is the greatest commandment, or the commandment on which “hangs” the entirety of the law. Like the hinge on which a door hangs, the door to the Kingdom hangs on actively loving God and our neighbour, and especially for ICRC the 5,922 men, women and children of Inglewood.

So, it is good to discover and know who our neighbours are in Inglewood. They are the people, agencies, ministries, schools, businesses, other churches and religious venues, community groups, and politicians who live and work and influence the daily

thrum of life in this neighbourhood. We do know some already and we interact, support, challenge, and bless



each other in varying ways. The Edmonton Native Healing Centre has a great influence for good and is supported by ICRC. The Neighbourhood Table serves meals on a regular basis with participation from our members. We have quarterly interactions with the Westmount Council of Churches. These are good ways to connect and to know who our neighbours are.

Our Inglewood community is the 1.65 km sq. area bounded by St. Albert Trail, 122 Street, 118 Avenue, and 111 Avenue. It was first used by Métis and First Nations people for their campsites when they came to do business in Edmonton.

Annexed by Edmonton in 1908, the majority of the homes were built beginning in the early 40’s; most were completed in the late 60’s. The community league established in 1950 and has been active ever since. There are indications that this is a community in transition, with new homes appearing on every street. At present at least 66 percent of the residents rent their homes, with the rest owner-occupied. Other statistics from the 2016 Edmonton Census reveal the majority of our neighbours are between the ages of 25 and 60 years, a third have never married, a third are employed 30 hours or more, there is economic diversity in employment, and there are more than 15 languages spoken in the homes.

There are thought to be four life cycles of a community: birth or establishment,

growth and maturity, decline, and renewal. It is possible that Inglewood is seeing renewal, but renewal can never happen without the efforts of residents and others to re-imagine what a neighbourhood can be, instead of what it has become. Though most of us are not residents of Inglewood, ICRC could be an effective partner in helping the community flourish, and through it show that indeed we are

disciples on the move. "Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up." –Romans 15:2

## Inglewood CRC's Ministry Coordinator Position

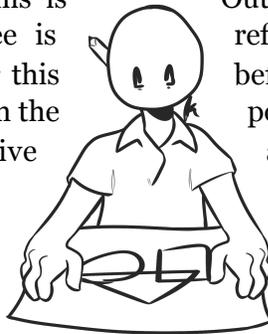
By Jim Joose, Chair of Council



At our recent Annual General Meeting our Congregation approved the appointment of a full-time program coordinator for a one year term. As this is

being written, a search committee is being struck to seek candidates for this position. This article seeks to explain the position as well as the reflective process that underlies it.

The idea of a program coordinator position grew out of a larger discussion about the present and future staffing needs of Inglewood Christian Reformed Church. The full measure of our staff complement consists of a Senior Pastor, a Worship Director, an Outreach Director, a Youth and Intergenerational Ministries Director (DOYIM), and an Administrative Assistant. Presently we have vacancies in the Outreach Directorship and the DOYIM positions, though some of the DOYIM responsibilities are capably filled by our interim Youth Program Director.



Faced with the prospect of filling the two vacancies in Outreach and Intergenerational Ministries, Council was led to pause a bit to consider our overall staffing needs both now and into the future. It did so in part because we were advised by an Outreach Task Force to take some time to reflect on the outreach mission of ICRC before we filled the vacant Outreach position. Then, when the DOYIM left, he and the Intergenerational Ministries Advisory Council (IMAC), gave us similar advice: to use the DOYIM vacancy as an opportunity to reflect on the larger missiology of ICRC before we made a hiring decision.

In taking this advice to heart, Council conducted two strategic planning conferences over the past year during which we were led to four significant initiatives, one of which is the hiring of a Program Coordinator. We thought that a Program Coordinator could serve us well in two major respects: one of these aspects being more short term and pragmatic and the second being more fundamental and missionary in nature.

During its deliberations Council became aware that the larger and longer-term questions around the staffing model for ICRC would take more work and reflection. Therefore, it appointed a Leadership Task Force to spend the next year examining these larger questions.

However, in the meantime there is the immediate need to keep our existing programs going and resourced, in particular those programs that had been historically served by the Outreach Director and the DOYIM positions. Council thought that an appropriate interim solution would be the appointment of a Program Coordinator to carry on the existing outreach and youth programs. This is the first and more immediate reason for the one year appointment.

However, during the course of Council's strategic reflections, another insight emerged about the way that we as a congregation or body prosecute the mission of the Church. This insight arose out of an observation that many of the initiatives that have become a part of our church and community life have found their inception in the passions of the lay membership—from out of the pews, so to speak. Just as the senior and worship staff capably preach discipleship and lead disciples in worship, the laity in turn yearns to practice its discipleship in many ways and according to the many gifts that exist within the congregation.

Past examples of these lay initiatives are the La Avispa partnership program, the Refugee Sponsorship program, and the Neighbourhood Table program. Each of these important undertakings derived their impetus not from the Council room, but rather from the pews. Furthermore,

Council is aware there are other yearnings or appetites for mission that are extant, but have not yet found implementation, in the areas of creation care, group Bible study, and community engagement.

The insight that the Church's mission is best accomplished by the harnessing of the gifts that reside in the congregation towards the practice of both individual and corporate discipleship is not new or novel. However, this idea served as Council's inspiration for its recommendation of the new position of Program Coordinator.

What will the office of program coordination mean in practice? We don't know entirely or clearly. However we do believe that it is directionally and missionally the right choice for us as a church at this time in our history and in our present context. We tried to capture some of this missional paradigm in the Program Coordinator job description that has been distributed and posted over the last number of months.

We know that some of the work of our Program Coordinator will be to listen to the passion and yearnings of the lay membership; to identify the gifts and attributes that reside here in ICRC; and to find places, programs, and the means by which those gifts can be put to the service of God and his creation. Another part of the job will be to provide the facilitation and to advocate for the resources these programs need to flourish.

The ICRC Program Coordinator position is an ambitious calling. But really it means only to advance the ICRC official Vision that says that we are:

*“Growing together as Disciples of Jesus Christ.”*



## Task force plans for a leadership transition

By Janet Paquette



Like most of us who have been around for 25 years or more, the face of Inglewood Christian Reformed Church has changed since the doors first opened for worship and fellowship in 1992. We've aged gracefully, improving our looks through several renovations. As we've grown into our role as a reliable neighbour in this part of Edmonton, our commitment to be faithful, to be a community of believers, has taken on different shapes and sizes. We've adapted to changes, even embraced new expressions in worship and leadership styles.

What has remained consistent since 1994 is steady shepherding from our senior pastor, John Ooms. Now Council is asking us to prepare for a transition to new leadership when Pastor John retires from active ministry in about four years. That may seem a long way down the road, but it offers Council valuable time to examine Inglewood's mission and staffing needs in the interim.

That process of looking ahead began in April 2017 with an all-day council retreat and continued in September with a second half-day retreat. Led by chair Jim Joosse, council members spent many hours in discussion, in breakout groups as well as a whole, sharing thoughts on what should be ICRC's priorities. Coming to a consensus on the missional calling was deemed an important first step to deciding how best to implement those ministries. What aspects of church work need to be led by a full-time staff position? Which ones should be

taken care of by a part-timer? In what areas can we expect volunteers to carry the full responsibility?

The discussions led to agreement on four areas of priority: planning, education, staffing and community engagement. Council approved its Strategic Planning Initiative in November and began implementing action plans for each of the

four priority areas. Among the general themes raised by council members during the retreats were the responsibility of leadership to anticipate change and prepare for it; tension between immediate needs and long-term objectives; and the questions of if our resources match our vision and if there is need for more examination of our identity.

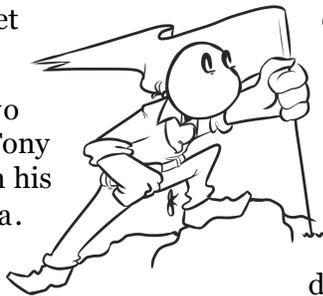


Early this year, council voted to establish the Leadership Planning Task Force, a six-member group that will work throughout 2018 to develop a new staffing model. The group was given the mandate to assess the long-term leadership needs and come up with a human resources plan that will meet the demands of ICRC's missional calling for the next five years. It is intended to cover the full ministry staffing picture.

The members of the task force were selected to ensure input from Council and a cross-section of the congregation. Council looked for representatives from the following groups: seniors (55-plus), young adults (18-plus), parents of young children and outreach volunteers. Appointees are: Albert Den Otter (elders), Spencer Nydam (deacons), Kris Ooms (parents), Tony Sneep (outreach), Zoe

Rozema (young adults) and Janet Paquette (seniors).

The task force has held two meetings as of this writing, with Tony Sneeep participating via email from his sunny getaway in California. Despite representing different sectors of the church membership, we're already encouraged to discover we're on the same page in our support for key identifiers of a worship community. In other areas, where priorities differ, our discussions have been lively and illuminating. When it comes to staffing, we are considering a wide range of



options, looking at what other CRCs are doing with creative job descriptions and fixed-term contracts.

Our first report will be delivered to Council in May, with the final summation and recommendations due in December. As the task force moves ahead on uncharted territory, we covet your prayers and your support. If that support is expressed in the way of an idea or suggestion, do put your thoughts in writing and email the task force chair, Albert Den Otter, at [albertd@shaw.ca](mailto:albertd@shaw.ca).

## A word about the 2017 and 2018 children's messages

By Kris Ooms



Since September, the children's messages I have presented have been trying to reframe how we understand our relationship to very simple parts of God's

creation so that we can better understand how we relate to creation. Much in the same way as Jesus told parables anchored in people's everyday experiences of creation, so too we can learn from the world around us. I hope that in using our imaginations, we will see creation and our place in it a little differently. And perhaps we will catch a glimpse of what it means to be a child of God, responsible for helping to usher in the New Creation.

**Message 1: The Word is at the centre:** We spent time identifying the central place

of the pulpit in the church and we discussed how the pulpit represented the Word, the Bible, which is at the centre of all that happens in the church. The Children then carried a large Bible and placed it on the pulpit to remind us of this.

**Message 2: We need imagination to understand:** We discussed how critical imagination is to understanding what God wants of us. We talked about prayer and how we needed to imagine holding Christ's hand as we pray, a symbol of praying "in Jesus' name."



**Message 3: Message in the stars:** We turned to creation and saw what might have drawn the wise men to Bethlehem: the coming together of the King planet, moving around the King star in the King constellation. This celestial event was followed quickly by the Mother planet and the Messenger

planet. We imagined how such an event might have drawn the attention of the wise men, sending them on their journey to find the newborn King.

**Message 4: Air and the new creation:**

With the coming of Christ, the Kingdom begins and the new Creation starts to unfold. Based on the verse “All creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God” (Romans 8:19), we talked about the air that waited so long, and then filled Jesus’ lungs as he took his first breath. We talked about how it is highly probable that every breath we take has at least one molecule that Jesus breathed out when he died on the cross. The key idea was that if air is waiting for the children of God, then every breath the children take ushers more air in to the new creation.



**Message 5: Message in the sand:** We talked about the wonders of sand and what it can be used for. Then we retold the story of the woman caught in adultery from the sand’s perspective. The highlight was in thinking how the sand felt, after “waiting in eager expectation” for so long, to be used to preach Jesus’ gospel of forgiveness. The children then drew hearts in the sand, the children of God welcoming sand into the new creation.

**Message 6: The woollen cloths:** The Palm Sunday message focused on the wool of the cloaks that were laid on the ground in front of Jesus. It once again tied into “creation waits in eager expectation” and how that wool found its glorious purpose the day of the triumphant entry. We then discussed how we can help wool and cloth be part of the new creation when we, the children of God, use it to clothe ourselves and especially those who are in need.

**Message 7: Creation watches Good Friday:** From the very beginning Creation has been waiting for humanity to take its place. In the first garden humanity failed,

denying God and abandoning its place at the head of creation. So creation groaned, but still waited in eager expectation. With the birth and life of Christ things seemed to change. There was hope, and all creation rejoiced as the Word made flesh walked upon the earth. Then came Good Friday, and creation watched humanity kill the Word that had brought everything into existence. We felt the grief that may have nearly destroyed creation.

**Message 8: Welcome to the new creation.**

It was a morning full of surprises, for the rocks, the earth, the fabric, and the sun. All creation felt the footsteps of the Risen Lord. Jesus lives and the story is starting anew. Creation watched as humanity was given the choice one more time. Again in a garden, again a choice to believe and follow, or remain blind to the gift of God. She kneels in the sand at the Creator’s feet. She cannot see him.

“Mary.”

She sees him, and she chooses with a single word. “Teacher.” And creation rejoices as she becomes a reborn child of God. First Mary, then the twelve, and in time billions of humans take their place as children of God. And as the air flows in and out of their lungs and the sun shines light down on them, as their feet step upon the earth and they are clothed in the wool and fabric of creation, all creation moves inexorably towards the ultimate fulfillment, the promised Covenant. Now starts the new creation, now starts the Kingdom of God.

*Special thanks to Jarin Ten Hove for his four artistic illustrations for this newsletter. Jarin is a grade 11 student in the Catechism Small Group Ministry.*

*This newsletter was created and edited by Jenna Hoff.*