

Peninsula Core Group:

You will be reading this from the bulletin of one of the United Churches on the Peninsula this morning. This is an update from the Peninsula Core Group (PCG), made up of representatives from First, Crescent and Sunnyside churches. The purpose of this non-decision making body is as announced before: *“To engage our congregations in practical conversations about our collective future in ways that are Godly, build relationships, and engage and energize everyone.”*

Those practical conversations have started:

Worship: worship leaders from the three churches met in November, with such enthusiasm that we saw a number of shared worship experiences in Advent/Christmas. Watch for more to come!

- a good number of women from the other churches participated in the Women’s Advent Vespers at Crescent United.
- the choirs from First and Crescent traded places on the 2nd Sunday of Advent
- the choir from First joined with Sunnyside’s choir on the 3rd Sunday of Advent
- about 170 of us gathered for a shared worship service on December 28, to everyone’s delight.

Outreach: As well as continuing the hosting of community dinners and volunteering at the Extreme Weather Shelter, a small group met to begin planning to share in sponsoring a Syrian refugee family. Work is going on to gather pledges of financial support, recruit 5 or 6 people for a Settlement Team and a wider group of volunteers for particular projects that will help the family once they arrive. Speak to Peter Jones, Kathy Booth or Marj Holmgren for more information.

Learning: Out of the outreach conversation came another one, that resulted in the three churches sponsoring an evening with some of our Muslim neighbours on January 21. This group interested in learning together is planning for a series of evenings in April/May called Community Builders. Watch for more detail on this.

On January 7, the Core Group meeting engaged us in a lively and inspiring discussion around the “The Double Loop Theory of Change” (see Moderator Gary Patterson’s blog). The theory helps people to organize their thinking around the reality that all organizations have a life cycle of “beginning,” “growth,” and “decline.” And, at the same time an organization can have another life cycle emerge into something new - one cycle gives hospice to the old, and the other cycle supports emergence to the new.

In the spirit of the purpose of the PCG, we began to plan to have a special event on **Saturday March 28, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Kwomais Park** where people from all three peninsula United Churches can gather for a next step together in these “practical conversations” that are calling to us.