
NEW AND RENEWED MINISTRY GRANT APPLICATION

Purpose and Goal

Around the Well, name based on the story in John 4:1-43, is a ministry that aims to grow into a new worshipping community (NWC) on the west side of Vancouver. The project is an experiment in discerning God's call to engage the community outside the walls of existing Presbyterian churches in the area. At present our focus is on the residential population on UBC campus, especially non Christians.

Vision and Mission

Our Vision

Obedying Jesus' command to Love our neighbour in three distinct social spaces:

- 1) Intimate Circle - a space where we, committed Christians, gather with Jesus hosting at the centre.
- 2) Perforated Circle - where God's presence reveals itself in our hosting space open to neighbours and strangers alike from our local community.
- 3) Half Circle spaces -where we discover Christ's loving presence as we participate in activities hosted by people in the secular community.

Our Mission - To create spaces or join existing spaces that build community through welcoming mutually transforming relationships.

Our core values

- 1) **Confessional in approach** - We like to share our love for Christ and understanding of the Christian faith. The means of sharing is confessional and we leave space for people to share contrary opinions.
- 2) **Biblical** - The Christian bible is our primary reference document for discerning what loving neighbour means.
- 3) **Respectful of religious diversity.** We value hearing about other ways of looking at the world and look to Jesus conversation with the samaritan woman at the well as the basis for our approach. Specifically, we believe God the Father is seeking people to worship him in spirit and in truth (see 4:23) and believe there are many ways that people do this.

- 4) **Experience matters** - We value the stories of our lives and believe they are relevant to the way we live.
- 5) **Belonging is a priority** - we set a priority on belonging over believing. Although we celebrate those who believe in Jesus Christ the priority of this mission is to build relationships with those who do not yet believe.

Please provided a detailed description of the new ministry.

Presently our meetings occur on the third Sunday of the month. We began in on March 17, 2019. The following summarizes most events, milestones, and activities since its inception.

Events

- March- **A Saint Patrick's Day Social** at the local community centre with a special message on the story of Jesus encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, John 4:1-42. Thirty five people attended including about a dozen children.
- May - **Creation and Creator at the Beaty Museum of Biodiversity on UBC campus** A talk about the six billion year history of Earth in light of the story of Genesis. The event was back by popular demand in **June** with VTPC Seeds, a youth group.
- July - **Family picnic at the Maple Grove Community pool.** - the event was rained out but we still enjoyed some fellowship with about eight people.
- Aug - **Beach BBQ at the Spanish Banks West.** 20 adults and 11 children gathered on a warm summer day. The main message delivered was all about finding ways to get to know each other and build community.
- September - **Supported Hawthorn Community Block party.** This was an intentional half circle activity whereby about six people from around the well simply volunteered and help run a BBQ in the community. About one hundred people attended this event.
- October "**Flavours of the World Potluck.**" The theme of the event was - Sharing food to build community. Richard spoke on the innate and uniquely human gift of creating food and drink through special recipes and our desire to share our successful creations. What is the driving force behind our desires to create and share food?
- November - **KAIROS Blanket Exercise** - Janette McIntosh from KAIROS and Melaney Gleeson-Lyall from the Musqueam people led thirty five of us through an hour and a half long history of the Indigenous peoples in Canada. Richard set the stage for the exercise with a reflection on Naboth's Vineyard (1Kings 21). We all shared in some vegetarian chilli and talked about our experiences. It was well received and very powerful!

- **December - Cookies Crafts and Christmas** - We drank apple cider and masala chai; we made popcorn garlands, paper tree decorations, decorated cookies and sang Christmas carols; we also heard some beautiful a-capella vocals and some first hand stories about homelessness and friendship.
- **January - You Belong** - This meeting worked with the story of Abraham and Sara to encourage people to Talk about their own stories of belonging. It was one of the most intimate meetings we had to date. Everyone of the 18 adults present got to share something of their story. One of the Participants, Elsie told us about her dramatic arrival to Canada as a Vietnamese refuge in 1979 (one of the many the boat people).
- **February 16- On developing our relationships** - This month we gathered again at St Andrew's Hall on the Family day weekend. Conversations centred around the five languages of love. One of the unique aspects of this meeting was the arrival of four new people, including some who are developmentally disabled. The highlight of the event was when we got to practice the "gift giving" language of love by handing out roses on UBC campus.
- **March 14 and 15 event was postponed due to COVID 19 - Healing through Art: making art to heal your soul** - This two day collaborative art workshop and exhibition was designed in partnership with Rev YOUNG-Tae Choi and the Poieo Centre of Art Ministry. Day one an art making workshop for adults and children was designed to use art as a medium of expressing the inexpressible wounds we may need to process. The main feature of day two will be a special exhibit featuring Artist and guest speaker Beth Stewart Ph.D. Beth's PhD work was with children, now youth, who were born into the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda. She will be talking about her use of art with the youth as a way of communicating what cannot be expressed through words. We plan to take these event online in May and JUNE of 2020.

Milestones and Important activities

- **Grants received** - IN June 2019 - A \$10,000 nonrenewable grant was received from the New Church development fund, \$5,000 from PIM and \$10,000 a renewable grant from the New and Renewed Ministry Fund. This provided the seed money for Around the well.
- **Monthly Planning group** - This group started in June of 2019. About eight people meet to discuss the plans for upcoming events. They began over a meal in Richards home and evolved into a meeting at the community centre. Our meetings are now online (COVID 19 response).
- **Weekly Discernment Group** meetings started on October 8th. The discernment group began a 20 week process of discerning a missional plan for Around the Well. Over 24 people were invited but the core group remains at five people We meet at a local coffee shop for an hour and a half to pray, share and go through a defined Process of Discernment. So far we have reached Meeting #13 of 20. The process was placed on hold in March of this year because of COVID 19. The vision, mission and

values statements included in this application were developed as a result of this group. We hope to finish with a full mission plan that will be presented to Presbytery.

- **Bank account .October 25th 2019** - Formally opened a bank account, established a finance committee with account signatories, and hired book keeper. This was an important milestone is establishing accountability maintaining fiscal responsibility. The process was anything but straight forward so the Finance committee celebrated when it finally happened.
- **Getting involved within the Community.** On November 7th Richard was elected to the University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA) Board of directors. This is another half circle activity that contributes to the greater community while increasing connections and building relationships. His two year term started on November 19th at the monthly Board meeting. An example of the effect of this activity has been the creation of a weekly bible study for about 20 residents of one of the neighbourhoods. the bible study started after fellow director, Jane Kang learned about Richard's skill set and asked him to lead their group.
- **UNA Community Connections night** February 22nd - Richard led this workshop with a dozen University Neighbourhood Residents on the Art of Neighbouring - Building Community and Positive Relationships with your Neighbours. Interesting discussions resulted as people grappled with the concept and benefits of getting to know your next door neighbour.

At present the new ministry engages with about 80 people at the events, through a Facebook page and through email communication. The impact of this ministry on the greater community is hard to measure but there are several stories I think are worth mentioning:

Deepti and Akshay live next door to me. They are also Hindu. Six months ago I invited them to come to our first event and tried to explain what it was all about. Deepti was worried and sceptical. I can remember her saying, "I've had friends try to get me involved in their religion before and it didn't work out. I may say yes but I may still change my mind." They showed up though, in fact they still do and continue to be a major part of the joy we experience at our monthly events. They even joined our planning group and helped organize our October event. The Lord is good and His light is showing through in our diverse community with people like Deepti and Akshay. Their enthusiasm and helpfulness is contagious and it is transforming all of us as we experience God's love from outside the formal church. Our focus is on building community through welcoming and mutually transforming relationships.

Elsie is the owner of the local coffee shop in the community. She is Vietnamese with a Buddhist background. Our first conversations about around the well were primarily oriented around her business: I wanted to rent the coffee shop for my discernment group meetings. However, the more we got to know each other, the more I realized how loving,

giving and respectful of God she really is. She worships in spirit and in truth but it does not look like a Presbyterian worship service! Elsie also learned about Around the well and our mission of building community. She decided to attend our event in January and ever since has been a very strong supporter. Elsie is a perfect example of how building mutually transforming relationships start with a notion of belonging and feeling welcome. Elsie just would not have even thought about attending a Christian Worship service but she is excited about and look forward to our monthly events.

Describe the ministry's partners/launch team.

This ministry began through the initiative of Richard Watson with the help and encouragement of Cyclical PCC. I am grateful for the support I received from Andrea Perrett, Jen de Combe and The Presbytery of Westminster has been supportive and volunteered to be the primary partner too. However, in the early days it was a launch team of one (two if you count my wife Janet). Things have grown and changed over the year. Richard's monthly reports to Presbytery have created awareness and interest. In addition Richard has shared information about Around the Well to many of the local congregations in the presbytery (through Pulpit Supply). He has recruited leaders from within the local community as well as the local Presbyterian Churches. Presently, the Planning group and Discernment group described above provide a core leadership team of about 8 people, including two ordained ruling elders (One from West Point Grey PC and the other from Vancouver Taiwanese PC). These eight people have been instrumental in the growth of the ministry and once the mission plan is finalized they may become the core support for launching future initiatives. It is also worth stating that the partners and launch team continue to grow. Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church on the West side of Vancouver has become keenly interested in the developments of Around the Well: it is too early to declare but a formal partnership may become the result.

Describe your ministry's plans for growth and sustainability.

Originally, our plan was to begin small from eight to thirty people attending the monthly third space experimental gatherings and 8 to 12 people on the on the monthly discernment team meetings. This goal has been achieved and a third space community is essentially formed. In addition the discernment group has developed a mission and vision statement along with some core values for proceeding. We now need to move into formally developing the mission plan which will include describing the what we hope this mission and vision will look like; who will be involved from a paid position point of view; and what the measurable benchmarks will be going forward. The general framework established last year shows our mid range hopes (stage 2) and long range dreams (stage 3) remain achievable. Plans for weekly close circle worship events his coming year along side the monthly half circle events will be important to the growth and

sustainability of Around the Well. Formalizing partnerships this year will also be important in establishing long term viability and financial stability. This is the work that will have to be done this year. Talks with Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church have begun and this may become a key to support need for continued growth and sustainability of ATW. In the mean time Richard will continue to lead the planning and discernment teams through the process.

Please provide a timeline for growth and benchmarks.

Last year we hoped Stage 2 would begin this summer with the completion of a mission plan. We are not quite there yet and need time for that plan to be finished and congealed before a formal launch from Presbytery or a future partner like Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church can take place. Given present conditions, even with COVID 19, I am confident that the Mission plan will be completed and presented to Presbytery this fall. IN the mean time, as per the original plan operations continue to focus on perforated circle and half circle operations (i.e monthly events) for at least another year. The key measurement rod to sustainability will be continued participation in the monthly events. The addition of a weekly worship, lead by Richard, will also help. Other benchmarks will have to be established with the formalization of the mission plan.

Stage 3 is still in the distance, two to five years from now, when regular worship services become a major activity within the recognized community. At this point, financial self sufficiency will be a celebrated benchmark enabling the new worshipping community to formally charter as a church within the Presbytery of Westminster.

Ultimately the benchmark for success will be general knowledge and awareness of Jesus Christ and his glory as it shines through Around the well activities. It is beginning. People within the broader community learning about who we are, and what we do. Eventually I hope most people will say - the community is better off because of us but we are not there yet.

Please provide a strategy for making this new ministry known in your community.

Around the well continues to become known within the community by word of mouth. This remains the primary strategy and much progress has been made. In addition a Facebook site is in place along with a regular Mailchimp based email communication system. Check us out on Facebook: [@aroundthewell.org](https://www.facebook.com/aroundthewell.org) or Join our email list: aroundthewell.vancouver@gmail.com. Around the well is also on Instagram. This past year we also developed a logo and purchased portable a sandwich board for display at our events.



Will Kozushko our interaction designer continues to help with branding strategy and social media development. We still will need to construct and operate a website but we have been holding off until the mission plan is finalized.

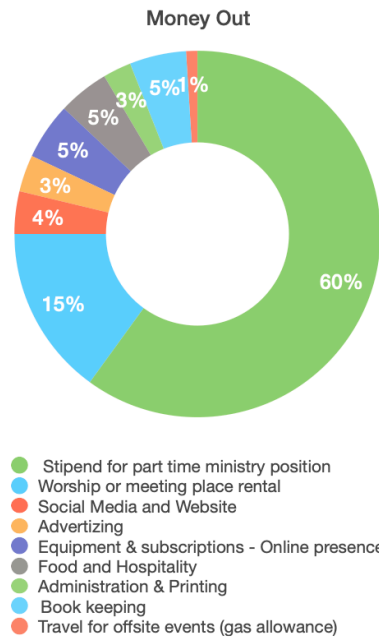
Budget

Around the Well 2020 Budget (June to June)

DESIRED REVENUE	
Presbyterian Innovative Ministries Grant	\$5,000
Canada Ministries Seed Grant - year 2	\$20,000
Fundraising and Donations	\$15,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$40,000

EXPENSES	
Stipend for part time ministry position	\$24,000
Worship or meeting place rental	\$6,000
Social Media and Website	\$1,500
Advertizing	\$1,300
Equipment & subscriptions - Online presence	\$2,000
Food and Hospitality	\$1,800
Administration & Printing	\$1,000
Book keeping	\$2,000
Travel for offsite events (gas allowance)	\$400
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$40,000

MONEY LEFT OVER	
Income minus expenses	\$0



How do you see God at work in this new ministry?

I believe God has been at work in this new ministry from the original prayer lifted up to God asking for help to try something new in January of 2019 through to today. There is no way ATW could have made it this far without God's help right from the beginning but some places stand out. First of all, I was sure that someone should be doing what has been accomplished in this past year but as an educated, trained ordained and experienced pastor in the PCC I was never sure that the person leading things would be me. Once Cyclical Inc. got involved with helping me discern and take steps in faith everything seemed more possible. In addition feedback from people inside and outside the church has helped make it real: this is God at work. Perhaps the most important part of this is how much I have seen God at work through people in the community and the effect of my efforts on their lives. I have a couple stories of transformation below but here are a couple other examples.

1. Each and every event we have hosted, there have been new people who have joined our group. It was important to be welcoming as I carried my faith in Christ up front. I have been constantly surprised at how people have continued to be involved and let me lead with this, many are not Christian and yet God seems to have made room for my testimony in their lives.
2. Getting a finance team together and opening a bank account was a challenge that would not have been overcome without God's guiding hand. The Bank manager needed registered charity status and although I had letters confirming Presbytery had agreed to be the sponsoring organization it was not straight forward to open a bank account in the name of "Around the Well." Success was achieved only after a full five months of repeated attempts. This was God at work helping us become accountable and fiscally responsible to the laws of our society.
3. Getting elected to the neighbourhood board and becoming its chair (UNA). When the idea came up our planning and discernment group, the Cyclical discerners group and several people from within the community thought it was worth a try. I am not a politician and have never run for office so I was not as confident. However every step along the way God has surprised me! Getting elected was a surprise, getting asked to become Chair was a bigger surprise, realizing that I had gifts to offer (my training in Presbyterian polity has benefits to helping people understand governance issues) was amazing. Having a fellow director ask me to lead a bible study for a group of Chinese residents was an outright miracle (there are 26 of them). this is God at work.

Please describe an individual or group of people who have been impacted by the start of this new ministry.

First - I have seen the excitement of the existing church grow with each step of growth in the new ministries, Around the Well is one of several. People are inspired as they see me take steps in faith. I have continued with pulpit supply to almost a dozen churches in our presbytery this past year. Each time I'm first at one of these churches I talk about what is happening with Around the Well. Many people are interested and they ask more questions. The elders from one church gathered round and prayed for me and the developing ministry. I can tell there is an impact happening because, in several instances people continue to ask me about how things are developing. Presbytery itself has been growing and adapting to this type of approach, again I am not the only new ministry, but ATW is one of the new ministries that is helping the body of Presbytery grow and change.

Second - The ATW is having an impact on the immediate community of UBC. Building community is a buzzword that many people aspire to adhere to so when I talk about Around the Well and invite people to join they pay attention. I think they begin by wondering if a Christian organization can really add value to what is already going on but I also think they wonder if it really is something they can support and participate in. Events outside the grounds of a church really make a big difference. People get a chance to see and judge without having to go into a building they are probably suspicious of. I also ask the committee to refer back to the stories of Elsie, Deepti and Akshay in the detailed description of the ministry. They are good examples of how regular people in the community are seeing things differently.

Finally, this ministry has impacted me and the leadership team in many positive ways. I have gotten a chance to see how important getting out into the world (as a church) really is. It's amazing what happens when you take steps in faith. My whole outlook on ministry, preaching the word, loving neighbour as self and the methods of sharing the gospel has also changed. I've learned so much and look forward to continue learning what God does when you take steps in faith.

How is the ministry meeting its proposed timeline and benchmarks for growth?

I think I have talked about this in section one of this form under the question "Please provide a timeline for growth and benchmarks." To reiterate, we have made some significant progress despite the reality that we did not achieve all of our original goals.

The monthly meetings that started have continued and gathered some momentum and regularity. Some good leadership is in place and teams meeting regularly: Planning Committee and Discernment group. We have set up a finance team to monitor and record

progress. Communication and connections with community is occurring, the Mailchimp system has 87 subscribers and most emails get a 60% open rate. In addition Facebook and Instagram are beginning to have an impact on communications and out reach into the community through cyberspace. I've also made progress in building relationships for future partnering opportunities both within and outside of the existing church. For example I meet with some of the local pastors on campus regularly to pray and the three Presbyterian churches on the West side are becoming more aware of what Around the Well is doing and hopes to achieve. Monthly reports to Presbytery have helped build bridges with Presbytery as well.

Some of the areas that continue to require more work and attention include the mission plan, the development of a weekly worship hour and the official status within Presbytery (is this an organized mission or are we still working towards becoming a new congregation). We have not managed to finish a mission plan but we have a very good start and hope to get it finished by this fall.

Please list one specific result (objective) that you are hoping to accomplish in the upcoming year.

The biggest achievement for the coming year, in addition to continuing the monthly events and growing/ maintaining the existing active participants, would be the development of a mission plan. This will give substance to the plans and dreams as well as provide a framework for moving forward. Also it can be shared with the other churches in the area and Presbytery to help communicate and solidify what Around the well is all about.

How will you achieve this result (objective)?

Finish the mission plan. In addition to working with my existing team members, the planning group and the discernment group I hope a partnership with Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church will help move it to completion. A partnership with this existing worshipping community will be instrumental in providing additional resources, a more focused context, stability and continuity. ATW also needs a place for weekly worship to occur.

As a new ministry, what types of challenges are you facing?

- Fundraising is the biggest challenge but it is not the only one.
- Formal status as a congregation or organized mission of the Church.
- keeping going and motivating people to participate.
- growing the leadership team to a place where the ministry could continue without my involvement in almost everything.

Please describe your ministry's plans for continued growth and sustainability.

See above. In summary the most important thing to continue on the path to growth and sustainability will be to keep walking in faith - one step at a time and on a daily basis. This is new territory for me so plans will have to change and adapt. Prayer and the actions that accompany faith that God will answer our prayers are important too.

and the actions that accompany faith that God will answer our prayers are important too. Finally the help and support from the New and Renewed ministry fund will help keep us going for another year and that just might make all the difference!

Rev. Richard Watson,

Director and Pastor of Around the Well