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Kokanee Concerns

We are reminded in the Gospels and in the Baptismal Covenant that we are called to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves. We are reminded also to strive for justice and peace, respecting the dignity of every human being, and strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, respecting, sustaining, and renewing the life of the earth. *Kokanee Concerns* is a weekly publication from the Anglican Parish of Kokanee that identifies items of concern in both the local community and the wider world, for which we can advocate, act upon, pray, and learn on a weekly basis. Consider the local community, the wider world, and your place in both as you reflect upon the topics each week. This week, please consider these thoughts in relation to our responsibilities as peacemakers and as carers of creation and of the community around us. How do we act as agents of Peace? How do we care for Neighbour?

Peace,

David

Concern in our Neighbourhood . . .

This week I have been meeting and connecting with various agencies in the Nelson area, finding more about how the community provides support and care to those who would ask for help. In particular I have come across four different groups that are working in differing ways with differing parts of the community. Have you heard of them?

Nelson Cares

In 1974 a group of dedicated Nelson residents came together with a single vision: create a fairer, safer, and socially just community. They were activists, volunteers, politicians and service providers with a common commitment to a caring, civil community.

More than four decades later the organization they created, now called Nelson CARES Society, continues to work towards that goal. In their words; we have grown into one of Nelson's largest and most diverse non-profit organizations. We act as a catalyst for community and program development, and advocate for people living in poverty.

Nelson CARES supports a wide variety of community programs and services including affordable rental housing; an emergency shelter; residential and employment services for adults with disabilities; legal information and victim Services.

We are funded through government, private foundations, and the generous donations of countless individual Nelson residents.

Today Nelson CARES Society provides hundreds of jobs and generates many millions of dollars in economic activity in the community. But the goal remains the same — work to build a healthy and inclusive community where respect for all individuals is an ordinary, everyday occurrence. <https://nelsoncares.ca/about/>

Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH)

Homelessness affects the whole community. Homelessness doesn't have just one cause, or a simple solution- and is too large for any one organization to address on its own.

In 2001 Nelson CARES Society helped start the Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH) to bring together the various organizations seeking solutions. We believe through communication and collaboration among various government, business and service organizations we can make a difference.

Meeting once a month, NCOH shares information about developing issues in affordable housing and homelessness affecting Nelson. The group shares best

practices, discusses plans and strategies, supports plans and initiatives of its participants and collaborates to sponsor new initiatives – its own or of participating groups. NCOH also researches issues to help all stakeholder agencies make better and more effective decisions.

Working with other agencies, NCOH has successfully supported the creation of several community programs. The Nelson Food Cupboard, Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, Ward Street Place, Our Daily Bread, Adult Support Recovery Beds, Street Outreach, Transitional Support Worker and Nelson’s first Homelessness Point-in-Time Count are all examples of initiatives that stem from the NCOH table. <https://nelsoncares.ca/portfolio-items/committee-on-homelessness/>

This week I will be taking time to consider the mandates and challenges that both the Nelson Committee on Homelessness and Nelson Cares face. In addition, I will be meeting with some of their representatives. In the coming weeks, I will also be meeting with ANKORS and representatives from the Aimee Beaulieu Transition House. Learning about our neighbours that take time with vulnerable populations are important so we can find out how we as a faith community can form our prayer and mobilize into action and advocacy so as to support those who are in need beyond our ken.

Concern in the World . . .

In reading the headlines below, I ask you to consider: ‘What parts of the world are the source of the following comments?’

“Police believe a triple stabbing during a gender studies class at the University earlier this week was “a planned and targeted attack motivated by hate related to gender expression and gender identity.”

“Jewish community asks City Council not to take sides following Pro-Palestine rally - “Right now our community is frightened.”

“There are nearly 2 million Muslims constituting nearly 5% of the country’s total population-. “At the same time, we are witnessing a recent surge of anti-Muslim hate crimes and institutionalized Islamophobia which can undermine social cohesion and potentially have deadly outcomes if left unchecked.”

“Police alerted that there are bullet holes in the doors of two Jewish run schools.”

One thing that these statements have in common is prejudice against minority groups. These statements result in fear and hatred. Polarization and hate seem to be on the rise in many countries, including Canada.

Racism is part of Canada's history, in particular, prejudice against First Nations peoples, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Doukhobor, Jews, Blacks, Germans, Roman Catholic, and others.

Prejudice is a reality in the modern day in so many contexts. Prejudice was also a reality in Palestine 2000 years ago. The Samaritans were shunned, as well as people with skin conditions, the blind, and others were left on the sides of the streets to beg. Galileans lived on a trading route where they were exposed to, contaminated by foreigners. There were no big industries in this rural, poor part of the country. Some of the religious authorities in Jerusalem questioned if the people in Galilee were good enough, clean enough, to enter the temple to pray.

Galilee was where Jesus chose to start his public ministry. He was a rabbi, a Jewish leader, who hung out with a questionable group of friends. And his message was one of love, of tolerance, of peace. It was a message for all sectors of society- the outcasts and the upper class, and Roman soldiers. He taught - you are created in God's image, are loved by God – all of you; all of us. Later, he said to his friends, I give you a new commandment, "love others as I have loved you". Jesus listened to, talked with people who had very different views. He showed love for all. Jesus talked with the Creator – the source of love. Jesus shows us how to live in these troubled, sometimes terrifying times.

Consider your biases today. Are you a part of a movement to address racism, stigma, and prejudice? How can you form your life to reflect love that Jesus proclaims in the Gospels?

(By the way, the statements at the top of this article all refer to events in Canada, within this last year. Some of them refer to events in Nelson and area.

1. CTV News June 23, 2023;
2. Nelson Star Nov 2, 2023;
3. George Brown College (Toronto) Sept 8, 2023;
4. Global News Nov 8, 2023)