



Community of Christ

## Calgary Congregation

### **Parker Johnson Staff Report**

*Church Mission & Young Adult Ministries Specialist*

November 18, 2018 Calgary AGM

- My work supports mission in Calgary.
  - I work hard to build a platform for storytelling that draws the world in to learn more about what is happening here in this congregation. This is achieved through the publication meaningful content via social media, our website, and email. A statistic I am particularly proud of is the sheer number of you who have been featured in The Herald – Community of Christ’s international denominational magazine. We had at least five stories published in The Herald since our 2017 AGM. Your stories can – and should – be shared with a wider audience. Additionally, Amy Cartwright was featured in Pres. Steve Veazey’s ‘President’s Challenge’ video broadcast as she responded in a video of how her hope is rising as a new member of Community of Christ. I love that I have been able to play a small part in helping to share your stories of hope, mission, and peace to the broader church as well as to seekers.
  - I work hard to support our young adults in a variety of ways. First, through ministry of presence. I strive to *show up* for our young adults as often as I can. This includes meeting them where they are: (at local coffee shops, bars, parks, in the mountains, maybe at the mall, or even in their homes) to discuss life, struggles, camp planning, etc.
  - I work hard to be a creator of connection for our young people. This includes planning accessible, relevant events throughout the year in order to ensure strong Community of Christ bonds remain intact. Each year, we have ongoing events that range from informal, impromptu gatherings to more heavily orchestrated events...like the one we had last night at our home. Preston and I invited young adults and their children from across Alberta and Saskatchewan to join us for an American Thanksgiving meal. We had 16 young adults and three children join us around an immaculate table filled with smiles, love, support, and generosity. As we sat down to eat our meal, I posed the question, “What has brought you to this very table tonight?” Some had driven distances as far as Regina, Rocky Mountain House, Edmonton, and Lethbridge...and I wanted to hear from them why this community means so much to them that they’d make such sacrifices to be seated there last night. The responses were heartfelt, authentic, and reflective of Community of Christ enduring



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principles. Loving mentions of congregational life, camps, and other fond memories were shared.

- In addition, I work hard to maintain relationships with our young adults who aren't so close anymore. Thank goodness for Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, but even more...thank goodness for good ole snail mail. I am a major proponent of letter writing. It's a lost art that I believe carries with it a certain weight that a simple email or text message simply cannot convey. I probably write at least 50 letters each year to young adults to provide words of encouragement, love, and ongoing support...sometimes a Timmy's gift card as well.
- I work hard to support Latter-day Seekers in Southern Alberta. Through our intentional events over the last two years with John Hamer and Apostle Robin Linkhart, we've managed to make more than a dozen contacts that continue in various capacities. Some engage with our young adult group on hikes, at game nights, etc. Others have joined the newly founded Restoration Heritage Society Board of Directors made up of members of Community of Christ, post Mormons, and active Mormons. In my everyday life I continue to engage with Latter-day Seekers in more informal settings. I have found that my own sexuality has been a major point of connection for many post Mormons...particularly for those also in the LGBT+ Community. I remain a central point of contact for Latter-day Seekers looking to learn more about our faith community, and I am committed to this form of ministry. I maintain regular contact with Apostle Robin Linkhart as well as Brittany Mangelson who head up the Latter-day Seekers program out of Utah.
- I work hard to support the Facility Planning Team and the Calgary Building Transition project. This is a meaningful project for me, as I feel strongly that the process we have been working through has provided not only much-needed data as we make decisions...but it has also provided our congregation with transparency, trust, and I would argue a much stronger sense of community...uninhibited by the stress of building ownership and maintenance. This has been a special time for us over the last two years.
- I work hard to communicate our congregation's news, announcements, and events. In a recent self-assessment, I realized I was spending a great deal of my time on administrative tasks related to communications. I addressed this by further automating the weekly email digests that go out on Thursday evening. This will also help with succession planning as I work to cross-train others on the Communications Team. Maintaining the website, sending email notices to each of you, or even the development of the new Calgary Congregation



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Directory that has just been completed are what I consider to be integral elements of a congregation's viability. Our website sees high traffic, our emails see high open and click rates...two signs of an engaged congregation working hard to fulfill Christ's mission.

- I work hard to coordinate events. Without a space of our own, planning events can be tricky. Our events with John Hamer and Apostle Robin Linkhart, for example, took months of planning and a great deal of volunteerism from the congregation. Young Adult events and camp planning activities are also areas I am passionate about in my role.
- I work hard to elevate the quality of our technology usage in worship, events, and online. In 2018 we expect a certain level of professionalism when it comes to presentations, sound quality, video quality, and web presence. This year, we purchased live-stream equipment that allows us to broadcast our activities to members, friends, and seekers far and wide. This is a great step towards working with what we have to engage more people in our community and around the world.
- I work hard to put the spotlight on Calgary as often as I can. I collaborated with the World Church Communications Team to publish new resources on social media usage, web presence, and Google Search Engine tools to help congregations be discovered via online searches. Our congregation was prominently featured in several of those resources as a 'best practice.' We are becoming a leader in marketing and communications in Community of Christ.

I'm going to leave you with a two-minute [Communication Team Report](#) that touches a bit on the things I've just mentioned but goes into a bit more detail. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together before the next AGM.