

Making a Difference

Background

This process began with a discussion within Woolastook Presbytery about our vision of mission of the church in preparation for General Council 2009. A chart that summarizes the result of that discussion is included in this package. As you can see from that document, there was a strong desire to serve the world beyond the walls of the church building.

This desire is not unique to the people of the Woolastook, (i.e. the people of the St. John River); it is true for the theological students of the protestant seminary of Matanzas, Cuba, with whom some of us have dialogued during recent years. They say it very expressly: “the role of the church is to serve the community”.

Thinking that the role of presbytery is to serve the congregations, which are serving their communities, we thought that it may be helpful to catalogue those initiatives already going on within Woolastook Presbytery. Our idea was that the quality and quantity of mission initiatives improve best by sharing information. That was our initial purpose.

However, what happened with the assembling of this catalogue was much more:

- many congregations discovered that there was things going on within their own congregation of which they were unaware;
- individuals discovered that there were other individuals that had similar interests; and
- some people had thought that they should think globally and act locally; however, some people were actually able to act globally, having acquired the skills to do so.

How to Use this Catalogue

1) **Acquaint yourself** briefly with the breadth of activity that is going on. We have arranged them into 13 categories.

2) **Be alert** for people in your congregation or in your local community that express an interest in making a difference. If their specific interest is found in the catalogue, please assist them in contacting others that are working in a similar direction. If their interest is not in the catalogue, please inform the Church in Action Committee of Presbytery, in case they know of others with similar interests, and are not mentioned in this edition of the catalogue.

3) Communicate in an inter relational manner rather than a hierarchical structure. One of the reasons that people are unaware of the variety of activities going on within their own congregation and community is that they communicate through a hierarchical structure, in which information gets lost. The other extreme is that everything is reported to everyone, and there is information overload.

In a relational structure, every group is aware of each other group that exists, but not all the details. Looking at the panorama of groups, each group selects the one or two groups that would have experiences with which they would need to become familiar. Then set up an efficient way of liaison: representatives, an occasional meeting in common, etc.

4) Think of other uses for the catalogue or the process, and share them with the Church in Action Committee of Presbytery.

Please help us update and expand this booklet by reporting any activities in your church that reach 'outside the walls'. Just complete the [questionnaire](#) and hand in at the next Presbytery meeting!

(cf. <http://www.woolastook-presbytery.ca/cia.htm>)