

St. Gerard's 40th anniversary

"Springboard handout" for Aug. 14 brainstorming

Background: The "Opening Mass" at the church now known as St. Gerard's, with a congregation of about 130 people who were largely non-Catholic islanders, was on Sept. 5, 1971. The consecration of St. Gerard's Church by Archbishop James Carney was on June 18, 1972.

Brainstorming: The main intent of the St. Gerard's community gathering on August 14, 2011, is to gather ideas, not to evaluate them. This sheet provides some brainstorming that has been done. It is just a springboard of ideas, not decisions, and there is room for many more ideas.

What are we trying to accomplish? Some possible aims:

- Give thanks for the gift of 40 years as a community centred at St. Gerard's Church.
- Gratefully recognize the Bowen Island community support.
- Share the invigorated spirit of St. Gerard's with all who can benefit, including the diocese, the island, and each other.
- Warmly welcome many people to services at St. Gerard's Church
- Promote St. Gerard's (and Bowen) as a destination for instant vacations within Metro.
- Be a church community that enables young people to feel at home
(late addition to the list after discussion of this topic in the Aug. 14 brainstorming)

Those are broad aims, not specific actions. What other broad aims should we consider?

What are the givens or near-givens? Some possibilities:

- The celebration will occur/begin in September 2011.
- Enthusiastic involvement by the whole St. Gerard's community, including a number of reliable leaders, will be of the essence.
- As always, the community will include the core group and diaspora, along with like-minded people throughout the diocese and world who choose to participate virtually or in person.
- The communication plan will include messaging (all coordinated, strategic, and persuasive) via the *Undercurrent*, *The B.C. Catholic*, the St. Gerard's website, and Holy Trinity bulletins.
- The 1971 Opening Mass sign-in sheets will be displayed on an occasion in September.
Leader/team: *Michel Paré*, with Juliette Paré and Jim Wright, in consultation with Fr. Rey.

Any clarifications needed? (Note: Let's look at the ideas on the other side before brainstorming.)

What means will get us to the ends? Some broad-stroke ideas:

- Celebrate for one year (Fr. Rey). (Would take us to end of August or early September 2012.)
- Have different highlights each month or two (Michel). (With this approach, the basic early planning could be filled out with ongoing planning.)
- Relate it to the biblical number 40, which can be interpreted as representing a period of *preparation*, as in the Israelite “40 years” in the desert. (However, rather than demolishing walls to get in, like Joshua at Jericho, we would be lowering any walls that hinder our welcoming in of all who can benefit from sharing in the St. Gerard’s community.) (Jim)
- Be open to all suggested events/features/methods without jumping to rule anything out, while intending to ultimately keep it simple and attainable. (Consensus)

Any clarifications needed before we go on?

Some more particular ideas:

- When the new floor is in, Archbishop Miller might rededicate the renewed church in the spring, with some of the priests we’ve had over the years also participating. (Angela)
- If there’s a rededication, consider Monday, June 18, 2012, the 40th anniversary of the consecration of St. Gerard’s. (Jim)
- Invite the United Church to join in a celebratory lunch. (Angela)
- Welcome people in to St. Gerard’s over a longer period, with deliberate-but-natural ongoing efforts to be the welcoming community that St. Gerard’s essentially is already. (Jim)
- For Mass on the day for celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Opening Mass, select from “all the oldies but goodies that Fr. Beauregard always loved us to sing” — “Morning Has Broken”/“This Day God Gives Me,” “Praise to the Lord the Almighty,” “Holy, Holy, Holy,” “Peace Prayer of St. Francis,” “Faith of our Fathers,” “Immaculate Mary.” (Rosemary Anderson, who often led the singing at that time)

Brainstorming: *What additional ideas are possibilities? All ideas are good ideas.*

Occasion celebrating 40th anniversary of Opening Mass:

Time and group inclination permitting, possibly get into more detailed thinking about a September event (so far envisioned as simple). Michel Paré has been leading an aspect of it related to the sign-in sheets with the signatures of those who attended on September 5, 1971.