



Flatlanders Inn

EVERY VALLEY LIFTED UP,
EVERY MOUNTAIN MADE LOW.

Summer
Newsletter
2016

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Flatlanders Inn is a diverse and intentional community that seeks to cultivate a positive, nurturing, and relational place to live for people who want to get their feet back under them.

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Spring is turning into summer, and we are enjoying getting our garden planted and spending time outside in our greenspace. Some Flatlanders just spent over a month in Nepal with the Vineyard School of Justice. Others have been showing off their writing skills by preparing pieces for this newsletter. We are very excited to share pieces here from Chris and from Gord, who are both long-term residents of Flatlanders. Read and enjoy!

*Tara Glowacki, Flatlanders Administrator/
Landlord*

Flatlanders, from the perspective of a Flatlander *By Chris Carriere*

What is a Flatlander, I wondered as I read the title posted above the entrance of this converted old warehouse situated in the deteriorated urban core of the city. Ribbons of the CPR rail system funnel through a bridge to the south, less than a hundred feet from the building. To the north, blocks and blocks of dereliction and taverns, and smack dab in the middle: this thing. Big brooding old warehouse thing. Flatlanders thing.

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It's connected to a Church. Does that help? Winnipeg Centre Vineyard Church. The main floor of the building is a Church. But above that is this Flatlanders thing. Maybe being a part of the Church is the reason for the Bible verse that appears on the walls inside:

"Every mountain brought low, every valley raised up" (Isaiah 40:4).

Even ground. Nothing to trip over. Nothing that needs grappling hooks to scale. Nothing to rappel down. Vistas so broad you can see your destination before you knew you even had one. That would make anyone traversing this stretch of open wilderness a "Flatlander".

So who, exactly, are the "Flatlanders"?

We're the ones that popped open our tents on this expanse in our wanderings, claiming a small stake here, for awhile anyway. We're individuals and, in some instances, entire families calling this plain our home.

It's a hospitable place; we have many visitors and invite many guests. They are well fed here before they continue on their own journey. Some even return. It's a noisy place. There are children here squealing and stampeding at play down the hallways. It's an unkempt place at times, our biggest concern being the plague of dirty dishes that revisits us often, growing towerlike beside the sink, which no amount of suds seems to render permanently clean and shelved.

It can also be a peaceful place, a place of solitude. Even though there are a lot of us here, there's always a spot to squirrel

yourself away to contemplate, think things over, read, and pray, especially in the middle of the day when the crowd's the thinnest, and especially if you're the one that works nights, like me. There's an activity room on the second floor. You can use the treadmill when the weather's in-climate or work out those biceps and triceps and get totally ripped for summer. Or you can crank up the tunes, belting out a song in a voice that's cracking and

out-of-tune, plodding away at a keyboard as you try to write a piece for the newsletter that's taken waaaay to long to finish, like this one. Or you can go downstairs and help out at the drop-in which happens every Tuesday and Thursday, that some of us volunteer for. Then there's the School of Justice that some of us attend. There used to be a yoga class, too.

So, in the most miniscule of nutshells, that's Flatlanders, and its residents. A group of wanderers, not necessarily lost, occupying two floors of your church, right above your head when you're here to worship on Sunday

mornings. Which, again, some of us attend, but I'm not one them. I work nights, remember? I'm still sleeping. Keep that in mind when you raise your voices in praise. The Lord's not deaf, you know. I mean, geesh, people. ☺

Chris C.

Chris is a long-time resident here in need of good sleep therapist.

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A Bitter Truth

By Gord Holmstrom

A foolish imp manipulates for control
He desperately yearns to be king of the castle
A spiteful witch sits alone in her cavern
Secretly contemplating her vengeful plans
Both release a corrosive venom
Straight from the rotting marrow deep within their bones
But tragically they are unable to see
The deadly effects of their emotional toxin
Or comprehend the reasons why
They spread this bitter poison to begin with
Because their minds have been veiled
To the origins of their own destructive ways

Of course I feel justified in despising them
And obviously I should be enraged
With all the terrible suffering I've had to endure
Yet every time I try to tell someone
just how awful they are
The only suggestion I get back is "Let it go"
And I think in my heart ... here we go again
I've heard this cliché ... this boring old note
A thousand times

And I don't know if I can bring myself to listen
To their galling advice any longer
I mean, all I really wanted in the first place
Was for someone to agree
With how horribly I've been treated
But please don't get me wrong
I know they mean well

And I see the truth and value in their words
But the fact is I am simply not ready to change
Do you realize how difficult it is

To just let these things go
When every fibre in your being
Is screaming for revenge?

Now if I'm ever to become
That kind and forgiving person I envision
I must start by looking
At the attitudes I have towards others
Especially those who hurt me
For instance ... have I ever given a second thought
To the delicate and complex nature of their human condition
Or even once ... considered the idea
That they might actually live with pain and brokenness in their hearts
Worse ... have I ignored the fact that they mirror the Divine
And are more valuable than I can possibly imagine
With an incredible potential for good?

I must confess that I have scarcely made the effort
To understand their plights
Nor rarely extended my hand in compassion
I have simply not embraced that higher calling
To walk in the ways of love
Instead ... I have allowed the scorn in my heart
To rage out of control
And the resentments in my life
To have mastery over everything
Because you see ... my mind has also been veiled
to the origins of my own destructive ways
And perhaps the reason why
I am now so obsessed with these latest villains
Is because I once again need someone to blame
For the pain and brokenness in my heart
Instead of looking at the true source of my anguish:
How I feel about myself



Left: Movie night part 1: The kids movie (also enjoyed by some of us who are not kids)

Connect with Flatlanders

Are you looking to connect with Flatlanders Inn, but don't know how? Are you interested in serving our community, but don't know what we need? Here are some ideas:

- Ask us about coming for supper sometime
- Come and cook us supper sometime!
- Invite people from Flatlanders into your home
- Come and deep clean with us on a Saturday morning (or arrange another time to come help, if you want to help us get really big jobs done)
- Pray for us
- Ask us what it means to be a "Flatlanders Friend"
- Do you have any building maintenance skills? Let us know!
- In the summer, ask us if we need any help with our gardening
- Plan fun events with us! Talk to us if you have ideas for something we could do together

If any of these suggestions make you think "I would like to do that", give our administrator (Tara) a call at 204-338-3528. If you still have no idea how you could connect with us best, but just know that you want to, give us a call anyway. Let's talk and figure something out.

Right: Two of our community members (Erin and Laura) participated in the Vineyard School of Justice this year. With the School of Justice, they spent the month of May visiting our sister churches in Nepal.



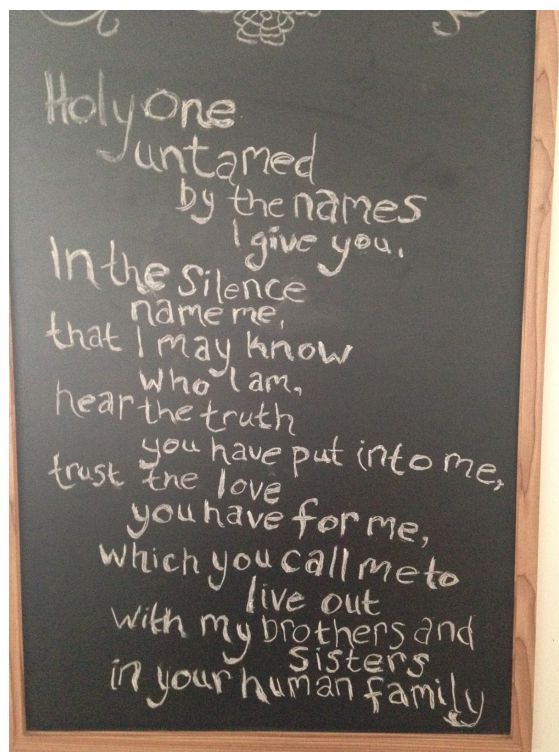
Pray for us:

Pray for the leadership team as they carry the vision of the community.

Pray for those among us who are struggling. Pray for hope, and for strength to keep moving forward.

Pray for grace and love through the frustrations of day-to-day living together. Pray that we would be able to really delight in being with each other. Delighting in each other is so much better than tolerating each other.

Pray for Laura and Erin, who just returned from visiting our sister churches in Nepal. Pray that they would be able to integrate and carry forward the things they learned there.



Above: Flatlanders blackboard prayers

Right: Flatlanders nurture new life by getting our garden started early in the spring.

Below: Coming soon: keep an eye out for our coffee fundraiser, Main Line Coffee



Help us to save paper by signing up for the Flatlanders Inn newsletter online at flatlandersinn.org/newsletters

Interested in learning more about Flatlanders? Check out our website at flatlandersinn.org, or contact our administrator (Tara) at 204-338-3528 or admin@flatlandersinn.org