

Lay ministers retreat

West Kootenay lay ministers call for resources and support

BY MARTHA FISH

Many rural areas of our diocese, especially the Kootenays, would have no regular worship without hard working dedicated lay ministers. This was one of the conclusions agreed upon at a recent day-long discussion session and retreat for lay ministers of the West Kootenay Region.

Lay ministers are a dedicated, committed, caring and spiritually alive group of people, who described the joy they feel in such activities as leading services, preparing homilies, and doing pastoral care.

However, several issues were identified, including insufficient training opportunities, lack of resources and support, particularly in the smaller parishes, and lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities between lay ministers, stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy.

The group identified that if lay ministers are going to be expected to continue the present high levels of service, they will need more training and resources, more opportunities



RETREAT — 16 West Kootenay lay ministers gather at Heart's Rest Retreat Centre in New Denver, BC.

to come together to share and support each other, and better communication between parishes and with the diocese. Without this, participants believe there is a high risk of burnout and loss of valuable and caring people.

A more detailed report was made to Archbishop John Privett to bring these issues to his attention.

16 people attended the retreat from all over the region, representing a wide range of experience and talents. It was held at Heart's Rest Retreat Centre in New Denver, and facilitated by Rev. Dr. Therese Descamps. The morning session involved discussing roles, expectations and concerns of lay ministers in the different parishes. The afternoon session introduced various spiritual practices including a mindfulness walking meditation, Lectio Divina, and Contemplative prayer.

Those who attended agreed that the retreat was a valuable and reinvigorating experience, and are looking forward to the next one. □

HYDRECS grant for food cupboard

photo julia roberts



St. Saviour's, Nelson, Food Cupboard was the recent recipient of a grant for a new Energy Star refrigerator from the BC Hydro Employees' Community Services (HYDRECS) 2011 Southern Interior Relationship Fund. Sandra Hartline, Food Cupboard Committee chair (left) accepts a cheque for \$900 from Beth Woodbridge of BC Hydro.

HYDRECS GRANT — Sandra Hartline, Food Cupboard Committee chair (left) accepts a cheque for \$900 from Beth Woodbridge of BC Hydro. Rear row, left to right: Norma Collier, Food Cupboard coordinator Nora Nitz, Ean Gower, Diane Bystrom. Missing: Denyse Kyte.