

On becoming an activist

May's discussion at Topics on Tap (formerly Theology on Tap)

In February a group of folks gathered at St. Paul's United Church in Bancroft to discuss the possibility of coming together as a community to do something about the Syrian refugee crisis. It was a significant group from across the community, including representatives from five Christian denominations. For the most part it was a positive discussion. What stood out for me were the many concerns that continue to be raised: We have enough people right here at home that need our help! We can't bring them here! There's no work! Affordable housing is hard to find in North Hastings! What about transportation? They will be so isolated; there are no Muslims here!

True! True! True! All of these statements are true!

That first meeting took place on a Tuesday; by Thursday morning I was consumed by a burning desire to do something; say something, to make these things not true. I immediately fired off an email to my friend, Bill, to share my epiphany that something needed to be done. I was a little late to the party, however, and discovered that there were many just like me with a passion for human dignity and well-being; for food safety and a just sharing of resources in North Hastings.

I surrounded myself with ?activists,? I read books about ?activists,? and I tried to find my gifts for ?activism?. Yet I'm still trying to find out what it takes for ordinary people to effect change ? real change ? in a community. As a Christian minister, I realize that Jesus didn't go to the seminary or to the country club, or the halls of power to find agents for justice. He didn't call a meeting, nor did he set up an ad hoc committee with an agenda or business plan. Jesus surrounded himself with working folks who cared!

Calling all activists! Calling all people with passion! Come and share your wisdom and questions at this month's Topics on Tap in the Lobby of the Playhouse at 7 p.m. on May 25. This will wrap up our season until the Fall. Come and join in the conversation!

Submitted by Rev. Lynn Watson