



ST. DAVID'S
UNITED CHURCH

The Shepherd

1525 Taylor Way, West Vancouver, BC V7S 1N5
Phone: 604-922-3961 Fax: 604-922-2680
email: stdavids_unitedchurch@telus.net
www.stdavidsunited.com

September/October 2010



St. David's Youth

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Minister: Dan Chambers
Minister with Children, Youth & Families: Colleen Blair

Minister of Music: Marsha Gould
Administrator: Leanne Gilhuis

Reflections...



18 OF THIS AND 10 OF THAT: INGREDIENTS FOR A HEALTHY LIFE & HEALTHY CHURCH

Few things are universal these days. Everyone has their own experience, their own perspective on truth, their own political inclination. You can't even assume that everyone had a nice, relaxing summer as I know for a fact that several of you worked your tush off in the summer. [spell-check doesn't like the word "tush". Is it OK for a minister to use the word "tush" in a church newsletter? dan@stdavidsunited.com]

But I do know that many of you -- not all but many -- find the fall an exhilarating but also stressful time. Kids are getting back into school and often family calendars get crowded and work mode switches into high gear and suddenly you wonder how you can possibly get all this done and cook dinner too and not scream with frustration or faint from exhaustion or break into sudden road rage.

So here's a list. Just what you need: another to-do list! But consider this more an attitude list with a few suggestions on how to be that can change how you are. Though it's not specifically about God or faith, it seems as prudent as something you'd find in Proverbs and at least as practical as the Ten Commandments. It comes to us from the Canadian Mental Health Association, but in my opinion suggestions for healthy living are not far from holy living. So here they are, the 18 tips for healthy as a way toward holy living:

18 Tips for Dealing With Stress and Tension - Recognize your symptoms of stress

1. **Look at your lifestyle and see what can be changed** -- in your work situation, your family situation, or your schedule
2. **Use relaxation techniques** - yoga, meditation, deep breathing, or massage
3. **Exercise** - Physical activity is one of the most effective stress remedies around!
4. **Time management** - Do essential tasks and prioritize the others. Consider those who may be affected by your decisions, such as family and friends. Use a check list so you will receive satisfaction as you check off each job as it is done
5. **Watch your diet** - Alcohol, caffeine, sugar, fats and tobacco all put a strain on your body's ability to cope with stress. A diet with a balance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and foods high in protein but low in fat will help create optimum health. Contact your local branch of the Heart and Stroke Foundation for further information about healthy eating
6. **Get enough rest and sleep**
7. **Leave some time that's just for you.**
8. **Talk with others** - Talk with friends, professional counselors, support groups or relatives about what is bothering you
9. **Help others** - Volunteer work can be an effective and satisfying stress reducer
10. **Get away for awhile** - Read a book, watch a movie, play a game, listen to music or go on vacation. Leave yourself some time that's just for you
11. **Work off your anger** - Get physically active, dig in the garden, start a project, get your spring cleaning done
12. **Give in occasionally** - Avoid quarrels whenever possible
13. **Tackle one thing at a time** - Don't try to do too much at once.
14. **Don't try to be perfect**
15. **Ease up on criticism of others**
16. **Don't be too competitive**
17. **Make the first move to be friendly**
18. **Have some fun!! Laugh and be with people you enjoy!**

Sounds like the kinds of things a good doctor might say, or a loving grandparent or a wise friend. Go ahead. Clip it out. Pin the list on your bulletin board or add it to the photographs and quotes and children's art on your fridge. Sprinkle a few of them throughout your calendar so that as you turn the page or look at another day, you remember this healthy and holy wisdom through the year.

This is also a time when the church gets a little crazy with programs and events, meetings and conversations. It's good; it's life; it's a sacred energy pulsating through this place. But sometimes it might not be so clear what a healthy church looks like. I like the suggestions found in the following list because it doesn't describe the impossible church of perfection, but a real community that struggles in a healthy way to embody the light of God.



So here they are: 10 tips for healthy as a way toward holy community:

10 Signs of a Healthy Church

10. People are always expressing differing opinions, and they do it freely, right out in the open.
9. The staff is always overworked, rushed and behind.
8. The church's finances are strained to make ends meet, but the church is always giving money away.
7. So many groups meet in the church that there are constant complaints, and it's hard to keep the place clean and neat.
6. Board and committee members occasionally miss meetings and insist on spending time with their families.
5. The choir is filled with amateurs.
4. More and more children make more and more noise.
Parking is hard to find, the utility bills are over budget, too many people have keys to the building and strangers are all over the place
3. Worship is different every Sunday. Too many people come up with last minute announcements.
There's too much different music. Who knows what to expect?
The whole church is full of losers: People who've lost loved ones, people who know they can't make it on their own, people who are different from the majority. But even when they're losing, they're also finding their lives in receiving
1. and giving a lot of love, for Christ's sake!

This year, through worship, outreach, book groups, Men's groups, Advent retreats and general conversations I believe we remind each other of paths that lead to healthy and holy living. Blessed be!

Dan



A Note From Colleen...

Our love for one another is a direct expression of our love for God: "Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen." (John 4:20)

From Marjorie Thompson's Soul Feast

It's wonderful to be back and among you once again and I look forward very much to reconnecting with you over the coming weeks! Parents should be receiving Sunday school and youth group registration details in the mail along with a schedule of youth events throughout the fall. If you are a newcomer, please be in touch by phone or email, colleen@stdavidsunited.com or speak with me on Sunday. The children and youth program throughout the fall will focus on the heart of our faith. The goal will be to help children to articulate the very essence of Christianity and to understand it in the deepest part of their being as a way of living and being in the world....a way of responding to life.



Sunday school registration and the start of classes will be September 12th followed by a BBQ after worship. We look forward to seeing you!

Colleen

p.s. Thank you so much for all of your prayers and support during David's illness. I am delighted to say that he is doing very well. We feel truly blessed to be part of this community!



Schedule for Junior and Senior Youth Groups

- September 17th – Juniors: Welcome back treasure hunt and fall planning
Seniors: Welcome back treasure hunt and fall planning
- October 1 Juniors: games, Halloween lunch planning, making a communion cloth
Seniors: confirmation retreat for some, baking communion bread and games for others.
- October 15th Juniors: TBA!
Seniors: *tentatively* participating in the ***Out of the Cold*** dinner at First United.
- October 22nd Province wide PD Day!
Plans to be announced. Possibilities include: visit to First United, or retreat (sr. Youth only), bowling, visit to a corn maze and/or pumpkin patch.
- October 29th Juniors: Prep for hosting a Halloween lunch/pumpkin carving event on Sunday.
Seniors: Prep for hosting a Halloween lunch/pumpkin carving event on Sunday.



Postcards from Home...



Brooke Atkinson is a member of the Youth Leadership council and went on a trip to Vicente Guerrero Mexico to help build houses for the homeless. She writes about her trip...

"The group I went down with built two houses for two very deserving families. The memories I made down there with the families are memories to last a lifetime filled with hope and a sense of reward. Fellow students from my global initiatives class from Carson Graham Secondary in North Vancouver all shared this amazing experience with me. We were only down there for 10 days and only building for 6 of those days but it is surprising how fast you can build a house with a group who

is so dedicated and hard working. The families houses were built out of cardboard boxes before we build them a fresh new house, the most rewarding part was when we gave them their first key to an actual house. If I could do it again I would and hope to in the future. "

Now, Brooke has been chosen to be on the Canadian Youth Delegation for the United Nations Conference of the Parties 10 Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan this October. She is going with 6 other youth from across Canada, and was chosen because she is on the Youth Leadership Council for Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots. They will be presenting a youth charter on biodiversity at the conference. Brooke will have a copy for St. Davids youth to sign after church. **Brooke is also fundraising for this trip and is very excited, so any donation would be much appreciated. She will be doing a presentation at church on September 26th to elaborate on this amazing opportunity.** We should all Act locally and think globally.



Hospitality Hints

Most every Sunday guests visit St. David's. Some come from afar and are just passing through. Others have recently moved, others have had a new baby, others are yearning for depth and meaning in their life and hope they'll find some of that at church; others have just received a dreadful diagnosis, others might have recently lost a beloved person in their lives. In other words, often a life event has brought someone through the doors of a church, which means we especially want to make this a welcoming place where people of many races and religious background feel "at home."

To continue the warm hospitality that is a mark of our congregation, please try to talk to someone after (or before) church that you don't know. They may be a visitor, or maybe you just don't know them because they sit in a different part of the sanctuary. Be bold! Welcoming conversations are fertile ground for the Spirit of Christ to bless all participants.

A quick look at this Fall

What's happening...



September 5th Labour Day Beach Service

Join us for this informal service in a beautiful setting

Ambleside Beach, 10:00 am

with Capilano and St. Andrew's United

BYOBC (bring your own beach chair -- or blanket)

BYOSYfC (bring your own sand toys for children)

(just past the totem of welcome, and by the dog park)

September 7 Board Dinner and Meeting @ Deb and Michael Burian's home

6:00 dinner and conversation

7:00ish meeting to get up to speed and look at priorities for the fall

Bring something to share and let Deb know if you cannot come, otherwise we'll expect to see you there!



September 12 Welcome Back!

Sunday school registration and Men's BBQ

Bring your child, bring your appetite!

September 25 Living the Faith



We invite you to join us at **Living the Faith**, a relevant and inspiring opportunity from **Emerging Spirit** for our church to explore its calling, gifts, and mission.

September 25, 2010 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Ryerson United Church 2195 45 AVE W, Vancouver, BC

This unique event will include a plenary and workshops exploring:

Profound Changes in Church & Culture
Congregational Mission & Change

Intercultural Connections
Technology & the Church

Cost: \$50 per person (or \$150 for a Congregational team of 4, \$200 for a Congregational team of 5)

For more information and to register, contact Kelly Lee at Ryerson United Church.

Phone: 604-266-5377, local 103 Email: klee0711@telus.net

September 26 Mark Fenster (a Jewish cantor and musician) will share in the service offering his gift of music and his story as a child of Nazi Holocaust survivors (centering on the theme of forgiveness and reconciliation)

What's Happening cont'd...



October 3 - World Wide Communion and, after worship, **a congregational meeting** to discuss future directions for St. David's. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Early October **An Altar in the World** (Barbara Brown Taylor). Remember to sign-up to be part of a bookgroup that gathers with either Colleen or Dan to discuss this lovely, thoughtful, funny and insightful book.

October 10 Thanksgiving

October 24 Ric Matthews, from First United, will be with us as a guest preacher. Ric is an inspiring and charismatic speaker, who tirelessly serves the community of the downtown eastside. He's generated transformation at First United; for example, the staff have increased from about 15 to over 90 as programs have expanded and services multiplied. Ric will speak about how stewardship is at the heart of our mission; how our mission is concerned not primarily with our survival as a congregation but with how we live into the compassionate call of Christ in the world.

What will be happening...

November 7 All Saint's Day and Remembrance Day Sunday

November 14 Youth Service and Confirmation Sunday

November 19-21 Advent Retreat at Rivendell



Looking Way Ahead



All those interested in the Advent Retreat, new and long-time participants keep this weekend free: **November 19-21** at the beautiful Rivendell Retreat Center on Bowen Island.

Due to a cancellation, we have a firm date this year, the weekend before Advent begins. We learned our lesson from last year (do I need to say anything more than Doc Morgans?), and this year will begin with a shared meal on Friday evening. Rivendell has also clarified their policy and requests that only people

who can stay overnight attend, and that the retreat begin on Friday and end on Sunday (in the past, we've tried to be flexible for those who could only attend on Saturday, but that is no longer possible).

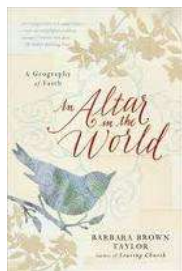
This retreat is one of the highlights of the year for some of us, so committing to more time is rather like committing to more dessert. Please speak to Colleen or Dan if you have any questions.

Outreach



Korogocho: As our own students go back to school, watch for a notice in the church bulletins about how we can help the children of Korogocho, Kenya, get to school, part of the international emphasis on "Education for All" this coming year.

St. David's Reads



An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith by Barbara Brown Taylor.

Don't delay! Start reading now! The book can be found or ordered in most any bookstore and is available in paperback. Elaine at the Vine and Fig Tree Bookstore can ship you one (734-2109) vineandfig@telus.net or you can order one through the office. Let Leanne know and we'll order a bunch at the beginning of September.

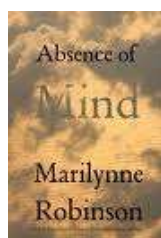
To hear an interview with Barbara Brown Taylor, Google **CBC Radio Tapestry**. (Tapestry is the Sunday afternoon program on CBC radio 1 hosted by Mary Hines). Go to podcast, and look under May 16 and 20).

In late September, we'll start putting out sign-up sheets for book groups to gather together to discuss the book. And even if you can't be part of a book group, we hope you'll have a chance to read this excellent book on faith in the world and in our skins.

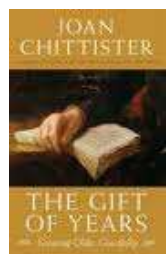
Library Discoveries

Come visit the library and check out our new books!

The following were reviewed in the *Vine and Fig Tree Books Newsletter*...



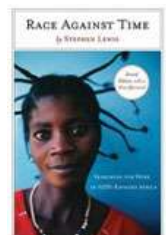
Absence of Mind by **Marilynne Robinson**. The novelist (Pulitzer winner, *Gilead*, current bestseller *Home*) applies her acute intellect to tensions between science and religion. She challenges the post-modern atheists as dogmatists (Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett for example) who crusade under the banner of science. For her "dogmatists are not given to flights of imagination or the creation of new syntheses. Scientists are. The human mind, wonderful and terrible, is the great fact. To minimize its power, its complexity, its loneliness, and radical individuation, is to evade every essential question." (quote from Globe and Mail interview, May 21, 2010)



The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully by **Joan Chittister**. Having worked long and hard to make a living, Chittister advises that our older years offer us the chance to make a life. Now that's wisdom worth pondering as is much else in this book of reflections on the burden and blessing of growing older. Written in her 70th year, this is another gift from the prolific Benedictine author.



In the Fullness of Time: 32 Women on Life after 50 edited by **Emily W. Upham and Linda Gravenston**. Women over 50 have ever been paragons of selfhood in my eyes says the reviewer. For those hungry for mentors in the daily project of aging, this is a book guaranteed to provide frank and engaging company. There's a lot on offer here: dozens of conversations you might have over coffee with a friend you are close to, on diverse topics, but there is a unifying theme of encountering and coping with – or not! – loss.



This book was recommended by **Lea Borlick** for adults and youth.

"I have spent the last four years watching people die." With these words Stephen Lewis (UN Secretary General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa and director of the Stephen Lewis Foundation) opens his 2005 Massey Lectures which aired on CBC Radio. This account tells how the International Community has not met its goals in helping Africa with this epidemic, but also gives suggestions for a solution.