



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

December 2010 – January 2011



An Unrushed Hour...

Thursday's in December (2, 9 & 16).

Drop in to the sanctuary *anytime*
between 7 and 8:30 and breathe your way
into deep peace and tranquility.

Let beautiful music and candlelight wash
over you and create a sanctuary in time.

Be still...Breathe....Be....

Table of Contents

Page 2-3	Reflections
	Dan Chambers
Page 4	Music at St. David's
	Marsha Goold
Page 5-8.....	Children Youth and Families
	Colleen Blair
Page 9.....	Alternative Gift Giving
Page 10-11....	What's Happening
Page 11-12....	Outreach
Page 12.....	Library Discoveries

Remember to check your email "inbox" or our website, www.stdavidsunited.com for updates regarding any event cancellations due to snow.



If you don't have access to email or the internet, updates will be available via the message on the church phone.

Reflections...

The Coming of the Light (that shines in every darkness)

Recently a solid group of us met at Rivendell Retreat Center for our annual Advent Retreat (a few photos have made it onto our website: simply 'Google' St. David's United). Our time together was meaningful, deep, and just plain fun. Though the Squamish winds howled and the power went out, a generator kept the retreat center going as we allowed the work of grace to re-generate our body and soul.

Our Advent theme this year is "Fear Not! For I bring you good news..." At the retreat, we discussed the dynamics of fear (what is a healthy fear, an unhealthy fear, and a holy fear?). We explored and experienced how to create an inner chapel of peace even in fearful times.

Because the insights shared that weekend are good for every season of the year and our lives, I'll share a few with you for your own reflection and sustenance, with a nod of gratitude for the participants who offered their struggles and wisdom. Receive these as a prayer.

Healthy fear can keep us safe from the cliff's edge, the ocean's rip tide, or the bear in our backyard. It can also be a great motivator.

Unhealthy fear diminishes us and makes us feel powerless. It's an anxious worry that keeps our mind racing with possible disasters. It is catastrophic thinking that imagines the worst will happen. It's a stress that seeps into our body and takes up residence.

Fear runs from laughter.

"Fear has a large shadow, but he himself is quite small." (Ruth Gendler, A Book of Qualities)

A holy fear, according to author Kathleen Norris, exorcizes an anxious, unhealthy fear. The "Fear Not!" of angels and of Jesus reduces fear to a not -- a nothing. In the presence of the holy, anxiety is diminished and a holy fear, or awe, ushers us into a greater, more surprising Reality. This is why scriptures refer to "fear of the Lord" as the beginning of wisdom.

On the retreat, we remembered a time when hidden in a fearful event was a blessing. The event that first came to my mind was the fear and trembling I had as a new father putting our one day old Colleen into her car seat. "This is insane," I thought. "First, the nurses send us home without a parenting manual, and second, we're supposed to drive home through traffic with a new born baby in the back? We should have sirens and flashing lights! We should have a police escort at the very least to clear the roads!"

What I learned in this wonderful but terrifying time was trust. We were blessed by friends who offered delicious meals, colleagues who would come and hold the baby, Janet's mother who came to help, offering us at least as much comfort as our child. I learned to trust my own parenting abilities, limited as they are, and learned to trust that angels sometimes show up disguised as family and friends. In short, this extended period of the first months of being a parent responsible for a gorgeous and fragile life helped me learn to trust.

In Advent we celebrate the birth of another child who helped the world learn to trust a God who is like a loving parent, even in fearful times. We sing in celebration, give presents on Jesus' birthday, and find dozens of ways to give thanks.

In Epiphany, beginning on January 2nd, we give thanks for the shining star that lead the wise ones to the infant Jesus, and for his light that continues to brighten every darkness.

I'll see you in church on Sundays, where our lives are expanded by a holy fear in the presence of a light that sings, "Fear Not! I bring you Good News..."

Dan



Music at St. David's

Marsha's Musings



We are coming into one of the most significant seasons of the church calendar – and we're only just getting started in the church 'year'. I must confess, however, that I am very calendar/date-based in my thinking. This is the time of year when I find myself reflecting on what particular blessings I can be grateful for since last year. One thing jumps out. At this moment, I have 176 more 'friends' than I had last year! I'm talking Facebook friends, of course! I long dreaded the idea of joining a social networking site but this year, I overcame my fear and found out that many gifts come from community, even a virtual one. I am astounded at how many people choose to open their hearts to their 'friends' when they are experiencing great lows and, of course, great joys are shared and

everyone clicks 'Like'. (If you don't know what I'm talking about, the young people in your world can explain!)

A church community is another place where we can share the ups and downs of our lives and our world. When you're a newcomer, you can't get to know everyone equally. You start with one person and it grows from there. And those that have long been part of St. David's know how easy it is to check in with the same people after church every Sunday. But we're not expanding our world and I think that this is unfortunate.

One of the happiest years of my life was when I got involved in my high school band. When the school band folded because of budget cuts, my heart sank. Making music together can be a very profound communal experience. Last year, when the adult choir became too small to continue on a regular basis, hearts sank. But I bring good news.

The choir returns for Advent! More people have been talking to me about being part of this short-term commitment. Some are members of the choir from years past. Some are brand new to St. David's. Together, we will make music and we will form a bond that goes far deeper than words. As a group, our experience will range from hundreds of performances to those that might consider themselves excellent shower singers, especially when no one is listening.

We all offer each other a gift when we come together in music. Give the gift of music this season. Whether you are a parent of a young child who loves to sing or you're in your 80's and you have always thought of being in a choir, there is a place for you here at St. David's. To have a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, a band ... these are all possibilities for us. But we need YOU!

On Sundays, I find myself pulled in many directions. I long to speak to each of you personally but it is simply impossible. Please contact me via email or phone and let's find a time to chat! And ... if you're on Facebook ... be my friend!

Blessings,
Marsha

Email: marsha@stdavidsunited.com;
Phone: 604-809-6708

Children, Youth & Families

As we head into Advent, and look forward to Christmas and Epiphany the Sunday School's focus shifts and we welcome new teachers, Xenia O'Brien and Trina Campbell, assisted by senior youth Alaina Wong. The preschool to grade 7 class are undertaking a Christmas story book project in which the younger children will be photographed, dressed as the characters in the Christmas story and then the book will be assembled and sent home. The junior youth will buddy with the younger children and will help direct and produce the book. Senior Youth will meet with Colleen and will delve into a variety of topics that I hope will help to deepen their experience of Advent and Christmas.

The theme for the Fall, ***The Heart of Christianity***, culminated in a deeply meaningful children and youth led worship service in mid November. Thank you to all children and youth who participated and to teachers, Pam Meneguzzi, Johanne Mabon, Joanne Franko, Darla Briggs, Janet Gear and Cynthia Sedun. The theme will be picked up again in the latter part of January when we look at Fair Trade!

Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present. Edward \Hayes, [A Pilgrim's Almanac](#)

Advent Blessings,
Colleen



Families

Friday, December 24th, 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Family Service

A reminder to parents and grandparents that it is a time honoured tradition at St. David's to have an informal 'come as you are', Christmas pageant at the 5 p.m. service. *Every child*, whether a long time member or a first time visitor, is welcome and encouraged to participate! Plan to come early to give your child time to select a costume. The pageant is always most successful and enjoyable for the younger ones, when the older elementary students participate as well, as they are a wonderful help to the younger children and great role models. This is a completely unrehearsed pageant, meant to bring the Christmas story to life for the children in a way that avoids stress and anxiety on a very special and exciting night. ***Any parents or youth able to assist in dressing the children and/or can help put the costumes away afterwards, (15 minutes) would be very much appreciated. Please be in touch with Colleen at 604 922 3961***

Sunday, December 26th, Worship in your PJ's!

After a busy Christmas day you might not feel like getting out of your pajamas. No worries! Enjoy a sleep in and then hop in the car in your pajamas. Children and youth are invited to participate in a carol sing during worship and enjoy hot chocolate and cookies afterwards. PJ's....no kidding!

Sunday, January 2nd, Epiphany Procession of Light

Join us for the annual procession of light on Epiphany Sunday. All children and youth are invited to participate carrying in the light for this very special event and to enjoy sharing their Christmas memories before we gently pack away our Christmas supplies and traditions. Delicious 'Kings Cakes' will be served in the coffee hour.

Tuesday, January 25th Cyberbullying documentary for Parents and Youth



"Everyone knows that adolescence is tough but with the advance of technology, teenagers today are redefining what's fair." Adults and youth are invited to attend a screening of this documentary to look at how cell phones, digital cameras, personal websites/Facebook etc. are being used by teens to invade privacy, spread rumours and humiliate one another. Join in the conversation about how we can protect our teens from inappropriate use of technology.



***November 14th
Children and Youth
Service***

Junior and Senior Youth Group Gatherings



*Colleen will send out reminder email notices regarding youth group events and any changes to the schedule. If you are not currently receiving these, please let Colleen know. Junior youth are grades 4-7 and senior youth are high school. **If there is a possibility of snow, please check your email before leaving home to confirm that the event is still planned. What may be rain in some neighborhoods could be a blizzard at higher elevations!***

Friday, December 10th A Giving Party

Both junior and senior youth are invited to make some special Christmas gifts for loved ones. Please bring \$5 to help offset the cost of supplies, and RSVP so that Colleen is prepared and has sufficient materials!

Junior Youth: 4:30-6 p.m. at St. David's

Senior Youth: 6:30-8:30 at Colleen Blair's home. Address and directions will be sent via email.

Sunday, December 12th, Annual Theatre Event

Junior youth are invited to the Pantomime presentation of Beauty and the Beast at Hendry Hall in North Vancouver. Speak to Colleen to reserve tickets. Another parent to drive and accompany us would be greatly appreciated! The show usually begins at 1 and is finished by 2:20 and we're back in St. David's parking lot by 2:45 for pick up. Watch your email for further information.

Friday, December 17th, Out of the Cold

Senior Youth are invited to help other members of the congregation to set up for and serve a delicious hot meal to people in the downtown eastside, at First United Church. This is a special way you can brighten the Christmas season for others *and* deepen your own experience of what it means to journey together as followers of *The Way*. Please let Colleen know by Dec. 10th, if you plan to attend and if you need a ride. Colleen will leave the church parking lot at 4 p.m. For those able to spend an extra hour to visit, we'll plan to go to the White Spot at Park Royal for a quick bite to eat. Let me know if you'd like to participate in this!

Tuesday, December 21st, Visiting our Elders

Colleen would like to go visiting sometime on Tuesday, December 21st to some of our elderly congregation members who find it difficult to get to church these days. If any junior or senior youth are interested in accompanying me, please email me. Time has yet to be determined!

Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve...5 p.m. service

Junior and Senior youth are encouraged to help provide welcoming hospitality and leadership at the 5 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Children need help dressing in costumes for the pageant and need some guidance during worship as the story is told. ***Please let me know if you are able to help!***

Friday, January 14Bible Story Cakes ...Junior and Senior Youth

It was a great success last year (extreme makeover: cake mix edition) and is back again this year! Groups of youth will meet in homes and build/assemble a cake that sets the scene for a particular bible story. Cakes will be on display, eaten and enjoyed on Sunday, Jan. 16th, in the coffee hour! And as the cakes are admired and served, the stories will be told. Parent volunteers will be needed to host this event. Last years stories included the Parting of the Red Sea, Daniel in the Lions Den and Jesus and the Woman at the Well! This is a special way to connect with a small group of youth in the comfort of your home. For more information, please be in touch with Colleen. Time and location will be confirmed by email.



Friday, January 21st ...Out of the Cold

Senior Youth are invited to help serve dinner at First United Church in the downtown eastside, with other members of St. David's. Please let Colleen know if you plan to attend, by Jan. 12th, and if you need a ride. Once again, if there is a desire to do so, we'll stop in at the White Spot on the way home to catch up and check in with one another!

Friday, January, 28thCaring for the Homeless

Junior Youth: Sandwich making from 4:30—6. Youth are invited to bring a loaf or two of bread and prepared sandwich filling and we'll make sandwiches for the north shore lookout shelter.

Senior Youth: Soup making from 6:30-8:30. Bring vegetables of your choice and we'll make a large pot of soup for people in the downtown eastside. Your soup will help warm people in these cold winter months.

Children's Retreat...mark your calendars!

A children's retreat for ages 8-12 is scheduled for Feb. 25th-27 at the Stillwood Retreat Center at Cultus Lake. Mark your calendars now and watch for registration details.

Remember Others...

Cold Weather Gifts: If you are finding that we're off to a cold start this winter, imagine the challenges for those who don't have a home or the resources to go out and buy the cold weather gear they need. We invite you to look around your closets and drawers and bring in these clean and usable items and leave them in the large wooden box to the right of the ramp that leads into the lower hall at St. David's:



- Boots
- Socks
- Long underwear
- Coats and warm outerwear
- Gloves, toques and scarves
- Blankets and sleeping bags





Also...if you find you have more candy and baking than is good for you, package it well and bring it to church with you on January 2nd or 9th and it will be delivered to First United or the Lookout Shelter.

Alternative Gift Giving Ideas

Right to Play

The mission of Right to Play is to improve the lives of children in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world by using the power of sport and play for development, health and peace. "With your help, we can continue to ensure that children have access to regular structured sport and play activities that help them to develop self-esteem, a sense of belonging and become role models for other children. It doesn't take much to make a huge difference in a child's life. Check out www.righttoplay.com

KIVA

"Kiva's mission is to connect people through lending for the sake of alleviating poverty. It is "the world's first person-to-person micro-lending website, empowering individuals to lend directly to unique entrepreneurs around the globe." Give a Little, by Wendy Smith You can make donations to Kiva in the name of a friend or relative (as a Christmas gift for example) and either choose the loan recipient yourself or let your friend/relative do this. When the loan recipient repays, the money is returned to the giver and ideally, another loan recipient is then chosen. This gift gives over and over! Check out www.kiva.org

Potters for Peace

"One billion people, or one in every six of us, lack a basic necessity for a reasonable life – clean water. There is a simple, inexpensive, and brilliant tool that addresses that deprivation – a cheap and effective water filter. Finally, there are the visionaries who developed the technology as well as the organization and methodology for distributing the filters in ways that both eliminate the problem and create local opportunities for work." Give a Little, by Wendy Smith Give the gift of clean drinking water and local employment. Check out www.pottersforpeace.org

World Bicycle Relief

Simple, sustainable transportation is an essential element in disaster assistance and poverty relief. Bicycles fulfill basic needs by providing access to healthcare, education and economic development. Bicycles empower individuals, their families, and their communities. "Donating a bicycle is one of the highest return contributions one can make to improve a family's standard of living and well-being." Give a Little, by Wendy Smith Check out www.worldbicyclerelief.org

KickStart

"The idea behind KickStart is simple – that the poorest people in the world are also among the most entrepreneurial. They have to be as a matter of simple survival. KickStart harnesses that spirit to help people help themselves out of poverty. We create tools that people can use to start successful and profitable businesses. For Africa's poorest farmers, KickStart may be one of the most important and effective projects working to eliminate chronic hunger and poverty." Give a Little, by Wendy Smith Check out www.kickstart.org

Heifer International

"Like KickStart, Heifer International's programmes make an immediate, substantial, and measurable change in the lives of recipients. Heifer's basic approach remains the same – providing an animal, typically to smallholder farmers in poor rural areas around the world, that improves the nutritional and economic status of the family. The receiving family must pass on the animal's offspring; in this way, the impact of Heifer's work ripples outward, ultimately raising the standard of living among neighbors and within entire villages and communities. Part of what makes Heifer such an exciting and effective organization is its holistic approach. Although providing animals is the hallmark of Heifer International, its total mission also includes protecting the environment, promoting gender equity, and providing training in animal management and business practices."

Give a Little, by Wendy Smith Check out www.heifer.org



Children of Korogocho

The Children of Korogocho fund contributes to over 50 Home Day Cares in Nairobi, Kenya, keeping young children safe and enables many children who are orphans or whose families are destitute to attend school with the required uniforms and fees. For more details, contact Becky Knapton, Joan Burrows or Mary Sue Atkinson. Gift cards are available for people who wish to give a donation as a Christmas gift.

UNICEF Gifts of Magic

UNICEF Gifts of Magic provide crucial aid to children living in areas affected by poverty, conflict or natural disaster. When you order Gifts of Magic for family or friends, real life-changing items are shipped from our warehouse in Copenhagen to children, and families, in need around the world. A description of the gift is included with every order and you can choose to receive a printed card with envelope, or send a personalized e-card when you order. Order online at www.shopUNICEF.ca/Gifts-Of-Magic, or look for UNICEF kiosks in shopping malls around Vancouver.

What's Happening...

A Quiet Christmas Service Tuesday, December 7, 7:30 – 8:30 pm



Pull away from the hectic and harried season to reconnect with the holy hidden in "the Christmas rush." Carols, candles, poems, scripture, and if you can stay after, cookies and hot cider by the fire in the Lounge (thank you Cay!).



Thursday Oasis (December 2, 9, and 16, 7:00 – 8:00pm). If you find yourself pulled in too many directions and need a place to breathe deeply, or if you find the season emotionally difficult and need a place to pray, come to the sanctuary where you will find quiet music, candles, and the space to simply be. Come for five minutes or an hour. It's for you.



Thank you Lunch! Sunday, December 12, we hope you can come to the Thank You Lunch, a chance to express our shared appreciation for the ways you support this community of faith with your financial resources and your great gifts of time and energy, bright ideas and multiple talents. This one's free!

Christmas Eve If you're in town, don't miss our Christmas celebrations with the lively and animated 5:00 family service, and the quieter, lush 10:00 service. Either way, you'll leave humming the carols and carrying in your heart a sense of peace and good will to all.

Boxing Day Pajama Party/Service Any child or youth (or adult!) is welcome to come to church on December 26 in your pajamas as we sing the carols, tell the story of Jesus' birth, and enjoy the intimacy of this joyful season. Dan (who may be in his slippers, bathrobe and curlers) will tell an Ekka Pekka Winky story and invite the young children to bring and share a favorite present, remembering that they are a precious gift of God.

(Do you have too many Christmas sweets? We're here to help! Bring a few to share for the Christmas coffee and tea after the service).

Welcome 2011!

Epiphany Sunday, January 2. Come, follow the star, as we step into the journey home.



Confirmation – At long last, youth in grades 7-9 are invited to be part of Confirmation. We'll begin with an event at Mt. Seymour, organized by Eric Hamlyn and friends, January 14 & 15. Talk to Dan for more info. and watch for upcoming e-mails. The first Confirmation meeting will be Sunday, January 9 at St. David's (11:30 – 12:30).

Welcome **Thursday January 20th at 7pm - Welcome Dessert** All those who are newer to St. David's are invited to a special gathering to meet the staff, meet each other and learn more about the church.

Outreach



Christmas Hamper program:

Once again we have had an opportunity to make Christmas a little brighter for 19 families in need by providing Christmas hampers with food and gifts for each family member. Thanks to all of those who have sponsored a family. **Hampers are to be at St. David's by 10:30 am on Monday, December 13th** and will be delivered to the Ray-Cam Community Centre.

Children of Korogocho:

"Thanks to all who have contributed to the Children of Korogocho Fund. We have raised close to (\$5500), from congregation members and many other donors from here to Ontario! We are pleased that we can tell David Oketch, the staff member for CYEN-Korogocho ("Children and Youth Empowerment Network") that this will be our contribution for the coming year so that the committee overseeing the programmes will be able to plan their budget better. We contribute to over 50 Home Day Cares keeping young children safe and we have enabled many children who are orphans or whose families are destitute to attend school with the required uniforms and fees. If you would like to consider giving someone an "alternative" gift, why not make a donation to Korogocho? There are lovely hand-made cards for you to send to the recipient to let them know you've made a donation on their behalf. Please contact the Church office if you are interested.

Thank you to everyone for your support with this global outreach initiative!

Fair Trade Bazaar:

On Sunday, November 14th, Ten Thousand Villages Robson store set up a wonderful display of fair trade and hand-crafted items from around the world in the church lounge. Congregation members and their friends had the opportunity to browse and shop conveniently, and learn more about initiatives supporting artisans from around the world with fair wages and working conditions. And in return, Ten Thousand Villages donated a portion of the money from the sales back to St. David's for our Outreach programs. Thanks to them and those of you who shopped, we raised \$200!

Out of the Cold:

As the temperature drops, there is more need than ever in the Downtown Eastside for people who may be hungry and homeless to not only come in from the cold, but to receive the warmth and sustenance of a hearty meal, as well as the hospitality and feeling that others care about them. That's what we try to do with our monthly program at First United Church. On November 19th, approximately 35 volunteers from St. David's, North Lonsdale United, including family members and friends, served up a hot meal and hospitality to over 180 people. We repeat this on the third Friday of each month, September to May, and are always looking for volunteers to help in many ways.

Our next dinner will be on Friday December 17th, so please contact Cynthia Sedun at 604.924.1234 if you are able to join us. The gift of your time and energy is so appreciated by those who come for a meal and a retreat from the harshness of the streets.

Chris Beveridge once again has kindly offered to collect warm socks hats, scarves and small toiletry items to distribute to those people who come to First United church for meals and a place to sleep. She will be taking these on Friday December 17th, so contact her at 604.983.3110 if you are able to donate items or alternatively, money to purchase them.

Thank you so much for your support of these Outreach initiatives. Each one of you does make a difference with your actions!

Gratefully,
Becky Knapton
Outreach

Library Discoveries



Thank you to Bob Burrows for donating his new book "Hope Lives Here A history of Vancouver's First United" to our library.

"In this well-written and lively account, Burrows, himself a United Church minister for over four decades, brings his lifetime of commitment and compassion to the remarkable history of the First United Church in Hope Lives Here. "

