



ST. DAVID'S
UNITED CHURCH

The Shepherd

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March/April 2011

A Most Happy Confirmation Day - 13 February 2011



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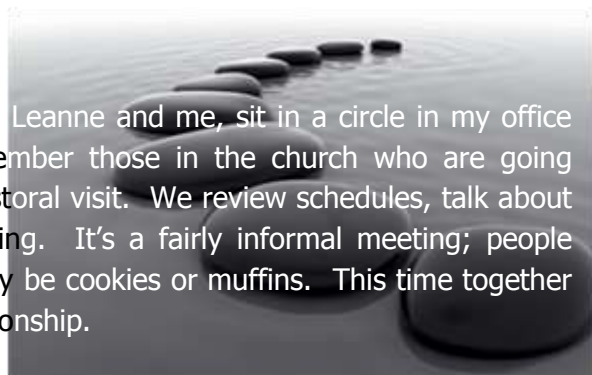


Minister: Dan Chambers
Minister with Children, Youth & Families: Colleen Blair

Minister of Music: Marsha Goold
Administrator: Leanne Gilhuis

Reflections...

Most every Tuesday the St. David's staff, Colleen, Marsha, Leanne and me, sit in a circle in my office and have a meeting. We begin with prayer, then remember those in the church who are going through a challenging situation or might benefit from a pastoral visit. We review schedules, talk about administrative matters, and then dive into worship planning. It's a fairly informal meeting; people bring their coffee or tea and on special occasions there may be cookies or muffins. This time together is critical for our ongoing communication and working relationship.



Last Tuesday, we began with a reflection from Frederick Buechner on Lent. I've probably shared selections of this passage with you before in other Lenten newsletters or in a sermon or in a Lenten booklet of reflections that we've put together as a congregation, but it seems so relevant I can't help but want to share it with you again. There are some passages that sink deeper every time you hear them, and this, I believe, is one.

LENT

In many cultures there is an ancient custom of giving a tenth of each year's income to some holy use. For Christians, to observe the forty days of Lent is to do the same thing with roughly a tenth of each year's days. After being baptized by John in the river Jordan, Jesus went off alone into the wilderness where he spent forty days asking himself the question what it meant to be Jesus. During Lent, Christians are supposed to ask one way or another what it means to be themselves.

If you had to bet everything you have on whether there is a God or whether there isn't, which side would get your money and why?

When you look at your face in the mirror, what do you see in it that you most like and what do you see in it that you most deplore?

If you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in twenty-five words or less?

Of all the things you have done in your life, which is the one you would most like to undo? Which is the one that makes you happiest to remember?

Is there any person in the world, or any cause, that, if circumstances called for it, you would be willing to die for? If this were the last day of your life, what would you do with it?

To hear yourself try to answer questions like these is to begin to hear something not only of who you are but of both what you are becoming and what you are failing to become. It can be a pretty depressing business all in all, but if sackcloth and ashes are at the start of it, something like Easter may be at the end.

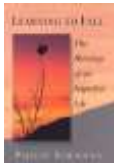
Frederick Buechner
"Listening to your Life"

May this season of reflection nourish your soul and lead you more deeply and freely into resurrected living.

Dan

What's Happening

Lenten Series ... Thursday's March 17-April 14th, 7:15 - 8:30pm



Our Lenten study series is four sessions and is based on the book Learning to Fall about author Philip Simmons' spiritual journey that begins when he is diagnosed with ALS. It charts his often humorous search for peace and his deepening relationship with the mystery of everyday life. Books are available for purchase from the office.

Everyone is welcome. Please join us in the Grouse Room.

St. Patrick's Day Lunch hosted by the UCW, Thursday, March 17th, at 12:00 in the Lounge. All are welcome!

Inquirer's Class

If you are newer to St. David's or if you simply have questions about St. David's or the United Church of Canada, this is the place for you.

Sunday, March 20 and 27, after worship, Dan and Colleen will meet with you in the Cypress Room (back hall, behind the sanctuary) for conversation and background about the church. Bring your questions. Come to meet others. No question is too basic, as often the simplest questions go deep.

Grab a cup of coffee or tea, if you like, then head to the Cypress Room where we'll meet from 11:30 – 12:29. Child care will be provided if you let us know in advance so we can arrange it. We look forward to seeing and talking with you!

New Member's Celebration

Anyone who would like to become a member of St. David's will be warmly welcomed in worship on Sunday, April 10.

Some people attend St. David's, others attend and are members: what's the difference? The only difference, really, is level of commitment. A person who chooses to become a member of the church promises to attend worship as often as possible, to be engaged in the life of the community as their time allows and as they feel called, to support the church financially as they are able, and to strive to live aligned with the compassionate, grace-filled Spirit of Christ.

If you have questions, please come to the Inquirer's Class (see above) or feel free to call Dan Chambers or Colleen Blair (both at 922-3961).



Open Meeting Invitation Everyone Welcome!

Join us for dinner and conversation with our new Board on **Tuesday, March 29th @ 6:30** in the Lower Hall. RSVP for a Borscht Dinner! (you can call Leanne in the office at 922-3961, or e-mail her at admin@stdavidsunited.com).

The conversation will include clarification of the Board and Visioning Group's mandate: to ensure the ongoing life and vitality of St. David's as a distinct community.

There will be opportunities for questions and to share ideas about future directions.

Hope to see you there!

Emmanuel Huchet
Chair of the Board

Deb Burian
Past Chair

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 17

With palms and procession, story and song, we remember how Jesus entered the embroiled city of Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, a symbol of peace.



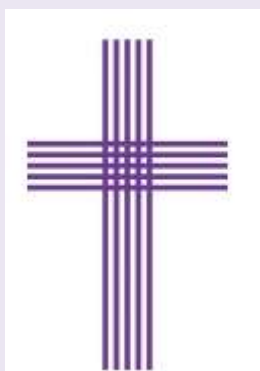
Sedar Supper, Thursday, April 21 A Christian expression of an ancient Jewish ritual meal.

Good Friday, service at 10:00 – 11:00am.

Easter Sunday, April 24

From the darkness of the cave to the light of resurrection, come celebrate what's at the heart of our faith: that somehow, Jesus is with us; somehow, Christ is alive!

Music at St. David's



Giving anything up for Lent?

How about adding something in?

Lenten Choir

Sundays, March 13 through April 17

Rehearsals: Sunday morning, 9 am, in the Sanctuary

Singing CAN be a spiritual practice!

marsha@stdavidsunited.com

604-809-6708

Children, Youth & Families

As I write this with snow falling and a record cold snap forecast for Vancouver, it's hard to imagine that spring is just around the corner, but I trust that it is, so while I enjoy the beautiful snowfall I am surrounded with seed catalogues and plans for my vegetable garden! It's in my garden that I will enjoy much of my 6 week sabbatical and I am grateful to be in a place that recognizes the wisdom and value of such time for reflection and renewal!

The next unit of Sunday school begins on March 13th, the first Sunday of Lent and for that 6 week period, we'll be looking at some very special spiritual practices with children and youth. For this unit and the final unit which is a 7 week session from May 1-June 12, there are many gaps to fill in terms of teachers. Given that my sabbatical coincides with this last unit of Sunday school, I am anxious for volunteers to assist in teaching over this period. As is always the case, curriculum is supplied and I will meet with teachers before their teaching unit begins. If there are enough volunteers, teachers can partner, which lightens the load and provides flexibility in terms of the teaching schedule. Please be in touch if you can assist in any way! colleen@stdavidsunited.com



Junior and Senior Youth Group Gatherings

March 4th -6th, Walking The Talk: Putting Your Faith into Action

At Walking the Talk, youth in grades 7-12 will connect with other youth and through community building, worship, song and ACTION, will learn and work together, going out into the city and making a difference in their lives and in the lives of others. Walking the Talk is a youth outreach project of the presbytery's youth and young adult ministry. For more information, contact Colleen or Eric Hamlyn. Find the details and register online at www.vanyaya.bc.ca or email eric@vanyaya.bc.ca

March 11th

Junior Youth –Park Royal Scavenger Hunt, 4:30-6. Watch your email for details!
Senior Youth- Cooking Together! Senior youth will gather to make dinner together. Our numbers will determine whether we do this at Colleen's or at the church! Email in your suggestions on what you might like to make and RSVP as soon as possible!

March 25th, Junior and Senior Youth – spring break event TBA!

April 8th, Junior Youth Sleepover event beginning at 7 p.m. RSVP required!

Saturday, April 9th, Senior youth Mall Scavenger Hunt. Watch your email for details regarding time and meeting place!

Friday, April 29th, Junior Youth Cooking Together

Junior youth will gather to make dinner and eat together. Our numbers will determine whether we do this at Colleen's or at the church! Email in your suggestions on what you might like to learn to make and RSVP as soon as possible!



Saturday, April 30th, Senior Youth Sleepover.

Along with a movie, games and spiritual oasis time in the sanctuary, we'll prepare for the Stephen Lewis Foundation picnic lunch fundraiser for HIV-AIDS relief in Africa, to be held the following day. All hands will be appreciated in preparing for this event. And as always, youth are welcome to come for the activity portion of the evening and go home to sleep in their own beds if this is their preference. A Dad is needed to sleep over with us....please let me know if you can be here!

Parents and Teachers

Tuesday, April 5th Documentary on Cyberbullying

Parents, teachers and anyone working with youth are welcome to attend a screening of this documentary to look at how cell phones, digital cameras, Facebook and other social media are changing the way teens relate to one another. Join in the conversation along with Sabine Ritson, about how we as parents can help protect our youth and how we can educate them to protect themselves. For reasons that will be obvious on that evening, this event will be for adults only but the dvd will be available afterwards for parents to borrow and watch with their youth. We'll gather at 7:15 in the lounge for refreshments and begin at 7:30. RSVP if possible!

Wednesday April 6th, Sunday School Teachers Dinner

Teachers and assistants and anyone interested in teaching Sunday school are invited to a potluck dinner at Colleen's home at 7 p.m. It will be a chance to check in with one another on a personal level, welcome newcomers, and also to review the Sunday school and youth program and look at new directions. It is very rare to have the opportunity to get together and have conversation about the goals of the overall programme and to address any challenges we face. Please RSVP! If you require child care, I am happy to contribute to that in order that you can come.

Wednesday, April 27th, Sunday School Teachers Meeting

At 7:15 p.m. at St. David's, there will be a meeting for teachers of the final unit of Sunday school (May 1-June 12) to review the session on a week to week basis, review and locate required supplies, and do any advance preparation that we might have time for. Hopefully, all teachers participating in this session are able to attend! RSVP to Colleen at colleen@stdavidsunited.com

For the Congregation and Families

Palm Sunday, April 17th, Children and youth are invited to participate in the palm parade and later, a dramatized *Walk Through Holy Week* during Sunday school.

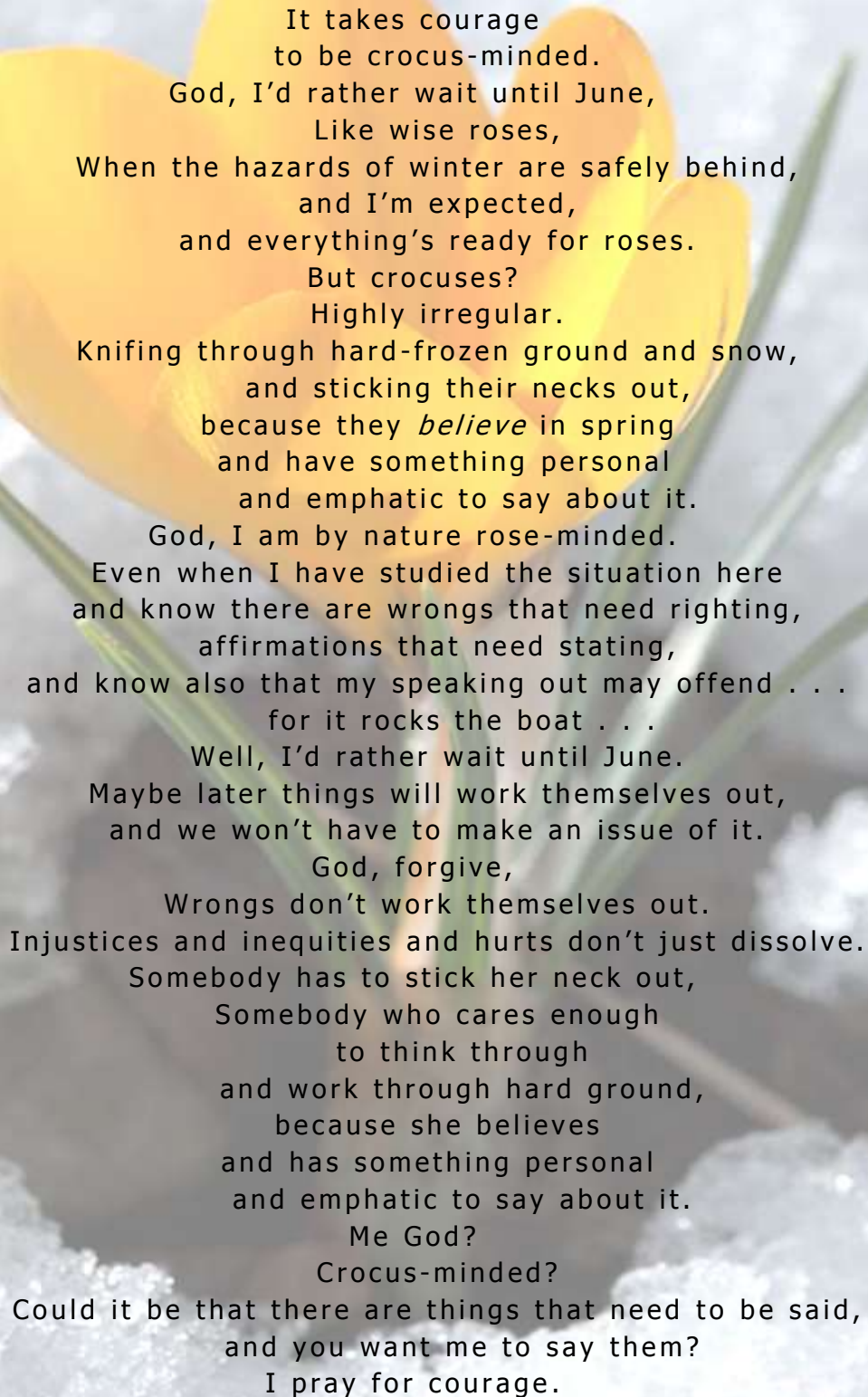
Sunday, May 1st, Annual Picnic Lunch Fundraiser

On Sunday May 1st, the congregation is invited to join with the youth in their efforts to do something concrete and positive to alleviate some of the heart breaking suffering of those in Africa who are living with AIDS or are orphaned because of it. Youth are inviting the whole congregation to purchase a picnic lunch after worship on Sunday, May 1st, as a way to raise money for AIDS relief, through the **Stephen Lewis Foundation**. We believe that as a caring community of faith, that we are called not just to care, but to **act** and to use our resources in a way that reveals who we are and what we care about. Please support the youth and give freely and generously out of deep gratitude for the life of blessing we've been given. If you won't be at worship on May 1st, we invite you to send in your clearly labeled donation to the office, in advance. Over the last many years and with your generous support, the youth of St. David's, have raised many thousands of dollars for HIV-AIDS relief in Africa. Thank you!



A Little More...

Crocus-Minded by Jo Sorley

A photograph of a single yellow crocus flower in full bloom, pushing through a layer of white snow. The flower's petals are bright yellow and layered, while its green leaves are long and slender. The background is a soft-focus view of the snow-covered ground.

It takes courage
to be crocus-minded.
God, I'd rather wait until June,
Like wise roses,
When the hazards of winter are safely behind,
and I'm expected,
and everything's ready for roses.
But crocuses?
Highly irregular.
Knifing through hard-frozen ground and snow,
and sticking their necks out,
because they *believe* in spring
and have something personal
and emphatic to say about it.
God, I am by nature rose-minded.
Even when I have studied the situation here
and know there are wrongs that need righting,
affirmations that need stating,
and know also that my speaking out may offend . . .
for it rocks the boat . . .
Well, I'd rather wait until June.
Maybe later things will work themselves out,
and we won't have to make an issue of it.
God, forgive,
Wrongs don't work themselves out.
Injustices and inequities and hurts don't just dissolve.
Somebody has to stick her neck out,
Somebody who cares enough
to think through
and work through hard ground,
because she believes
and has something personal
and emphatic to say about it.
Me God?
Crocus-minded?
Could it be that there are things that need to be said,
and you want me to say them?
I pray for courage.

© Dave Ingram

Peace Candles

St. David's has decided to make available to our congregation the "Peace Candle" Our invitation is that members of our congregation or our visitors take one of the Peace Candles and present it as a gift to another congregation so that the desire for peace which is represented by the candle might be symbolized in many churches throughout the world.

The Peace Candle originated in Russia in 1986 where an elderly lady asked a visiting clergy, Dr. Blair Monie, to take a candle as a symbol of peace back to his home church, in York Pennsylvania. That church, upon receiving the candle, decided to make candles available to members of their congregation inviting them to give them to other churches with which they had contact. From there a candle found its way to Wylde Green United Reformed Church in Sutton, England and from there the tradition was passed on to a number of English and Welsh churches. From Wales, the Peace Candle was sent to Emmanuel United in Waterloo, Ontario and from there to other congregations in Canada. And now we pass this light of peace on to you.

Our prayer is that the elderly woman's hope for peace be spread, far and wide as churches in many parts of the world receive these reminders of the vital task of working and praying for peace.

So...if you are travelling over the coming months, let us know and we will provide you with a peace candle and letter, as a gift to another congregation as a symbol of the ongoing struggle for peace in the world.

Outreach

Korogocho Update:

Warm greetings from the children, youths, women, and the CYEN-Korogocho committee! Thank you once again for this another great support and commitment to improve the lives of all of us in Korogocho. We do sincerely appreciate for all these. Thank you once again!

The funds as sent on 15th February 2011 did arrive safely in our accounts.

Currently the Day Care Centres / the CYEN as an organization is progressing well through the above funds. These have enabled the continuation of its operation as well as creating a conducive environment for caring for the children and nurturing the skills and talents of its youths. In this regard, the CYEN-Korogocho management committee and in consultation with the office of the project Coordinator spent/ intends to spend these funds as below-mentioned:

- Food for the Children: (well- balanced nutritious porridge)
- Mattress and Blankets
- First aid kits
- Teaching Aids (Charts and Blackboards)
- Toys
- Stationery
- Desks/Tables and Chairs

Floor Mats- Already been accomplished

School Uniforms: (periodically) –Part of it have already been accomplished. Uniforms for Orphans in Primary Schools and Bibs for the small babies in the Day Care centres for identity.

Training/ Refresher Courses:

- Day Care mothers
- Leadership workshops (Management Committee)

- Youth Group (Entrepreneurship Skills) - instilling of behavioral change and making them change agents in the community.
- Study / Exposure visits:
- Youths, Women Groups and the Management Committee
- Creation of Income Generating Activities/ provision of small business start-up loans (Women and youth Groups).

Launching of the Organization officially; (CYEN-Korogocho), as new entity away from the former (TAK)

Once again, we reiterate our appreciation and look forward to solidifying this partnership through ANPPCAN. And we remain open to clarifying any section of this Email that may not be clear to you.

With best regards, yours sincerely,
David Oketch

Update on Refugee Sponsorship for the Al-Azaizeh family:

St David's is a part of the six United Churches of North & West Vancouver that are working together to sponsor a refugee family. As a congregation, we contributed an initial \$1500.00 from the Christmas Eve offering to assist with this. Already formed is a committee with representatives from all six churches, with St. Andrew's United Church named as the main constituent group for the application process.



A sub-committee has worked very hard and has sent off the initial Settlement Form /Plan to Toronto on behalf of the Al-Azaizeh family. Although there can be unforeseen delays, families usually arrive about six weeks after this paperwork, when approved, gets sent to Damascus.

A little bit about the family:

SENAA AL-AZAIZEH, father, is 36 yrs. old

ENAM. AL-AZAIZEH, mother, is 29 yrs. old

Qods, (Kuds) a daughter, is 9 yrs. old

Ali, a son, is 7 yrs. old

Omar Fares, a baby son, - 4 months

The Al-Azaizeh family has been in turmoil for many years, being shuffled from country to country. They are stateless. As Sunni Muslims, they have been persecuted and threatened. The family currently lives in the El Hol Refugee Camp on the border of Syria and Iraq. The camp is being closed as soon as possible, leaving families with literally nowhere to go. If we are successful in meeting the requirements of sponsorship, the family should arrive in Canada in about six weeks.

The Sponsorship process....

Sponsorship means we will be assisting them to settle here - finding a home, setting them up in school, helping them learn our language and culture, helping them make a huge adjustment in their lives. Sponsorship requires effort, money and compassion. The family has been told that they are being sponsored, so already they have more hope than before. But they are worried, please pray for them. To bring a family to Canada a sponsoring group (6 N.S. Churches) must have funds, and volunteer help, to provide for the family for one year.

The family will, immediately after arriving and having the required applications filled out, be eligible for BC Health Care. Qods and Ali and Omar will receive Child Care benefits immediately it is applied for.

"How can I help?" you may be asking. We are currently forming teams with responsibilities for various tasks, e.g. housing, furniture, clothing, medical/dental, English-language education, government forms, etc.

We are also working with the city-wide El Hol Project to ensure consistent, equivalent support for all newcomer families, as there are other families that other United churches and faith-based groups in the Greater Vancouver area will be sponsoring.

A sub-group from the North Shore has met with the Burnaby / Edmonds Mosaic Organization - "Empowering Immigrants and Refugees" www.mosaicbc.com and looked around the area at potential accommodation sites. This is the location that most of the five 2009 arrival families (relatives) are already settled into and so ideally will be where the newcomers will live.

Please contact Becky Knapton at becky@canken.net, or 604.980.0891 if you are interested in learning more and/or helping with this compassionate Outreach initiative. There is much to be done to support this family as they transition to a new and better life.

Thank you,
Becky Knapton
St. David's Outreach Chair



Cherry Blossoms - Downtown Vancouver