



ST. DAVID'S  
UNITED CHURCH

# The Shepherd

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December, 2011 and January, 2012



## Table of Contents

- Page 2..... Reflections  
Dan Chambers
- Page 3..... From St. David's Board Chair  
Emmanuel Huchet
- Page 4.....Stewardship & Quiet Christmas
- Page 5.....Carols in Advent
- Page 6-7.....Worship in December/January
- Page 7-8.....Children Youth & Families  
Colleen Blair
- Page 9-11.....Outreach
- Page 12.....Alternative Gift Giving this year

Remember to check your email "inbox" or our website, [www.stdavidsunited.com](http://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.

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

Minister of Music: Nicole Thomas Zycynski  
Administrator: Leanne Gilhuis

## Reflections...



*Happy New Year! Happy New Year!*

The first celebratory greeting is for the beginning of Advent (November 27), the start of the Christian worship year. The second greeting is for January 1 and though that date seems miles down the road, we all know how very soon we'll be waving farewell to 2011 and turning to greet 2012.

Of course, underneath seasonal celebrations are the ongoing conversations we're having at St. David's about our future. I know this is not a comfortable time; I know that for a number of us there's a hum of anxiety in the background as we wait to see what we all decide and in what direction we turn. This is inevitable when conversations and deliberations carry such significance about our shared future.

Given this reality, examples of your resilience, fortitude and love of the community shine all the brighter. Our worship services this fall have been well attended and brightly spirited. People are engaged and remain connected. People continue to explore directions, talk to each other, listen. And as I look at our December and January events, I believe this momentum will continue. You'll see on the following pages some great programs for adults and youth; Nicole has arranged excellent musical offerings for Advent and Christmas and we'll continue to reach out to those in need around us. Together we move forward in faith.

Approaching the season of Christmas and the beginning of a new year is a different experience when you're young and when you're no longer young. Those of us no longer young are more aware of the complexity of the season: We sing about peace but are aware of the numerous conflicts in the world and stress in our life. We sing "fa la la" but also have long lists of packages to buy and meals to plan and baking to do and cards to write and decorating to finish – all of which is life-giving, but also can be stressful when pressed for time. We sing about joy, but also are aware of grief as we miss loved ones no longer with us. We speak about love of neighbor but also are aware of rampant injustices in the world and our own shortcomings. The season no longer comes to us in a pure, unalloyed fashion.

Yet through the complexity, I hope we all are uplifted by an underlying simplicity of the Spirit. Through the layers of the season, may the radical love of Christ be born in us once again, and the light of God lead us on our journey of faith.

*I hope this Advent, Christmas and New Year  
is filled for you with the surprise of joy,  
catching you at unexpected times.  
May the sounds of the season  
bring hope and courage to your heart  
and may beauty wrap its graceful arms around you  
in even the most common moment or ordinary place.*

Dan



## *From St. David's Board Chair*

### I love the smell of coffee in the morning

But I can't say I love mornings. Some people are morning birds; I'm a night owl. I'm always more energized, creative and productive in the evenings. But there are times – an early-morning bike ride for instance – when I absolutely have to get up before dawn. I've been known to set three alarm clocks to make sure I actually get up. That early wake-up is often disorienting and downright unpleasant. But I made a commitment to the guys I cycle with and I don't want to let them down, so I drag myself out of bed.



After a few minutes of adjustment – and a cup of coffee – I start to notice things. The sounds of birds waking up, the smell of the early-morning air, the feeling of those first gentle rays of sunshine on my face. The initial discomfort of being rudely awakened turns into a feeling of gratitude for these beautiful things, and that energy and “aliveness” you get when you're jolted out of a reverie into reality.

St. David's has just been rudely awakened. Sorry if this sounds patronizing or glib, but as a congregation we have been blessed for many years with a warm bed, and the luxury of being able to hit that snooze button and sleep in. Who can blame us? There's a chill in the morning air, and it's so comfortable here in our cozy blankets.

But it's a new day. The birds are singing and the air is fresh. The sun wants us to get up and greet the dawn.

So now the question becomes: what do we do with our day?

That's what we want to answer over the next few months. Nothing has been scripted, nothing is cast in stone. There are several paths available to us, but we must be prepared to make the effort – this stuff doesn't happen automatically, nor should we expect others to make it happen for us.

We must also choose our path wisely, with an open heart and a trust in God. As well as trust and respect for each other.

The board recognizes this has been a difficult last few months. We are planning to bring in an outside consultant to help the congregation come together and develop a shared vision to help us decide how to move forward. We have options but how do we choose? Our two planning teams have begun developing details of how, when, who and what. While this is happening we will also put our heads and hearts together – as a Christian family – and get clear about the *why*. Ultimately we need to combine our dreams for the future with the practicalities of how to achieve those dreams.

And then we need to get out of bed, have a cup of coffee, and seize the day.

*Emmanuel Huchet*



Hopefully by now you all have received the stewardship material for 2012. Though we don't know yet exactly where we'll be, we do know *that* we'll be! We'll continue to be a community of faith together, joined by friendship and connected by the Spirit of Christ, which is the essence of our collective body. We'll still be called to bring good news and grace to a hurting world. And all of this will still need your support of time and money.



Please mail or e-mail your pledge forms **by Friday, December 9 at the latest.** Better yet, bring them in your hand when you come to church on **Sunday, December 11.** In addition to special music in the service and a Carol Sing after the service, we'll have a cake to go with your coffee or tea just to say *thank you!*



## Quiet Christmas Service

***This year on Thursday, December 15, 8:00pm – 8:45pm***

*Please note the change of day and time*

Our quiet Christmas service is held in the sanctuary brightened by candles, deepened by prayer and music, poetry and scripture. We're delighted members of the choir can join us this year. This service is especially for those wishing to pause, breathe, center, acknowledge loss, and step into a time and place of deep peace.

## *Carols in Advent?*

*When can we sing carols this year?*

This is the perennial question.

I love Christmas carols. They're a thread to my past and one of the real joys of the season. When asked a good time to sing Christmas carols, my daughter, Katherine, answered, "Whenever I'm in a good mood, no matter what time of the year!" Needless to say, she loves Christmas.

Naturally, several in our congregation want to sing Christmas carols in the weeks leading up to Christmas, not only on Christmas Eve, which seems to some to be anti-climatic if you wait that long.

But there's the liturgical rub: most Christmas carols celebrate the birth of Jesus. Naturally. But Advent is the season of waiting, of preparation, anticipation and hopeful expectation. Advent is a time to stand on your tip-toes, eager to see what's coming from the horizon. In worship, the scripture readings are about this very anticipation of the birth.



So each year, we strive to find a happy balance between throwing ourselves into the season of carols and...waiting. This year, in addition to some beautiful Advent music, here are some ways you can satisfy your seasonal yearnings and sing carols:

- ❖ Advent Workshop, November 27 – After dinner, we'll close the evening in the sanctuary with a carol sing with candles.
- ❖ Advent Retreat (December 2-4) – Carols included.
- ❖ Quiet Christmas service (December 15) – Carols that are, of course, quiet (instrumental and sung)
- ❖ *New!* Worship, December 11 – After our service, the children will come back to the sanctuary to join us for a 15 minute Carol Sing (11:00 – 11:15 am), before a special coffee hour.
- ❖ December 18 – A few carols might wiggle into the service for our Advent Music Sunday.
- ❖ *New!* Wednesday, December 21 – *Here we go a wassailing!* Singers and plain ol' people in the spirit of the season will meander through our neighbourhood knocking on doors and singing carols to spread good cheer. Hot bevs after. (If it rains, we'll go to Park Royal).
- ❖ Christmas Eve, December 24 – Of course!
- ❖ Christmas Day, December 25 – All out singing!

## *Worship in December*

### **2012 Advent Theme: *Watchful Waiting***

November 27, **Advent Sunday of Hope**

Sermon: *What Are You Waiting For?*

Hew Gwynne singing "Come My Way, My Truth, My Life"

Rob Knopp, violin

Advent banners and wreath

December 4, **Advent Sunday of Peace**

Sermon: *The Waiting Room*

Marion Walsh singing "I Believe"

Communion

December 11, **Advent Sunday of Joy**

Sermon: *Are We There Yet?*

Special music with Celtic harp, violin, guitar, flute and voice!

Stewardship Celebration

Christmas Tree in the sanctuary

December 15 (Thursday), Quiet Christmas Service

8:00 pm – 8:45 pm Unwind and soak in the quiet beauty of the season to beautiful music and special readings.

December 18, **Advent Sunday of Love**

Music Sunday with the choir, pipes and violin

Sermon: *Is Someone Waiting with You?*

Hanging baskets

December 24, Christmas Eve

5:00 Family Christmas service

Youthful voices, trumpet and an always vibrant intergenerational service

10:00 Christmas with a Celtic note

Candles, traditional readings and beloved carols

Small bagpipes, violin, recorder, trumpet

December 25, Christmas Day (Sunday)

10:00 Pajama worship

Come for carols (choose one you love that we didn't have a chance to sing the night before or one you just want to sing again!) and a special Christmas story for this fun, relaxed, intergenerational service. Children and youth (and the youthful) are invited to wear pajamas, a robe and cozy slippers. Stay a minute after for Christmas cookies and tea in the lounge.

### **An unrushed hour...Thursdays in Advent**

(Dec. 8, 15 and 22) Drop in to the sanctuary *anytime* between 7 and 8:30 and breath your way into deep peace and tranquility. Let beautiful music and candlelight wash over you and create a sanctuary in time. Be still...Breath....Be....

## *Worship in January (first peek)*

**January 1, Happy New Year!** Come celebrate the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas, the beginning of 2012 and give thanks for the year that has been.

Bob Burrows preaching, Nicole Thomas Zysynski leads the music.

Communion Sunday

**January 8, Epiphany:** A Light for All Nations

Epiphany celebrates the child Jesus, the wise men from the East, and the star that guided them on their journey.



## *What's Happening...*

### **Bible Study**

Each Thursday you're invited to wade into, splash around and dive into the scriptures as we explore their meaning in our everyday challenges and delights of living. A small group meets from 11:30 – 12:30 in the Lounge to listen to the wisdom of these ancient texts. Feel free to drop in when you can.

**Note: We'll take a seasonal break from December 15, last session of the year, and will begin again on Thursday, January 19.**

## *Children Youth and Families*

**Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>....Christmas at Colleen's**

Junior and Senior youth are invited to a fireside Christmas event at the Blair home. Bring a potluck plate of cookies or other treats and we'll explore alternative Christmas gift giving ideas and play games. RSVP to [colleen@stdavidsunited.com](mailto:colleen@stdavidsunited.com)  
Address and directions will be sent via email.

Junior Youth: 4:30-6

Senior Youth: 6:30-8:30



**Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup> Christmas Out of the Cold Dinner**

Senior Youth are invited to help set up and serve a hot meal at First United Church along with other members of St. David's. If you would like to participate, please let Colleen know by December 4<sup>th</sup> and I'll pass the information along to Cynthia and reserve a space in my car if you need a ride.

### **Christmas Visiting...**

Colleen would like to visit some of our elderly congregation members sometime in the week before Christmas. If any junior or senior youth are interested in accompanying me, please email me. Time has yet to be determined!



**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve...5 p.m. Service**

Junior and Senior youth are invited to help provide welcoming hospitality and leadership at the 5 p.m. family service on Christmas Eve. 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 6<sup>th</sup>**

### **Junior Youth – Sandwiches for the Lookout Shelter**

Junior youth are invited to meet from 4:30-6 at St. David's, to make sandwiches for the Lookout Shelter in North Vancouver. Please bring one or two loaves of bread and prepared sandwich filling for the amount of bread you bring. RSVP to [colleen@stdavidsunited.com](mailto:colleen@stdavidsunited.com)

### **Senior Youth – 6:30-8:30**

Details to be announced.

## **Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>**

Watch your email for details of youth events this night!

## *Children's Retreat...mark your calendars!*

A children's retreat for children ages 8-11 is scheduled for Feb. 24-26 at the Stillwood Retreat Center at Cultus Lake. Mark your calendars now and talk to Colleen for further information and registration details.

*Colleen will send out email reminder 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 students. **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!***

## **Families**

### **Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day Worship**

If your Christmas Day tradition is to stay in your PJ's as long as possible, no worries! Hop in the car in your pajamas and join us for a Christmas morning carol sing followed by Christmas treats. PJ's....no kidding!

### **Sunday, January 8th, 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.

# Remembering Others...

## Cold Weather Gifts:



First United Church

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  
Long underwear  
Gloves, toques and scarves

Socks  
Coats and warm outerwear  
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 1<sup>st</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> and it will be delivered to First United or the Lookout Shelter.**

## Outreach

**Out of the Cold** – December 16<sup>th</sup> . Please contact Cythia Sedun or the office if you can help.

Thank you to all who supported Outreach activities on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> it was a busy and meaningful Sunday! The Fair Trade Bazaar with Ten Thousand Villages allowed us to enjoy shopping, ethically *and* 15% of total sales proceeds were donated to St. David's Outreach initiatives. Our gratitude to Arnaldo, Mariane and Yuki from Ten Thousand Villages (the store on Denman).

Several also generously supported alternative gift-giving through Korogocho. Thanks to Joan Burrows for the beautiful hand-made cards and all the work she does with this ongoing Outreach program.

### Christmas Hamper Program



The Christmas Hamper project was once again a great success – with special thanks to the St. David's Community! You can still participate! If you would like to contribute in this way and haven't had the chance please contact Leanne in the office or Beth Weese.

Volunteers from Ray Cam Community Centre, will pick up and deliver the Christmas Hampers to many very happy families living in the downtown eastside area and all associated with Centre. They are grateful to be able to give a gift to families in need at this time of year and St. David's provision of hampers enables them to do this.

The Outreach Committee is aware of the many ways members and friends of St. David's contribute their time and resources to others in an effort to alleviate the hardship of poverty. That you have chosen to contribute in this way is greatly appreciated.

## Korogocho

**Our contributions help to fund over 50 Home Day Cares, and to provide school uniforms and fees for orphans and vulnerable children** who otherwise would be unable to attend school.

Please remember Korogocho in your Alternative Gift Giving this Christmas! There are cards available for pick up in the Thanks to the many St. David's congregation members, and friends across the country, for your generous support of the CHILDREN OF KOROGOCHO FUND!

Already we have raised enough money to match last year's support of this project of the St. David's OUTREACH COMMITTEE. We partner with an African NGO, CYEN (the Children and Youth Empowerment Network), working in the impoverished community of Korogocho, on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya.

Staff person DAVID OKETCH writes on November 13, 2011:

"...As always we continue to be grateful for the support you have provided in accelerating development in Korogocho. In addition and most profoundly we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for you, your friends and all the well-wishers in Vancouver and all over Canada for all you have done and continue to do for us over the years and also for the on-going fundraiser that you are currently undertaking on our behalf.

The children, families and community of Korogocho are grateful for all the support and we wish you God's blessing."

(signed) **David Oketch and the CYEN-Korogocho Community**



## Update on the Al-Azaizeh family

Update on the Al-Azaizeh family and other Newcomer families who were sponsored as refugees by interdenominational faith-based groups and now call Canada their home

Please join us as the sponsors from eleven North Shore churches look forward to celebrating Peace, Hope, Love and Joy with this family and other newcomer families throughout December, but particularly at a secular Christmas event on **Dec. 17th. from 2 - 4:30 pm. at South Burnaby**



**United Church**, which promises to be filled with fun, skits music and dances by brave sponsors and members of the Newcomer families. You are invited. **Please RSVP by contacting St. David's administrator Leanne Gilhuis at 604.922.3961, or Becky Knapton-Outreach Chairperson at 604.980.0891/ [becky@canken.net](mailto:becky@canken.net).** It will be a wonderful chance for members of the St. David's community to meet and make welcome these families who have been sponsored and come from refugee camps in Syria to find a new and better life here in our part of Canada.

**For your interest, please see an article in the Nov. 18, 2011 Vancouver Sun:**

***Indomitable spirit of ESL students inspired Burnaby principal to pen book*** By JANET STEFFENHAGEN

Read more: <http://www.vancouversun.com/news/canada-in-afghanistan/Indomitable+spirit+students+inspired+Burnaby+principal+book/5734813/story.html#ixzz1eVXuuuSI>

The inspiring article accessed through the website is about the school the Al-Azaizeh family attends. Qods & Ali go to Edmonds Community School, and parents Senaa & Enam attend daily English Language lessons, Enam in the afternoon and Senaa at night ("So that I can look for work"). One-year-old Omar had his first dental check up through their Strong Start Program. Qods & Ali have had dental work through a UBC program to which Fraser Health Dental Program busses about 30 Edmonds Community School children, every Tuesday afternoon.

**For a truly eye-opening article about people who came to the Vancouver area as refugees from the Al Hol camp in Syria, see the video**

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2011/07/201172074512442665.html>

## *Volunteers for Inglewood?*

Several Sundays a month a cadre from Inglewood Care Facility join us for worship. Elise carefully and conscientiously arranges a van to drop them off and pick them up so they can come for worship. Elise invites any who would like to volunteer at Inglewood during group activities to please let her know. She works in the same area where our own Ed Greidanus resides. No special training is needed, just the desire to make contact, offer support and good company. Please call Leanne at the office at 604-922-3961 or e-mail [admin@stdavidsunited.com](mailto:admin@stdavidsunited.com).

# *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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.heifer.org)