



"In The Orchard" Newsletter

Orchard Valley United Church of Canada
Advent Newsletter, November 30, 2014



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"For unto us a child is
born, unto us a son is
given; and the
government will be upon
his shoulder, and his
name will be called
"Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of
Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

Rev. Karen's Advent Message

The season of Advent begins the new year of the Christian calendar and draws us into four weeks of preparation for the Christmas season. The word "Advent" simply means "coming". Christmas is coming and there is so much to do. As we are well aware, long lists of things to do can overwhelm us as the month of November comes to a close. Decorating, baking, gift buying - all demand our attention. For me, I need the reminder that Advent provides, that in all of this,

God continues to be active in our lives. No matter how busy it gets, we are never alone. I cherish the opportunity to think about what the season really is all about, the birth of the one who, as he grew up, never lost his closeness to God ... the one whose life demonstrates for us, the reality of God's great and powerful love for all. We will spend time in worship preparing ourselves to receive this wonderful gift. The music, the decorated sanctuary, the special events of-

ferred by Orchard Valley United Church will help calm our spirits, bring joy to our hearts, and knit us together in expectation of the Christmas celebration. My heart-felt prayer is that you will join with us in the preparation throughout the Advent season. May the blessings of the season be yours, and as you join family and friends in celebration this Christmas, may you take time to give thanks for the birth of Jesus, the Christ - God's gift to us!

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Annika's Advent Message

Advent is traditionally seen as a time of waiting, but it's more than that. When I was a kid, we had a couple of different ministers who had hosted "Family Advent Preparation Day" usually involving Advent calendars or decorations for the church. As a teen I was always pleased to be asked to decorate the church's Christmas Tree. It was somewhere around the time of working 20-30 hours a week while being in school full time, that I became less enthusiastic about Advent. Last year, we purchased a house and moved during Advent leaving me commuting 2.5 hours or camping at the manse on an air mattress. I'm not sure when we put the tree up and bought presents, at least I remember there was a tree and presents....

I'm on a mission to rejuvenate my Advent experience this year though. I want Advent to be more than a time

of waiting for it to be over. This year I'm committing to diligently doing those little preparation activities that "unwrap" Christmas. I am hoping that while I wait to celebrate the birth of the Historical Jesus and the Cosmic Christ with you, I will relearn how to slow down and to walk through Advent with intention and excitement. Maybe this will become my New Year's Resolution, appropriately beginning on the eve of the Christian Church's New Year. After all, Advent is about new beginnings too. It's about taking what you've got and working with it.

Mary and Joseph were dealt a bad hand, yet they worked through things and managed to make family and relationships meaningful for their children. That's spirit I'm looking for with my Advent resolution - enjoying the season regardless of what it throws at me. I will work at intentionally and deliberately choosing to be ok

and maybe even happy with what life throws at me. The Biblical Mary deals with everything thrown at her with poise and grace (at least in the public eye). She was dealing with an unplanned pregnancy, a difficult journey, inadequate accommodations, public accusations, midnight departures and threats against her family. Yet she still managed to raise a son that would inspire the world to love one another.

I've been saying for a while now that worship is what you make of it. Anytime we celebrate love; we worship. I'm choosing to make Advent a time of worship, amid the crazy and unpredictable, amid the snow and rain, full sinuses and full malls. I am choosing to act intentionally with love, to make new beginnings when I need to and to simply wait with love when I don't. I'm going to enjoy my Advent this year, because I choose to.



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to see what this little sheep gets up to throughout the Advent season.

From the Council by Valerie Mosher

As we enter the season of Advent, for me it is a time for reflection and thankfulness. It is a time to leave the business of the church and sitting in quiet reflection. Sometimes I believe we are moving too slowly towards "being Orchard Valley" and other times it seems like time is flying.

What I have never questioned is the community of our church. We need to nurture and to care deeply about each other even

those who at times seem unlovable. We need to practice outreach and to remember our community is larger than those we worship with. If we practice this daily and intentionally we will grow in our faith in ways we can only dream of and live the Christmas Story.

Valerie Mosher
Chair of Church Council

Come to the Cabaret!!!

On Dec 19th the Orchard Valley United Church will be the scene of a fun Christmas variety show and social evening. The evening will begin at 7 pm and the cost only \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 per family. Church members and their families will present many wonderful and varied acts. The MC for the event will be our very own Harvey Gilmore. Seasonal refreshments will be served. Plan now to attend and bring your friends.

Service schedule

Nov. 30 Advent 1 -
9 a.m. Wings
11 a.m. Roots

Dec. 7 Advent 2 -
9 a.m. Wings
11 a.m. Roots

Dec. 14 Advent 3
11 a.m. Combined worship:
Berwick Handbell Choir
3 p.m. Messy Nativity and
Pot Luck Supper

Dec. 21 Advent 4
11 a.m. Combined worship:
OVUC Cantata
7 p.m. Longest Night Service

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services:
4 p.m. - Children's Pageant and
Service
7 p.m. - Communion Service
11 p.m. - Covenant Service

Dec. 28 - 1st after Christmas:
11 a.m. - Combined worship

Helping at the Soup Luncheon By Amanda Dominey

I really liked helping with the soup luncheon in November (my first time). It was a nice atmosphere and a lot of nice ladies who are really helpful. They have a great line up to get the meals out

quickly and smoothly. The food was really good and they always have lots of community help to get all the food and to get it all done. The ladies

have lots of fun and made me feel welcome. I really enjoyed helping out and I hope to help out again and make

it so I can feel like I am a part of this church, and the more I can do to help, I will feel like I fit in more. The ladies are polite and they work hard to make things better for our church, and to

I hope that at the next soup luncheon I can be just as helpful or more if needed. What I will say in finishing is that there are great people and good food, and I hope to see more of us help or



come and enjoy the food. It is a chance to relax and be your self, and chat to friends, family and new faces. It was a great experi-

ence and it made me feel good. show the community that we care and that we will be there to bring in new people, and that we will be like a family to them.

Amanda and two of her boys: Jacob and Noah.

Reflections on Advent by Hilary Jones

There is something unique about the Christmas season compared to other times in the year. To me, the Christmas season is less about what some people would describe as the miracle of Jesus, and more about fostering the miracles of humanity.

Growing up, my sister and I had identical Advent calendars. They were felt with a little numbered pocket for each day, and a small candy cane on a ribbon that we could move each day, counting down until Christmas. Each year, my parents would pull them out right at the end of November and hang them on our bedroom doors. This tradition is one that we've held on to, even now that my sister and I are both adults. The only difference is that now I can't start moving my little candy cane right from the beginning of De-

ember. I have to wait until I'm home for the holidays. That seems appropriate to me though. Advent and the Christmas season wouldn't seem the same to me if I weren't with my family. For me, the beginning of Advent isn't dictated by the calendar, but by my personal life. Whenever I'm able to get home for the holidays and spend time with the people who I miss so deeply whenever I'm away is when Advent, and all that it stands for, begins to feel real in my world. That's when I can celebrate what I see as the meaning of the Christmas season, the miracles of humanity: the ability for people to intentionally and with full awareness, accept and love one another, to look honestly at another individual and respond with compassion.

Really, there isn't anything

about these things that restrict them to this particular time of year. Unfortunately for me, however, I have yet to master the ability to do this year-round. So for me, Advent is an established shift in daily living. It is a time when it seems natural to pause and appreciate, connect with, and reach out to loved ones. It is a socially sanctioned time to shift my priorities from work and being productive, to relationships and being loving. Perhaps it will serve as a reminder to myself that I am able to live with the intention of exemplifying these miracles of humanity. And maybe I'll learn to hold that with me a little longer each year. Maybe it will still feel real in my life even when I'm not yet home to move my little candy cane marker. But if not, I am thankful that there will always be next year's

longer each year. Maybe it will still feel real in my life even when I'm not yet home to move my little candy cane marker. But if not, I am thankful that there will always be next year's Advent to serve as another external reminder of my internal challenge: to foster a view of all individuals that is based in compassion.



Heather Hennigar prepares the Memorial Giving Tree. When a donation is made a red bow is removed and replaced by a white one. Let's make the tree all white by Christmas Eve!

Church Size Theory Summarized by Annika Sangster from Ministry in Changing Times

There are four different sizes of churches. Each size has many benefits which are easy to see. Each size also has a shadow side where things aren't so pleasant. One person's benefit might be another person's shadow. Transitioning between the sizes is tough and often riddled with conflict. Read on to identify which sized congregation you were previously a part of and to discover the benefits and the not so helpful stuff about Orchard Valley's current size.

Family Size Church – under 50 at worship

Characteristics: Personal ownership, The clergy is there for traditional pastoral care, High rate of pastoral turnover (minister stays on average 3-5 years), The congregation survives by not taking the minister seriously, Often perceived as the toughest place for ministers and is a traditional settlement spot

Pastoral Sized Church - 50-150 at worship

Characteristics: The minister is central to the functioning of the church, The minister must delegate or face burnout, Often perceived as the perfect size for clergy burnout, Expectations of the

minister are high and personal, Often oppressive time demands on the minister forcing them to choose, Growth depends on the popularity of the minister, Hard on the minister's family, Most small town churches are this size.

Program Sized Church – 150-350 at worship

Characteristics: Multiple clergy/leaders to provide multiple program, Lay leadership is vital, Clergy are still central, but role shifts to be more administrative: recruiting, planning, training, evaluating, coordinating, Minister is no longer able to "Just stop in", Minister helps people to arrive at consensus, Clergy act as motivators and trust builders, Very hard to get from Pastoral size to Program size without crisis

Corporate Sized Church – 350 or more at worship

Characteristics: Very high priority on high quality worship (one minister dedicated to worship alone), Music Program is top notch, Has a lead minister as a symbol of unity and stability, More complex than a program church, Multiple staff collegial, yet diverse, Staff must have fun working together, Leaders generate energy and momentum.

Godly Play by Annika Sangster

"Godly Play" is a form of worship designed and written by Episcopalian Priest, Jerome Berryman, which uses similar approaches as Montessori curriculum. Although it is designed for children, adults who willingly and fully engage in the process often find it to be a very fulfilling form of worship.

A Godly Play Circle has a similar rhythm and flow that a traditional Anglican or United Church of Canada worship with communion would have. The circle begins as soon as the participant crosses the threshold and joins the circle. The storyteller is prepped and ready to go. The stories are simple, often told with wooden figures and colourful felts. The storyteller is encouraged to tell the story from memory, enjoying holy moments of silence. The stories always end with times of wondering. The storyteller asks specific questions with the intention of relating the story to the participant's own life and sometimes encouraging the participant to simply wonder themselves. Once the time for wondering has concluded, partici-



pants are then encouraged to choose some work to do. Now work in Godly Play is different than work in the real world. Work in Godly Play is a time for reflection, but it is also a time for playing.

Traditionally participants are given a variety of things to play with: craft supplies, puzzles, Lego, any toy that encourages independent, creative play and any of the stories that have been told. The work time is a chance to practice creativity, co-operation (children often want to play with the same thing at the same times), and to learn the importance of playing or relaxing. Traditionally everyone comes back to the circle for a "feast", symbolic of communion. We have chosen to have our Godly Play Circle

right before the families on the run supper, a time of building relationships between all ages. It traditionally ends with a community prayer and a blessing for each participant as they leave. Our Godly Play Circle is open to any one of any age or ability who is willing to wondering and working at playing!

Children's Corner

Advent Wreath Activity

Colour the advent wreath and the four candles, then cut out the candles and add them to the wreath.

