



In the Orchard

Keeping Christmas

ROMANS, xiv, 6: He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord.

It is a good thing to observe Christmas day. The mere marking of times and seasons, when men agree to stop work and make merry together, is a wise and wholesome custom. It helps one to feel the supremacy of the common life over the individual life. It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then, by the great clock of humanity which runs on sun time.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the

foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can

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Keeping Christmas (cont.)

keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a

garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone. (From *The Spirit of Christmas* by Henry Van Dyke, c. 1905) by Charles Scribner's Sons and accessed on Project Gutenberg)

Each Sunday during Advent, a new addition is made to the Creche.



Where Two, Three, or the Masses Have Gathered

There was a question on CBC Radio a couple weeks back that asked, “when do you start listening to Christmas music?” If I was to call in, my answer would be something like, “when the radio starts to play them, and I have no choice but to either listen or shut it off.”

Christmas seems to start earlier and get bigger every year. There are the parades and festivals, special shopping days, big dinners, and over the top decorations on some homes.

As Advent leads into Christmas, as the spirit of the season often starts small and builds up through December, it does become a large extravaganza of colour and lights and tinsel and festive music. Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love slogans spread across store windows.

Nova Scotia ships a huge tree to Boston as an acknowledgement of our continuing gratitude of their assistance back in 1917. Soon the local Fire Department will be rolling down our street with sirens and lights and Santa onboard.

We’ve taken in community tree lighting along with great seasonal entertainment. I think Cheryl and I are actually going to schlep a real tree into the house this year and

break out the ornaments. There’s a lot of Christmas to love after all!

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.” - Matthew 18:20

Recently, I had the privilege of sharing communion with two others. It was a very moving experience of something holy happening in our midst. It was literally “where two or three are gathered”. We shared stories about our lives, our pain and our gladness. There were smiles, laughter, and tears . . . Although this experience came in a small room with limited light, we were surrounded by memories both recent and from ages past.

The only Christmas decoration I saw was a simple ornament – a sock made out of a swatch from the flannel jacket of a loved one who is now gone. Attached was a little note to acknowledge the life of the person to whom it belonged, and to whom they loved.

You may like to do things up big and get caught up in it all as the Spirit fills your heart and takes you into the footsteps of Jesus this new year. Or Advent may come to you in a lower key with quiet contemplation and deep personal meaning as the Spirit brings

Where the Masses (cont.)

those around you, and those who have departed, together again this year. For Cheryl and I it will be a mix of both.

However Advent and Christmas come to you, however you embrace it, may its deep meaning, spontaneous generosity, and peaceful contentment embrace you.

Let the warm glow found in the love of God, the forgiveness of Christ, and the strength of the Holy Spirit guide you now and into the richness of a life in faith.

May the peace of Christ fill your heart again this year.

Rev Don.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Greetings, “O Come about: remembering what it All You Faithful . . .” means to truly love; it triumphs over all other human emotions.

As we love to sing, we the faithful, have come once more to celebrate and remember the wonderful story that makes this season holy.

We are on our journey during this Advent season to Bethlehem where we celebrate the story of the birth of a sweet baby.

We all know that the arrival of all babies changes our very existence. Our lives are never quite the same as we ponder the miracle of new life. From the first tender moment we look into an infant’s eyes and feel its tiny hand holding onto our finger, we know the true meaning of love.

This is what this season is all about: remembering what it means to truly love; it triumphs over all other human emotions. Our Scriptures tell us that God gave us the gift of Jesus. Why? Because God loves the world and all its creatures. Oh yes, all creatures. That is why in our Bethlehem story we hear not only about the human characters, but the animals, and other spiritual beings, who were there to adore and protect this great wonder. Therefore we, in the United Church, are called ‘to live with respect in Creation’. All creation. As Jesus grew, through the love of his family and community, he was filled with wisdom and changed society’s way of thinking about kindness, justice, and walking gently with God,

who created everything out of love.

We are the inheritors of this gift.
It is what defines us as Christians.

So, this Christmas, no matter what is happening in the world, be filled with joy, and faithful to our precious story of the birth of a baby – that changed our world. Let us be thankful for the Prince of Peace.

*“O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.”*

In Christian love & peace,

Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte Youth &
Young Families Minister

“Be a Candle”

It has been hard to write this. The world seems to be in such turmoil that looking for joy has been a difficult thing. Everywhere seems to have so much conflict.

Yet the world has pretty much always had conflict. As a dear friend has reminded me, in all our history, there's only been ~180 years without a declared war somewhere.

In the time of Joseph and Mary, they had to travel long distances just because an oppressor state required them to do so, just to register for taxes; a journey that would have taken almost a week by foot and donkey.

If the chaos of the world around us could be described as sound, it would be a terrible sound - the cries of grief, despair, and fear would surely drown out any voice for peace or reason.

But the Bible doesn't describe the world in terms of sound - in fact the bible refers to 'a voice crying out in the wilderness' in the book of Isaiah - imagery that brings to mind a wilderness devoid of life, a place of silence.

There is a reason why I prefer the imagery of terrible times as dark times; in the midst of noise and chaos we may be unheard, but in a world that is experiencing darkness, if we can be even a candle's worth of light, we can shine and bring comfort.

As advent approaches, as Christmas nears, I encourage you to be a candle, a light to others to shine in the darkness. We all have the power to bring comfort and joy to those in need, whether it is in our donations to the hamper program or food bank, or how we volunteer to provide care

“Be a Candle” (cont.)

for others (even as simple as caring for the feet they walk on), or even just a kind smile to a stranger...we CAN make a difference. We CAN be a candle that helps light someone's way.

And maybe, if we listen closely in the

darkness, we can hear a newborn baby's cry, to bolster us to be a light to others.

I wish you every Christmas blessing, and the encouragement to shine.

Mindy Vinqvist-Tymchuk
Council chair



Being a Candle. Prayer Shawl Committee members Jean Millett, Sylvia Delisle and Helen Seymour proudly display the 28 red scarves the group has made for the Halifax AIDS Coalition for distribution to those in need of warmth this winter.

Strummers, Choir & Caroline This Season

In April of this year the decision was made to search for a Choir Director and an accompanist rather than one position of 'Music Director'. Orchard Valley is delighted to have Thea Koenig-Burton as permanent Choir Director with pianist/accompanist, Carmen Peng.

This Advent Season promises to be one with much music including a festival of Carols entitled "What Sweeter Music" by Mark Hayes, which will be presented by the OVUC Choir on December 17. Our lovely chimes will also make an appearance and if there is interest, the Chimes Choir

will start up again. The OVUC Steeple Strummers performed "When a Child is Born" and "Give me Oil in My Lamp" on the first Sunday of Advent.

At the Covenanter Church on Christmas Eve at 11:00 p.m. those in attendance will be treated to the lovely voice of Caroline Burton and the special music of the OVUC Choir.

Looking ahead, music for the Easter season is being considered and something special being planned. We are blessed to have such wonderful musical offerings for our worship services.



The choir, seen here singing during a service will be performing with Caroline Burton at Covenanter Church on Christmas Eve.

Orchard Valley is Back Home!

by Donna Murphy

There has been much work and many 'new' changes for Orchard Valley United Church since the last newsletter. Our move from the local Mall, in May of this year, to our newly renovated and expanded building at 130 Cornwallis Avenue was exciting and much work for many people. The first service there was held May 28th when in his opening remarks, Rev Don said "words really won't work today-if you could look inside our hearts today, you would weep for the joy you see there; for everything that has gone on this week" (during the move). As a congregation we are still feeling our way around this new space which was rededicated during a service on September 17.

The special afternoon rededication service was attended by many visiting clergy, regional council representatives and a B.D. Stevens representative; some of whom took part in the service (Mindy Vinqvist-Tymchuk, OVUC Council Chair; Shauna MacDonald, Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council President; previous OVUC ministers Rev Gloria Churchill, Rev. Ivan & Judy Norton). The service began by gathering outside around the main entrance where all

were welcomed and invited to enter by Rev Don. Also during this service was the Covenanting Ceremony of our Minister for Youth and Families (Supply), Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte.

In the last year, many items from the amalgamated United Churches in Eastern Kings County were moved out of various storage locations where they had been since 2013 and reviewed for usefulness. A piano is in the Choir Room and stain glass windows are in storage at OVUC from the former St. Andrew's in Wolfville and await future plans. The grand piano in the sanctuary and a commercial dishwasher from St. Paul & St. Stephen's in Kentville, was reused in our renovated kitchen.

A lovely round stain glass 'orchard' window from the Greenwich United Church awaits installation. The electric organ in the sanctuary, originally used in the New Minas UC, remains available for use here. These items mentioned, are only a very few of the many moved, stored and moved many times more; but, the most important part of Orchard Valley United Church is the coming together of the people of these foundation congregations who persevered to do their best to make it work and make it strong.

We are the United Church of Canada presence in Eastern Kings County. Are there things which may have been done

differently? - perhaps. Are there things we can improve upon? - always. It is a journey and we are on it together.



The beginning of the re-dedication ceremony was held outside.

The congregation sang "Draw the Circle Wide" in our spacious new sanctuary.

Our interim ministers, Judy and Ivan Norton, wished us the best.

Rev. Gloria Churchill, a former minister of OVU celebrated our determination.

Shauna MacDonald, Bermuda-N.S. Regional Council President brought blessings.

OVU Welcomes Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte

by Carol Dewar

Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte is our new Supply Minister for Youth and Young Families. She has done both congregational ministry and chaplaincy for over 25 years of ministry in the UCC. She is a graduate of Acadia (BA-Wolfville, NS), AST (M Div-Halifax, NS) and ETS (D Min-Detroit, Mi). She is a specialist in cultural and pastoral/spiritual practice. Linda retired in 2014 and has never stopped serving congregations across Canada including three years in Yellowknife NWT, where she became very involved in the MMIW&G and Every Child Matters Movements. She has served in all ten provinces and three territories and has been called a 'tumble weed' by her colleagues, as she is willing to go anywhere the Church needs help.

Linda is happy to join OVUC as a part of the team ministry with Rev Don, Rachel, Thea, Carmen and Doug and all the valuable volunteers that give their time and talent to make OVPC an Affirming and inviting sacred place.

She is passionate about sharing Creator's love through stories about Jesus and the peace of Christ that passes all understanding with

all, especially children and youth.

Linda's partner is Ari Snyder, (a concert pianist & composer) and they share an interfaith union – Christian & Jewish. They begin their Sabbath at sunset on Friday and end it at sunset on Sunday. Their home in Wolfville is a place of shalom and their table is always open to share with all. Linda is a vegetarian, but she is willing to sit with fellow tax payers and meat eaters.

On September 17, Orchard Valley United Church held a special service, beginning with rededication of OVUC for our extensive renovations and the building of our bright new sanctuary. The second part of the service was a Celebration of the Covenant between Orchard Valley Pastoral Charge, the Bermuda-NS Regional Council of the United Church of Canada and Rev. Linda and God. The service started with prayers, scripture, reflection by Rev. Don, and then her partner Ari Snyder played a beautiful piece called I Giorni

David Hewitt, the first minister of the New Minas United Church, and today representing the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council, was the presider of the Celebration of Covenant, and led Rev. Linda, first in

her commitment of her promises, then the congregation in their promises and support of the Pastoral Charge, and finally members of the Bermuda-Nova Scotia Regional Council in supporting her in her ministry with us.

Nancy Handrigan, as member of the M & P committee presented Rev. Linda with a children's bible. Jane McDonald, as member of the Christian Development Committee, presented her with a curriculum book. Dale MacArthur, as a member of the Affirming Committee gave her

an affirming candle. Two of our youth presented Rev. Linda with an orange t-shirt, a symbol that every child matters. It was a moving service with some of our children leading in singing This Little Light Of Mine. Rev. Linda remarked that she has been a minister for many years, but that this was the first time as specifically as minister to Youth and Young Families.

We warmly welcome Rev. Linda to her year with us while we search for a permanent minister for Youth and Young Families.



Rev. David Hewitt, Regional Minister for Bermuda-Nova Scotia, makes the Declaration of Covenant welcoming Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte to the Bermuda-Nova Scotia ministry team.

Expanded Kitchen Major Benefit of Renovation

by Donna Murphy

As a result of the renovations to our OVUC facility came a wonderful kitchen which was designed by a sub-committee of the Facilities Committee. This kitchen could be certified as a 'commercial' kitchen in the future if desired; but, it also brings with it the responsibility to prepare/handle food properly.

Thus, on October 18, a four and a half hour Food Safety Handling Course was held at OVUC with 22 (14 from OVUC) in attendance. Members of OVUC as well as members of various sectors of the community were welcomed and it was conducted by Alan McMullen of the Federal Food Inspection Agency.

Some participants were taking this course for the first time, while others took it for re-certification. This course involved education on the proper handling of food and use of kitchen equipment and on sanitation.

Participants found it informative, well presented and a serious matter regarding the cleanliness of the kitchen and the handling and preparation of food.

The goal of having a commercial grade kitchen, as well as taking the opportunity to improve on the previous kitchen, was in mind when this kitchen was designed. John Foote, Cheryl Manzer, Dave Murphy, Chair, Helen Seymour and Debbie Selig made up this sub-committee. It asked for input from the congregation, visited other community kitchens for ideas and put together a model design to work with. All proved worthwhile.

The contractor, B.D. Stevens was helpful with designing and ensuring all was up-to-date with current kitchen standard codes - national, provincial and municipal. This sub-committee has been dissolved and a Kitchen Committee has been formed to oversee concerns regarding the kitchen as we go forward.



Farewell to Pastor Katie

by Donna Murphy

Another significant change was saying farewell to Pastor Katie Logan as she completed her covenant with OVUC and took on her own charge as Minister for Riverport and First South Pastoral Charges on Nova Scotia's South Shore.

At the same time, Katie will complete her Master's of Divinity at the Atlantic School of Theology and is a candidate for ordination

with the United Church of Canada. Katie was with OVUC for over two years as Youth Minister and left a lasting impression on all who met her.

Our farewell service/celebration for Katie was held on June 18 and included presentations, special music and although Rev Don could not be with us he joined via video and gave Katie a very moving farewell address.

All the best Katie!



Micah Bornemann-Davis and her brother Gabe hold the banner that the group made for Katie. Seated by Katie is Owen Leonard-Ford then Raychel and Maddie Leveille with their grandmother Jane McDonald. Andy Pitter, at the lectern, led the congregation in the CGIT clap.

Pastor Katie at the pulpit in her last service at Orchard Valley.

Dinner Theatre Raises Over \$7000 For MYF

by Sylvia Jacquard

A Nov. 12-13 dinner theatre fundraiser for Meet Your Feet raised over \$7000 for this much needed appreciated Orchard Valley outreach project.

The brainchild of MYF founder Cheryl Manzer, the “Foot in Mouth Diner Dinner Theatre” was written by Rev Robyn Brown-Hewitt with set design and setup by Steve and Lisa Manzer. The kitchen staff was Cheryl, Eric, Lisa and Steve Manzer, Beth Patillo, John Foot, Darlene Hennigar, Lisa & Mary Cormier, and Audrey Dorey. Thea Koenig Burton was responsible for the theatre production which was a comedic look at what happens when a shoe store and a cafe owned by Maryjane Marten (Cheryl Sellsted) and her husband Doc Marten (Gordon Whiteway see left) both facing hard times, join together. The production began with everybody singing “Shoe Shopping”. The succeeding musical numbers were interspersed with serving of the four course meal of hush puppies and dip, a green salad, Lasagna and apple crisp. Peter Oleskevich was Biff Wellington. “These Boots Were Made Were Walking” was sung by Nancy Singatcha (Angela Whiteway) to Clark

Rockport (Julien Davis). Rev. Burke N. Stock (Don Sellsted) sang “Blue Suede Shoes” followed by “Proud Mary” sung by Penny Loafer (Donna Murphy) and finally Barbie Blisters (Heather Hennigar) sang “High Heeled Shoes Blues”. The Gigi Dancers, Thea and Micah Bournemann-Davis, performed during each song.

The band, made up of David Murphy and Wayne MacDonald on guitar, Dale Griffin on piano, and Thelma MacDonald on drums led the final song “Boot-Scooting Boogie” to which the whole cast danced and joined in on the chorus.

Thanks to those who donated to the silent auction run by Vera Burke and Audrey Dorey each night.





Donna Murphy as Penny Loafer (p. 14)

Rev. Don as Rev. Burke N. Stock and Cheryl Sellsted as Mrs. Maryjane Marten.

Angela as Nancy Singatcha sings to Clark Rockport (Julien Davis).



Voyagers Have Worship Sharing Circle

by Rev. Dr. Linda Marcotte

This Autumn has been an exciting one for our Voyagers at Orchard Valley. Among the many events we shared was that they took a trip down Memory Lane.

Micah, Gabe, Owen, William, Raychel, Maddie, Jasmine, Noah, Katia, Wesley, Teagan, Addie, Sawyer, Norah and Jazzy, together, invited several Senior Members (at least to the Voyagers!) to come and share their memories of when they were young and attended Sunday School in their church and their experience of other significant events in their communities. The guests wanted to tell how important church is to them,

and how they have valued the church.

Vivien MacPhee, Mary Jane Penny, Edith Scaife, Jean Millett, Bill Woodman and Susanne Sweatman were welcomed to our Worship Sharing Circle.

Vivien, Mary Jane and Edith shared their experience of learning the Bible stories from their Sunday School teachers. The Voyagers were amazed that in their time, there were multiple classes for many age groups – sometime there were over a hundred children in different classes. And, there were also youth and young people groups who gathered at the church for dances, picnics, church suppers, and fun.

Voyagers Sharing Circle (cont.)

They remembered, with fondness their ministers and Sunday School teachers.

They told us that Sunday School was sometimes on different days from Sunday, and when it was on Sunday, it was not just an hour worship service, but sometimes lasted hours. The church, in those days, was the place to meet with the community and their friends on Sundays and sometimes week days. They especially learned respect for their elders.

Jean, who was nursing in the North, brought artifacts, carvings and toys made by hand, to share with the Voyagers and told wonderful stories of living and nursing among the Inuit People in the North, especially the children in the community. She had so many lovely memories to share and helped them understand what it means to live and work in a different culture.

Bill helped our young ones understand why it is important to honour Remembrance Day and Veterans.

Our Voyagers listened well and asked appropriate questions. Bill answered in a manner that they could understand the significance of what happened. He particularly empathized that living a life of peace, as we contribute to the wholeness in our community, is paramount to our wellbeing and relationship with God and others, including respecting nature.

Susanne came with her daughter, Bev Thompson, and shared her precious memories of her own family and church. The Voyagers were very happy to hear of the love that is shared in families.

One of my goals with the Voyagers is to help them understand that they are valued members of our church. Having mentors, such as our guests, is important to understand what we are all about as Christian people who choose to live out our faith through this church.

It is my hope that our Voyagers will remember, with fondness, their time at Orchard Valley United Church.



Veteran Bill Woodman speaks to Owen Leonard-Ford, Katia (seated on floor), Wesley and Noah Duyan as they make thank you cards for veterans on Remembrance Day Sunday.