

Easter Newsletter 2010



A Message from our Minister



Mount Seymour United Church

Inclusive, Intelligent, Inquisitive, Involved

1200 Parkgate Ave., North Vancouver, BC
604-929-1336 www.mtseymourunited.com

And on the seventh day, God rested (Genesis 2)

Have you ever tried to type a letter without hitting the space bar in between words? The end result is an indecipherable jumbo. The same can be said about our lives. If we never make space to breathe, to pray, to reflect or simply to play, our lives stop making sense.

The ancient practice of sabbath keeping is a deeply rooted biblical tradition. In scripture the original purpose of observing sabbath was to remind us of the goodness of creation and our connection to the Divine. The story of the Exodus tells how sabbath became a time for the Hebrew people to recall their liberation from captivity. Eventually, even the land would lay fallow every seventh year as the practice of keeping sabbath was extended beyond the human community. In the Gospels, Jesus is often found stealing away from the crowds and his disciples for rest and prayer.

In 1995, the United Church of Canada recognized that beyond the weekly practice of sabbath that shapes and forms our life of faith, an extended time of sabbatical for ministry personnel would offer a time of renewal benefiting both ministers and the congregations they serve. The church defined a sabbatical as a period of at least three consecutive months intentionally set aside by ministry personnel in pastoral relationships as an occasion for reflection, recreation, and revitalization, unencumbered by their usual and customary responsibilities, and yet still receiving their usual remuneration and benefits. Ministry Personnel are now eligible to request a sabbatical after serving a

congregation for a minimum of five years. The national church's sabbatical policy states that sabbatical finds expression in study, rest, spiritual retreat, and prayer.

I am delighted that the Council of Mount Seymour United approved my own request for a sabbatical this past fall. On April 16th I will begin an extended period of leave from my ministerial duties here at the church that will continue through until August 15th. During this time I'm looking forward to a trip to the Mercy Center in San Francisco for 8 days of silent retreat; a workshop with renowned preacher Barbara Brown Taylor; the experience of being in church with my children on Sunday mornings so I can relate to those of you who do it every week; the chance to check out how other churches do things; and time for cleaning out closets, attending Pilates classes, catching up on my reading, cooking good food and pondering life on my deck. Most of all I'm hoping for space to fan the embers my spiritual life and savour the moments of being with family.

While I'm away I will pray for you and ask you to do the same for me. I will count on Kathryn Clinton our office administrator to keep me informed about illnesses and life passings to shape my prayers. If you have something you really want me to know about you can pass it on to me through her. I won't promise that I will think of you always, but I will think of you often as I see this time not as a break from ministry, but rather a vital part in my ministry with you.

I could not be happier with the arrangements we have made for the continuation of ministry in my absence. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find some words from Kimiko Karpoff who will be joining us half time beginning April 15 with primarily responsibility for worship and pastoral care. Wade's hours will also be increased by 10 hours a week allowing him to lead the Living the

Questions group after Easter, attend council meetings and keep an eye on the big picture here at the church. The Worship Team has been working hard at securing speakers from various faith traditions to share their wisdom with us from time to time. The children and youth choirs are preparing a musical to be presented in worship on mother's day and we've been invited to worship with our friends at St. Clare in the Cove on May 23rd to hear guest preacher Dr. Richard Leggett. Please watch for emails and bulletin notices regarding these and other events!

Words can't express how grateful I am to all of you for setting me free to take this important leave. I have felt remarkably well supported by the Ministry and Personnel Committee, the Council, Worship Team and Staff in the days and months leading up to this undertaking. I know how blessed I am to be in community with you and I trust that when I return you will receive a well rested, inspired and grounded leader.

I hope that this will also be a renewing time for you as a congregation. I know you will care for each other well. The experience of different preachers in the pulpit will surely broaden your experiences of the sacred and a set of new eyes looking in on our life together always offers fresh perspective.

So, here's to hitting the space bar!

Rev. Nancy Talbot



Kimiko at the celebration and commissioning of the water tanks in Ghana last January.

Who's In Charge during Nancy's Sabbatical? (April 16 - July 15)

Kimiko Karpoff

604-929-4114

kimiko_k@telus.net

Coordination and Leadership of Worship

Pastoral Care Emergencies and Memorial Services

Wade Lifton

778-230-1689

Wade_o_rama@shaw.ca

Living the Questions Group

All adult and intergenerational events

Administrative issues related to the work of Council

Kathryn Clinton

604-929-1336

kclinton@telus.net

All questions no one else can answer!

Meet Kimiko

Hello Good People of Mt. Seymour United:

What a blessing to have the opportunity to journey with you while Nancy is taking spiritual time for rest and renewal. I have been asked to take responsibility for Sunday morning worship for the three months of her sabbatical. To this, I bring a spirit of adventure and the belief that all of our senses long to worship. I will also be responsible for offering emergency pastoral care and memorial services as needed.

I am a student of diaconal ministry. I have also worked in ministry in both United and Anglican settings for more than ten years. For the past two summers I worked at Naramata Centre as a Program Resource. Last year I was the interim minister for youth and young families at Northwood United in Surrey. Prior to that I spent five years as Community/Ecumenical minister at Shiloh-Sixth Avenue United in New Westminster. I am also trained in and training in the Healing Pathway at Naramata Centre and am part of the healing group at Northwood. I have recently returned from an exposure trip to Ghana, Africa with Wade. We hope to have an opportunity to share with you some stories from our experience.

My family includes my partner Paul, who is a musician, and our thirteen-year-old son Finn, also a musician. Occasionally I will join them jamming, although playing music is more of a delight for me than a talent. Playing guitar and singing is one of my spiritual practices.

I eagerly await our time together and pray that it will be a blessing for all of us.

Kimiko

Youth Group News

What is the youth group reading?

Me to We by Craig and Marc Kielberger

What is the youth group playing?

The latest fave is *Apples to Apples* - the game of hilarious comparisons. A fantastic game for youth and adults!

Where is the youth group giving?

Through Kiva.org we've contributed to micro-credit loans around the world - our most recent loans were to Mexico and Paraguay.

Upcoming youth opportunities...

Spiritual Retreat @ Naramata Centre

April 30-May 2

www.naramatacentre.com

May Retreat @ Cultus Lake

May 21-24

www3.telus.net/vanyaya

Go Project mission trip in Toronto

July 24-August 5

www.theproject.ca

The Breath of God

Elizabeth Petersen and Kate Staude created this poem together in Godly Play, using magnetic poetry.

We breathe the breath of God

Dark truth

Remember beauty

Ancient nature

Suffer tears

Create hope

Play or laugh

Believe every journey

Love the spirit

Dream of wisdom



On Sunday mornings, beyond the sanctuary...

Children have been learning that play dough does not go in the desert box...exploring and wondering about parables like the good shepherd and the mustard seed...creating prayerful poems using magnetic poetry. Youth have been watching videos and chatting about what scripture means in their lives...lighting candles as a practice of prayer...making forgiveness dessert pizzas - forgiveness has never been so sweet! If you want to know more about what goes on in those rooms - ask one of the kids!

Constant gratitude to Kathryn Ferris and Judy Ashbourne for their dedication to the Sunday morning youth programs, and to all the passionate Godly Play leaders - Jen-Beth, Ward, Anna, Laura, Ruth, Bette, Sherrill, and the Barbs (Ralph & Smallridge)!

Constant seeking for folks to spend Sunday morning experiencing the sacred with children and youth, in leadership as a Godly Play door person, storyteller, or youth program leader. Please be in touch with Wade (wade_o_rama@shaw.ca) if you are able.

Camille Rocks!

We're super grateful to Camille Noullett who led the children and youth ministry while Wade was away.

Thoughts from Ghana (excerpts from Wade's e-mails)

'God Firts' - I'm back in Ghana, where taxis often have religious stickers on them, sometimes with spelling errors. This one was supposed to say 'God First' but ends up looking more like 'God Farts'.

...

It amazes me that being here increases my love for Ghana and also increases my love for Canada. One does not diminish the other. I also observe patterns of behaviour here that perpetuate poverty and contribute to their struggles, and I wonder why these patterns continue. Then I look at my own culture, and it is so clear the behaviours that lead to the stress, isolation and loneliness that are often the struggles in western society. I can see the patterns of busyness and consumerism, clutter and technological distraction, and know very well the results. But while trying to make life-giving choices each day, I still find myself participating in those behaviours more often than not. The gift of the perspective from here is that I am seeing these things with more clarity and less judgment. I feel inspired to return home and make life-giving choices in my own cultural context.

...

Today I will get into a metal tube with wings that will carry me to Canada. Bizarre and wonderful. I'm coming home rested and renewed, with more learning than I can fit in my bag.

A Letter from Wade

To Mount Seymour United-

As many of you know, I have been in a formal process of discernment since June. It's become clear that it is time for me to step down from my position as Children & Youth Minister. This has been a difficult decision, and I've spent a lot of time seeking clarity that it is the right one.

In this process of asking questions about my deep purpose and my work in the world, questions have led to more questions, and it is clear that I need to be stepping back from leadership and responsibility, and focusing on a time of learning. I have a feeling of being on fire, and an awareness that there is need for space between the logs in order for the fire to thrive.

I will stay on until the end of August, then shift my focus to studies at VST and other learning

opportunities in the area of justice and sustainability.

There are a few things I need you to know about how I am feeling about this decision...

- *I am grateful.* When I came to Mount Seymour over three years ago, I was deeply in need of a spiritual home and community, and I feel so blessed to have found that here in such depth and quality.
- *I am sad.* In this time of such life and vitality in this place, it is disappointing to step back from this work and this team of colleagues.
- *I am committed to this place.* While stepping back from my work here, I still consider Mt. Seymour to be my home, and will continue to be part of the life here.

Something I have been learning in this time of discernment is that one of my core values is integrity. My deepest gifts are only available to share when my actions and words are congruent with my inner journey. Thank you for receiving this decision, and for the ways you have and continue to support my journey.

As I write this, the perfect orange sphere that is the African sun in the early morning is rising up through the clouds. It is a wonder that we are under one sky.

With gratitude and love~

Wade

A Search Team to replace Wade has been named: Ward Branch, Bette Shippam and Laura Staude along with 2 representatives from the youth and children's communities.



Living the Questions2 Returns for Part II



10 sessions begins Monday, April 12 at 7 pm
led by Wade Lifton

10 lunch sessions begins Wed. April 14 at 11 am
led by Jen-Beth Fulton

Cost is \$25.00 for new participants. Please sign up on the Action Table or at the office.

Living the Questions is an open-minded study program that strives to create an environment where participants can interact with one another in exploring new thoughts about Christianity without being given all the answers or told what we have to believe. These are *come as you can* groups.

Living the Questions

(What I've been up to on Monday nights)

It was a great disappointment a few weeks ago, when I learned that we had come to our final session in our Monday night LTQ group. I had become accustomed to stretching my mind (and my vocabulary) away from the status quo and into the mystery of God. More disturbing was the fact that I missed a couple of sessions; yet with a patient facilitator (Rev. Nancy) and a little homework on my part, I was able to regain the momentum of seeing a myriad of new insights.

LTQ is about being in a safe, respectful place with like minded people who, although from various backgrounds and experiences, share the common trait of spiritual yearning. It's also about realizing that it is OK to ask, probe and analyze. For me, it was as if the burden of uncertainty becomes diminished by the inherent right of our faith to incorporate new ideas, and receive "bread for the journey"

LTQ is the post-modern paradigm shift of the traditional Bible study group.

I remember from my youth, being tasked with the responsibility of memorizing selected scripture that would ultimately form an inflexible dogma, and serve as the panacea for all our troubled despondent hearts.

Additionally, those sixty-six books formed a solid template of literal interpretation for the "born again" Christian. While we all have (save to your favourite file) passages of great comfort and meaning to our lives, there is still so much more to explore and to revisit in a more enlightened, and uninhibited way.

If I were asked what was the most important thing that I learned in the LTQ sessions so far I would have to quote from Marcus Borg saying "the bible is a lens through which we see God."

I think that opening the bible is not unlike opening a beautifully wrapped gift from a friend. There is an element of curiosity, mystery, and love. Yet just as that beautifully wrapped gift is but a single facet in the bond of friendship, so too is the bible in our journey of Christian faith.

I'm reminded of some words from T.S. Eliot, while I anxiously await the start of the next series in April: (hey Wade, I think you're going to be my teacher!) "We shall not cease from exploration; and the end of all our exploring will to arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time"

DAVID NEY



Guided Meditation Evening Wednesday, April 28 at 7 pm

Three lies and a half-truth:

"...that meditation means getting our minds totally quiet; that if we get distracted we're doing it wrong; that there is only one correct, Christian way to meditate; and finally, the half truth at the root of much suffering, that our goal is inner peace."

-Therese Descamp, United Church Observer - Oct. 2009

Join us for an evening on meditation. We will be looking at Therese's article and be led in a guided meditation by Jen-Beth Fulton. Check the website for future evenings.

Talking About a Resurrection

by Brenda Fawkes, member of MSUC Parents Group

Whether they wanted to or not, this fall, my son's preschool teachers found themselves doing a unit with their class on the subject of death. The class guinea pig, Gwendolyn, had died and there needed to be an explanation for her rather sudden disappearance.

And so began a gentle explanation of lifetimes, illness, how long various species of animals and bugs live for. A letter was sent home to parents explaining their approach and how we could be of support and help with this very significant life learning. I found myself grateful for their approach.

I also felt somewhat confident thinking to myself that here (finally) was a topic in which I was versed. Surely I could support Nathan's learning. However, that was before I realized how concrete many preschoolers need things to be and how much information they want—especially my preschooler. The teachers finished their course of teaching but for Nathan there were many more questions. I came across a book that was very comprehensive and aimed at younger audiences.¹ Many an afternoon we poured over this word and picture book about how things and beings die, why, lifespans and even the various ways death can occur. Nathan seemed somewhat satisfied with the facts.

Then came the topic of what happens after we die. My confidence in life and death matters quickly eroded. What answer could I give that would not dumb things down and leave the mystery intact? Parents and caregivers often worry about how to talk to kids about death, and this can be difficult particularly if it has occurred recently close to home. But I would add that it is really hard to talk about resurrection—even as Christian people. If I told him about resurrection, what expectations would he bring to his own life not to mention that of the Guinea Pig? My most recent experience has taught me that he is not always content with leaving things up to mystery.

Back to the book—both books. The science book covered everything from memories to medical miracles to 'learning from death'. It also covered the briefest survey of what the major religions believe I have ever seen. From that science book we returned to our book—our biblical story-- and talked about believing in Jesus 'resurrection'. To be honest, by this time Nathan was losing interest. However the conversation had started and Nathan still had choices as to what, if

any of it, he wanted to pursue in his own concrete way at any time. I was left wondering if I had done my duty as a parent and as a minister.

When I left seminary, our final position paper needed to include a number of major components in order to be approved. Mine was approved (and so I got my degree, whew!) but apparently my section on resurrection "could have more." My evaluator reminded me that the church and society were hungry for resurrection stories and the more we could speak of them the better off our ministry. I think she was right.

In the week ahead of us we will be asked to immerse ourselves again in the story of Jesus' trial, crucifixion and death. Doing so will remind us of our own fears, beliefs and learning about this part of the story. It will remind us of the realities of our world and the power of politics. Then we will be asked to think about what comes next and why and so what.

What about resurrection? As Godly Play suggests they are part of the same mystery, with one comes the other. In this Holy Week ahead of us, and in our lives, may we be willing to speak the truth we know and also look for ways and signs that help us flesh out the resurrection section.

March 2010



Our God has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time.

~Martin Luther

Outreach Opportunities

Thrift Shop

Help sort and price donated items during the week. On Thursdays, help is needed with set-up, selling, sorting, and take down of donations.

Sandwich Making

On the first and third Monday morning of each month, MSUC volunteers make sandwiches for First United Mission in the downtown eastside.

Saturday Night Fellowship at First

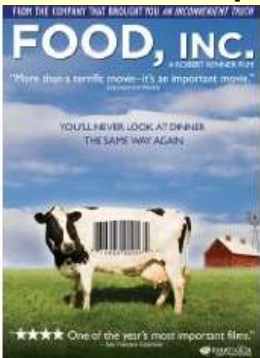
On the fourth Saturday evening of the month MSUC hosts a movie and fellowship night at First United Mission. Snack food and hosts are needed.

Recycle

Bring in your dead batteries (tape the positive end), prescription glasses and returnable drink containers. We will make good use of them! For more information, see our website.

If you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities contact Joyce Jones (604)929-0168 or the church office.

S.E.A. presents "Food Inc." April 17 at 7 pm



S.E.A. is a new organization dedicated to raising awareness around social and environmental issues that affect our community, hosting events featuring films, speakers, and discussion.

On April 17th, we will be showing the film "Food Inc.", a highly acclaimed documentary that exposes America's industrialized food system and its effect on our environment, health, economy and workers' rights. The movie will be followed by a reception and music. An art room with childcare is available - please RSVP for kids (heatherlawrence2@me.com). Admission by donation. Doors open at 6:30 pm - film at 7 pm.

This event is co-sponsored with Mount Seymour United Church

Caring Connections Ministry

The Caring Connections Ministry is about connecting with folks in the M.S.U.C. Congregation and Community, that may be in need of temporary support due to illness, surgery, isolation, loneliness, grief and other life events.

The Ministry members visit in home and in hospital, keep in touch by phone, honour prayer requests, offer in home Holy Communion and healing modalities, such as Music Therapy, Reiki, Therapeutic Touch and Reflexology. The Caring Connections Ministry is "Caring About People", supporting and empowering them, and staying connected until they are able to manage on their own.

We welcome anyone that would be interested in offering their time and talents to this Ministry, by talking to any one of the Core Team Members, which consist of Rev. Nancy Talbot, Carolyn Porter, Don Collett, Earla Blackwell, Ian and Emma DeJong, Mardi Joughin, Sherrill McLeary and Team Leader, Tricia Arpino.

If you know of anyone that could use the support of this Ministry's services, please talk to one of the Members mentioned above".

Caring Connections Ministry Team

Maundy Thursday Community Dinner April 1 at 6 p.m.

The congregation will be hosting a dinner again this year for Thrift Shop Customers and others in the community. We will need food (casseroles, salads, desserts, etc. to be dropped off in the afternoon) as well as help with set-up, serving and clean-up. Sign up at the Action Table or at the office to help with this important community outreach. We will also need church members to dine with our guests.



Sing with MSUC Community Gospel Choir

“Music is an outburst of the soul.”
-Frederick Delius

Brian leads a spirit-raising, hand-clapping, voice-lifting gospel experience once per month. Feel the passion and power of gospel music! All voices are welcome, and music reading is not required. The choir practices one Thursday per month at 7:30 pm and sings at worship on the following Sunday.

Practices are April 1, May 13 and June 10
Check our website for upcoming workshops or date changes.

Making a Joyful Noise II!

(Back by popular demand)

Friday, May 28th at 7:30 pm

Great choirs

One great evening of music!

MSUC Community Gospel Choir, Singspiration,
North Shore Chorus
and more!

Check our website and announcements for more details to follow...



Making a Joyful Noise! - May 1, 2009

Dates to Remember

Services

March 28	10 am	Palm Sunday Service
April 2	10 am	Good Friday Service
April 4	7:30 am	Easter Sunrise Service at Panorama Park
	10 am	Easter Celebration with MSUC Gospel Choir
April 11	10 am	Nancy's last Sunday before her sabbatical
April 25	10 am	Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan
May 9	10 am	Children and Youth Musical
May 16	10 am	Leigh McKay, Buddhist practioner and teacher
May 23	10 am	Pentecost Service at St. Clare-in-the-Cove Anglican Church

Events

April 1	6 pm	Maundy Thurs. Community Dinner
April 17	7 pm	Food Inc. Film Night
April 18	11 am	Church Clean-up after worship
June 13	11 am	Chicken BBQ after worship

Spring Concerts at MSUC

April 11	7 pm	Pro Nova Chamber Music
April 25	3 pm	Espiritu Concert
May 8	7 pm	North Shore Chorus
May 28	7:30 pm	Multi-Choir Concert
May 29	7 pm	Singspiration Choir

CHURCH SPRING CLEAN-UP

SUNDAY, APRIL 18 AFTER WORSHIP

Wear your jeans to church! Plan to stay after worship for a couple of hours and help with the clean-up. One of the jobs will be preparing the lobby walls for painting. **Lunch will be provided.** Sign up for jobs at the Action Table.



Check out our new website: www.mtseymourunited.com
Find out about church events, listen to sermons and more....