



Spirited Summerlea

United Church of Canada

Newsletter

December 2012



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CALENDAR

December

- 09 10:30am 2nd of Advent
White Gift Sunday
- 12 7:30pm Candlelight Service
- 15 3pm Christmas Carol Singing
- 16 10:30am 3rd of Advent – Food Sunday
7:30pm Lakeshore Concert Band
Christmas Dessert Concert
- 23 10:30am 4th of Advent
- 24 7pm Family Christmas Service
9:30pm Communion Service
- 30` 11am Ecumenical service at
Dorval Strathmore United

(No service at Summerlea United on Dec. 30th)

JANUARY

- 06 10:30am Worship with Communion
- 13 10:30am Sunday Worship
- 20 10:30am Food Sunday
- 27 10:30am Sunday Worship

Looking ahead:

February 9th 6pm – Summerlea Anniversary Dinner
More information will follow in January in the church bulletin.

Elders' Corner:

Next Communion Service: Christmas Eve, 9:30pm

EDITORS:

*Jane Cowell Poitras,
Susan Hawke & Lynn Closs*



Most of you who read this column regularly are well acquainted with my transportation escapades. I hope you are not too tired to read one more. The daily commute in Montreal has become quite a grind whether you take public transit or drive your own car. Those orange cones and their accompanying snarled traffic are everywhere.

One night pressed for time and anxious to get home I scurried to the back seat on a much-crowded bus leaving the terminus. Commuters were jammed in like sardines as we lurched away from the curb. It was bumper-to-bumper as the bus eased down the street. Rats - Almost 15 minutes passed and we hadn't even left sight of the Metro! Passengers fumed and fussed. Those of us lucky enough to have seats settled down from the ordeal.

There were several familiar faces in the crowd but no one I knew well. One woman facing me seemed to be delighted to find that she had been sitting on 25 cents worth of nickels left behind on the seat by a previous rider. "Well at least someone is happy" I grumbled. Suddenly, a young man across the aisle began to sing. He was wearing earphones and was obviously reading the lyrics off his smart phone. "Good grief", I mumbled under my breath. "Can things get any worse?" An older woman remarked that he had a lovely voice and that he had "made her day" earlier in the week with his singing. "Huh??" Had I been missing something here?

People shared knowing smiles as we all sat gazing at the young man as he sang. He really did have quite a nice voice, I realized. As the song finished, our singer looked up to see he had an audience. He sheepishly grinned and we all broke out into spontaneous applause. His elderly fan, asked what he did for a living and he told us he sometimes sang

in the metro. Someone got the idea to “pass the hat” for a collection and woman with the 25 cent windfall kicked things off. Our singer launched into another tune, and the hat made the rounds while people laughed, swayed and hummed along.

An ordeal had become a pleasure. People I didn’t know now seemed like friends. We all exchanged names as we clambered off the bus to our homes and waiting dinners. How often do we miss opportunities, like I almost did, to enjoy the small things life has to offer? How often do our worries and preoccupations, block out the possibilities of real joy? As we approach this wonderful season, with its gifts of peace, happiness and love let us all be sure that we take the time to really see them. They are all around us if we would only look!

Susan Hawke

A Word from the Minister

When this edition of the “Spirited Summerlea” newsletter reaches you, we will already be well-ensconced in the season of Advent, a time when we prepare both spiritually and temporally for the upcoming celebration of Christmas and all that it means for each one of us. Many of us have more than enough to keep us occupied during this time, as we shop for gifts for those we love, and prepare for holiday meals and get-togethers. And as important as those preparations are, I would like to talk about a different kind of preparation for Christmas.

I think that most of us have something that we do, some special tradition that is all our own, that puts us into the Christmas spirit like nothing else. It could be something very simple like putting out a special Christmas decoration or ornament, or some ritual that we engage in – something above and beyond the preparations that we do for family or friends, something that is meant just for ourselves, something that becomes for us the “official” beginning of our own celebration of Christmas.

For me, this special thing is listening to Handel’s “Messiah”. Ever since I heard my first live performance of “Messiah” at Notre Dame Basilica in 1984, this has been my own official

“kick-off” to the season. Every year since that time I have attended a performance of “Messiah”; every year, that is, expect this year. I went on-line to do some investigating, and could not find any performances being advertised anywhere! But God, as always, works in mysterious ways, as this happens to be the year that I am leading a Bible Study during Advent on the opening section of “Messiah”, the part that has to do with the promise of the coming Messiah, and the story of Jesus’ birth. So I may not be able to keep my tradition of attending a performance of “Messiah” this year, but preparing for and leading the study group has afforded me the opportunity to really explore the deeper meaning of Handel’s most famous oratorio, and to be reminded of why it has so much meaning for so many people.

“Messiah” opens with a tenor aria based on the words of Isaiah 40, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” Most people are unaware that these words were originally spoken by Isaiah to the Israelites, who had undergone the experience of the attack on Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BCE, the destruction of the temple and the city, and the subsequent deportation into exile of most of the Israelite population. This event was for them the very worst thing that could ever happen to them, and most saw it as a sign of God’s abandonment of them. In their minds, God “allowed” this to happen to them, and they felt it must be because of their sinfulness and unfaithfulness.

Into the searing pain of this tragedy, amid these feelings of abandonment, Isaiah spoke a message from God, saying, “take comfort, and know that I have NOT abandoned you, and death and destruction do not have the final say. Your fortunes are about to be reversed, and you will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that I love you and am with you always.” We do, indeed, take comfort in these words because many of us have been to that “place of exile” in our own lives in one way or another, and many of us have longed to hear God speaking those words of comfort to us.

It is my hope that somehow, through my leading a study group that helps us to delve further into this biblical promise of hope, I can help others to get in touch with this message that God still seeks to share with us today. Perhaps this will become a Christmas gift that I can offer to someone who needs to be reminded that God loves us all and is with us always. This truly is the message of hope that so many long for, especially at this time of year. Perhaps Handel's oratorio is like Christmas itself – we can experience it, and appreciate it for its beauty and loveliness, but still miss the deeper meaning of it. So in the midst of all your preparations for Christmas, I encourage each of you to take the time for that special thing that means “Christmas” for you, and to re-discover in that the deeper meaning of the message of Christmas that God seeks to share with us and with the world. May the hope and promise of Christmas be yours, both now and in the year to come.

Rev. Scott A. Patton.



Candlelight Service Wednesday, December 12th at 7:30pm

This year's guest speaker will be **Susan Winn**, a teacher & former school administrator with the LBPSB. Sue is passionate about the need for Christian response to social and justice issues, and the importance of working with ecumenical partners to meet the growing needs of our society. Bring your friends and neighbours for a beautiful time of friendship and refreshments. The free-will offering will be much appreciated for those in need in our community.



Outreach continues to re-invest in Kiva.

Kiva works with microfinance institutions around the world to provide loans to people without access to traditional banking systems. So far with an initial investment of \$300 we have

made 69 individual loans of \$25 each. Most of these have been repaid. Carolyn Osborne administers our “investments” and chooses which entrepreneurs we will support. 70% of those selected have been women

60 Million Girls.

The objective of 60 Million Girls is to support, on an annual basis, at least two major education projects (\$100 000 and more) targeting the most vulnerable and marginalized girls in the most impoverished countries with the greatest gender disparity in school enrolment.

In November Sinclair, Michelle and Alayna attended the annual fund raising event in Montreal.

After attending the reception with yummy goodies and a silent auction, we heard a round table discussion between Roxanne Joyal, of Free the Children, and Jackson Kaguri, of the Nyaka AIDS Orphans Project. Each spoke eloquently of the many challenges facing children in their on-going quest to become educated members of their communities.

The Christmas Gift Tree

This was placed in the sanctuary on November 26th. Members of the congregation were invited to take Christmas ornaments and to return on December 9th (White Gift Sunday) with clearly identified gifts for less fortunate children in Lachine.



An Ecumenical Service will take place at Dorval Strathmore United, 310 Brookhaven, Dorval, on Sunday, **December 30th at 11am**. *There will be no service at Summerlea United.* This is an opportunity to give those people who want to attend church on December 30th, a place to worship which will be lively and have a lot more people with whom to sing and pray. Join us.



A Living Gift is a way to honour a person you care about by giving a gift that makes a social contribution. Make a donation to Saint Columba

House in the name of someone you wish to honour. Gifts include a card of acknowledgement made with original Hand in Hand Art on the front of the card with a description of what the gift will make possible inside. The gift package options are:

- (1) \$30 will purchase 6 Christmas dinners for low-income families.
- (2) \$45 will purchase an outing for 10 children in the Alternate School;
- (3) \$60 will purchase 5 hours of one-on-one tutoring for children struggling with reading and mathematics.
- (4) \$100 will purchase the participation for one month of an intellectually-challenged adult in the Hand-in-Hand day program promoting autonomy, and special skills.

Gift cards will be available each Sunday morning after service, at coffee hour, or contact the church office at 514-634-2651.

Income Tax Receipts

You are reminded that all contributions to Summerlea United must be received by December 31st, for 2012 income tax receipt purposes.

A word from your Stewardship Chairperson

Envelopes will soon be available for those who requested offering envelopes on their stewardship form for the 2013 givings. If you've not yet requested envelopes and would like some, please call John Coffin (514-634-1116) and he will supply you with a number and a box of envelopes. A gentle reminder to please fill in and return your stewardship commitment forms in order for the church to prepare its budget for 2013. Many thanks to those who have already done so.

Bazaar Report 2012

For many years the Summerlea Bazaar has had a great reputation in Lachine and throughout the West Island Community. People come from far and wide, not just to shop, but also to participate in a social activity and meet old friends. From time immemorial the "Bazaar" has provided a major source of income towards Summerlea's operating expenses. In the 1991 Annual Report, the bazaar was reported to generate \$13,200.

Over the years convening the bazaar has been a rather daunting task. Many people still in the congregation have done it at some point. After 2 years as convenors, Bill and Marg Lynn conceived the brilliant idea of creating a "Summerlea Bazaar Guide". This comprehensive document was placed on a CD and has been installed on several computers. No more relying on collective memory or worrying about lost pieces of paper. It is indeed a living document. As people move away and modifications need to be made, new people appear with new ideas. We don't reinvent the wheel – we just adjust the mechanics. This year was yet another success thanks to the beautiful weather and to all you marvellous people. The total to date, is over \$17,000 with meat pies still to be sold. At the post bazaar meeting on November 25th, we noted your comments and are ready to implement your suggestions next year – on Saturday November 16th.

See you there.....

Sinclair and Nancy



FAMILY LIFE CENTRE

Mission

Prompted by the love of God and neighbour, the Family Life Centre is a coordinated project in community outreach operated by West Island churches.

Our Purpose

To support family life through referral services, short-term counselling and relationship education. Summerlea is one of the supporting congregations of the Family Life Centre.

Referrals are taken by intake volunteers by either voice-mail or e-mail. They are then referred to professional counsellors who can meet with the client for up to 6 sessions. Scott Patton is one of the counsellors.

Many of the calls in 2011 were related to relationship difficulties or parenting problems. Services are free, although donations towards operating costs are welcome.

The Family Life Centre also organises periodic workshops with a range of topics from "preparation for kindergarten" to "retirement planning".

“Journalling” is always a popular, well attended workshop.

Services can be accessed by calling 514 630 7794 or by email familylifecentre@gmail.com

The Dominique Literacy Centre in Haiti:

Hurricane Sandy caused major devastation in Haiti and since our attention was drawn to other devastation much closer to home, we didn't pay as much attention to the destruction in Haiti. In addition, the food shortages that the people of Haiti are going to experience as a result of damage to crops is now a major concern.

I wish to express a sincere thank you to those who continue to contribute to the Literacy Centre by dropping change into the jar at the back of the church. We have fulfilled our initial commitment and I am very grateful to you for this. However, the children need our support more than ever. The children are taught math, reading and writing skills, but the Centre promotes the development of the social, emotional and spiritual well-being of the child as well.

Undeg Edwards

Thanks Volunteers!



THANK YOU to everyone, especially the “Mumbo Jumbos”, who worked tirelessly to make 2,021 small meat pies, 650 large meat pies. 123 apple pies, as well as 23 blueberry, 33 raspberry and 47 strawberry/rhubarb pies were made.....The price remains the same as last year (\$8 mini pies), \$7 large meat pies, and \$6 for fruit pies. *There are still a few apple, large & mini meat pies available, but they're going fast! Call 514-634-2651 to order.*

The Lakeshore Concert Band will present its Annual Christmas Dessert Concert on Sunday, December 16th at 7:30pm at Summerlea again this year. Acadia Hall was so full last year that we have changed the format - the concert of holiday music will be presented in the Sanctuary, and will be followed by our famous home-made desserts in Acadia Hall. Tickets are \$15 (\$12 students and



seniors) at the door, and \$12 (\$10) if bought in advance. See Leslie or Keith for more information.

Why buy a Claxton Fruitcake?

Help support the Lakeshore

Civitan Club with the purchase of Claxton fruitcakes – light or dark.



A package of 3 cakes (1 lb cakes) is \$15.00. One pound cake is \$6. All cakes are sold by volunteers, and all money raised goes to local charities, among them:

- A - West Island Residence for the Intellectually Handicapped
- B – Quebec Special Olympics
- C - Generations Foundation
- D – AVATIL – Training for Independent Living
- E - Our (LCC) annual distribution of Easter food baskets to the underprivileged in the West Island

Call Terry Jones at 514-637-8817 to place your order. Many thanks to all who support Lakeshore Civitan Club with your purchases.



Music Notes

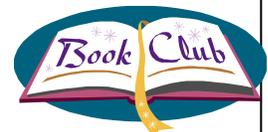
Work is in full swing on the Christmas programme, as Advent approaches. The Candlelight Service is on Dec. 12th this year at 7:30pm. I hope you will all come out and hear the choir and guest speaker. The pieces are varied and include a duet! We are looking forward to performing for you and your families. Please join us.

The Lakeshore Concert Band will be holding their Dessert Concert again this year at Summerlea on the 16th of December. See elsewhere in the newsletter for details.

Connie Osborne, music director

The Book Nook

I have always loved the period between Christmas and New Years – a wonderful, relaxing time for spontaneous entertaining, long, brisk walks in the cold and for curling up with a good book! Here are a few suggestions for your holiday reading:



Dilemma by Father Albert Cutié

This memoir traces the early life of Albert Cutié a bilingual Roman Catholic priest well-known in media circles as a spokesperson and poster boy for the Church both in Florida and Central-American Spanish-speaking countries.

In this book, Father Cutié details his struggle between upholding his sacred promises as a priest and falling in love. Already conflicted with growing ideological differences with the Church, he was forced to abruptly change his life the day he was photographed by a Mexican tabloid hugging a woman on the beach, that he would later make his wife.

The love for this woman, that he deemed a blessing, was bringing him closer to God but distancing him from the Church. A fascinating story of one man's journey of starting a new life for himself and discovering a new way of serving God.

The Sandcastle Girls by Chris Bohjalian

One of the best novels I have read all year! This book has something for everyone – it is a sweeping historical love story that emerges from one of the most devastating events of the 20th Century – the Armenian Genocide.

While I had certainly heard of the Armenian Genocide, I cannot say I knew a great deal about it until I read this novel. How did I not know that towards the end of the Ottoman Empire, for reasons of territory and religion, the Turks had herded Christian Armenians out of Turkey, to die of thirst and sunburn in the Syrian Desert during World War 1? As we near the centennial of this genocide when 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives, it's interesting to note that Aleppo is once again in the news and the stories are painfully familiar.

While incredibly sad and disturbing at times, this is ultimately a spellbinding tale of hope and survival with vivid, unforgettable characters.

Kate Morton

I discovered this Australian author in 2012 and after reading just one of her novels, I was hooked and I have read all of her books to date, including her most recent work **The Secret Keeper** that was just published in October. While all of her books have an "Australian Connection", her stories take place in Great Britain. Long, beautifully crafted tales that often span several generations, these books would be perfect to read over the holidays. Other titles to look for: **The Distant Hours**, **The House at Riverton**

and **The Forgotten Garden**...I promise you that whichever title you may choose, you will be unable to put it down!

2013 United Church Calendars are available at the church office for \$5.50. To reserve one, please call Susan at 514-634-2651. ☺

RECIPE CORNER

Here are a couple of recipes we use every year over the holidays. *Lynn Closs*

Baked Brie

- 1 whole 12 oz. brie (or 2 small)
- 1/3 cup sun dried tomatoes
- 3 tsp olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 tsp balsamic vinegar
- ¾ tsp Basil chopped
- 1/3 cup Parsley chopped



Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

Mix all the ingredients together

Place brie in ovenproof dish. Top with mixture and bake brie until warm and softened, about 13 to 18 minutes. If topping is getting too browned, cover loosely with aluminum foil during last portion of baking.

Can be done in the microwave but be careful not to overcook

Truffles au Chocolat

- 2 squares of chocolate 1 oz. each – non sweet
- ¼ cup of unsalted butter
- ¾ cup icing sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- ½ tsp almond extract or vanilla

Melt chocolate in double boiler. Cream the butter, add little by little the icing sugar stirring well between each addition. When very smooth add egg yolk one by one. Mix well. Then add melted chocolate. Let cool till mixture is firm.

Take tsp by tsp, shape a small ball and roll into fruit sugar. Makes about 25. Keep refrigerated.

Christmas Carol Singing Saturday, Dec 15th, 3 PM

We'll gather at Summerlea at 3pm and from there spread out to share the songs of the season to residents of the Bayview, Les Floralties and the Belvedere. Folks of all ages are welcome! After carolling, Linda & Roy Rodd are kindly opening up their home for a Potluck Dinner at around 6:30pm.



William Hunter Memorial Fund

This fund honours the memory and contribution of William Hunter, a former member of Summerlea who died suddenly in his first years as a United Church Minister. We collect loose offerings from the early service on Christmas Eve and the special envelopes you will find in the pews or with this newsletter. All donations are tax deductible. These offerings are our only source of funds to support our overseas family and other local children's needs.

We currently sponsor three children at a cost of \$456.00 per child, an annual commitment of \$1,368.00. They are Angelica, a 9 year old girl from Paraguay, Naomi, an 11 year old girl and Tahiru, a 15 year old boy, both from Ghana. Through your generosity, we provide services to these desperately needy families and help improve their standard of living. We are helping children in need from infancy to young adulthood. We greatly appreciate your continued support. Thank you.

Dale Romagosa

Mile of pennies

We are pleased to report a balance of \$490.43 in our fund, a half mile to our objective of \$845. We were given a big boost by Peter, a friend of Marg Walker's, and by the Blatherwick family. Our own congregation contributes regularly. Thanks to all.

Barbara Davidson, Outreach Committee

Christmas Is About Recalling the Past and Building the Future

For most people, Christmas memories are among their most vivid recollections. Do you remember when...

- you knew Christmas was coming by the way the snow crunched under your feet?
- there was one box of Christmas cards, and your mother had to decide who would get the nicest ones?
- you waited on the steps while your mom and brother wrapped gifts for you?
- a nighttime trip to see decorations and store windows was an annual event?
- on Christmas Eve, when the tree lights were still on, you sat downstairs alone, mesmerized by their warmth and glow?
- your Dad would put you on his lap and try to trick you into telling him what his presents were?
- the drive to Grandma's house found you all cheering for every decorated house you saw?
- your uncles did silly things on Christmas Eve? Once Grandma did too, laughing and telling stories. Dad said it was something in the punch.
- Grandma had a big round box that could hold a dozen big animals, dolls, and trucks?
- the women and kids went to church by moonlight, while the men told stories about fishing, hunting, and cars?
- on Christmas morning, you didn't have to do anything or go anywhere? You just stayed in your house with your family and your toys because it was Christmas, and it was life.

While nothing in life is perfect, the season of Christmas brings us to a mental state that is as close to perfect as it can be. Try to keep some of that magic alive all year as there are many good things to remember.

A Holiday Message to You

Has the year moved quickly for you? Will you sit down to your holiday dinner and marvel that, so soon, the New Year is upon you? Or will you breathe a sigh of relief and say, "At last..."

It's strange how time moves at different speeds for different people in different years. Of course it all has to do with the challenges we face. If you have a son or daughter serving overseas, perhaps time has slowed to a crawl. If he or she is home for the holidays, maybe you wonder why time moves so quickly.

Whatever way time is flying for you this year, take time to relax, enjoy your family and friends, and



remember that the holidays don't have to be picture perfect to be warm and enjoyable.

We hope you are able to enjoy the holidays and rest and relax during the holiday break.



News and Notes

Congratulations to proud parents, Isabelle Quevillon and Joey Madden upon the arrival of their first child, Dreyken who was born on October 22nd.

Congratulations to Cassandra McKenzie who received the Summerlea United Church bursary at the Lakeside Academy convocation in October. It was great news to hear that Elizabeth Rodd is now home from a lengthy stay in hospital and on the mend. Speedy recovery to those who also had surgery this Fall and are home recuperating.

The office recently received a lovely letter from Louise Emanuel who continues to enjoy her retirement home at the Manoir Lac Brome...has it really been 5 years already? Time does fly by. Louise is well and treasures her 2 daughters nearby.

Kate Miller and Ann Marie Blinkhorn have recently moved near Lancaster, Ontario. We will miss you, but wish you much happiness in your new home.

Our Sympathy is extended to Rhodes Oulton and his family upon the death of Mary on November 21st at the Palliative Care Unit of Le Vivalis Residence. Mary will be sadly missed by her family and friends. A memorial service is planned for a later date in Arundel.

Our Sympathy is also extended to Dianne Goodyear upon the death of her only sister, Judy Wilton (née Fonseca) on Sept. 11. Judy went to Lachine High, and some may remember her.

Dorothy Jack died in hospital on November 5th from complications following brain surgery. She was 94 years old. A memorial service is planned for a later date in Toronto. Sinclair, who was her Elder, shared that Dorothy was a delightful old lady who will be missed by those who were her neighbours, who knew

her as a curler, who delivered her meals on wheels or who had the pleasure to visit her.

Marie Louise Kumli died on Dec. 3rd from a stroke. She will be sadly missed by her husband, Marcel.

Ray Laviolette's brother, Marcel, died peacefully on Dec. 4th. Our sympathy is extended to Ray and Lorna & their family.

Please keep Mary and Lewis Guynan and Sarah McCall in your prayers as well as our shut-ins during the Advent season. Wishing you peace, joy and good health for the new year. *Susan*

