



Spirited Summerlea

United Church of Canada

Newsletter

December 2017



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CALENDAR



December

- 03 10:30am 1st of Advent & Communion**
White Gift Sunday
La Guignolée Food Collection
- 10 10:30am 2nd of Advent**
7:30pm Lakeshore Concert Band's
Christmas Dessert Concert
- 14 7:30pm Candlelight Service**
16 3pm Christmas Caroling
- Meet in Acadia hall
- 17 10:30am 3rd of Advent**
Lessons and Carols
- 24 10:30am 4th of Advent**
24 7pm Christmas Eve Family Service
- 31 10:30am Ecumenical service at**
Summerlea United Church

January

- 07 10:30am Sunday Worship**
11 9:30am Worship & Membership Mtg.
- 14 10:30am Sunday Worship**
- 21 10:30am Soup Sunday**
- 28 10:30am Sunday Worship**

EDITORS:

*Jane Cowell Poitras,
Susan Hawke & Lynn Closs*

The holidays are fast approaching and most of us will celebrate them in homes decorated with Christmas trees. The trees will take different forms depending on our traditions and circumstances. They could be real or artificial. They also come in a variety of sizes from jaw-dropping floor-to-ceiling models to tiny potted versions designed to sit on your table. As for decorations – there are as many types as there are people to hang them.

I lost my mother this year and as December looms I remember Christmases past with great nostalgia. The trees of my childhood were wondrous and when viewed through the ladder of years take on a magical quality in my mind.

We had real trees, usually quite large, and always anchored with wires to prevent being toppled by overly enthusiastic cats. Our cats viewed the trees as their personal playground and took the tree stand with its water-filled base as their personal beverage dispenser. We used to smile, as amid the Christmas carols, we could hear them gently lapping up the water under the tree. They always emerged from underneath fragrant with scent of pine and sticky from the sap.

Our tree was decorated with a hodgepodge of decorations. No colour coordinated designer version for our family! We strung popcorn and cranberries to make garlands – usually eating more than we managed to string. Spun glass called “angel hair” was nestled in front of each tree light to make them glow. However, the crowning glory of our trees were the icicles. Made from lead, they were long and heavy, dripping from the extended branches like true frozen water. My mother was a real stickler for putting the icicles on “right”. Each icicle needed to be carefully hung by its tip so that the other end gracefully caressed the branches below. The job took hours – and the takedown was even longer. My frugal mom always insisted each icicle be saved for next year. How I envied the neighbours who just pitched their icicle-laden tree into the snowbank on garbage day!

The Christmas tree tradition was started in Germany in the 16th century. Legend credits Martin Luther,

trying to emulate the stars shining through the evergreens on an evening walk, for putting lighted candles on trees. German settlers brought the tradition to North America but it was not popular as the New England Puritans thought the custom frivolous and pagan. However, it was the picture in the Illustrated London News of Queen Victoria and her family gathered around a Christmas tree in 1846 that made the practice instantly fashionable. Early North Americans decorated their trees with homemade ornaments while those of German background opted for apples, nuts and marzipan cookies.

As we celebrate Christmas with its modern-day trappings of decorations, food, parties and presents let us not lose sight of its true meaning. It is the day we celebrate the birth of God’s most precious gift to us – his son. One of my last year’s Christmas cards said it best – The magic of Christmas is not in the presents but in “His presence”.

Best wishes for the holidays from the Newsletter Editors.

Susan Hawke

A Word from the Minister

On November 4, I, along with three members of Summerlea, attended a workshop that was put on by Montreal and Ottawa Conference called “The Travelling Road Show”, a stewardship event aimed at sharing ideas of what works well, and not-so-well, in the stewardship of our congregations, and in celebrating the life, work, and ministry of our congregations. This event was a gathering of people from many different congregations, but it soon became clear that we all shared in very similar concerns – the main one seemingly being how to maintain and support our churches when membership is going down and expenses are always going up. Attendance at the event seemed to be a clear indication of what many of us have been saying about stewardship all along: money is an important part of stewardship, but stewardship is about a lot more than money.

I think that, now more than ever, appropriate stewardship of our resources is a crucial matter. Back in the days when Summerlea had hundreds of

active and committed members, we didn't seem to be as concerned about financial matters simply because we knew we would be covered by our broad base of supporters. But we are all aware of today's reality, which (as I mentioned above) is that membership in most churches is continuing to drop, while expenses are increasing. But I know that this comes as news to exactly no one. We are all very much aware of this reality, but there is another reality that I am very much aware of, which is that the theme or topic of stewardship is one that some people would go out of their way to avoid. Perhaps this comes from a feeling that some seem to have that stewardship is about "strong-arming" people into parting with their hard-earned money to support the church.

But thankfully we have learned that the "strong-arming" method does not work. And neither does shaming people, or cajoling them into supporting the church. Being part of the church should always be a joyful response to God's call to each of us to be part of Christ's ongoing work in the world, which is really what the church should be about. The theme for the stewardship event I mentioned above was "Inspire, Invite, Thank", and I thought it was a particularly good way of approaching matters of stewardship. Gone are the days when people belonged to a church because it was expected, or they felt they had to. All of us remember times in our past when we did something because it was expected, even though we didn't really want to. This is about fulfilling a requirement, and if this is the reason we seek to maintain our church presence in this community, then I would say we have gotten off track. For me, the same thing that inspired me to offer myself as an ordained minister in the church is what inspired me to come to Summerlea as the minister. As an affirming congregation within the United Church of Canada, I believe that this congregation offers something unique in that we proclaim God's love for ALL people, and we affirm that ALL people are welcome to be a part of our faith community. And all are invited to join together in that work of love that we carry out at Summerlea on a regular basis. It is true that part of my role as a minister is to inspire people to offer themselves and their resources to the work and ministry of our church, but in truth, so often I myself have been

inspired by the acts of love and caring and inclusion that have been carried out by so many committed members of our church. It truly makes a difference in the lives of so many, and I feel very honoured to be part of making God's loving presence known in the world, and in the lives of individuals.

The invitation I extend is to anyone and everyone who seeks to be part of this life-giving work. It is too easy nowadays to conclude that faith is an individual matter, and we can live out our faith without belonging to a congregation. In many ways, this is true, but only to a certain extent. In this scenario, our faith becomes only about ourselves, and it can become like a precious gift that we hide away in a closet for safe-keeping. True, it will be kept safe, but it will not be shared with anyone else, or have an influence on anyone else. Faith, like love, only becomes useful when we share it and give it away, and when we do this, we can often see the results right away, or sometimes it may take months or years to see the results, but it is all because that seed was planted at an earlier time, and is now bearing fruit.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we say thank you to all of you who have shown in so many ways your commitment to the life and work of our church. The words "we couldn't have done it without you" take on even more meaning today as resources are more limited. What is not limited is our ability to share the love of God in a hurting world, and in the lives of hurting people, as well as to spread the joy of knowing we are God's beloved people, called to share this precious gift with the world. As I said at the end of my sermon on November 19, it is my hope that we will come to believe in ourselves the way God believes in us.

Rev. Scott A. Patton.

White Gift Sunday, December 3rd

Thanks to everyone who chose a labelled gift tag from the gift tree for 42 under privileged children. These gifts will be brought forward on White Gift Sunday to accompany the Lachine Christmas Baskets. Thanks to Resurrection of our Lord for providing the gift tags to decorate our tree.

Candlelight Service

Thursday, December 14th at
7:30pm

Summerlea United Church and the Serendipity Group welcome the community to a joyful evening of carols, scriptures, meditation and candlelight to help put the glow of Christmas deep in everyone's heart. This year's guest speaker will be Father John (Jack) Kennedy, former pastor of Resurrection of our Lord Church in Lachine. Father's talk is entitled "Inner Thoughts at Christmas". Bring your friends and neighbours for a beautiful service of Christmas hymns & music, followed by lovely refreshments in the church hall. The free-will offering will be much appreciated by those in need in our community.



Living Gifts Campaign – a creative way of making a difference!!

The living gifts program 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.



Gift packages available Sunday mornings during coffee hour

\$30 will purchase 6 Christmas dinners for low income families
\$45 will purchase hot meals for the Alternate School,
\$60 will purchase one-on-one tutoring for children struggling with reading and mathematics
\$100 will allow an intellectually challenged adult to participate in the Hand in Hand program promoting autonomy & skills acquisition.
Gift cards will be available each Sunday morning after service, at coffee hour.



THANK YOU to everyone who helped prepare the tourtières this Fall. We had many volunteers come forward once again, and it made the preparation so much easier.

The Lachine Guignolée (Food Drive) will be taking place on Sunday December 3th in the morning beginning at 10am-12:30pm. Once again we will be organizing a district of the food drive out of Acadia hall. Feel free to come and see us if you wish to contribute either food and or cash. Youth will also be going door to door to collect your non perishable donations.



Jane Cowell Poitras and Sinclair Harris

Income Tax Receipts

For income tax receipt purposes, you are reminded that all contributions to Summerlea United must be received by December 31st 2017.

Flu Shots in Lachine

A free vaccination clinic will be held at the former Lachine Hospital, 3320 Notre Dame Street, Lachine on November 29 to December 2nd. Please remember to bring your health insurance card.

A word from your Stewardship Chairperson

Envelopes will soon be available for those who requested offering envelopes for 2018 on their stewardship form. 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 so that the church can prepare its budget for 2018. Many thanks to those who have already returned their completed forms.



Summerlea Bazaar 2017

When getting ready for the bazaar we sometimes get caught up in worrying, complaining and maybe getting a little grouchy. Then the bazaar happens and it is WONDERFUL! All our preparation resulted in a successful and fun day. Thanks are due to the various Youth organisations who as always worked hard and cheerfully.

We heard recently of a congregation that calculates the number of volunteer hours given to different aspects of their ministry. What fun it would be for our congregation to calculate the Service Hours given to the Summerlea Bazaar.

We could include: graphic designing, shopping, baking, tourtiere making, sticky bun production, making jams and pickles, taking orders, gift basket assembly, knitting, crafting, growing plants, advertising, alphabetising and setting up books, assembling the country store, sorting donations pricing and setting up booths, serving at booths, setting tables, making lunch, buying lunch, serving lunch, scraping plates, washing dishes, buying from the booths and raffles, and counting.

Let's do it start counting now!! We can total it up for our next bazaar November 10th.

Nancy, Sinclair, Kate

Request for Christmas Decorations

As you decorate your homes for the festive season, please set aside any Christmas-themed item that you may be looking to find a new home for. It will be stored for next year's Christmas Decorations table at the Bazaar. Advanced thanks. *Linda Rodd*

William Hunter Memorial Fund

Thanks for your generous support to the William Hunter Memorial Fund which honours the memory and contribution of William Hunter. He was 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. These

offerings are our only source of funds for the support of our sponsored children. All donations are tax deductible.

We currently sponsor three children at a cost of \$468.00 per child per year. They are Alba Abigail Morales Cabana, a one year old little girl from Paraguay, Santiago also a little girl from Paraguay who is 3 years old and 16 year old Naomi from Ghana.

Through your generosity these children will receive an education, medical care, clothing and improved nutrition. You are helping to make a difference in the lives of children, families and communities in developing countries. We are grateful for your continued assistance.

Thank you

D. Romagosa

Music Notes



Well, here we are approaching the Advent season. Our choir is madly rehearsing for the upcoming Candlelight Service on December 14th, and we have Dik Harris, Brad Moffat, Andrejs Vitols, Jean Stuart, and Anne Allmark joining us in song! Please tell all your friends and family to come to this special annual service. They will really enjoy it!

We had our first Taizé Service at the beginning of November and the people present really enjoyed the peacefulness in the midst of this busy time of year! Look for another service early in the New Year.

We are fortunate to have the Lakeshore Saxophone Quartet join us for our Lessons and Carols Service on December 17th. This service consists of readings from the Christmas story followed by the singing of one or two verses of familiar carols. Our choir is preparing a few special anthems for this day, also.

There will be a morning service on December 24th and also our evening Family Service at 7:00pm. This is always a lively, exciting service in which the children present have a chance to participate in action and music. We look forward to seeing you on Christmas Eve!

Connie Osborne

The Lakeshore Concert Band, under the direction of Mark Dharmaratnam, is holding a Christmas Dessert Concert on Sunday, December 10, at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$15 for adults, and \$12 for seniors and children. The concert will take place at Summerlea United Church, 225 - 50th Avenue. For more information, call 514-428-0292. Please bring a non-perishable food item to support the local food bank!

Book Nook

Wonder by R.J. Palacio

This novel is aptly named. Truly a wondrous book. Unable to sleep one night, I started reading it around 3 a.m. and did not stop until I turned the last page 7 hours later. I could not put it down.

It is the story of a 10 year old boy named August who is born with a facial anomaly. After being home schooled for many years his parents have decided to send him to regular school. The book relays the life that awaits this courageous child as he starts Grade 5. August has many strikes against him as he tries to navigate the real world but he is blessed with a gentle, sweet personality and a warm and loving family – all of whom we grow to love as we read this wonderful book.

Today's world is full of hate and intolerance and there is much we can all learn about kindness and acceptance in the pages of this novel. This book is actually written for children aged 8-12 but I think it can be read and enjoyed by both young and old. This senior loved it! Frankly I think it should be mandatory reading for all Grade 5 students. We all need to learn to "choose kind".

Susan Hawke

RECIPE CORNER

Cornstarch Cookies

(Recipe from the Benson's Cornstarch)

½ cup Corn Starch (other brands or bulk will work as well)

½ cup icing sugar
1 cup sifted plain flour
¾ cup butter

Sift cornstarch, flour, icing sugar together. Using either your fingers or two forks, mix in the butter, until a soft dough is formed.

Shape into 1 inch balls and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten with a lightly floured fork.

Bake the cookies at 300 F/ 150 C or until edges are lightly browned. These will be soft when they come out, so make sure you let them cool before you take them off the cookie sheet.

You can decorate them with bits of candied fruit or nuts, before baking. Alternately roll out fairly thick and cut into shapes.

Crab Appetizers

½ cup margarine
1-1/2 tsp mayo
½ tsp garlic salt
½ tsp seasoned salt
1 – 7 oz can crab meat, drained
¾ cup cheese spread, (Ingersol if you can find it)
6 English muffins

Blend all ingredients. Spread on muffin halves and cut into eighths. Freeze on a cookie sheet then put in plastic bags in freezer.

When ready to us, brown under broiler till puffy and slightly brown
(5 minutes)

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.

News and Notes

Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Virginia Crawford who passed away peacefully in November.

Many church members receive their Newsletter by email. If you are still receiving a paper copy and would prefer to receive it electronically, please send your request to the secretary at

summerlea_united@videotron.ca Your email address will be added to the list.

Some members of the Summerlea family have been ill, in and out of hospital, and some who are in long term care in hospital. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers as well as those on our Prayer List during the Advent season.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND SUPPORT

Natalie Moreau-Wightman	Lewis Guynan
Mia Laviolette	Stewart Pryce
Vera Osidacz	Peter Leggett

Christmas Is . . .

*A favourite time of year
For all who are dear
A time for love and peace
A time for all fighting to cease.*

Poet: Catherine Pulsifer



Wishing you peace, joy and good health in
the New Year.

Susan Ippersiel

