

Connections Spring 2017



COMOX VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

725 Aspen Rd. Comox, BC V9M 4E9 250-339-2882

email: office@cvpc.ca

web: cvpc.ca

In this issue:

Message from the Minister	1
Important Dates	3
Fellowship	4
Mission	4
Pastoral Care	4
\$10 a Month Club	5
Joy to the World	5

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Last month I attended the lecture and seminar by the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Wells at the session entitled “Theology for the First Time: New Eyes for Reading the Old Testament”. I thoroughly enjoyed it and saw some of you there! I already knew her lecture style, and I already knew I would enjoy learning new things and being refreshed by old ones. I appreciated the analogy that Scripture is like a snowball rolling down a hill (even more relevant following the weather we've had!).

It begins with the foundations of the law, then as the stories were re-told and written down they incorporated traditions for centuries until the ball was as big as a boulder. I was also reminded of how engaging the Old Testament can be. I hope this is something that will come across in my preaching for the next little while. As many of

you know I prefer to follow what is called “The Revised Common Lectionary”. This lectionary is a set of Scriptures that have been carefully prayed about and chosen for every Protestant (and often Roman Catholic) church to study on a particular Sunday. It is a three year cycle, and theoretically if you attended worship every Sunday over those three years you would have heard almost the entire Bible. I like using the lectionary as often as possible because it means something to me that other churches are preaching on the same Scriptures on that Sunday. While we may not be united in our worship we can be united in our study of Scripture.

For my first three years at CVPC, I focused mainly on the Gospel reading, in part because all of our reading of Scripture is read through the lens of Jesus Christ. Now, for the

next little while I am choosing to focus more on the Old Testament readings, followed by a reflection of the Gospel. The Old Testament is full of stories about a people's struggle to understand their relationship with God, as well as poetry and prophecy about that relationship, and traditions that encourage the relationship. Dr. Dutcher-Wells mentioned that when the empires changed in the Old Testament, that's when the prophets were most active. She theorized that this is because times of struggle often influence how we understand our place in the world as God's people. She was referring to the prophets in the 8th through 4th century BCE, but this statement seems just as relevant today.

Globally we are faced with changes, struggles, ignorance, intolerance and of course violence. Sadly, our modern world does not look all that different from the violent, empire-changing, struggling world of the Old Testament. This is one reason I look forward to unwrapping the Old Testament throughout the year in preaching.

There is still an opportunity to sign up for the remaining two "Theology for the First Time." sessions with lectures and seminars led by professors from Vancouver School of Theology (VST). I am particularly looking forward to the lecture led by the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, VST's principal. Both topics promise to be interesting. The Rev. Janet Gear will be leading "How Then Shall We Live?" March 3-4. Richard's lecture "Theology for Non-Theologians" is March 31st- April 1. Please register at vst.edu/form-

[page/theology-for-the-first-time.](http://vst.edu/form-)

Our challenging era is also one reason why our current book study on grace is so important. We have about twenty people gathering on a weekly basis, thinking about the words by author Philip Yancey, and studying Scripture related to the topic. If you have not had a chance to join us and would like to, you are more than welcome. The reading of the book "What's So Amazing About Grace?" is recommended but not required. We are meeting Wednesdays 2:00-3:30 until April 5th.

You are also most welcome to attend our Taize-style communion service every fourth Friday (Feb. 24, March 24 and April 28) at 4:30 PM. This simple half-hour service is a great way to finish off the week and spend some time in contemplation.

Another opportunity to pray and worship is at the Women's World Day of Prayer service at Comox United on March 3rd at 1:30 PM. This service was prepared by women in the Philippines. Rita Tingle and I will be participating in the service, and invite men and women to join others in Comox for this time of prayer. Reminder: we will also have a communion service on Sunday March 5.

Lent and Holy Week provide opportunities to really contemplate and put our faith into action. This year we are joining with St. George's and Comox United in special services. It was such a moving time for us last year! An Ash Wednesday Service will begin our Lenten Season on Wednesday March 1st at 7 PM at Comox United (250 Beach Dr.). This is always a special service for

me as we are anointed with oil and ashes. There will be a Maundy Thursday Service at St. George's United (505 6th St. Courtenay) on April 13th. The time is to be confirmed, so please keep an eye out in upcoming bulletins. We have the pleasure of hosting the Good Friday Service at 10 AM on April 14th. There will also be an informal SonRise Service at 8:30 AM on our church lawn on Easter Morning followed by a light breakfast. Each one of these services is unique to this time of year, and it is extra special that we can unite with other Christian brothers and sisters for these services. I would encourage you to attend them all!

This year the Mission Committee has chosen "Project Watershed" as our local charity to support for our Lenten project. I am excited about this fundraiser because I believe we

are truly lucky to have such a beautiful estuary in our valley and we need to work to support and protect it. On Sunday March 12th we will welcome a member of their board during our service. Also be sure to attend our Annual General Meeting on Sunday March 12th following the service. We will serve a light lunch and take time to celebrate the various ministries and programs at CVPC. Come and hear about the work of the Mission Committee, Prayer Group, Fellowship Group and so many more!

May we face this era of unrest and concern as best we can by being the Christians that God calls us to be! Witnesses to God's grace, Christ's love and the Spirit's presence.

Rev. Jenn Geddes

Rev. Jenn's IMPORTANT DATES

Every Wed at 2 PM until April 5: Book study, "**What's So Amazing About Grace?**"

Feb. 24	4:30 PM Fourth Friday Taize Communion Service
March 1	Ash Wednesday Service at Comox United at 7 PM
March 3	1:30 PM World Day of Prayer
March 3 & 4	VST Lecture: How than Shall We Live?
March 5	Communion
March 12	Project Watershed Sunday and CVPC AGM following the service
March 24	4:30 PM Fourth Friday Taize Communion Service
March 31- April 1	VST Lecture: Theology for Non-theologians
April 2	Guest Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping
April 13	Maundy Thursday Service at St. George's United (505 6 th St.) Time T.B.D.
April 14	Good Friday Service at CVPC at 10 AM
April 16	8:30 AM SonRise Easter Service and Easter Sunday
April 28	4:30 PM Fourth Friday Taize Communion Service

FELLOWSHIP**CHANGES ARE AFOOT!**

The Fellowship Group is trying something new! During the coming year we are planning on alternating between our business meeting and lunch out. The business meetings will be held in January, March, May, September and November (we take a hiatus usually during the summer) on the first Tuesday of the month at the church. As always everyone is invited to attend. On the alternate months, February, April, June, October and December we are planning lunch at a local restaurant. These lunches have proved popular in the past and we hope that many people will plan on joining in. Please watch for details and sign-up sheets throughout the year. Rides are always available. Come and join other members of the congregation for a relaxing meal and a chance to celebrate birthdays or other significant events.

Contributed by Maryka Wester

MISSION

This year the Mission Committee, after considering several local charities, decided to support an environmental project.

PROJECT WATERSHED gives us an opportunity to become better informed about the water, its impact on the Comox Valley, and its importance to all of us now and on the future.

The Comox Valley Project Watershed Society advocates working with - not against- nature when dealing with the water issues. CVPWS is a non-profit society working with the city and regional district to manage the flood plain in this area. We look forward to supporting them.

For more information on Project Watershed go to projectwatershed.ca. We will have an opportunity to learn more about what Project Watershed is about at our Project Watershed Sunday and at the Church Breakfast Club gathering on April 1st.

Contributed by Laura Cheyne

**PASTORAL CARE:**

We are looking for care partners who would join in on activities such as movies, walks and lunch, who could provide drives for others, or who would join in card games with a group. Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

Contributed by Ruth Rivington

\$10.00 MONTH CLUB

Imagine a young boy sitting at the sidelines of a school PE class. His clothes are from a thrift store and he has learning challenges. His shoes have the soles flapping, and one is taped together with duct tape. The teacher, in accordance with school policy, is insisting that all the students participating in the class have indoor running shoes so they can be safe in the gym and that the floor remains clean and safe for all students. This child already feels marginalized and alone. His response is to misbehave so badly that he is sent to the office. This happens every day. Then, imagine the principal finally putting two and two together. She traces the boy's feet and heads off to the store to purchase brand new indoor shoes, ones that will be like all the other students'. The next day the student is an active participant in the PE class, he is no longer sent to the office and walks proudly out of the gym with his head held high. This is a true story, but the one missing piece from the story is the source of the funding to buy the shoes, and that's where Comox Valley Presbyterian Church comes in. These shoes were purchased using funding from the \$10.00 a month club.

This is just one story of many that could be told in schools throughout the Comox Valley. Vulnerable students have been able to attend camp with their peers, have the right clothing for cross country skiing, a warm breakfast made overnight in a slow cooker purchased with the funds, replacement pencil crayons in the middle of the school year, the list goes on. The thank you letters from the elementary principals tell the story, each one addressing a unique need in that school. Thank you to the regular supporters of the \$10.00 a month club. If you do not already support this project, please consider it. The students in the Comox Valley thank you.

Contributed by Corinne Wester

JOY TO THE WORLD!

Our 3rd annual display of nativity scenes from around the world was another great success, thanks to the support of our congregation's members. This event is CVPC's gift to the community of the Comox Valley. The nativity scenes on display were visual, artistic portrayals of the "reason for the season".

In addition to the scenes on display, the event also included live music, a dress-up and craft area for children and families, a dark room for lighted sets, and a tea for seniors and persons with mobility issues on Friday afternoon.

The statistics tell one side of the story:

- About 400 people attended
- There were 200 sets on display – many lent by people outside our congregation

- Seven hours of live music were provided by volunteer musicians and musical groups, many outside our congregation.

Dozens of people-hours were volunteered from within and outside the congregation for set-up, take-down, greeting, monitoring, supervising the children, lending sets, and serving tea and home-baked goods to the senior guests on Friday afternoon. Many of you also distributed posters and encouraged the committee with your enthusiasm. This, plus of course God's grace and blessing, is what made it all possible. Thank you!

The 134 comments left in the guest book also tell a story: all were highly positive.

- From the children: "the dress up was extrimelie FUN!!!!"; "it was awesome and I especially like the dress up, I was an angel"; "so fun"; "we loved it, especially the crafts"; and "Special".
- About the music: "Lovely, enjoyed the live music"; "Wonderful display. It's nice to have live music as a background"; "wonderful and the music was a gift"
- From the seniors: . "Beautifully displayed! Thanks for the goodies." There was one comment indicating that this was so very special for the Cumberland Lodge residents, and the residents of Cummings Home sent a very eloquent card signed by the residents.
- From the general public: "Who would know unless they visit!" "I don't want to leave". "Magnificent! Sent Shivers! Beautiful, many countries". Yet another: "It gets better every year, wish you had a donation box", and "a beautiful tradition for our family".

We also received about 10 names that we can contact for nativity scenes next year.

And last, but not least, the 3 albums of photos on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/comoxvalleypresbyterianchurch/photos/> give a visual impression of this wonderful experience. We're looking forward to next year's event, and also looking forward to your help and input!

The committee: Sheila MacLellan, Peg McMillan, Nerissa Thomas, Lois Lupkoski, Jenn Geddes, and Al and Jessie Schut.

Contributed by Jessie Schut

