

Connections Spring 2014



Comox Valley Presbyterian Church

725 Aspen Rd. Comox, BC V9M4E9

250-339-2882 cvpc@shaw.ca

Web: comoxvalleypresbyterian.ca

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A Brief Biography—The Rev. Jennifer Geddes

The Rev. Jennifer Geddes began her ministry journey while growing up in Hamilton, ON. She studied in Waterloo, ON at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University and received a degree in Archaeology and Religion in Culture. Her undergraduate thesis was entitled "Buddha Between the Lines: The Beat writers and their influence on Buddhism in North America." She returned to Hamilton where she was involved in youth ministry and inner city outreach at MacNab Street Presbyterian Church. It was at the neighbourhood pub that she met her companion along this road, her now husband, Mike. Upon graduating from Knox College at the University of Toronto with her Master of Divinity she accepted the call to St. Andrew's in Victoria, BC as their assistant minister. She was also the Presbyterian Chaplain at the University of Victoria where she learned wonderful lessons in interfaith dialogue, inclusivity and meditation. It was while serving at St. Andrew's that she fell in love with Vancouver Island. In 2013 she felt the Spirit calling her up island to this valley paradise. Both she and Mike are excited about exploring the region via kayak, trails and road trips in their campervan. Jenn has a passion for what she calls "Beyond the Church Walls" ministry in which she recognizes the great need to be involved in and

with the community and share the love of Christ with everyone. She is also an avid tea drinker and collector, enjoys attending live music events, and admiring local art. She feels blessed to be in such a beautiful country where the some of the Creator's best work is protected and enjoyed.

Please feel free to contact Rev. Jenn at revjenng@gmail.com or by contacting the church office.



What a privilege it is for me to be the Reader this morning at this very special Service in the life of this congregation. I couldn't help but think at last Tuesday evening's Service of Induction for Jenn that it was 19 years before – almost to the day – when the Presbytery of Vancouver Island met in St. John's the Divine Anglican Church and constituted us as a congregation within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. It went through my mind that both evenings were filled with joy and celebration as we anticipated then and anticipate again today with this new beginning, what is to come in the years ahead.

There is no doubt in my mind that God has blessed us richly. Our first Minister, **D'Arcy Lade**, came with skills of building – not only in bricks and mortar – but in community and in caring for each other. It is a foundation that has stood the test of these years.

Our second Minister, **Ted Hicks**, brought different gifts and abilities. He encouraged us to look inward, to focus on our spirituality, on centering prayer, on soul searching to discover who and where we are in our relationship with God and what He would have us do as individuals and as a congregation.

And here we are nineteen years from our beginnings – once again – standing at the door – this time with **Jenn Geddes**. God is inviting us to cross that threshold together to a future that while unknown to any of us, will be filled I am sure with challenge and opportunity.

I will acknowledge that over the past couple of years, there were times when we felt discouraged as we searched for a Minister. I think that one of the most significant things we learned as a congregation is that we were not entering a process similar to that of hiring a CEO, or the Chair of a Board - but rather we were seeking and searching for an individual who heard the Gospel Call to serve

as Minister at CVPC. As Laura Kavanagh suggested in her Charge to Jenn last Tuesday evening, a Call very closely resembles a marriage - a joining together of Minister and congregation - to discern (there's that word that Sherry has been telling us about most recently) to discern God's will for us within and beyond the walls of this building. Personally, I couldn't feel more assurance that the Call has been heard and answered.

For some reason over the past weeks, the words of Advent have been resounding in my head – **Hope** for the future; **Love** for each other and all whom we serve; **Joy** in being the people of God; and **Peace** in knowing that we are never abandoned. God has indeed been good to us and there is every reason to believe and trust in His leading.

And now, I would publicly like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and give thanks. During times of vacancy – and that would total a little more than 4 years out of our 19 – we were richly blessed in many ways - although it may not have always felt like it. In both cases, Presbytery put into place Interim Moderators to assist us not only in carrying on – but in moving forward. **Rev.'s Elizabeth Forrester** during our first and **John Green** during this most recent, ably served our congregation in this role.

Also this morning, I want to express our corporate thanks for remarkable contributions that have been made over these two years. We have been richly blessed by a variety of clergy who led us in our Worship Services. I have often heard it said that it is not an easy thing to preach to a congregation that you do not have a relationship with. But you wouldn't have known that by those who filled our pulpit. I would like to highlight just a few who were with us more regularly:

David Stewart, retired Presbyterian Church Minister – who travelled up Island to lead us in Worship. While I greatly appreciated each

Service that he had with us, I also valued his enthusiasm, vitality and commitment to Christ's Church. I must tell you, I can't think of David without remembering his preaching scarf. He shared that story on at least two occasions, and it touched me deeply. I heard the other night that St. Andrew's, Victoria, is now benefitting from his preaching while they continue their search for a Minister.

Wally Fry, a retired United Church Chaplain who had served in the military. He and his wife Paula came and were welcomed with open arms. What a privilege it was to listen to him preach and to have him lead us in Communion on occasion. Our prayers continue for both Wally and Paula as they deal with Wally's treatments for cancer.

Murray Eddy, a retired United Church Minister from Campbell River. Murray's preaching challenged me in a different sort of way. His viewpoints often encouraged me to think through my own faith and determine and define what I believe and why I believe it. To me that means being open to the Spirit's leading.

Roy Cowieson, also a retired Minister who while recently moved back to the Valley from Scotland with his wife Christine, served previously in Comox United Church and has connections here in our congregation. A gifted teacher and preacher, Roy brought the Christian message to us in a way that for me made me want to hear more.

Charles Scott – Presbyterian Church Minister – retired – but who of us believes that! Last week, when Charlie spoke during the Service of Worship, outlining the plans for his cancer treatment and how he envisions his future within the congregation, I had a very strong feeling that there needed to be an expression to both he and Sharon publicly acknowledging the years of service in so many ways that they have both contributed to the life of this congregation.

What you two have brought in the 10 years you have been here has been a most remarkable gift. Not only have you both shared your leadership skills in the many studies and meetings that have been held over the years that have focused on a variety of subjects - but you have mentored us in variety of ways as well. Your devotion to Bible study, meditation and prayer are evident in your daily life. Through both vacancies Charlie, you preached often and took on the responsibility of pastoral care for those who were sick or ailing – whether at home, in care facility or hospital.

You and Sharon visited regularly with those in the congregation and built relationships that have made a difference in the lives of many – and I know you would say in your lives as well. The faith you both share is evident in all you do and say.

As you head off tomorrow to begin the treatment regime for cancer – please know that with you goes:

the gift of Hope – our hope alone rests in the fact that with God, we are never alone. Know that while we will not be with you in person, we will be with you in prayer and spirit.

the gift of Love – I know that you both are very much aware of the love of Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Know as well that you take with you the love and care of everyone in this congregation.

the gift of Joy – may you recognize the Joy you have both brought to us over the years. And may the joy of each new day outweigh any challenges that may need to be faced; and last, but certainly not least

the gift of Peace - may you experience that special peace that passes all understanding. Our wish for you is that you will go in Peace knowing that the prayers and support of this congregation are with you every step of the way.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

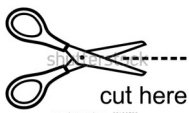
Mike and I want to thank everyone for their hospitality, kindness and willingness to show us around. All our furniture has arrived, most of our pictures are up on the wall, and our cats love the spacious house. We continue to find time to explore the region, and are particularly taken with all the walking/hiking trails. We appreciate all the advice of good places to visit, see and explore. I truly feel that God is among us as we settle down but also as we get to know the congregation. Please feel free to give feedback and suggestions about the structure of worship, the programs you would like to see, and other thoughts you may have. I am most often in the office Tuesday-Thursday 9-12 but am available for appointments any time. Although I "lead" this congregation as the minister, this congregation and I are very much in ministry together. I look forward to being a part of the community.

Thank you to all the committees and groups who have shared with me the goings-on at the church. I have enjoyed getting to know those who participate in the Prayer Group, Centering Prayer and Women's Bible Study as well as attending the incredible Discernment discussions (Please note there are two more sessions on April 8 at 2pm or April 10 at 7pm). I am inspired by all the work of the Pastoral Care, Missions, Finance and Building Committees as well as the Fellowship Group. This is a church filled with passionate, hardworking friends! A Worship Committee and Website Committee are

both in the works. Please note that the Pastoral Care, Finance Committee and Session are all investigating further requests regarding a taxi service. At the bottom of this page is a survey for those who might be interested in making use of this service if it were available. Your responses will help us receive a better understanding of how it would be used and what the costs may be.

As I write this there are a few interesting juxtapositions. We are in the midst of Lent which is often a time set apart from our regular routine for quiet and reflection, but I am also preparing for our very first Family Sunday service, an inter-generational service about play. As I look out the office window I see the sun lighting the mountains in the distance while I receive email photos from my brother in Halifax in which they are currently enduring 50 cm of snow! This is often the way I feel about the approach of Easter. Within a few days we experience a roller coaster of emotions from the moving moments of Maundy Thursday, to the grief of Good Friday, to the elation of Easter morning. There is much good news to be shared in our Easter experience but there is also the solemn truth about a God who came to be among us and was rejected by the very people he loved. It is a love and relationship that is hard to understand because it is so contrary to our contemporary understanding of love. In his book, *The Cross in our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World*, Canadian Presbyterian theologian, Douglas John Hall

Please complete and hand in on Sunday or to the office .



I _____ would be interested in taxi service for church on Sunday.

I would use the service approx. _____ times per month

be willing to pay something towards the cost

writes, "God defines love. And if the cross of Jesus Christ is the apex of God's definition of love, then the divine love has very little to do with the "luv" that is passed around so liberally." Easter is all about this love made manifest in the actions and narrative found in the Gospel. In the end it is a story of grace, good news and triumph. It is a love story.

There are a few events coming that will help us learn more about this love story. The **Maundy Thursday** service will be at 6:30pm on April 17th. It will include a simple communion service as well as contemplative prayer. The **Good Friday** service, on April 18, will be at 10:30am and will include a special Scripture and Hymn liturgy. Please note

that the **SONrise** service will take place at 8am on the church property and will be followed with a light breakfast (with donuts!). Our usual **Easter** service will be at 10:30am and will be filled with joy and celebration.

Also, on April 27th at 7pm there will be an info night entitled *Presby-What?: A brief history of the Presbyterian Church and its doctrine*. It is open to anyone in the congregation, but particularly encouraged for those interested in Membership. If this timing doesn't work for you please feel free to make an appointment with me.

Blessings this Lenten and Easter season!

Rev. Jenn Geddes

INTRODUCING MIKE AND JENN TO THE COMOX VALLEY

We love the Comox Valley because...

- * of the mild climate
- * there are no mosquitoes
- * Seal Bay Park & Hike
- * Tourist Bureau displays and gift shop
- * Kin Beach is a great place to go
- * Point Holmes— especially during a windstorm
- * sea lions at Union Bay
- * the variety and vibrancy of excellent music, art, and theatre
- * Filberg Lodge Park & Tea House –if you go after supper you can count the deer
- * Comox Valley Auction (relocating to new location in early April (check website)
- * antique car collection in basement of Crown Isle Clubhouse
- * beach walk from Kye Bay to Air Force Beach on low tide to find sand dollars
- * Air Force Beach and Campground open to public for small fee or season pass
- * yard/garage sales (check Thursday's Record; early Sat. morning; go to Crown Isle & E. Courtenay first)
- * Cottage Thrift Shop behind St. Joe's Hospital (Open: Wed to Sat. noon)
- * We love to visit the Chainsaw Wood Carver (Kevin) on the way to Nymph Falls. Visit the enchanted forest and see the "creatures" he and his wife carve!
- * We moved here from Ottawa because of Mount Washington. It offers so much variety — skiing, hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing. It is a year-round paradise. cont.....



INTRODUCING MIKE AND JENN TO THE COMOX VALLEY (cont)

- * of the wonderful/friendly/welcoming people
- * great Eggs Benny brunch (best hollandaise) at the Atlas
- * on a really hot day we have Stoten Falls river walk to cool off in July and August
- * check out the book Land of Plenty in our church library—interesting reading
- * CVPC has so much love and caring; so easy to make good friends in the church and the community
- * where else can you ski in the morning, golf in the afternoon and still have time to go fishing after dinner?

I love the Comox Valley for the great bird-watching. One of my favourite things is to take the lift up Mt Washington in the summer with a bag of birdseed. The whiskey jacks eat right out of your hand. Also the trail along the shore from the Salmon Point RV Park is great for seeing a variety of ducks, and we have always seen at least two pairs of eagles there.

Lee Ellis



Thanks to all (especially Lois Lupkoski) for your CV highlights



INDUCTION

The Rev. Jennifer Geddes was inducted as the minister of Comox Valley Presbyterian Church at a service on January 28, 2014, becoming the third minister to serve our congregation.



L-R The Rev. Ron Fischer , The Rev. Jennifer Geddes

BAPTISM

Hannah Grace Ghory was baptized on Sunday, Feb. 23rd. She is the granddaughter of Ron and Heather Philip. Her parents are Alison and Josh Ghory and her other grandparents are Arif and Maxine Ghory, who came from Victoria for the occasion. Many thanks to Jenn, who did an amazing job. Hannah loved playing in the baptismal water. Also it was wonderful to see so many members of the congregation at church on that very snowy day.



L-R: Maxine Ghory, Josh, Alison and Hannah Ghory, Rev. Jenn Geddes and Heather Philip