

# Connections Winter 2016



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

### A Message from the Minister

I have some pretty serious Advent and Christmas traditions. Among the usual, like trimming the tree, lighting the advent candles and hanging stockings, I have added things like attending the amazing Joy to the World Nativity Displays and the carolling at Kitty Coleman Gardens. But there is one tradition that, while often adapted as the years go by, is a must: Christmas baking.

I think I was about 7 years old when my Mom and I went to a Christmas baking workshop at the local rec centre. There I learned with the other Moms and daughters how to make “haystacks” and “stained-glass windows”, both involving chocolate, and cookies like shortbread and ginger snaps. At the end of the workshop we received a handmade cookbook. That book continues to help me make special treats for the

Christmas season, despite the fact that the front cover is long gone and many of the pages are spotted with grease stains. Both my Mom and I will consult those recipes, and while often spending Christmas apart, whenever I use a recipe from the book it reminds me of her.

In university, exam time was also over the advent season, and I found that baking and studying were wonderful companions. Whenever I was stressed about an upcoming exam I would begin to bake. The 10 minutes it took to prepare the product was enough time to calm me down, and the 20 minutes it took to bake was enough to help me revisit my books. My roommates loved it. While I certainly do not have the same stress as I did at exam time, the season of advent can be rather busy. It’s one of the most challenging aspects of this time of year.

There are so many reasons why we should spend time together, not to mention the list of things to do, but it is also a season in the church year that should involve contemplation, worship and prayer. How do we balance all those demands? My simple answer would be: bake! But I know that's not always possible either.

Over the weeks of Advent I have prepared some services that I hope will allow us to take the opportunity to really understand and celebrate this season. It is my hope that some of them, like the Service of Hope and Healing, are becoming traditions for you also. The Service In Search of Peace and Light will be quite moving and the Service of Joy: A Journey with Mary, will include pieces of traditional lessons and carols. They are a wonderful way for us to add a little something special and sacred to our traditions. I know I am also looking forward to the Joy to the World event again this year, and to a new event: the Christmas Tea by the

Fellowship Group.

I have to admit I am also looking forward to having my parents spend most of December in the Comox Valley. Just like we did when I was 7, I hope my Mom and I can make haystacks and stained glass windows. I recently came across this lovely prayer from Ruth Burgess, of the Iona Community. May it bring a smile and meaning to your advent season.

God of the years,  
come and meet us  
through the rituals  
of our preparations  
for the feast of Jesus' birth.

Help us to pass on,  
through chopped fruit and sticky fingers,  
the story of your love and sweetness  
in the living of our lives. Amen

*Rev. Jenn Geddes*

### **Church Christmas Hope Tea**

No need to be lonely this Christmas Season. The Fellowship Group is planning a Church Christmas Tea on Tuesday, December 20 starting at 1:00 pm. There will be entertainment, games and traditional Christmas baking. There is no cost, we only ask that you bring a very small, very cheap wrapped gift (\$2 or so) which we will use in one of the games. Please bring your spouse, friend, or neighbour, or maybe even all three to join in an afternoon of hope. Sign up lists will be posted at the back of the church so we know how much to bake!! See you there!

# *Advent at CVPC*

- Nov. 27      First Sunday in Advent and Membership Sunday*
- Nov. 29      5 pm Service of Hope and Healing:  
A special service in which we celebrate the hope of the season and seek the presence of Christ in our busy lives. At this service we will pray, sing, and hear some familiar words but also light candles in memory of those whom we miss and have an opportunity to be anointed by oil.*
- Dec. 4        Second Sunday in Advent and Communion*
- Dec. 6        5 pm Service in Search of Peace and Light  
This candle light service will celebrate the peace given to us through the birth of Christ. This is a contemplative service with some poems, songs, and even a special advent creed perfect for the season.*
- Dec. 11      Third Sunday in Advent*
- Dec. 13      5 pm Service of Joy: A Journey with Mary  
Join us at this special lessons and carols service in which we travel with Mary through this season. Hear her brave words and sing familiar songs as we approach Christmas.*
- Dec. 16-17   Joy to the World! Nativity Displays*
- Dec. 18      Fourth Sunday in Advent*
- Dec. 20      1 pm Church Christmas Tea  
Enjoy entertainment, carol singing and most importantly fellowship*
- Dec. 24      5 pm Christmas Eve Service*
- Dec. 25      Christmas Day Service*



## THE BEST THING ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION IS ....

At Worship on Sunday, October 16, 6 campers shared their experiences while attending the Annual Women's Retreat held in April, 2016 at Camp Imadene in the Cowichan Valley. The theme at the retreat was "Building Up the Body of Christ" and the campers were Sharon Cunningham, Lois Lupkoski, Sheila McLellan, Heather Philip, Sylvia Rowlandson, and Sharon Scott.

During Worship, the CONGREGATION had the opportunity to complete the title sentence. Those who responded represented relative newcomers (9), the 5 - 10 year group (14), more than 10 years (37) and Visitor (1). The responses fell into a number of categories.

### ***The top 4 categories were:***

FRIENDLY (22)	CHOIR (12)
OUR MINISTER & HER HUSBAND (13)	WELCOMING (8)

### ***Additional responses:***

FELLOWSHIP (5)	FAMILY (3)	WARM (2)
LOVE (4)	COMPASSION (3)	UNITY (2)
OUTREACH (4)	PRAYER BOWL (3)	INCLUSIVE (2)
CARING (4)	TOGETHERNESS (2)	
COMMUNITY (3)	FLEXIBLE (2)	

### ***Other areas mentioned:***

power point, sincere, sermons,	joy, sharing, diversity of gifts,	participation, supportive, non judgmental.
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The Session invites you to give prayerful consideration to the following question and share your insights with us:

*WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS DOING IN AND THROUGH OUR CONGREGATION?*

***Submitted by Sharon Scott***

## **Bereavement—The Truth About Grief and Loss**

**What is loss.** When we think of grieving and loss we often think of death. However there are many other kinds of loss, including divorce, illness or loss of job. What is particularly surprising is that any change - even positive change - involves loss. Getting promoted or married are changes that we think of as positive, but these changes also involve elements of loss.

**What is grief.** Grief is the inevitable process, We experience as the result of a loss. Grief involves a series of stages including the denial or disbelief, fear, anger, depression. These stages may overlap, or come in a different order. During this process, we may experience myriad of emotions, such as confusion, sadness, fear, guilt or hopelessness. These feelings will vary in intensity, according to the size or extent of the given loss.

How can best heal after a loss? There is no one right way to grieve. Everyone's experience of grief is unique in the words of author Monroe Lindberg. Suffering... no matter how multiple, is always individual. There are some general guidelines however, that will allow you to mend more quickly and completely, remember that no matter how much pain you feel, you will survive your loss.

**Emotional ups and downs** are a normal part of any grieving process. Here's the paradox: in order to get past the difficult feelings, you must experience them. Don't try to speed up or avoid the process. If you do, you will not heal properly. Your grieving will have been incomplete and your energy to deal with the present will remain bound to the past. Care for yourself as if you are caring for a dear friend. Rest, eat well even if you aren't hungry, and exercise even if you don't want to.

Avoid other changes and don't make big decisions, unless you absolutely must! Trust those who support you; you don't have to face this alone. Write about your loss. Journaling will bring your unexpressed emotions to the surface, thereby encouraging the grieving process too. Create your own rituals. Most cultures have ceremonies to mark the event. Marking any loss helps us to accept the loss is real. It is a way to honour the loss and to separate past from present. Faced with any kind of loss, feel free to create any kind of ceremony that holds meaning for you. There are actually gifts in loss.

***Submitted by Marion Carmichael***

## Fashion Show and Lunch Nov. 7

The Fellowship again put together a successful event with the assistance of Roxanne's Fashions. There were almost 90 in attendance and funds raised will go to **Days for Girls**, which provides sanitary products for women in third world countries.

Beautiful table settings greeted attendees



### Models: L-R

Jeannine Taylor,  
Jean Sibbald, Susan  
Scott, Joan Morrison,  
Sylvia Rowlandson,  
Jenn Geddes, Marion  
Lade



Some of the guests at the lunch