



SUNSET UNITED CHURCH

SUMMER 2011

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SUMMER SCRIPT



Summer Reflection by Kathy Platt

There is a song which we used to sing every week when I was in Explorers 1000 years ago. It went like this...*"This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears, all nature sings and round me rings, the music of the spheres. This is my Father's world, I rest me in the thought, of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, his hand the wonders wrought."* Amazing – those words are still embedded in my memory! Many things have changed in 1000 years – one of which is language. Where once I thought of the Creator exclusively as our Father, I now tend to think of our Creator as simply that – our Creator – our God. It is not an abandoning of tradition, nor is it a denial of the image of Father. For me, it is a recognition of an ever growing, ever changing, ever expanding way of expressing our faith. As we move into warmer days and into the lazy, hazy routines of summer living, another thing that will change is our way of "being church". In the village where I grew up in B.C., I used to play my guitar for the Catholic Church on a Saturday evening. In the summer, their congregation grew dramatically with the influx of all the summer tourists. Not quite the experience of most United Church congregations that I have been associated with! In the summer we often become a much smaller and more intimate gathering of the community. If we go back to the hymn I quoted at the beginning of this reflection, perhaps what we need to do is expand our definition of "church" – perhaps it is too confining to think that the only definition of church is what happens with the four walls of our building. A more expansive definition would be that the congregation is gathered under the wide open skies to listen to the singing of nature – resting in the rocks and the trees and the other wonders wrought by the hand of God. What I hope is that as we experience the ebb and flow of the gathered community, that we will

remember our connection to one another – that we will hold each other in prayer – that we will pay attention to how our faith is lived out wherever it is that we happen to be spending our time. Happy summer – may we all sing a tune or two and give thanks for the gift of time and the gift of life itself!

A Spiritual Retreat – Hiking in the Rockies
July 16 – 21, 2011

I came up with the idea for a “spiritual hiking retreat” based on a couple of ideas. I once heard Robert Bateman say that if everyone spent half an hour walking in the woods getting to know the names of 10 of our neighbours (trees, flowers, birds, fellow hikers...) many of our ailments which are caused by over-stressed living would be alleviated. The second idea comes from Barbara Brown Taylor who, in her book *An Altar in the World*, says: “in a world where faith is often construed as a way of thinking, bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of life.” (p. xvi). And so, last year I asked Daniel Dumont if he would be willing to handle the expertise around the hiking part of the retreat, and I would offer the spiritual direction that would invite people to articulate their own experience of “living” their faith as we walked the mountains together. This is the second year we are offering the hike. Four of us are returning for our second experience, and two people are joining us for the first time. Quite a number of people have told me that the timing is not right for this year, but to keep them in mind for next year! I am very much looking forward to being immersed in the wonder of the mountains, and then to all of us bringing that experience back to share with the Sunset community. Another quote: “The miracle is not to walk on water but on the earth”. (Thich Nhat Hanh). I am so glad that there are others who will walk the earth with me, open to exploring the miracle of life itself. Here are what some of the rest of our “holy hikers” have to say about why this is an important opportunity for them....

Andrew and Karen Cartmell: *“There are two primary ways to know God – through the little book of Scripture and the big book of Creation”, summarized our previous minister on Celtic Sunday a couple of years ago. Those words really resonated with me – that some people can get spiritual nourishment by reading the Bible, or listening to the minister’s explanation of the Scripture readings each week, but that other people get equally nourished from different sources. The world is humming with the word of God – in the relationships we build with other people, in taking time to examine how God relates to our everyday lives, and in enjoying the beautiful world around us. We can feel God’s presence in many different ways.*

In our changing society, I think United Church ministers are doing a great job in reaching out to people – helping us find diverse ways to discuss our beliefs, make connections to each other, and find God in our everyday lives. In our previous church, we did this through a Listening For God book study group, choir, and Spirituality on Tap conversations.

After moving out to western Canada, Andrew and I are looking forward to exploring the Rocky Mountains with Kathy and the Spirituality Hiking group. We enjoy hiking narrow paths, scrambling over rock faces, sliding down scree slopes, discovering tiny alpine flowers, spying deer, and looking up at the stars in the vast sky. What a great way to experience God's creation!

Daniel Dumont: *Why hiking? Most of the time, life is busy and complex; too busy, too complex ... Staying on the "Path" becomes difficult. I need my feet on the ground, my face in the rain, and I need to feel my sustaining breath. I need simplicity – I need wilderness. So I go and hike...*

As I breathe the cool air of the mountain top and as I open my eyes wide, I begin to take in the world as God has created it. I notice what is being created, right here – right now, in front of me. I begin to feel my connections with this amazing world. And the more I feel, the more I believe...

I am in God's world... Thanks be to god!

Scott Thompson: Blessed be Your Mountain Top...

As this year's "Holy Hikers" are invited to "Stand on Top of a Mountain", I thought that I would take a moment and reflect upon last year's hike, particularly the spiritual connections I made. I clearly remember my first thought: Andrew and I spent many years living and hiking in BC and we missed that; now here was an opportunity to do so with church folk. How exciting! As we traversed the mountains, every day I experienced deeper relationships with Nature, God and our fellow church travellers. This year at Sunset has been greatly enhanced for me through the relationships that were strengthened with each other and with our church. On that hike, each day Kathy gently infused spiritual prayer and practice in amongst green branches of the forests and mountain vistas—just enough to make our days and our feet a little more intentional. We sang Hymns, we saw bears, we talked, we listened, we walked, we climbed, we fell down and we got back up. I look forward to hearing from this year's crew about your journey of church in Nature on mountain tops and valleys. (PS be prepared for snow!)

Ross Macnab and Janet McMurtry: *Mountain hiking has been "church" for me for almost forty years; since that first trip to Waterton with a gang of teenagers from First United in Swift Current, led by Larry Edwards. I often say that my life, as I now know it, began with that trip to the mountains. Most certainly those hiking expeditions [I think there were eight] are a source of my deep connection with the United Church. So, I was thrilled last year that Kathy and Daniel agreed to take us to church in this special way.*

Life on the hike is elemental: food, water, sleep, shelter, each other. And toilet paper, Janet would add. Everything else – those things that so define you back here – is irrelevant. Like worship, hiking is deeply contemplative. While the scenery is spectacular, you can't look at it all that much, or you'll go off the trail. You spend most of your time looking at your feet, the trail immediately in front of you and the butt of the person ahead of you. So you think and you feel and you breathe. Up there, with sky above, below and all around you and the world so suddenly

immense, you are focused on the pinprick of your own existence. And you have no grander purpose on this earth than to put one foot in front of the other. Then again. And again.

Summer Worship Schedule

Worship will be happening at 10:00 a.m. for the months of June and July. Our choir will be done for the summer months, so the worship committee has arranged for the following special music to be offered to add to our worship experience for the summer....

June:

Sunday, June 5 – coffee and cake after worship to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Russell’s commissioning for Diaconal Ministry

Sunday, June 12 – special music by the Prairie Pride Chorus

- Invited guest: Darryl Auten and his potter’s wheel

Sunday, June 19 – special music by Sharon Saunders & Alex Young

Sunday, June 26 – special music by Emma Cameron

July:

Whitmore Park United Church congregation will join us for worship this month.

Sunday, July 3 – special music by Karen Cartmell

Sunday, July 10 – special music by Dana and Craig Martin

Sunday, July 17 – guest worship leader: Reverend John Haas

- Special music by Singers of the Sacred Web

Sunday, July 24 – special music by Kevin Petrychyn & Shirley Hill

Sunday, July 31 – special music by Marianne Woods

August we are worshipping with Whitmore Park at their congregation: 336 Durham Dr.



Ladies Fellowship Garage Sale

Thursday, August 11 - 10 am to 8 pm

Friday, August 12 - 1 pm to 8 pm

Saturday, August 13 - 10 am to 1 pm

Items may be dropped off at the Church for the remainder of May, June & July. We want only small items. For information call Merle 585-1970 or Jessie 586-0211.

This year we are raising money to replace the doors on the west entrance of the Church. We will be asking for both items and person power to make this event successful.

Regina Pride Parade – Saturday, June 18

Mom has been talking to me about the Pride Parade. Mom says we walked in the Parade last year and it was the second time I had done it. I rode in my stroller and Mom pushed me down the middle of the street!! (This year Mom says maybe I can ride my tricycle and Tessa can ride in the stroller.) There were lots and lots of people. And police cars!! Mom says they were helping direct traffic. There were lots of colours and balloons and signs. Everyone was really happy and there was music and honking horns. At the end of the parade some people talked at the front of a big building and I got to have a snack. Mom says we'll have snacks again this time. I can't wait!!

Brock Wallin, age 2

PS Mom says we hope that lots of you will join us.

Regina Pride Parade – Saturday afternoon, June 18. Please watch the bulletin or website for further time and place details. Or speak with any of the members of the Affirming Ministry Committee – Kelly Warden (co-chair), Brian Mitchell-Walker (co-chair), Hilary Wallin, Karen Wotherspoon, Peter Wotherspoon, Dave Warden, Kathy Platt

Bible Study and Prayer Group

The Bible Study and Prayer Group has completed its regular sessions and will resume meeting weekly Thursday mornings in the fall. Over the summer we will meet monthly on the invitation of a hostess.

During this past year we have been studying "Women of the Bible" by Jean E. Syswerda . Each week we pray for the concerns of our world and our community and specifically for the concerns of our church family members. We encourage new members to join with us.

The Bible Study and Prayer Group for many years has been fortunate to have the dedicated leadership of Dorene Mentiplay. We have all benefitted from her scholarship, her devotion, and her Christian witness. We accept her decision to pass this responsibility to others and we are grateful that she will continue to inspire us as a member of our group.

Over the summer please direct your prayer concerns to the church office or to Susie Ross (721-1502).

Submitted by

Susie Ross



Looking ahead to September

Are you new to the United Church of Canada? Are you wondering how decisions are made; how the United Church of Canada came to be; what the United Church believes about God, or about Jesus, or about biblical reflection? Kathy will be offering 4 weeks to explore positions and beliefs of the United Church. It may lead to you wanting to become an official member of this congregation, or it may simply spark you to continue exploring your own beliefs within this worshipping community. There is no expectation of membership – simply an invitation to be part of the conversation. So, these sessions will be open to anyone – long-time members, first-time members, and anyone else who would like to talk more about who we are as one congregation within this national denomination. Our first session will be on Wednesday, September 7th and we will be done by Wednesday, October 7th. Please speak to Kathy if you are interested.

Ministry & Personnel Committee News and Information

1) Sunday, May 8 was “Nora Atcheson Day” at Sunset. We honoured Nora, thanked her for her 6 years as our Office Coordinator, and wished her well in her retirement.

2) On Sunday, June 5 we will be honouring Russell as he observes 25 years in the ministry. Please join us for a short program and cake.

3) Sometimes there is confusion around our ministers’ time away from the congregation. There are 2 reasons for them to be away:

- **Con Ed (Continuing Education)** - The United Church of Canada mandates that a minister should take 3 weeks of Con Ed each year, including 3 Sundays.

- **Vacation time** - Sunset had a policy of giving our Ministers 5 weeks of holidays each year. Russell and Kathy’s salaries are the minimum amount that is mandated by the United Church of Canada. In an effort to compensate for this fact, a number of years ago, the Board increased their annual holiday time to 6 weeks. Of these 6 weeks, 4 are taken in the summer when Sunset is either closed or is very quiet. We feel that giving Russell and Kathy this extra week of holidays is a “perk” for them that has no financial impact on the congregation.

Every effort is made to have one of our ministers always here for Sunday worship and for providing pastoral care, but sometimes there are extenuating circumstances and situations that can’t be avoided.

4) With Nora’s retirement, work began a number of months ago to find a new Office Coordinator. The group that took on this task has advertised and interviewed twice. Each time we found a very suitable candidate and offered her the job. Unfortunately, both times the candidate, after accepting the job, turned it down. The hiring committee has decided to postpone repeating the process until late July, with hopes of having someone in the position for Sept. 1.

For June and July (the office is closed in August) office hours will usually be Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and Friday morning. However, this may not always be the case, so please call and check before coming. We hope that this will not cause inconvenience, and we appreciate your understanding.

We are so grateful to Bev Hui who has agreed to be our “interim” Office Coordinator. THANK YOU BEV!!!

5) Our Ministers’ Summer Schedule:

(This information will also be on the office phone message)

Russell will be away on holidays from July 1- 28.

Kathy will be leading a Sunset spiritual retreat in the mountains for July 16 - 21. Rev. John Haas will be available for pastoral care for those 5 days, and for Sunday worship

on July 16. His phone number is 586-3565. Otherwise, Kathy will be leading in worship and available for pastoral care for the first 4 weeks of July.

Kathy will begin holidays on July 26, but will be available for pastoral care until Russell gets back on July 28. Her cell number is 306-529-4009. Kathy's holidays will be July 26-August 23.

Russell will be available for pastoral care for the month of August. His cell phone number is 306-535-3720.

Whitmore Park United Church will be worshipping with us for the month of July. In August, Sunset congregation is invited to worship with Whitmore Park (336 Durham Drive)

A Dream is a Seed

A dream is a seed. What we do with that seed is a choice – a choice of germination or termination - a choice we make that is reflected in our every action, every second, every breath. Are we following our dream, are we giving it life and letting it bloom, or are we stifled by fear, hiding it in the shadows of convention and rational thought? The dream is our soul talking, or it might be the soul of the world. Possibly it's the guidance of divine Creation Herself.

I'm not sure whose voice it is, nor do I think it's important – let's leave that to mystery. What I do know is that it guides us on our journey called life. Follow it! Listen to it! Drink it! Let it consume you, delivering to you both ecstasy and deep wounds along the way, because the dream is the path of your divine expression, the journey of a life in grace.

Life is not rational, nor is it secure or conventional. It's always in motion. It never stops, always flows, and continuously transforms, even in silence and death. It's an exhilarating journey of discovery and transformation, an adventurous cycle of death and rebirth guided by our dream, which serves as a torch lighting the oath for us to follow. Let's allow our seeds to germinate.

Hugo Bonjean from **Seeds**

I Believe in Miracles

We're familiar with the mantra of the T.V. evangelist who proclaims, "I believe in miracles!" and the words of a song that the pop charts once pumped out, "I believe in miracles, you sexy thing." Miracles – things that happen that you don't expect to happen. As a church, we're into making miracles happen and that's what happens when the work of the Mission and Service Fund is supported by folks like you and me.

Read the statistics. United Church congregations raised more than \$30 million dollars over the last year to support:

- The work of 124 indigenous churches, Christian Councils and agencies in more than 30 countries worldwide. That includes medical institutions, theological colleges, emergency relief, and the work of partners overseas on behalf of the poor and oppressed.
- We assisted global mission and ecumenical relations like the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), a World Council of Churches initiative that stands in solidarity with Palestinians who struggle to establish their own state and just relationships with Israel.
- As well, over 20 overseas personnel are supported. People like Faye Wakeling and her partner Peter Goldberger who some years ago served in Guatemala. They described a workshop for women in a remote village sponsored by the Mayan Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala, one of our partner churches. "The small church kept filling and when we were ready to begin, there were 35 women, 10 men and 25 children, young people and babies ready to participate. We reflected on the creation story, the role of women as co-creators and the importance of their daily work in the families, churches and communities. We looked at Jesus' parable of a widow and the judge, identifying basic needs that are lacking in villages like schools and health services, latrines, and stoves in houses. The Gospel story brought us face to face with their need to organize to seek out the basic needs that must be met for their families to grow in health and strength."
- In Canada, M and S supports grants for youth ministry, ministries for community outreach and social support programs (like RA-PM), chaplains in hospitals and nursing homes and ministries giving support to refugees and new immigrants to Canada. In addition, your M and S givings support in some way more than 4000 ordained and diaconal ministers, candidates in ministry training and church schools.



The United Church sets as its goal to raise ever more funds for Mission and Service. The task begs a vision, a vision like that of Marie-Claude Manga, an immigrant from the Congo and a United Church member living in Montreal. She writes, “Imagine that we are like flowers in a big garden. If there are only tulips it’s boring ... but imagine many different kinds of flowers, or tulips of different colours. Imagine, too, that each flower has its own structure, its own appearance and its own scent. Yet together they give out a rich and exquisite perfume. Then imagine many people with different ways of seeing and understanding things, yet working together as a team, sharing the same faith and the same hope.”

I invite you to read Mandate Magazine to find out more about United Church programs in Canada and overseas and consider supporting M and S through your weekly offering or special gifts. Do I believe in miracles? Yes I do, because I know that with your support, the important work of the United Church will continue and YOU will be a part of it!

Brian Stubbings (Overseas personnel in Zambia 1971-78 and with Els Wilms in Malawi 1981-85)

Celebrating One Aspect of Sunset’s Community Service – Meals on Wheels for the Regina Qu’Appelle Health District

The Meals On Wheels Program is a service delivered by volunteers to those unable to prepare their own meals. Sunset United Church has participated in the Program for numerous years and has a committed team (four regular and one alternate) that delivers meals each Thursday on a regular route. The dedicated Sunset drivers perform a valuable service in helping to sustain this service. Sunset United Church Community would like to both acknowledge and celebrate our drivers for their ongoing community service: Donna Ward, Jean Cameron, Diether Peschken, Peg Achtymichuk and alternate driver Marg Hubbard.

