



Zion United Church Christmas Newsletter - December 12, 2010



From the Minister's Study

“Unto us a child is born...”

Such is the message of Christmas, and it reminds us of the privilege and the responsibility we have been given to nurture the children in our church community, for they too can be “saviours of the world” through Christian commitment and genuine caring for others and our planet.

I had the recent joy of meeting individually and sometimes collectively with our Sunday School volunteers: Dorothy Wark-Wright, Shannon Gray, Shauna Mikuliak, Adrienne Forsyth, Jeannette Blackmore and Bev Pettigrew; and also with Brenda Johnson, the Director of our new Children’s Choir, the Sunshine Singers. Not only is it energizing to witness their commitment, but these folks are full of great ideas about how to go forward. All of us are excited about the future.

Previously we have talked about dividing the Sunday School into two...an older and a younger group. Yet actually, we are about to divide into three. Let me explain: Dorothy has agreed to be here as many Sundays as she can... for the very young children, for those who find it difficult to sustain interest in a program designed for children who are slightly older. Thank you Dorothy, for your ideas and your help! The core members of our group are situated between the youngest and the oldest, and their teachers – Shannon, Jeannette and Bev – are going to take turns with the teaching. Finally, we have Adrienne with her eye on the older group, and we are looking for someone else to help out.

The most exciting part of the plan is our intention to hold a meeting in the middle of every month... to prepare the programs for all ages in the coming month. This is exciting because there is the opportunity to share ideas on crafts and learning activities, and we will work on the content of the material to be presented. We want to “line up” the Sunday School program with what we do in the children’s time in church and with what the adults are experiencing in worship. I have found that when people meet and plan together, all sorts of creative thoughts emerge, and it will be fantastic to know, weeks in advance, what is going to be taught and how we are going to do it.

Okay...here is more good news. The Sunshine Singers are going to participate in our worship services on December 12 and December 19. It is truly wonderful to have children involved in our Sunday worship again in this way. We are hoping that five hundred people will come out to support them, to cheer them on, to make them aware how very important they are to us. You may want to go home before the sermon, but do what you can to come and hear the children.

“Unto us, there are children born”...and we have the privilege of inviting our children to be a part of a community where they can come to know the love of God in Christ. Let’s do it; and let’s have a wonderful Christmas!

Doug Hallman



Zion United Church is a busy and exciting place. We welcome all persons and families to worship, and to share in the activities and fellowship offered in Zion.

Because this is the Christmas edition of a newsletter, we are using the space to inform and remind folks of activities taking place in Zion in the month prior to Christmas Day, and to provide a “heads up” about what 2011 has to offer, however, we hope you will notice that many of these special events actually happen on a regular basis in Zion. This is the make-up of Zion United Church. Please know that everyone and anyone is welcome to join in the worship and in the programs and activities offered.

Children's Event - November 27, 2010

The children prepared for Advent and the Christmas season by enjoying an afternoon of fellowship, crafts, and by making Christmas decorations.

Kid's First Christmas Party - December 1, 2010

The Kids First and The Parent Mentoring Program held their annual Christmas Party at Zion December 1, 2010. Families shared a meal, got to know each other, and had pictures taken with Santa. All were grateful for such a nice evening and a wonderful warm environment for the party.

Krista Bakke (FHHR)

The Children's Choir - The Sunshine Singers

Brenda Johnson, assisted by Marjorie Pritchard and Shannon Gray, is the Director of this choir of young people. There are currently nine members, but all children aged five to twelve years are welcome to join the choir. The choir practices in the Parlour at Zion Friday nights at 6:30 p.m. Brenda says they are committed and enthusiastic and are learning quickly. The choir has already sung in church and will do so in both the December 12 and December 19 services, after which they will take a short break and reconvene in February. Anyone interested in joining the choir may contact Brenda (Cell: 631-8095) or just come out to the practice.

The Moose Jaw and District Foster Families had their Annual Christmas Party at Zion United Church in the Social Hall on December 4th. No better venue can be found. We have been using this location for about five years now. It allows our families to come and celebrate the season with room to run and dance and sing.

Christmas can be so uncertain for children who aren't in their own homes for the holiday. Will Santa know where to find me? Will I get a gift? Will I see my Mom and Dad? Do I get to spend some time with my siblings as this home didn't have room for all of us? Am I responsible for our family not being together? So many times, but especially this time of year, our time of celebration and abundance can be so confusing for those who live in a world where there is little or none.

So, for just a little while we try to brighten the lives of these precious little ones. If we can help them forget their fears for even a moment, and create a memory, it is all worthwhile. When even the lure of Santa calling your name can't pry your nose off the snow globe, little eyes all a-twinkle, you know a child will go to bed at least for tonight with a smile on his/her face.

Sometimes that twinkle comes in the form of a senior, eyes all a-sparkle as they recount the stories of days gone by. Aren't we all children....this time of year?

Thanks to all who pray for our event, and help to make it the growing success it is. And God bless children....no matter what their age. *Bev Pettigrew*

The CANTABILE CONNECTION CHOIR under the direction of Dorothy Yakiwchuk hosted their Annual Christmas Concert on Sunday Evening, December 4, 2010. The glorious sounds of the Hallelujah Chorus and other 'Christmas Specials' rose to the dome of Zion United Church when the choir performed.

The choir performed a number of eclectic pieces that are contemporary and fun and that appeal to everyone. One highlight for some folks was the invitation to join with the choir in singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

The Cantabile Connection Choir began in January 1997 as a Music Ministry Outreach Choir. The choir auditioned and sang at Unisong (2000) as part of the Canada Day celebrations in Ottawa, sang at Premier Calvert's swearing-in ceremony (2001) and at the Western Premiers' Conference in Moose Jaw. In 2004, they performed at the grand opening of the Moose Jaw Cultural Centre.

Over the years, the choir has enjoyed singing at the Gospel Jamboree in Besant Park, Bethlehem Live, Conventions, Fundraising events, Senior Centres, the Rotary Carol Festival, and many morning church services.

Proceeds from concerts have paid for a water well for a village in Mozambique, and for children's school supplies. Locally the choir supports the Riverside Mission and Zion United Church.

The choir is open to new members who wish to sing, to be united by music, to be united spiritually and who are willing to work hard so as to enjoy the journey and the finished product. This year the choir will also perform a Spring Concert.

Zion United Church has a rich history of music performed by choirs and instruments. Music from various persons and groups and the classical piano performances by our minister Rev. Hallman are part of every Sunday worship service. We are also privileged to host concerts and recitals of groups and individuals directed or taught by members of our congregation and others associated with our church:

The Heart of the City Piano Recital took place in Zion on Thursday, December 9

The Moose Jaw String Orchestra under the direction of Brian Johnson of the Regina Symphony Orchestra will present a concert on Sunday afternoon, December 12 at 3:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Everyone is invited to attend. Donations will be accepted at the door and will be given to Zion in appreciation of the practice space used for orchestra rehearsals.

Diane Bruck will be holding her student's Christmas Recital on Sunday, December 19th in the Zion Sanctuary at 2:00 in the afternoon. Diane says she is so pleased to have her students able to perform in this beautiful facility using the grand piano. Diane currently has five vocal students and seven students studying piano. The recital is open to family and friends with a reception to follow in the parlour.

The Good Food Box continues to pack and distribute from Zion Church. We much appreciate the use of the building and our volunteers, some of whom are Zion members. Our numbers continue to grow in this worthy community program. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Sincerely *Kass Demkey*, Good Food Box Co-ordinator



From The Pit.....

What a month this has already been and yet to come! The sanctuary choir has been working very hard this month in preparation for the Advent season. We will be participating in the annual Rotary Carol Festival on December 13th with two new anthems.

On December 19th, at the 7:30 pm evening service at Zion, the choir is singing some old favourite anthems that should bring back lots of memories. Rev. Hallman plans to weave the Word and his teachings along with the anthems to provide a power packed hour of inspiration and motivation for we at Zion and the Moose Jaw community. Make sure you all attend!!!

At this time, on behalf of the sanctuary choir and all the music teams we wish you all a truly blessed Christmas filled with the hope and promise of tomorrow. Thank you for your continued support.

Your Organist, *Bruce Learmonth*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- 1. Rotary Carol Festival in Zion United Church – December 13 and 14 – 7:30 pm**
- 2. Carol and Candlelight Service. The Zion Sanctuary Choir, under the direction of Bruce Learmonth – with the support of Pam Ludwar and the Zion Strings – will be providing a Carol and Candlelight Experience on Sunday Evening, December 19 at 7:30 pm. There will be Christmas readings, special music from the choir, and opportunities for the congregation to sing their favourite Christmas Carols**
- 3. Christmas Eve**

An early Christmas Eve Service will be held at Zion on Friday, December 24 at 7:00 pm. This is a family event and traditionally we have always had lots of children. There will be music and a brief message appropriate for all ages. Then the people of Zion are invited to participate in the Communion Service at St. Andrew's United Church at 10:30 pm.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR 2011. We want to give some “heads up” about events to look forward to in the New Year. If there are readers on your Christmas lists, you may find some great gift book titles in what follows.

Adrienne Forsyth’s Sessions on the Emerging Church: This coming year *The Emerging Church*, edited by Michael Schwartztruber is being read and discussed. They have already had meetings, but there is still time to join and be part of future meetings: Monday afternoons at 1 pm, December 13, January 10, February 14, March 14 and April 11.

The Women’s Spirituality Network meets once a month on Monday Evenings at 7:00 – January 31, February 28, March 27 and May 30. The January 31 meeting will feature a presentation by Tracy Crooks on “Body Wellness and Spirituality.” For more information, contact janetkilgannon@hotmail.com.

Sunday Evening Services at Zion, 7:30 pm

1. **January 23.** The story of the Anointing of Jesus appears in all four Gospels, and this allows us to examine a distinction between “History Actual” and “History Preferred.” The primary illustration for the service will be *Life of Pi*, by Yan Martel.
2. **February 20.** This service will include references to the controversial novel, *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.
3. **March 20.** Luke 6:37 reads: “Do not judge and you will not be judged.” The primary literary reference is *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham.
4. **April 17.** This will be “The Big Service” of the season. It will be constructed and conducted by participants from St. Andrew’s College, the United Church Seminary in Saskatoon. Rev. Lorne Calvert is coming and bringing as many of the faculty members and students as he can. All the people from churches in Moose Jaw and the region are invited to attend this special event to support St. Andrew’s College. Zion will provide the music and a social time.

A “TRYIN ZION” Series

In the summer of 2011, the church is closed in July but open in August. For the four Sundays in August, “The Messages” will centre on a book by Rabbi Harold Kushner entitled, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

For those still unsatisfied with the approach of contemporary orthodox evangelicals and the traditional perspective of the main stream churches, Kushner’s work invites us into the lobby of a “Postmodern Christian Perspective,” which also does justice to contemporary science (i.e. quantum mechanics).

