

The Mirror

Reflections on the life and work of Como Lake United Church November 2011

Rev. Jan's Advent Letter



Dear Friends at Como Lake.

The last Sunday in November is a special day in our household. It is the time when a string of lights is placed over our fireplace and is plugged in for the

first time this season, as a way of reminding heart, soul, and body... that a new season - the season of Advent - has arrived in my yearly spiritual journey - and in our living room.

More than any other season in the Christian year, the season of Advent - the month before Christmas - is a season when we long for more light - both physically and spiritually. It is a time when we are aware of completing values within and without. And while the month of December is one of the times in the year that holds the potential for love and joy and hope and peace, it also holds the potential for stress and debt and overwhelm and arguments.

Within all this real life stuff, Advent is a time to remember that God has not forgotten us even in dark times when situations seem impossible. Advent anticipates once again

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Advent and Christmas Services and Events

Regular Sunday Worship 10 am will focus on the theme of Advent. There will be Communion on Dec. 4th.

Saturday, November 26, 5:00 to 8:00pm - Preparing the Way—An intergenerational Advent evening of stories and activities to focus ourselves in God for the weeks before Advent. A chilli supper will be provided.

Tuesday November 29, 7:00pm - Readings, Prayers, songs and silence for your heart, mind and soul.

Tuesday December 6, 7:00pm - Readings, Prayers, songs and silence for your heart, mind and soul.

Tuesday December 13, 7:00pm - Readings, Prayers, songs and silence for your heart, mind and soul.

Tuesday December 20, 7:00pm - Readings, Prayers, songs and silence for your heart, mind and soul.

Saturday, December 24 - Christmas Eve
4:00pm - Christmas Pageant and Carols

7:00pm - Christmas Story, Carols, and Candlelight

10:00pm - Christmas Story, Carols, Communion, and Candlelight

Sunday, December 25 10:00am - an informal Christmas morning service

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**We are Christ's caring community
connecting people with God
and with one another
answering God's call
and making a difference.**

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the story of the birth of Jesus – and offers us an opportunity to open ourselves to the wonder, the hope, and the beckoning of new birth in our own hearts and lives. The light from a prayer candle or even from a small string of lights on a fireplace, symbolizes this hope in the season of Advent - our hope and our prayer and our commitment to say “yes” to God’s soul work within us and in the world around us. Christmas Blessings and God’s Peace, Joy, and Love to all of you in this awe-inspiring season.

Rev. Jan Bihl.

Tuesday Morning Worship ends

The Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. Prayer and Meditation Small Group ministry has come to a close, with gratitude to GOD and one another for the spiritual nurture and connections experienced over the past four years.

Those who participated will be carefully listening to see how the yearning that was met through this group may be filled and grown in the life of the congregation in new ways, trusting in God’s creative surprises!

Joint Search Committee Update

By the time you read this, the application deadline for our second minister position will have closed and the search committee will be busy getting ready to interview. Once they have made their decision, a Congregational meeting will be held to present their decision and seek ratification from the congregation. Please keep the committee and the applicants in your prayers.

News From the Board

“What in God’s name is going on here?”

Since the last Mirror, your Church Board has held 3 more meetings and as well, has had a half-day working session to examine our Church committee structure and Board functions – in other words, your Church governance structure.



At meetings held on September 20th, October 18th and November 15th

the Board dealt with:

- Creation of a “Chair Elect” position on the Board to provide leadership in the absence of the Chairperson and to train to take over in the ensuing year. As yet, this position has not been filled though Dick Smith agreed to serve as back-up Chair Person.
- Acceptance, with regret, of the resignation of Dave Nicol from the Board, the Presbytery Committee and the Joint Search Committee. Dave has opted to give life to his gifts in other areas while also attending to work and related matters. We thank him for his dedication and service. His position on the Joint Search Committee will be taken on by Valerie Simpson, thank you Valerie, and the Board will be searching for a replacement on Presbytery and on the Board. If you feel called to serve in either position, please talk to me or to any Board Member.
- Ongoing updates on the Joint Search Committee, whose first

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meeting was held on September 22nd.

- Opening discussions on Church governance (committee structure, Board function, etc.)
- Issues relating to the consistency of the sound and video in the sanctuary to enhance the worship experience for everybody involved, including those providing the service. The Board approved the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee, initially under the Worship Committee but reverting to Board leadership at the latest meeting.
- Issues relating to the garage, in particular water seepage and structural soundness. This matter is ongoing.
- The Gentlemen of Fortune (GofF) and a Christmas Season concert. After discussion internally and with the GofF, it was decided to suspend the November concert and instead consider an alternative date preferably in January. The Chorus is swamped giving concerts during the holidays so they were delighted with the suggestion.
- The initial consideration of the United Church of Canada's remit relating to the articles of faith, the New Creed and the Songs of Faith - matters which will need to be voted in mid-2012 by the Board.
- Staff and contractor salary/fee administration for 2012.
- The 1986 Wing "time capsule".
- On-going review of our financial situation which, at present, is close to being bang on target.

At the half day working session on October 22nd, the Board discussed at length the existing Committee structure (what exists now) and started initial discussion on what is still life-giving, what we may need to "let go" and what might be done to ensure our growth and vibrancy in the future. Additionally, the duality of the Board functions – eldership and stewardship – was discussed and will continue to be discussed in the coming weeks and months. The decision has been taken to hold monthly Board meetings to deal with the management and stewardship issues with one extra meeting every quarter to deal with vision and eldership matters – issues of the spirit.

As you can see, it has been an active few months and we look forward to more exciting things evolving in the weeks to come.

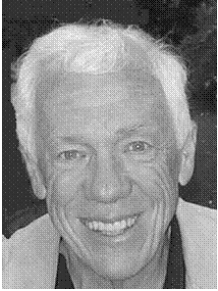
As we prepare to enter the Advent Season, the Board wishes for you and yours, the joy and peace embraced in the Christmas story and the blessings of family and friends, here and beyond these walls. Merry Christmas!

George Elgstrand



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From the Editor



Random thoughts while recovering from surgery...

Why me? I guess most of us ask this when something unpleasant faces us and I did too. But then I looked around our congregation and saw what some others have bravely faced and thought "Hey, I can do that too."

And, you know, with the tremendous expressions of support and prayer from members of this congregation and friends, it seemed easier. Thank you everyone in "Christ's caring community".

Why is the term "disciple" so scary? Even some of the people who I would name models of the word, seem to cringe when you mention it. What is wrong with being a follower of Christ and living a Christian life? Isn't that what it means to be a Christian? Maybe it's the spectre of standing on a corner in your sandals preaching 'The Word' that does it. I think of it as simply centering your life through worship, prayer, Bible study and employing your God given gifts in doing His work to set an example that speaks to others. Is that so hard?

We're getting closer to bringing our second minister on board. This is a brave step forward for our congregation; launching a new ministry. Now that's scary! Making it a success will mean all of us rallying to the cause, participating where we are drawn and able, being a part of the ministry not just bystanders or recipients, and supporting it financially. Scary? A little, but exciting too. Maybe it's fitting that we reach this point at Advent, the beginning of the Christian year.

And speaking of Advent, there are a number of opportunities to enhance your Advent experience this year, from our Advent activity evening on November 26th, to the Tuesday night services through Advent, to "Advent Awakenings" a book of daily devotionals for the season of Advent, to concerts at other churches in the Lower Mainland (check the weekly bulletin and the bulletin boards), and of course to our own Christmas Eve services. I urge you, make the most of this joyous season.

Ralph Johnston

WANTED

**Forks and Spoons
For First United Mission**



**Drop them off at the Thrift Shop
marked First United**

Coming in February

A small group made up of members from the United Churches in the Tri-Cities and Maple Ridge areas have been meeting to discuss ways in which our churches can encourage the kind of cooperation and resource sharing that has been occurring over the past year or so.

The group is planning an open meeting in February for all members to participate in the process. Watch for more information.

Nurturing Faith and Friendship

Advent Lights



Prayer

Silence

Music/Song

Meditation

Tuesdays at 7:00pm
November 29,
December 6, 13th and 20th
In the Sanctuary
All are welcome

Advent Awakenings

Daily Devotions for the Season of Advent.

Available at the Reception counter.

The **daily reflections** begin **Thursday, Nov. 23rd,**

so pick one up soon!

You can buy (\$10.50 each) or borrow.

Preparing the Way An Advent Evening

Saturday November 26

5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Come for an intergenerational time of stories and activities to focus ourselves in God for the Advent weeks before Christmas

Como Lake Prayer Circle

Want to do something tangible to be a part of Christ's Caring Community? Want to enhance your prayer life? Come and join Cheryl Blake on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am in room 202 for a time of prayers, silent and spoken. We will open with scripture, a prayer of invocation, prayers for our church family concerns, our church, our community and the world and a closing blessing. No experience necessary, everyone welcome. Please contact Cheryl at 604-219-5186

Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

A Note from your Pastoral Care Team

Your Pastoral Care Team members Hilda Backus, Cheryl Blake, Marilyn McCutcheon, Ann Smith, and Vicki Stacey as well as our visitor John Backus continue our work weekly. This work includes sending cards for birthdays (over 70's & children), get well and thinking of you. The weekly bulletin "family concerns" is updated and given to the Office Secretary.

We do phone calls to shut-ins as well as remember them with cards at special times of the year – Easter and Christmas.

We would welcome new people to join us and nominal training will be provided to get "you" on board. It is our hope that our new staff person will help us greatly in this work.

We need your help to inform us when persons you are related to or know are ill, in hospital or getting treatments. We want to let them know that 'Christ's Caring Community' does care about them. As Jesus said, "we need to love our neighbour as we love ourselves".

Marilyn McCutcheon.

Thrift Shop Hours

Tuesdays

9:00am to 1:00pm

Thursdays

6:30pm to 8:30pm

Saturdays 9:00am to Noon

Enter off the lane



"Welcome, O weary searcher for truth!
Say, have you ever worked with kids?"

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Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.

D. Elton Trueblood

Remember Your Smile Card

Every time you fill your Thriftys Smile Card 5% of it goes toward extending the fire monitoring into the sanctuary.



If you don't have a Smile Card ask at the church office.

Como Lake United Church Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer shawls become tangible symbols of love when words can't be found to adequately express one's feelings. They can be warm hugs of happiness, empathy, and support; a private place of escape in which to rest, relax, and renew; something to hold on to when all else seem to be slipping away. Wrapping another in a shawl knit of prayers and loving thoughts is a gift not only for the one receiving the shawl but fore the maker as well.

Prayer begins in the heart. Because the creation of a prayer shawl is, first, a spiritual practice for the shawl maker.¹

Shawls.....made for centuries, universal and embracing, symbolic of an inclusive, unconditionally loving God. They wrap, enfold, comfort, cover, give solace, mother, hug, shelter and beautify.

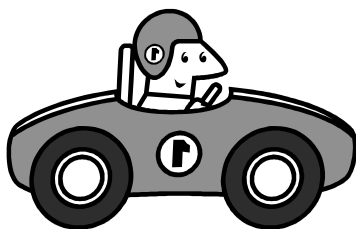
A group of women who participated in the first Women's Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, began this shawl-knitting ministry in 1998. Vicky Galo started knitting shawls for women who were undergoing treatment for breast cancer and other illnesses; Janet Bristow started knitting shawls for new mothers. Other members of the Institute began knitting shawls for their friends, family members, and people who just needed a shawl.²

The Prayer Shawl Ministry of Como Lake United meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at 2pm. All knitters and crocheters are invited to gather together for a time of contemplative prayer, fellowship and a sharing of ideas, patterns, techniques and experiences.

¹"The Prayer Shawl Companion" by Janet Bristow & Victoria A. Gole-Galo pg. 9

²"Knitting into the Mystery" by Susan S. Jorgensen & Susan S. Izard pg.147

Car-ing



"Do you know anyone who can't make it to Sunday worship because they don't have transportation? If so, don't forget our Como Lake United's "Car-ing" program. It's in operation rain or shine and like you, we'd love to ensure that those wishing to join in praising God and joining in community with us may do so. Just give George

Elgstrand a call at 604-469-8488 or leave a message with the church receptionist 604-931-8555."

