



Spirit of Shalom

Duncan United Church

Sharing our faith from the beautiful Cowichan Valley of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada.



Season of Lent 2020



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In the midst of movement and chaos, keep stillness inside of you.

Deepak Chopra





FROM DUNCAN...

It's one of the most powerful and life-changing verses in the Bible...“Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) It was many years into my ministry before I truly took those words to heart. After seven years of university, ordination came in 1976. It was a period shaped by the positivism and the hopefulness of the “peace and love” of the sixties. Even in the warm afterglow of those heady times, however, the Protestant work ethic was alive and well. That curious amalgam, that strange blend, gave birth to significant and timely social justice initiatives. We believed everything was possible! Challenges were simply opportunities to be seen through to their natural conclusion...a better and fairer world for all. All these years later, I still hold onto that.

Many of us in ministry believed that it was hard work, discipline, and long hours that pleased God. Spiritual practices and contemplation weren't even on the radar. Such activities were almost seen as “fluff”. We were never “still” for long. I remember, as a young minister, working late into the evening, study lights burning for all to see. Early each morning, I would be back in the office. I thought my parishioners would appreciate knowing that their devoted minister was hard at work. Days off were not necessary. There was even a theological justification: this was a “calling”, not a job. In hindsight, I now know that my congregation would have been much better served had I taken self-care a little more seriously. They were wonderful people. So patient with their young minister. God was patient too.



The dark side to all this need for activity, busyness, and “achieving”, however, is that we become human “doings” rather than human “beings.” We miss a significant part of the whole point of life: to be gracefully present to each moment, and still enough to hear the God who speaks to us in the way God did with Elijah, in a “gentle whisper.”

Over the years, Joan and I always found a degree of stillness or contemplative time in the daily morning run, or kayaking on the ocean, or hiking in the forested mountains. Only in these past few years since “re-configuration” have I discovered the gift of stillness in spiritual practices: being still simply for the sake of being still. The difference? There's a deeper peace, a more tangible calm, a clarity of focus, that is so much more nourishing to body, mind, and spirit than anything else imaginable. Stillness softens the edges of the “work ethic” and strengthens and expands its reach.

Don't wait another precious moment, find intentional opportunities to “be still”, and discover that God is undeniably and wonderfully there.

With warm wishes to all.

Rev'd Duncan Barwise

Interim Minister.





SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

Another annual tradition lives on! Join us for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on **Tuesday, Feb. 25th**. Sponsored by the Duncan United Church Youth and AOTS Men's Club.

Gluten Free pancakes available by request.

Dinner for Adults is \$5.00 and Kids is \$2.00

First come first serve starting at 5:00pm and ending at 6:30pm.



LENT AND EASTER SERVICES

Shrove Tuesday—February 25th, 5:00—6:30 pm. Pancakes!

Ash Wednesday Service—Wednesday, February 26th 7 pm

Palm Sunday Holy Communion Service—April 5th 10 am

Taize Service—Sunday, April 5th, 7 pm

Maundy Thursday Service—Thursday, April 9th 6:30 pm

Good Friday Service—Friday, April 10th 10 am

Easter Sunrise Service—Sunday, April 12th 7am—Art Mann Park

Easter Service—Sunday April 12th 10 am

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Duncan will lead our **Ash Wednesday Service, February 26th at 7:00 p.m.** will mark the beginning of our journey through the season of Lent. To truly experience the fullness of Easter one needs to journey through Lent from beginning to end. Please join with us for this brief but meaningful occasion of worship.



EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

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We will celebrate the 'first light' at **Art Mann Park** (on the shores of Quamichan Lake) with our **7am Sunrise Service**.

Guitar music, hot cross buns and hot chocolate will close out this special time.





STILLNESS IN LIFE

Being still was something I used to do a lot of. Many years ago I met weekly with a Buddhist meditation group and we sat very still for 45 minutes. I actually found it very easy to do and for over seven years I meditated or prayed twice a day for 45 minutes. I would bounce back and forth between Centering Prayer that we do here at the church and the Buddhist style of meditation. I found them both really similar. I have to admit that the stillness brought a sense of peace to my soul and I feel it was probably the most spiritual time in my life. I felt a deepening connection with God.

Now I have to confess, I stopped meditating fifteen years ago and even though I know how helpful it is to me I can't seem to bring myself to get back into the daily practice so the twenty minutes of centering prayer I do here at the church each Friday morning is about the only time I am totally still.

These days when I need to "still" my mind I get outdoors. I walk through the woods or along the shoreline and hear the sounds of nature and it quiets my mind. I find the most fulfilling time of stillness to be when I am near water. The sound of the waves crashing on the shore or the water rushing down the waterfall or gurgling down the creek bring a sense of calmness to my mind. I can sit and listen to the sounds of water in nature and be at peace. It seems strange to find stillness next to so much movement but for me it works.

Someday I may find myself back with a daily practice of meditation and prayer and I hope I do because I know when I do meditate I feel spiritually healthy. Yet I feel there are many ways to find stillness and I don't really believe you have to actually be still in your body to find that stillness in your mind. I find that our lives are too busy, we live in this fast paced world where we are always going here or there and doing this or that so I believe the greatest gift we can give ourselves is to just take some time to be still and to breathe, to quiet our busy minds. Now whether you do this in a quiet space in your home with meditation or prayer or whether it be out on the trail near a gushing waterfall, it doesn't really matter, we each just have to find what works for us.

Blessings to you all in this quiet time of stillness - Lent.

Linda Evans, Outreach Coordinator





EASTER — MESSY CHURCH

SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH 3:30 PM TO 6:00 PM

Join us for a fun afternoon of crafts, games and story telling in this time of Lent as we approach Easter. Messy Church is fun for people of all ages and a great way to have fun and maybe get a little messy. Includes a pot luck dinner so bring something to share if you are able. All are welcome so bring your family and friends !



“COMPASSIONATE AND GENTLE PRESENCE”

Saturday, March 7, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Come and join Rev'd Duncan and Joan Barwise for an instructive (and entertaining) workshop on being a “compassionate presence” to others. This will focus on increasing the skills and confidence of those who enjoy visiting others in need of a friendly visit. It’s all about nurturing human connection, and creating a sense of warm and supportive community.

We’ll explore together...

- the nature of “listening”, and what it is to be a compassionate presence
- the mutual gifts of “life review”
- the times when “listening” begins with talking
- the “how to” of building trusting relationships
- the Psalmist’s call to “being still”
- simplifying the matter of offering a prayer
- some practical matters when we visit one another

Please register in the office or give Linda a call at 250 746-6043.

WORDS ON STILLNESS

“A nest is a cup of space, a swinging cradle, an anchored platform, a wedge between boulders, a pocket in bark or dirt, a scrape on a rock, a dent in sand. It represents the still point in a bird's fast-paced life, the place where past and future meet”

Gretel Ehrlich

Submitted by Daisy Anderson

Moonlight, Summer Moonlight

‘Tis moonlight, summer moonlight,
all soft and still and fair;
the silent time of midnight
shines sweetly everywhere

Emily Bronte

Submitted by Maureen Gallacher





IN THE SPOTLIGHT!



Colleen Fuller
Ministry & Personnel
Chair

Where were you born? I was born in Stamford England, my parents were in the air force. Interestingly, the hospital records were destroyed in a fire a week later so I had to open archived documents from the Department of National defense to prove I was born and reapply to be a Canadian citizen at the age of 50 in order to get a passport.

Where have you lived? Most of my childhood I lived in Saskatchewan, went to University in BC an then moved to Calgary for thirty years and raised two wonderful daughters. When they grew up, I said “Enough Snow” and in 2006, came to Duncan via Victoria. Smartest move I have ever done.

What is or was your occupation? I lasted one year as a traditional teacher but was too much of an independent rebel and fell in love teaching people with disabilities. I spent 25+ years in many roles rising to executive director managing 40 clients and 20 staff. The past 8 years I managed the Foodbank in Duncan, definitely my most unpredictable but most rewarding job. I retired “Working” in November.

What do you enjoy doing? I love to read and travelling with Keith and our family. I enjoy being around people and will continue to volunteer helping vulnerable folks. I love to hit Thrift stores, its all about the search for just the right thing and I do love a bargain!!

Share a fun fact about an event in your life? For my 60th birthday, my girls threw me a “Hippie Themed party” complete with a flowered van for a photo booth. Seems that their vision of me is the Island Gypsy Love Child, Pretty close to the truth!!





IN THE SPOTLIGHT!



David Annis

Where were you born? . Born in Chilliwack, BC (my great-grandfather homesteaded there in 1906, hence Annis Road on Highway 1)

Where have you lived? Chilliwack, Kitimat, Nanaimo, Duncan.

What is or was your occupation? High School Teacher of Social Studies for 32 years.

What do you enjoy doing?

Travel, gardening, hiking, spending time with family.

Share a fun fact about an event in your life?

Have hiked the West Coast Trail and the Chilkoote Trail (long time ago!)

Where were you born? Duncan, BC

Where have you lived? Duncan, Chemainus and Nanaimo

What is or was your occupation? Automotive and other labour positions.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time. Fishing, hiking and frequenting the library.

Share a fun fact about your life? Some thing folks may not know about me is I have a great interest in anthropology.



Travis Shaw,

HOT DOG LUNCH

The SJOT Team invite you to stay for a hot dog lunch following the service on Sunday March 29th!

By donation at the door.

Hope to see you all there!



Edie and Sheila were first up our **New Access Ramp!** We are now more accessible and welcoming to all folks.



CHURCH LIFE IN PHOTOS—ERIC MARSHALL



Keith's Sabbatical Farewell Sunday!



Sunday worship Christmas Pageant



Our Choir's Christmas Cantata Evening. An evening of wonderful music lead by our amazing Music Director, Connie!



BURNS NIGHT—ERIC MARSHALL



A fun evening as we celebrated Robbie Burns in honour of Ray Lockhart who was MC and organizer for many years at our church. Everyone stepped up and fun was had by all!





Today I promise

Today I promise I'll be true
 and do the things I ought to do.
 I'll keep my thoughts all shining bright
 my spirits buoyant, clean and light.
 I'll speak with calm and careful tongue;
 rejoice when I see work well done.
 I'll love my neighbor down the street
 and guard my sometimes wayward feet.

I'll see the best, the fine and true,
 and let no angry thoughts come through.
 I'll offer help when need I see,
 For that's the way I ought to be.
 And can I, Lord, this promise keep,
 and when at night lie down to sleep
 Remember that my thanks are due—to God,
 the one who saw me through.

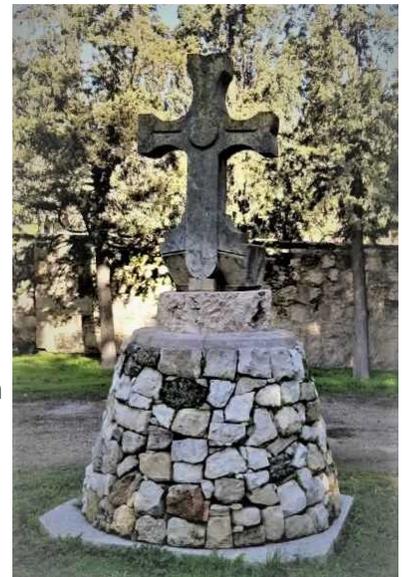
Mable Warburton.

STILLNESS—Keith Simmonds—from his sabbatical time in Bethlehem

Taking some time away from Bethlehem, I travel to Jerusalem. Spending time alone, wandering the Old City, behind fortress walls through streets constructed by Emperor Hadrian. Wide avenues narrowed down to three side by side bazaars. Shops selling whatever your heart might desire. Each with a hopeful keeper viewing the crowded way.

Jammed and packed with tourists, worshippers and residents. Dressed in clothing specific to their group. Long hair locks, wide brimmed black hats, apron strings. Headpieces patterned in Palestinian black and white or Jordanian red and white. Women with hair tightly covered, loosely wrapped or free. Men in long skirted clothing, women in patterned dress. Colour, scent and sound. Spices, incense, bird call, bright patterns, carved wonders, 'ancient relics', Roman glass...Voices accented in Arabic, Hebrew, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Armenian, Chinese dialect, Indonesians, Filipinos, even English, American and probably the odd Canadian too.

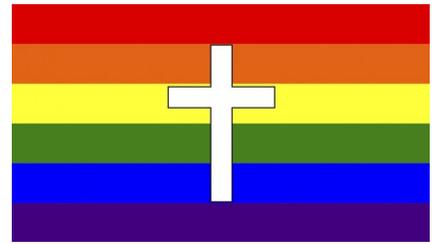
It is sometimes too much. Walking down the Via Dolorosa, tracking Christ's way of the Cross among the pilgrims touring I come to station five. Here a man named Simon saw another struggling under his load and stooped to carry a share of it. The story calls me, a chapel beckons. In this moment empty of all but me and it's attendant. In this moment – silence. I am one. It is good.





JOURNEYING TOGETHER—Michelle Creedy, Affirm Committee

In Psalm 46, we are reminded that in order to fully encounter God’s guidance and wisdom, we must take time to be still and to know that God meets us in that stillness. Given that this newsletter is about being still, you might be asking yourself what being still has to do with exploring the possibility of becoming an affirming congregation? How can sitting around talking encourage stillness?



As members of the Affirm Committee, we have been called to examine our own hearts and minds while considering what it means to be both personally affirming and part of an affirming congregation. We have prayed, read scripture, listened and grappled with questions. Only by being still and encountering God through one another have we been able to deepen our journey into the process. These are Holy conversations we continue to have.

All of us are invited into the affirming journey. It’s not just for those of us who decided to join the committee. We are collectively exploring and discerning. We’re asking hard questions and having challenging conversations. We keep moving forward. We can only move through this process if we are together.

God calls us to draw the circle wide. As we do so, God invites us to be still. The beautiful thing about this is that if we pray with intention God will guide us. By doing so, we can more fully open ourselves to the movement of the Spirit in our lives and in our church.

How will you take time to be still? Will you spend time in God’s magnificent creation? Will you light a candle? Will you knit or play your favourite musical instrument? We hope that you might take some time in your stillness to offer a prayer for our Affirm Committee and for our congregation. God is love and so many in our community need a safe place where they can encounter Christ and grow in faith.

We thank you for your prayers and for your continued discernment. May God bless our journey together.

May you find some “stillness” during these weeks of Lent. We wish you all a very joyous Easter!

From the Staff of Duncan United Church
Duncan, Joan, Connie Linda, Sarah and Joy



Duncan United Church

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Sharing in Ministry:

Keith Simmonds (Minister—On Sabbatical)

Reverend Duncan Barwise—Interim Minister

Joan Barwise—Pastoral Care

Sarah Prestwich (SundayJourney/Youth Coordinator)

Linda Evans (Administration/Outreach Coordinator)

Connie Masson (Music Director)

Joy Hachey (Custodian)

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Interesting Links for you to browse...

Duncan United Church

Web page: www.duncanunited.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/duncanunited/

Keith Simmonds Blog

www.faithfulwitness.xyz.

Micah 6:8 “What does the Lord require of you...but to seek justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God”



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