



Spirit of Shalom

Duncan United Church

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

Easter

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Rev. Nancy Colton | 2 |
| Unified Board | 3 |
| Linda Evans | 4 |
| Easter Events | 5 |
| Daisy Anderson | 6 |
| Maureen Gallacher | 7 |
| International Women's Day | 8/ 9 |
| Did you Know | 10 |
| Skye Evans | 11 |



FROM REV. NANCY COLTON

Where to begin?

How about with two facts and an explanation?

First fact. We're well into Lent now; counting from March 16th there are only 13 days until Easter Sunday.

Second fact. Background fact: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and proceeds for 40 days not including Sundays. Fun fact: This year Ash Wednesday happened to fall on Valentine's Day. That happened three times in the last century, and it will happen three times in this one (2018, 2024, and 2029.)

How and why does that happen? Because Valentine's Day is a fixed date and Ash Wednesday isn't. Because the 40 days of Lent are tied to the date of Easter which is the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox. It's complicated. Interesting, though, if you ask me.

Valentine's Day, a day of love, on Ash Wednesday? Seems like a good coincidence to me. If you've already started to take some time this lent for self-examination and prayer, or if you're going to start today, begin with loving yourself and knowing that you, like all God's children, are loved by God just for who you are. Remember that you come from the dust of the earth and will return there, but also remember that life is for living. And remember that both the divine spirit and the dust of creation that is in you connects you in a profound and intimate relationship with all things.

Bonus fun fact. Easter is among the reasons that every four years February has 29 days. You may have a vague recollection about how we came to have leap years from your school days involving popes and competing calendars – the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar. Toss in the full moon which is central to the timing of the Jewish Passover, tradition around the timing of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, the spring equinox, and calendar drift and you end up with an extra day every four years. It's more complicated and involved than that, and there's room for error in my understanding, interpretation, and explanation. (My sources? Two UCC ministry personnel. The Reverend Bev Brazier via FaceBook who's source was the Reverend Stephen Milton, Lawrence Park Community Church. Mrs Google or Wikipedia may also have some light to shed on this bonus fun fact.)

Traditionally in Lent, folks have given something up, something that gets in the way of their relationship with God. That's one option, one way to approach and mark the Season of Lent. There's another option, though, another approach. Adding something. With intent and meaning that enhances – or at least doesn't get in the way of – their relationship with God.

Most often that's what I've done – intentionally added something meaningful to my day. This year I decided on two things, one in the morning when I wake up and one about mid-afternoon. For the first, I take about 5 minutes to focus on my breathing with a breath prayer. Inhaling, "Jesus, remember me," and exhaling, "when you come into your kingdom"; for the second, I take 5 minutes to reflect without distraction about myself (self-examination), my relationship with God and with other people, and to wonder about the world and what's happening in it.

Peace,

Nancy





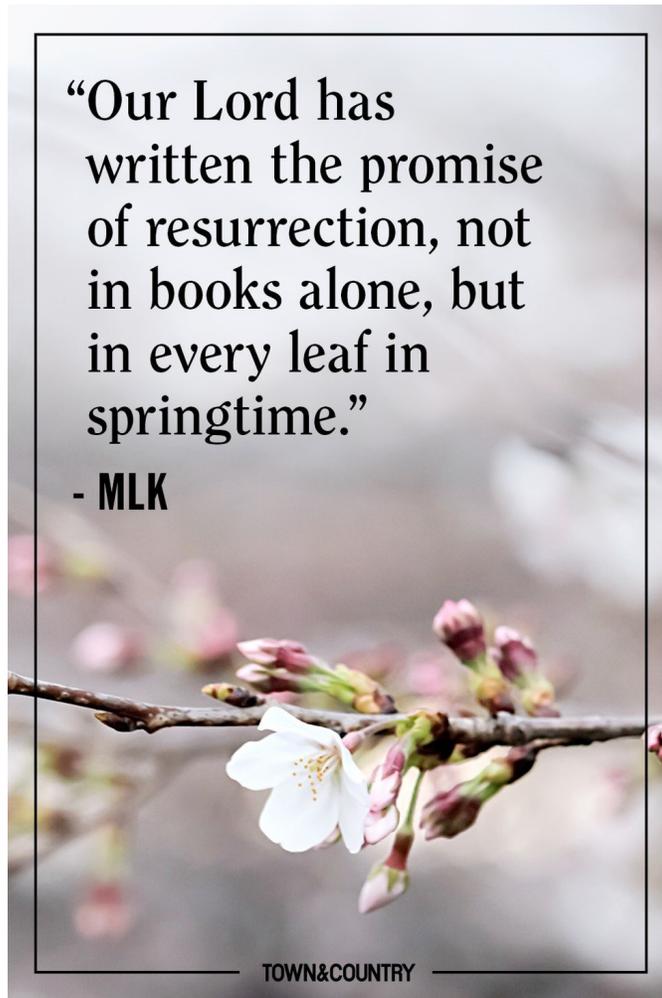
UNIFIED BOARD—DAVID VANDERLINDE

A thought for Spring and Easter from David Vanderlinde, Chair of the Unified Board

I was thinking about my entry for the Easter Shalom newsletter, when, I came across this Quote from Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Our Lord has
written the promise
of resurrection, not
in books alone, but
in every leaf in
springtime.”

- MLK



Getty Image (<https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/arts-and-culture/g18211259/best-easter-quotes-sayings/>)

I hope you are able to enjoy all the wonderful colours of the Spring flowers and the many flowering trees, which line the boulevards around Duncan, as they emerge from the dark of winter.



EASTER THOUGHTS — LINDA EVANS

Easter is such a wonderful time in so many ways. It is a time for many families and friends to gather around a table and share in a meal, share stories of the past and their dreams of the future. At church it is a time of celebration for the risen Christ. Following the six weeks of Lent, a reflective time, Easter brings us great joy.

Journeying through the six weeks of Lent from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday gives us time to make changes in our lives. Some people fast, others add a spiritual practice or some may just take the six weeks to think about what has been and what will be. I find it a busy and yet quieter time in the church. It is a time when we can wonder about the mystery of bible stories and the messages they bring to us. There is so much mystery in life, things we will never know or understand both past and present.

My favourite Sunday has always been Palm Sunday as I can picture the children greeting Jesus as he came into the town. Their joy and delight at seeing him gives me a warm feeling inside and has me excited about good things to come. Even today I feel that way on Palm Sunday. For me it is all about the children and their hopes for the future.

At home my Lent is a time of planning family dinners and brunches, arranging Easter egg hunts for seven little ones and finding crafts to do with them to keep them occupied. It makes it very busy and takes some energy and yet I try and find time to just be quiet and reflect.

Attending the Wednesday morning meditation time here at the church is a time I am able to really be in the quiet. It helps to center and ground me—to just breathe. On the weekends hiking out in the forests at this time of year when the river and creeks are full, the sounds of the rushing water gives me time to just stop, breathe and listen. (and of course take lots of pictures for church services).

It is in these two places, the church and the outdoors that I find myself wondering about life, creation and the mystery of it all. It makes me curious about so many things.

I hope you all find time in your lives to reflect on all that you are, all you have done in the past and think about your future and what dreams you still have for yourself. Self care is so important and as we wait for the longer days of spring and summer, the warmth from the sun bringing new life and growth in creation , it is a good time to just take time for ourselves and wonder.

Happy Easter, I hope you are all blessed with a sense of mystery, joy and lots of Easter treats!





SKILLS AND SERVICE M & S AUCTION!

GET READY FOR OUR ART MANN SKILLS AND SERVICE AUCTION!



All of you who love to bake, or knit or sew, or are crafty or those of you who love to help others doing outside /household jobs – we need to think about what item or service you can donate to our auction. We had a lot of fun in past year and lots of great items. Baking and lunches were battled for along with every other item, all were auctioned off raising funds for our M & S contribution. So think about what you could donate—A chore, creating something or a fun gathering to offer.

ITEM INFORMATION CAN BE SENT IN ANYTIME via email or forms are in the office.

EASTER SERVICES

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Thursday, March 28th at 6:30pm join us for a meaningful service on Maundy Thursday.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE



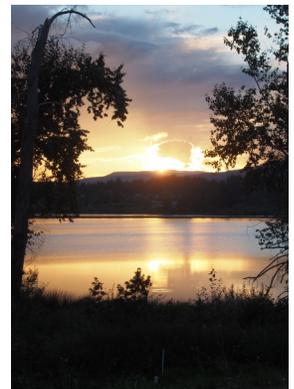
Friday, March 29th at 10:00 am join us for this meaningful service as we retell the story of Jesus on the cross. Following the service we will enjoy some hotcross buns at coffee hour.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE Sunday —March 31 2024

We will celebrate the ‘first light’ at Art Mann Park (on the shores of Quamichan Lake) with our 7am Sunrise Service. Refreshments will be served following the service.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE—10am in the sanctuary as we celebrate and worship the Risen Christ.

Refreshments will follow in the church hall.





Transformation—Daisy Anderson

I recently made a monumental decision. Last summer and for the next eight months I'd had scary symptoms that pointed to deadly diseases. And with all the poking, scanning and snipping at my body, a "who cares" despondency set in; I felt like I was an object, and a flawed one at that. Every few days, feeling lost in the whirlwind of appointments I'd visit the church to chat with friends and felt immediate relief. At home I sank back into the mire. I had lost my sense of adventure.

Living in a whirlwind of fear was unacceptable to me. And whatever it was—my spirit, or habit—I opened iTunes to listen to the singing of Psalm 23. The comfort and calm of the music nourished and strengthened my soul. The turnaround was miraculous. I decided that I was determined to live until I die.

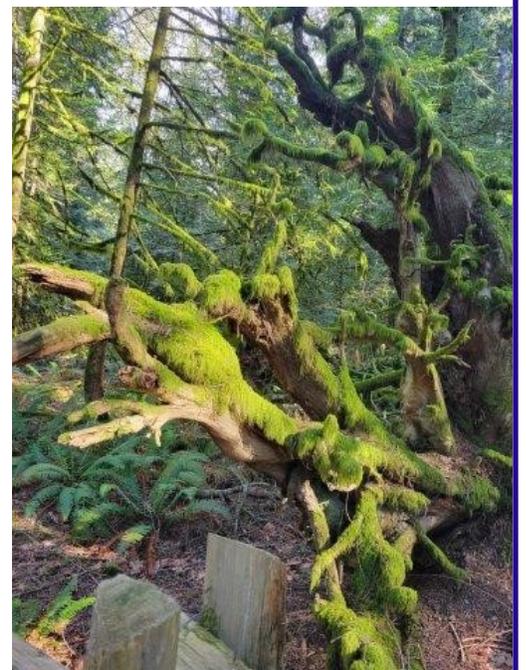
Confidence abounding, I sized up my situation by asking the same questions as years earlier "How would I live right now if I knew lightning would kill me in six months?" A soft voice replied with another question, "What do you cherish so much that you cannot let it go?" My answer came easily, "practicing my faith, being in community and connecting with friends." When I asked myself, "What is stopping me?" I knew what I had to do.

After the insight, I made my monumental decision. I will say "No" to medical tests that might whirlwind me into chaos. If pressured, I will ask, "Then what?" I will accept only health care that supports me to live fully. And with my decision and the worries out of mind, I resolved to deepen my faith by following through with two spiritual practices.

First I chose to improve my ability to live in the moment. In the past few years, I tamed my straying mind by noticing the small and the ordinary while walking the trails. However, when I was tired my thoughts raced so fast I could not think straight.

Enter the second spiritual practice. Three years ago I was diagnosed with a serious breathing problem. Since then, twice a day I've twisted and turned my torso to slow and deepen the breath. Breathing exercises quickly became a spiritual practice and for a while, I was feeling better. But then eight months ago the whirlwind of **medical stuff** overpowered my sensibilities; I went downhill and my spirit ailed.

I started thinking about pilgrims who travel far in search of a divine presence, seeking spiritual renewal and transformation. Some of them have profound spiritual experiences where earth and heaven become almost one, time stands still and the presence of God is felt like never before.





Transformation con't—Daisy Anderson

One day, on what felt like a whim, I booked a holiday. The following days I envisioned letting go of stuff with every out breath and on every in breath inspiring living air. I reminisced about my youth, how the seaside mesmerized me with the rolling pebbles and lapping waves. That was when it hit me; my time away could be my pilgrimage, condensed into a couple of days.

I will breathe, reflect and have fun too. My hope is to return revitalized, ready to get through whatever life throws my way, and to have the fortitude to do what I can for our troubled world.

Amen

Submitted by Daisy Anderson



Easter—Maureen Gallacher

What exactly does the word “Easter” mean? Well, “the Oxford Dictionary” states—it is the festival of Christ’s resurrection.

Eggs indicating “new life” are painted and also given out as gifts. “Spring” is on the way after the dark cold of winter, and the more cheerful-Longer days are not lost on Christians around the world. Easter music is some of the most beautiful ever written.

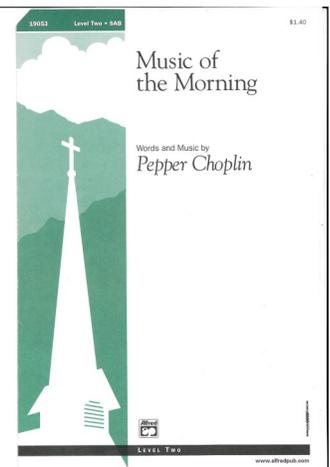
“Pepper Choplin” is “ Minister of Music” at “Greystone Baptist Church” in North Carolina. He says, “Music of the Morning” is like the light of a cloudless morning at sunrise.”

“Joy” is in the air and when our family all went to Easter Morning Service we wore new clothes. Women wore hats then and we had new Easter bonnets be-decked with flowers and ribbons. The ribbons, tied under our chins kept them safe in cold Scottish winds. Very pretty but very scratchy!

Easter is a time of renewal. Just look at what is represented. Fresh eggs—new life , baby chickens, baby lambs and baby bunnies. New Life.

Yes, Easter is a blessed magical time of longer days and sunshine. The darkness has been dispelled and we greet Easter morning with thanksgiving.

Blessings—Maureen Gallacher.





INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND THE 20TH DAY OF LENT

Friday, March 8th marked the halfway point of our Lenten journey to Easter; it was the 20th day of Lent. It was also International Women's Day 2024. I know you all know and are familiar with the story of Lent so I won't remind you here (that's what Sundays in Lent are for). You might not be as familiar with International Women's Day, though, so I thought I'd share a bit of its history as background for two posts I read on my Facebook feed that day.

The background: From <https://www.internationalwomensday.com> (accessed on March 9, 2024), "**International Women's Day** (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women." The webpage goes on to say, "IWD has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people. Today IWD belongs to all groups collectively everywhere. IWD is not country, group or organization specific." #IWD2024.

The two posts: Accessed on March 8th and 9th, shared because they name and lift up women of the Bible and speak to their roles in and importance to the story of our Christian faith.

St. James United Church (Dartmouth, NS) shared this one, reposting from #IDW2024:

- Like Sarah, who laughed but saw God's blessing.
- Like Hagar, brave enough to name God.
- Like Tamar, resisting with wits and daring.
- Like Deborah, wise judge and leader.
- Like Rizpah, immovable witness and defender.
- Like Jael, blessed collaborator.
- Like Ruth, committing herself in devotion and love.
- Like Ester, risking her life for God's people.
- Like Mary, Jesus. Mother, birthing God's in-breaking.
- Like the Canaanite woman, challenging Jesus.
- Like the woman who anoints, bring of a lavish gift.
- Like Mary and Martha, learning the way of balance.
- Like Mary Magdalene, first to proclaim the resurrection.
- Like Joanna and Susanna, providers and disciples.
- Like Priscilla, travelling evangelist and woman worker.
- Like Junia, respected apostle.

~ #IWD2024

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CON'T

Broad View United Church (Victoria, BC) shared this one, reposting from #IDW2024:

- Teach like Junia
- Preach like Mary
- Be bold like Noa
- Protect like Rahab
- Scheme like Tamar
- Resist like Shiprah
- Dance like Miriam
- Defy like Vashti
- Pray like Hannah
- Lead like Esther
- Risk like Ruth

May we *be like* the women named in the first, and *behave like* the women named in the second.
 Be blessed and be a blessing as your Lenten journeys bring you daily ever closer to Easter Day.
 Nancy

OUR SISTER CHURCH—FORFAR SCOTLAND

In 2011 our minister at the time, Rev. Duncan Barwise did a minister exchange with the minister, Rev. David Logan at St. Margaret’s Church in Forfar, Scotland. It was six weeks of learning how others do worship and we made wonderful connections with the congregation and with Rev. David and his wife Catriona. In 2012 we became “sister churches”. Pictures of the congregations and the certificate are on the wall outside Burns Hall.



On Sunday March 31st. St. Margaret’s Parish will have their last worship service and begin a new adventure as they amalgamate with another congregation and become “All Souls

Church”

Duncan and Joan will be there at the closing service to wish them all well from us here at Duncan United Church. A card has been sent from us wishing them well in their new parish home. The banner we gifted them that matches one of our banners still hangs in their sanctuary.





DID YOU KNOW?...

- Easter, the Sunday of the Resurrection, or Resurrection Day is the most important religious feast of the Christian liturgical year, observed between late March and late April. It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, which his followers believe occurred on the third day after his death by crucifixion some time in the period AD 27 to 33.
- The week before Easter is very special in the Christian tradition: the Sunday before is Palm Sunday and the last three days before Easter are Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday (sometimes referred to as Silent Saturday).
- Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday respectively commemorate Jesus’s entry in Jerusalem, the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Holy Saturday are sometimes referred to as the Easter Triduum (Latin for “Three Days”). In some countries, Easter lasts two days, with the second called “Easter Monday”.
- The week beginning with Easter Sunday is called Easter Week or the Octave of Easter, and each day is prefaced with “Easter” e.g. Easter Monday, Easter Tuesday, etc. Easter Saturday is therefore the Saturday after Easter Sunday. The day before Easter is properly called Holy Saturday. The day before Easter is properly called Holy Saturday. Many churches start celebrating Easter late in the evening of Holy Saturday. Many churches start celebrating Easter late in the evening of Holy Saturday at a service called the Easter Vigil.
- Easter also refers to the season of the church year, lasting for fifty days, from Easter Sunday through Pentecost.
- Easter falls on the first Sunday following the first full moon that occurs on or after the first day of Spring.

EASTER MESSY CHURCH!



Come on down and join us as we gather together to celebrate in God’s community by exploring the theme of “Easter” There will be crafts, games, singing, worship, community, followed by a potluck dinner! All ages are welcome! Come on down and join us for a great time at Messy Church!

3:30 pm – 6:00 pm Saturday March 23rd.





EASTER RAMBLINGS—SKYE EVANS

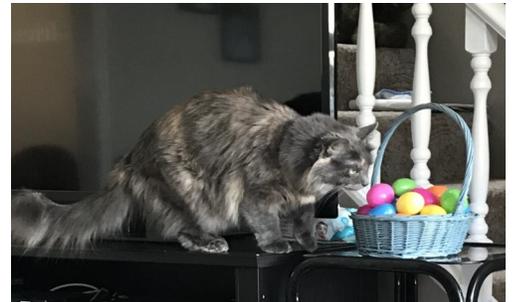
It's that special time of year again folks! We celebrate Easter with family and friends at home and at church. What I love most about this time of year is.... it warms up, there are wonderful new things sprouting from the ground, bugs crawling around again and I am well entertained in my backyard outings.

I think we all look forward to spring and new beginnings. Being able to get outdoors is so important for our physical and mental health. It uplifts us and gives us a sense of hope and fresh air is the best. When the days are dark and dreary and short we aren't always able or willing to go outside. I however will go outdoors in any weather except when the ground is covered in that horrid white stuff. I do not like the way it feels on my paws, I'm a little bit scared of it and on those days I choose to stay indoors in front of the fire. On those days I hear Linda say "I told you so" a lot because I ask to go out but when she opens the door I change my mind. Sometimes she knows me better than I know myself. That can be true about a lot of things and a lot of people. There are times when others know us better than we know ourselves.

I hope you have a wonderful Easter weekend. I have heard that I am going to be having a lot of company in my house and apparently a new four legged , sniffy friend that barks will be coming as well. I will probably spend my Easter under the bed. It's not my favourite place to be but it is the only place I really feel safe when all those little ones come over. You won't believe how much noise they can make. It's unbelievable when they are all together. Anyway I shall make the most of it. I do have quite a few toys stashed away under the bed to keep me company and maybe just maybe this new four legged will not want to chase or play with me. Maybe it will be

quiet and sleep a lot like myself. We all need to think positive and hope for the best so that is what I will try and do. Wish me luck! (I sure hope he can't fit under the bed)

Happy Easter everyone, enjoy the Easter eggs!



HAPPY EASTER FROM THE STAFF

The staff of Duncan United Church would like to wish you all a peace filled season of Lent and a Happy Easter. We hope you will join us at the many gatherings and services as we journey through this season of Lent into Easter celebrations.





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”



Duncan United Church

246 Ingram Street
Duncan, British Columbia
Canada V9L 1P4

Sharing in Ministry:

Rev. Nancy Colton

Sarah Prestwich (SundayJourney/Youth Coordinator)

Linda Evans (Administration/Outreach Coordinator)

Connie Masson (Music Director)

Jeff Legatt (AV Technician)

Peter Gray (Custodian)

Office (250) 746-6043 Open Mon—Fri 9 am—noon

Fax (250) 746-6785

Office e-mail: admin@duncanunited.org

website: www.duncanunited.org

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Duncan United Church

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