



Spirit of Shalom

Duncan United Church

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

Thanksgiving Edition 2019

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A Note from Keith,

Give Me Ears to Hear

Lord,
I believe
my life is touched by you,
that you want something for me,
and of me.

Give me ears
to hear you,
eyes
to see the tracing of your finger,
and a heart
quicken by the motions
of your Spirit.

(Ted Loder in "Guerilla's of Grace")

Gratitude, our theme for this quarter's "Shalom" is, at least in part, the lived practice of awareness of blessing and grace. Of knowing, even, perhaps especially, in uncertain, unsteady, unpredictable moments, God's loving presence in creation.

Gratitude is looking into the heart of every part of creation, even, perhaps especially, those parts that irk or disrupt our contentment with incomprehensible acts, words or deeds and recognizing there the abundant, grace-filled presence of the Creator of all.

May this season find you steeped in reflections on grateful, abundant, poured out and overflowing love. In the wide open smiles on the faces around you, in the uplifting music of the soul's abandoned grace, in the flights of birds above and the lapping waves below. May you see in every flower, hear in every voice, feel in every breeze a moment that gives you pause to be grateful, as the Creator knows gratitude and blessing in you.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Wishing you the gift of
faith
and the blessing of hope
this thanksgiving day!

www.duncanunited.com

Good Times at our Fun Fair at Providence Farm



*Gratitude is the song
your heart sings when
your mind is still.*



**Photos courtesy of
ERIC MARSHALL**



Thanks From Campers!

At Camp Pringle I had a lot of fun. My favourite activities were high ropes, kayaking, and tubing. I also really enjoyed the Memory Island canoe trip and all the wide games we played at camp. Sarah Walker



Rachel appreciated having more responsibility this year at Camp in the CREW Program, loved the yummy food, and enjoyed new activities such as building a picnic table!

NEW GATE BUILT BY CREW

I had a lot of fun at Camp Pringle. I'm incredibly glad that I got to experience Crew for the first time. I made a lot of new friends and we all had tons of fun. We did a bunch of different activities like tubing, high ropes, leading wide games, and playing murder mysteries. We also got to participate in a Dungeons and Dragons workshop. Mary Walker

Thank you to the congregation for Camp Bursary donations!

We are so thankful to the congregation for helping us to raise \$2,000.00 towards our Camp Pringle Bursary fund! It is such a special opportunity when our Children and Youth get the experience the magic of Camp Pringle and have a "Week that lasts a Lifetime", you are all a part of that and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping us achieve so much!

"From the Desk of Sarah"

As September gets rolling and takes up momentum, so do our Children, Youth, and Family Programs here at Duncan United Church! I am so very grateful to work at a congregation where there is always so very much happening and excited to get our programs started here again!

Being Grateful—Linda Evans, Outreach Coordinator

*“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough and more.
It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity.
It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.
Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”*
Author unknown

This was sent to me by Don and Anne McAfee and it really spoke to me about a new practise I have been trying these past few months. I know many of you have heard of doing gratitude journals. I tried that years ago and wasn't very successful with it. However this summer I started to email three things I was grateful for each day. It was amazing. Throughout the day I would find myself thinking, “oh this can be one of my three for today” and it allowed me to see the good in life in so many new ways. Even when things weren't going as I had hoped I was able to find some way to be for grateful for it and *feel* the gratefulness.

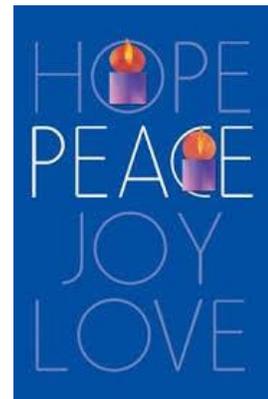
Being part of Duncan United gives us all so much to be grateful for. From having a church family, someone to call when you need support, a place where you can offer some form of help to others which in return always makes us feel valued and needed., Sunday mornings services and Friday morning coffee hours give us times of connection with one another and a time for us to be there for one another.

There are so many here in our community that require support and help. It is with gratitude to the congregation of this church that I am able to say “yes” to so many folks who come through our doors seeking help. Whether they need food, warm clothing or help with staying housed we can often offer them some form of support.

It's hard to read the news these days. In fact I don't. It is mostly full of people doing horrid things and horrid things happening to good people. Yet sadly it is all part of our world and not something one can totally ignore but if look we can find lots of good among the horrid. Each day that we spend time being grateful for what we have, we will find that our lives are changed and we will feel that sense of “peace for today” and hopefully have “visions for tomorrow”. Give it a try!

Advent Study

Beginning on November 27th at 2pm and 6:30pm
We will study the ways prayer and other spiritual practices (singing; creating art; writing; photographing, etc) sustain us and connect us with the divine eternal Spirit of God in Christ. Each week will focus on an Advent Theme (Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Creation)



Our Library

In keeping with the theme of gratefulness, did you know that the church library has several nice books about this very subject??

Find a quiet place to just sit and think about how grateful we are to live in Canada: where all children go to school, where we learn to read. Being able to read led us to be able to have a job.

Being able to read can give us enjoyment in just sitting and reading anything –newspapers, magazines, novels. Being able to read means we can enjoy a letter or e-mail from a friend or relative.

A book that is currently popular and very insightful into finding everyday contentment is *The Gratitude Diaries by Janice Kaplan*. Start thinking everyday for a month of three things that you are grateful about your family, next month find three things that you are grateful for in your home, next month your community, next month.... etc.

We have several meditation books by the Buddhist Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Han and also by the Dalai Lama who encourage us just to slow down and be grateful for the moment.

Our minister, Keith, mentioned awhile ago in one of his reflections the name Fred Rogers known to many of us, when our children were young, as “Mr. Rogers.” He opened his children’s TV program with a catchy song “It’s a beautiful day in the neighbourhood...” and then he would take off his jacket, put on a comfortable cardigan and sit down to connect with his young audience. He exuded gratefulness for everyday things.

The church library has many different topics of books, so peep in for a look or stop by the Sunday cart at coffee hour.

Submitted by Pat Lamont

Mugsy's Grand Opening

Mugsy's Grand Opening

Roaring 20's Comedy, Murder Mystery Mayham

Directed by Dawn Adams Staring our very own
Keith Simmonds, Carie Saville and Shaun Pattenden
along with the Theatre Group.

Friday, Nov. 15th Dinner Theatre - \$35.00

Saturday, Nov. 16th – Afternoon Tea - \$25.00

Tickets available in the office



It's 1920, a turbulent time during prohibition; with illegal gin joints and police raids. Gangsters have taken over the city with their showgirls dripping in diamonds. Crowds of fun-seekers are drawn to Mugsy's Speakeasy for an evening of cheap gin and dazzling entertainment. Mugsy's right hand man, Three-Finger George, and Strong-Arm Henry try to keep the revelers under control. Mugsy is a tough customer, and he don't want no trouble with the law...See! Well wouldn't ya know it: a body turns up in the most unusual place. Suspects are everywhere. Whodunnit? You are about to find out.

Celebrating 150 Years !



Celebrating our 150 years of history!
Photos courtesy of Eric Marshall.

More fun!

Worship in the Park!
Photos courtesy of Eric Marshall



Harvest Fair Fun!



Prayer Shawl Ministry

In 2007 we began a prayer shawl ministry here at Duncan United Church. It is a ministry done with care and love. Knitters prayerfully knit shawls from wool purchased through our Pastoral Care Committee and the Circle of Friends. The wool and shawls are blessed by the Circle of Friends at their meetings for the people who will receive them. Each shawl is delivered by one of our members and wrapped around them with love and prayer. Shawls are given when someone is ill, grieving or celebrating a special time in their lives such as turning 90!

Those that have received these shawls are filled with gratitude. They feel the love and prayers that went into the shawls and know that people have been thinking about them and caring for them. It's a ministry that touches the hearts of both the knitters, those that deliver them and those receiving the shawl.

Here is a poem written about prayer shawls that was sent in by Jean Dunbar who is one of the COF.

*A skein of yarn is a fine thing
But not very warm or comforting
So with a prayer to guide my hand
I crocheted this shawl strand by strand
For You*

*When you wrap this shawl around you
And feel the need of a prayer or two
May you know the encircling Love of the Lord
and feel the healing of His Word
For All*

*And please remember, you are Loved
Not only by the Lord above
But connected through the hearts of friends
Like a skein of yarn that never ends
For Ever*



Thoughts on Gratefulness—Pamela Braun

About a month ago the thought came to me that I could be totally honest when someone says to me “Hi, how are you?”

I now say “Grateful”.

Honest because regardless how I feel in the moment when asked I say grateful.

If I wasn't at the time, in the moment I can be. So it is a reminder to myself, that's where I want to be and I put myself there.

What is Pastoral Care? - Keith Simmonds, Minister

It is the way we care for one another. At Duncan United Church our care for one another is expressed in many ways. From welcome on Sunday mornings to invitations to coffee or lunch. Perhaps a walk on one of our local hiking trails, or a seat at the next concert offering. We visit one another, sometimes checking in on friends, sometimes coming from the church to a care home or the hospital. We offer a shoulder to lean on, prayers of comfort and blessing, a warm and willing hand with some of the tasks of life. We can get practical too, with food for body and soul, help with clothing and changes in life and living. We are there when life brings change, to sit with, support, celebrate and hold on tight.

We offer care to community members too. Meeting space and prayer time for twelve step groups, food for the hungry, with warm hearts and hands serving, clothing for those in need, emergency assistance for those on the edge of losing everything. An ear that listens, a seat at the table, a prayer, a blessing, a reminder that all are welcome and beloved in the heart of God.

What is pastoral care? It is how we bring love into being.

Sanctuary Mental Health Study

Faith-based small group explorations in mental health. Eight sessions developed by Sanctuary Ministries. Check it out at: <https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org/sanctuary-course/>

Hardly a day goes by without news of a mental health crisis in our community or families. Many folk in our neighbourhoods, homes, workplaces and churches live with mental health diagnosis (or undiagnosed) that make life difficult and debilitating.

How do we respond?

What does our faith have to tell us?

Are there precedents in scripture? Supports in community?

Who might consider attending?

“The Sanctuary Course is for anyone who wants to learn about faith and mental health. It requires no previous training or expertise—just a willingness to engage in dialogue with other believers.”

Session times will be Wednesdays at 2pm and 6pm beginning on October 2nd. For 8 weeks.

St. Margarets Church Forfar, Scotland

Gary and I recently spent a month in Scotland. We planned our trip to stay in nearby Carnoustie in order to spend a Sunday service with our sister church, Saint Margaret's in Forfar. I took greetings from all of you via a message from Keith. They warmly welcomed us and send back their best wishes to DUC. In the group picture, you will notice a banner [top right] given to them by DUC. Carie Saville



Busy Bee—June Mafin

"Sweet little bee, so industrious, so intense,
You didn't see me get
oh, so close.

I waited, holding my breath, expecting
you to fly away but
you didn't.

I took your picture and you
kept on working, burrowing
your head and once again I
was in awe at Creation. God. Beauty. Wonder. Holiness encapsulated in
a gentle yellow flower and a busy bee.

Grateful.

I am grateful there are still bees.

Bees being busy.

Bees "doing their thing."

May humanity recognize the importance of keeping this planet safe
for you and for ourselves.

May you always be here
"doing your thing", busy bee.



Trish Stock

You may have noticed a new presence among us. Trish Stock is an Anglican Postulate, training to become a Deacon in the Anglican Church. While most of her training takes place in the Anglican Churches in Saanich, Trish is spending time with us to learn about Social Justice Outreach. She's coordinated the Meals on the Ground relief program this August, will be helping organize and coordinate the Homelessness Day of Awareness on October 16, and will be taking part in some of our Reconciliation and Relationship building activities over the next few months. She is a gift and a blessing to our ministry. If you've been around the Food Basket, you've probably met her there too.

Gratitude— Sarah Prestwich

As a child , my sister and myself loved the Berenstain Bears books. We had over 50 of these books that we would beg our father to read to us before he tucked us in and made us say our nightly (usually made up on the spot) bedtime prayers. The specific story from this collection that has always stood out for me was the one teaching the little bears to count their blessings. The story weaved through how the bears were scared because of the lightening and thunder from a storm outside, but they were reminded to count all of things and people in their lives that were blessings to them. When I think about this, I can see that I have countless blessings and each one is in each Child and Youth that comes through our doors. They are my blessings this Thanksgiving season.

With Gratitude from the Unified Board of Duncan United Church

If the definition of gratitude is “the feeling of being grateful; a strong feeling of appreciation to someone or something for what the person has done to help” the congregation of Duncan United Church deserves a great deal of gratitude. Every day so many folks in our church are actively involved in helping; whether it is helping within the church community from pastoral care, to the UCW, the AOTS, the Ushers, the Choir, Sunday School leaders, the Thrift Store volunteers, the many and varied Committees within our church, our Librarian, each amazing member of Staff; everyone who plays a part in keeping our church moving forward with care and consideration. Our gratitude also includes what our members do for the wider community, particularly those people less fortunate who also need our support. I am so proud to be a member of such a church community...it fills me with gratitude.

As the Chair of the Duncan United Church Unified Board, I feel gratitude for the Board Members who have committed to serving on the Board over the next year; Susan Younie, Vice-Chair, Marta Swain, Secretary, Bonnie Loudon, Treasurer, and Members at Large Sharon Annis, Mary Kae Smith, Carie Rae and Sally Whitmore. Also sitting at the Board table representing our committees are Colleen Fuller, for Ministry and Personnel, Jim Walker for Stewardship, Joan Mueller, for the UCW, Carie Saville, for Building and Finance, Audrey Towle for Worship and Regional Council Representative, Laurel Walton. I feel gratitude for those who are working on the Sabbatical Committee that is organizing replacement personnel for Keith when he takes his Sabbatical from January –April 2020.

I feel gratitude for the Pastoral Care Task Force who are considering next steps in organizing and carrying forward pastoral care in our church.

I feel gratitude for those who have organized, supported and worked at the Harvest Fair this year, which is such an amazing tradition in our church for raising funds and coming together as community.

I feel gratitude for those who are applying for various grants which will help finance modifications and improvements to several parts of our church building. This takes a great deal of focus to complete myriads of paperwork and know which grants are appropriate.

I feel gratitude for our Congregation which steps up to support all the needs of our Church by volunteering, by financially supporting the Church and by just getting involved in the life of our Church family.

I feel gratitude for each of our Staff members, Keith, Linda, Joy, Sarah and Connie, Taryn, Casey, Mike Garth and Ruth who are committed and dedicated to making our Church a very special place to be.

On behalf of the Unified Board of Duncan United Church I would like to express our gratitude for all of you who make up our Church Community.

We are blessed.

Virginia MacCarthy, Board Chair



Wishing you all wonderful blessings this Thanksgiving weekend!
From the staff at
Duncan United Church



