

St. David's St. David's

Welcome Back!

Welcome Back!

Growing & Deepening Our Spiritual Lives in Community

Expressing Our Values in 2015-2016

Courage
Growth
Connection
Courage
Growth
Open Heartedness
Diligence
Blessings
Open Heartedness
Diligence
Blessings
Justice
Surprise
Justice
Recognition
Surprise
Recognition
Calmness
Calmness



BOTH JOY AND HAPPINESS

There is a small breathtakingly beautiful country nestled between the countries of China and India called Bhutan; a secret, secluded jewel, a Buddhist kingdom in the lap of the Himalayas. Until about 40 years ago it remained set apart from the rest of the world. This small country's story is compelling and I believe that other countries of the world and communities such as St. David's could learn much from Bhutan. Their philosophy for life mirrors what I imagine Jesus envisioned to be the Kingdom of God.

In the mid-70s the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck championed a new approach to his country's development based on the understanding that each individual's well-being must take precedence over the economic and political practice of materialism. He promoted the concept of Gross National Happiness that measures prosperity by the spiritual, physical, social and environmental health of its citizens.

The Buddhist concept of interdependence is at the heart of Gross National Happiness, the understanding that each person is but a small part of the larger whole yet has the power to affect every other part; therefore, how we connect with each other will either sustain us or destroy us. In light of this philosophy collective happiness and well-being are of utmost importance to the Bhutanese. Happiness is not a perfect life or romantic ideal. Happiness is about harmony, about striking a balance. It is an inner state of contentment that remains constant. Nothing can be added to one's life to increase happiness and nothing can be taken away to decrease it.

There are four important underlying principles of Gross National Happiness: generosity; ethics; tolerance; and perseverance. These fundamentals were intrinsic to Jesus' vision of the Kingdom and they can be powerful connecting forces in the life of a congregation.

Generosity is the highest form of reciprocity; it is about how one demonstrates his or her appreciation for the blessings of one's own life and it expresses how we honor the inherent value of all created life. Simply put **ethics** is how we behave toward each other. It is more than just being friendly, loving and kind; it is about behaving decently towards others and it involves honesty, courtesy, and sharing. It is about that we treating each other with decency and with regard as we help each other to deal with the challenges of life.

Intolerance is rampant in the world today. It is an outcome of self-righteous attitudes about one's own beliefs, opinions, culture, and status and it is fed by fear and ignorance. Intolerance leads us to take sides and become narrow-minded and arrogant and does not respect other people's customs, lifestyles, and religious systems thereby devaluing differences and diversity.

Continued...



Tolerance is about upholding each person's dignity and humanity. As the Dala Lama said, tolerance is about "knowing that despite all of the things that differentiate us – race, language, religion, gender, wealth and so on – we are all equal concerning our fundamental humanity." The most profound generosity that people can extend to each other is unconditional compassion and acceptance

Perseverance is about keeping on keeping on. There is little doubt that we are living in challenging times and life is often complex and overwhelming. Exhaustion and occasional despair are common experiences as is the intensifying climate of fear and aggression. How then do we keep going, how do we remain grounded and steadfast as a community? How do we not lose our way or get swept away by the negative currents that swirl around us? We know that sometimes we will be buffeted, criticized, opposed, and attacked, and we will struggle and fall. But when we face the challenges of life, never buckling under the pressure, and keep on going despite criticism, opposition and overwhelming obstacles, we are persevering.

St. David's is a church connected by faith and hope, by the vision and message of Jesus, and by our need to belong and be in relation with others. Adrienne Clarkson ended one of her Massey lectures with these wise words: "What is the paradox of citizenship? It is that we are most fully human, most truly ourselves, most authentically individual, when we commit to community." Whether we sing in the choir, volunteer for Inn from the Cold, attend book studies, lead worship, teach children and youth, make coffee, or sit in a pew, we are individuals intersecting ourselves in the interplay of community life.

As we move into this new church season rather than focus only on the state of this congregation's material well-being let us focus on our collective well-being knowing that what each one of us does or does not do affects every other person in this community. I believe that our interconnectedness, our hope for the future, our struggle to sustain ourselves, and our dreams will be best nurtured by a spirituality of happiness. When the spirituality of happiness awakens and our real life comes to the surface revealing our potential and wisdom, great things can happen. Let us remember that each of us is ONE with all living things, and life is an amazing journey as we seek to hold hands with more and more people in the great circle of life. This circle of interconnectedness is a never-ending, infinite connection of love, perseverance, strength, patience, generosity and acceptance. With each new embrace our world grows, our heart expands, and our compassion deepens. May this be so for us at St. David's.

Rev. Peggy McDonagh



Hello Fine People!

I hope you have all had a great summer and are excited to be back.

According to Wikipedia,

"a spiritual practice or spiritual discipline (often including spiritual exercises) is the regular or full-time performance of actions and activities undertaken for the purpose of cultivating spiritual development."

Over the course of this year, the children will delve into six different spiritual practices and how each relates to the spirit: We will explore Cooking, Quilting, Pottery, Night Sky Gazing, Music & Mindful Listening, and Serving Others. We will present another White Gift Mystery during the season of Advent and the Faith Quest families will be invited to lead worship on the first week of May.

Although I will be away on a sabbatical from September 22nd to Dec 20th, I have prepared the curriculum, the White Gift Mystery and has already prepared for Christmas Eve. During my absence, I will keep in touch by mail.

Stay tuned to hear about my adventures!

Many blessings,

Alison



2015/16 SDUC YOUTHCHURCH

"A RIOT IS THE

LANGUAGE OF THE UNHEARD

"- REV. DR. MARTIN
LUTHER KING JR.

MINORITY
MOVEMENTS
SPEAK UP &
SPEAK OUT

SUNDAYS
10 AM
Youth Room
Downstairs

MORE INFO:
YOUTH@SDUC.CA

The St David's United Church Youth Program offers youth a space to have conversations and encounters with the language and presence of the God revealed through the Christian tradition. Each Sunday we gather in the Youth Room in Robertson Hall (downstairs) to explore the world through this lens and see what surprises emerge.

This year's theme **The Language of the Unheard** revolves around two movements that have emerged over the last several years ... **Black Lives Matter** and **Idle No More**. Both speak towards their respective dominant cultures about racism, prejudice, power, privilege, discrimination and violence that has been brought against the African American and Aboriginal communities. We are going to examine these issues and how they intersect with and interrupt our own lives in the 21st century.



Pastoral Care at St. David's
"caring for one another in community" Petal Group Ministries:

Pastoral Care Committee

Healing Touch

Card Ministry

Prayer Chain

Prayer Shawl

Sunday Drivers

Elevator Operators

Sunday Office Volunteers

We are grateful to welcome our new Pastoral Care Minister, Kelley Warner, as we embark on yet another year of growing and deepening our spiritual lives!

Although commissioned to diaconal ministry in May of 2015, Kelley has served in the United Church for many years. She has had many roles in and out of the churches: a drama teacher, a stay-at-home Mom, a Sunday School teacher, youth leader, staff associate, peace worker, student and now as minister of pastoral care at St. David's. As a ministry student, Kelley's field placements brought her to Hillhurst, St. Thomas, Lakeview United Church and to the Young Offenders Centre. She has led youth cross-cultural exchanges to Mexico and Africa and travelled with Christian Peacekeepers to Palestine-Israel. Kelley brings to her new position, not only the many learnings from these roles, but also a deep compassion for all ages and a desire for justice for the marginalized.



November 8

Spirit Yoga

learn to release and relax for rejuvenation

Living With
Unexpected Change

*If you are grieving a loss or change,
these sessions may be for you.*

Sunday December 6, 7pm

Blue Christmas Service

Tuesday December 8, 7-9

Sunday January 24, 11:30-1:30

Sunday February 28, 11:30-1:30

January 17

Healing Through

Drumming

meditate and relax through rhythm

March 6

Embracing the

Inner Artist

creative stations to engage poetry, art,
music and more

April 3

Abundant Living for the
Golden Years

Aging as a Spiritual Practice

explore the many things aging offers and
teaches us

April 10

Where then
Shall We Live?

investigate alternative housing in light
of future realities

April 17

Technology 101

bring your ipad, phone or laptop and get
some one-on-one help

April 24

Leaving More Than Money

a legacy sharing your struggles, joys,
hopes and wisdom

May 1

Living the Life:
Healthy Aging

discover ways to improve balance, strength,
nutrition and cardiovascular

ACTS

Awakening Compassion Through Theology & Spirituality

AUTUMN 2015 MONDAY NIGHT STUDY

Theme: "Living in Darkness - Living in Light"

Books: "Learning to Walk in the Dark"

by Barbara Brown Taylor

"Between the Dark and the Daylight"

by Joan Chittister

A ten-week study in contemporary spirituality with books by two prominent Protestant and Catholic women writers.

Ten Monday evenings, 7-9PM

In the St. David's TM Room

September 21st - November 30th, 2015

Books and Registration/Hospitality - \$60.00

Books only - \$35.00

Brenda and Joan will lead the sessions during

the two Mondays that Jock and Wayne are

participating in the "Jerusalem and the Lands

of Three Great Faiths Tour" (October 16th - 31st)

Our sixteenth year of Monday night studies, this is our thirty-first series. We usually have ten week sessions!

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Theme: The Book of Exodus from the Hebrew Bible

"A Classic Story of Human Liberation"

Twelve sessions 10-11 AM

In the St. David's TM Room

September 17th - December 3rd

No charge.

Study resource—The DK Bible Handbook.

ST. DAVID'S SPIRITUAL TRAVELERS' SPECIAL 2015 SIXTEEN DAY TOUR

"Jerusalem and the Land of Three Great Faiths"

October 16th - 31st, 2015

Hardcopy tour details brochure
is available at the church

Tour Company: Rostad Tours Calgary

Tour Hosts: Wayne and Marlene Holst

Sponsored by: St. David's ACTS Ministry

Endorsed by: St. David's Church Council

This tour is filled up with 30 registrants.

***On Sunday October 11th there will be an official
"blessing" and "send off" from
St. David's Congregation***

"Monday night book study has become a regular part of my fall/winter schedule. It is a great way to connect with people through reading interesting books on varied topics, engaging questions to guide group discussion, plus welcoming hospitality -snacks & socializing!"

Karen McKeown

"Mostly I enjoy the learning, and the ACTS committee chooses great books and topics to study. Wayne and Jock are extremely well read, and generously share their knowledge."

- Betty Smith



St. David's Choirs

Sanctuary Choir

The staple of St. David's Sanctuary Choir is open to all people of ages 14 and up. This group sings on the first and third Sundays from September to June and on special occasions. The main focus is on a repertoire written within the last 30 years. All musical levels are welcome. While the ability to read music is not required member should be able to match pitch.

Rehearsals Thursday 8 to 9:30 pm.

Chamber Choir

A group comprised of 16 singers aged 14 and up. Singing on the second Sunday of the month from September to June and on special occasions. This group focuses on more challenging choral repertoire ranging from Gregorian Chant through contemporary gospel. An ability to read music is required for this ensemble and membership is by audition or invitation.

Rehearsals Thursday 7 to 8 pm

Angel Voices

A ladies' auditioned vocal group. Performing every style of choral music. This ensemble of women sings the fourth Sunday of the month and on special occasions. The choir ministers to others through collective efforts in music making, strives for learning, growth and excellence both spiritually and musically.

Rehearsals Monday 7:30 to 9:00 pm

This year St. David's Evening Compline will occur every third Sunday of the month starting on October 18th. Be sure to attend this beautiful contemplative service where you will experience peace and meditation



Opening Hearts: The United Church Affirming Process

Have you ever wondered or experienced what it is like:

*to be born into a body, whose gender you can't identify with?
to be rejected by your family because of your sexual orientation?
to experience racism?
to be excluded because of poverty?
to live life as a person with physical or mental challenges?*

Browsing the website and talking with congregants suggested forward thinking members and this attracted me to St. David's United. Accepting a position here, I was somewhat taken aback when I learned that this wonderful community had not engaged the "affirming process." Many members reassured me that there was an interest in becoming an Affirming congregation. My life encounters with *the other*, people different from myself, have convinced me that God desires diversity not sameness.

On September 20 we will be launching the Affirming process. This will be the start of a year of exciting and thought provoking events meant to challenge us by wrestling with and expanding our knowledge, understanding and acceptance of a diversity of human experiences with the goal of becoming more loving.

Since 1992 the United Church has joined with Affirm United to engage a formal process of education, awareness, support and justice-making, towards becoming "a worshipping, pastoral and prophetic community celebrating God's call to liberation. It declares that all people are created in God's image and are unconditionally loved by God."

"The Affirming Ministry Program acknowledges the hurt and injustice the church has caused to many social groups—not just to LGBT people but also to First Nations and Aboriginal people, in our racism and fear of those who are different from the [majority], and through our silencing or exclusion of people because of their class and economic background, their age, ability, culture, gender, or ethnicity, or their physical or mental health."

We invite all of you at St. David's to join us on this journey intended to grow our hearts

September 20 Affirm Launch 10:00 am
guest speakers unwrapping, what, why and how?

October 18 Invitation to the Banquet 11:30-1:00
re-enactment and discussion on who we invite or do not to the table and why? Intergenerational!

November 15 So the Bible Tells Me So 11:30-1:00 –
movie, popcorn and dem...





Growing & Deepening our Spiritual Lives With New Programs

St. David's Muffin Ministry

Perhaps you have had an idea or wanted to try an experiment and wondered what it would be like? Well that is what happened last year . A group of woman had an idea. The community at St. David's was very grateful for the people that attended the playschools and park in the church lot. They help support the life and finances of this community. We wondered who they were. Did they know how important they are? How can we acknowledge this support and meet our neighbors? It was a great success. We were able to open up to our community and were delighted to have people come in and have a chat. It was a diverse group of maybe 50 guests...all ages and stages of life. Some were students writing exams or studying and some were employees that worked at the university, downtown or at the playschool. There were guests from the community who stopped in. Children came with their parents or caregivers. Some children played with a few toys we had set out as their parents chatted. A couple of children were interested in the sanctuary and wandered up to the front of the church to see the beautiful lights and decorations. It gave us and them the opportunity to connect and come to really know each other.

We will host our Muffin Ministry each month. If you would like to be apart of this, please let the office know!

Spring Forest Qi Gong Every Wednesday morning at 09:00 am

***SFQ incorporates four elements:
breathing, movement, meditation
(a focused, still mind), and sound.***

Breathing is fundamental to life, and breathing slowly and deeply increases the uptake of oxygen which enhances metabolism, particularly in the muscles. As well, you become more alert, focused, and relaxed.

Deep breathing is extremely helpful for people who suffer from depression, anxiety, or stress.

This kind of breathing also enhances physical endurance and creativity.

The movements and postures used in SFQ help to open energy blockages and enhance the flow of energy in the body. A straight spine is important to opening the back or governing energy channel in the body. Movements can also help with focus. Those with busy minds can often better concentrate when movement is combined with meditation.

Meditation allows access to your subconscious mind, the part of the mind that has the most control. Meditation relieves stress, which is one of the major factors involved in the development of disease. In addition, it strengthens the immune system, enhances a sense of well-being, increases the ability of muscles to take up oxygen, and encourages living in the moment.

Sounds are energy. Each sound has its own frequency and vibration.

Sound can open up energy channels and help the body heal. It can help people get into a focused, alert, relaxed meditative state more easily.

Join us at St. David's in the TM Room at 09:00 every Wednesday morning for as mid week relaxation

CALENDAR *OF* EVENTS

Coffee House & Talent Show

This is going to be an exciting evening of fundraising for both the organizers of this event and the talent. It a great way to spend a Friday evening being entertained while enjoying local talent along with some tasty and savory foods. The list for talent is still open for you or anyone you know who would like to be a part of this. We will also have a silent auction and door prizes. Don't miss out on this chance to express your talents what ever they might be.

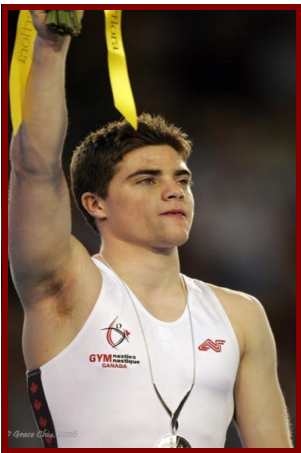
Friday Night, November 13th, 2015

***Acting, Impersonating, Dancing, Singing, Stand up
Comedians, Oratory, Mime it,
Poetry it, Musician it
Something not mentioned here?
Bring it on!***

Stewardship Dinner

Saturday Night April 16th, 2016

Our Speaker for 2016



Nathan Gafuik competed at his second consecutive Olympic Games in artistic gymnastics at London 2012, finishing 46th in the horizontal bar. One of the best all-around competitors on the Canadian team, Gafuik earned an Olympic spot for his performance on horizontal bar at the 2012 Canadian Championships. Gafuik won two medals at the 2011 FISU Games, a bronze medal for the all-around and a silver medal on vault. He placed 17th at the 2008 Beijing Games, the second-best ever Canadian all-around result. In 2004 he was named to the team as an alternate. He was a key member of Canada's best-ever team result at the men's 2006 World Championships by placing sixth.

Getting set to finish up his competitive career, Nathan is really looking forward to his future. He has seen a lot of the world, met a lot of people and learned to manage highly stressful situations. Along the way, he feels that he has gained a tremendous amount of first-hand knowledge about dealing with chronic illness. This last is perhaps the most valuable and he would like to find ways to pass along his findings and experiences in any way he can. Nathan believes he has been extremely lucky with the support he has had from his parents, doctors and coaches and wants to be the one who now lends support to others.

Ireland



It is with great excitement that next year in May I will host my third tour with Rostad Tours to a destination I have long wanted to visit: Ireland. The name of the tour is *Ireland – Celtic Christianity* running from May 3 – 19th. This will be an amazing continuing education opportunity for me as together with those on the tour we will explore the ancient history and sites of Celtic Christianity and visit the Centre for Celtic Spirituality in Armagh.

Armagh is known as the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, where Roman Catholic and Anglican Archbishops reside. The aims of the Centre are to share the ancient heritage of Celtic Spirituality, with the rest of the world; to inspire others – of all faiths or none – on their spiritual journey through the power of Celtic Spirituality. This Centre brings together all faith traditions in the spirit of peace, respect and understanding.

This tour will take us around the coastlines of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland where we will experience some of the most beautiful coastal scenes and sites along with some of Ireland's finest gardens. It will also take us into the places such as Belfast, Dublin, Derry, Galway, Killarney, to name a few. We will enjoy the friendliness and hospitality of a people who live in a land of myth and history

This is not an ACTS endeavor but a tour I am hosting as part of my continuing education. The tour is being publicized across Canada. It would be great to have some St. David's people on the tour and some have already booked. Kathryn Doherty will host the tour with me and she is quite excited to visit the ancestry home of the Doherty clan.



Celtic Christianity Tour

Stewardship Dinner 2015

Thanks to the chef and thank you to all of the sous chefs with their generous hearts and time to make this a delicious success. The fine Italian scents permeated the church halls all day Saturday creating a real ambiance of an Italian restaurant. There are no men like St. David's men!

Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped transform the Sanctuary into an Italian ambiance that complimented all of the Italian aromas. From table cloths, to candles, to flowers, to opera, to acoustic Mediterranean guitar. These precious touches created a cozy and warm atmosphere.

Here are only some of the moments we captured!



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!
Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

St. David's Refugee Committee

*35 Years of
Sponsoring Refugees*

Tibetan refugee
families



Vietnamese
Family 1979



Tibetan Refugees
& Refugee
Committee

Lim Family
from
Cambodia
1980



Sultana Yaldi,
Iraq family 2001
and refugee
committee

Iraq family 2015 Abid
and Aedah Yalda and
their children



Did you know that Sultana's brother, Abid, his wife Aedah, and their four children (18, 14, 11 and 8), Christians from Iraqi, have now been accepted to come to Canada as refugees, arriving within 1 month? We are so grateful! They fled Baghdad when ISIS approached in August 2014, after years of great danger, and have been waiting in Lebanon for a year. Many thanks to the 23 St David's families, the Friendship Club and eight other donors who have made it financially possible for them to live in Lebanon for the year. Thank you so very much.

Practical help is now also needed from those who have the time and interest.. St Thomas United church is being asked in the same way. There is a need for household goods, winter clothing, storage space, and employment referrals. (Abid can install security systems and air conditioners, and is skilled in electronics and cars). When they arrive, this family will need your warm friendship and various people to be along side them as they: try to find housing; approach the four children's schools; write applications for social insurance health insurance and the Federal Child Tax Credit; learn about banking, taxes and budgeting; get around Calgary; go grocery shopping; carry out a work-search. Sultana and her two children were St David's refugees in 2001. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Ruth Cross 403-284-9235 or Sally Hodges 403-247-1653. This is very rewarding work, with much laughter and learning on both sides.

Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM

Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM



Our Mission

St. David's reflects the values of the United Church of Canada that are justice, equality and forgiveness. The United Church welcomes everyone the same way that Jesus did, regardless of age, race, class, gender, orientation, or physical ability.

We cultivate a friendly , supportive and inclusive community of diverse thinkers. We openly embrace intra-spiritual and inter-faith understanding as a means to enrich, expand and affirm our Christian faith.

We inspire an environment of love, peace and acceptance. Our community is spiritually fed through worship, music, deep conversation and education for all ages. We grow and deepen our spiritual lives as we acknowledge our interconnectedness with all life. As a passionate forward thinking and hope-filled community we watch the beauty of Divine life evolve within and among us.

We seek meaning and ask questions, celebrate and laugh joyously, share sorrows and nurture hope, act justly and live compassionately.

We invite you to grow and deepen your spiritual life with us!

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