

Occupy Bethlehem? By Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart

Imagine the scene. A mass of people taking up temporary accommodation, warming their hands by the fire, brought together by the demands of Empire. While recent media coverage may lead you to think of the front steps of the Vancouver Art Gallery or a park near Wall Street in New York, I'm imagining – Occupy Bethlehem. A census, ordered by the Roman Emperor for tax purposes, had all kinds of people on the move when Jesus was born into this world. Mary and Joseph were forced to return to their ancestral home in order to be registered. Unfortunately, the biblical equivalent of the local Super 8 motel was simply overwhelmed by guests like

Vancouver hotels during the Olympics. I imagine in Bethlehem temporary accommodations popped up everywhere – even a barn or a cave was deemed suitable for these out of town, distant relatives. While it is possible to see Jesus' birth as a protest against the dominant powers and principalities of the world, it is also possible to see this Occupy Bethlehem movement as a homecoming. After all, John's gospel declares that "in the beginning was the Word" reminding us that the cosmic Christ was present at the beginning of creation. The shocking and sudden arrival of "God with skin on" in this temporary accommodation was a homecoming for the Creator in

creation. For Christians, we too practice a sort of homecoming during Christmas. Family return home from distant places, friends gather around a table, food and drink are served with good cheer and we gather on Christmas Eve for one of three services to mark the gift of Emmanuel – God with us. How will you celebrate Christ's homecoming this year? We look forward to seeing you during the Advent and Christmas season where we not only look back to "Occupy Bethlehem" but look around with hope that God in Christ might "Occupy West Vancouver United Church" as well as the hearts and minds of all those who call our North Shore parish home.

A Morning Out by Rev. Laura Lockhart

We are now approaching our fourth month of our new outreach program, "A Morning Out". We've had some amazing speakers and met some wonderful parents. In September we had our own Dianne Allan speak about nutritional trends. In October, our music minister Gerald van Wyck spoke to parents about how integral music is to our children's

lives and their well-being. And this past month, we had Karen Hoffman, parent educator, speak about maintaining our patience in parenting.

For those of you who don't know, Caring Ministry is sponsoring our once a month program for parents with young children. We meet the **first Thursday of the month at 9:30 am** – so

parents have enough time to drop older children off at school and make it to the church on time. Our speakers are always informative, relevant and fun. We meet for about an hour and there is always *free Starbucks coffee and free childcare*. This program is open to all young parents in the congregation and in the

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West Vancouver United Church
Advent Devotional Guide
2011



Available on-line at
wvuc.bc.ca, after church on
Sunday, or in the office.

Do you have room at
your Christmas dinner
table?

The Caring Ministry encourages you to invite family, friends, and your church family to share your Christmas Table.

Merry Christmas

Under South African Skies

By all accounts the fall congregational dinner was a huge success. Fabulous food, decorations, and entertainment. Thank you to the Fellowship Committee for such a wonderful evening.



UCW Update by Elaine Barkey

Forty-three years ago the UCW gave up bake sales in favour of “Elegant Flea Markets” to earn income to support their mission and service projects.

Some of the projects the UCW carry out with their portion of the money are as follows:

For West Van United, the UCW has purchased two new stoves for the kitchen, new lighting for the chapel,

new outdoor signage on 21st street, and contributed funds towards the Minister’s discretionary fund. Locally, the UCW has helped support First United Mission, VST, the Longhouse Ministry, and Wish. At a provincial level, the UCW has supported the Naramata Centre. At a national level the UCW has supported the United Church of Canada Mission and Service Fund.

The executive of the UCW would like to thank our members and families as well as the entire Church family and community for the incredible support that made the fall flea market such a success. A word of special appreciation goes to Heather Gates.

The Oikoumene Unit’s Christmas pot-luck dinner is on December 12th at 6 pm. The Naomi Unit is holding

their Christmas luncheon on December 14th at 11 am. Both functions are in the Church Lounge. Please check your Sunday bulletin and Calvin’s Friday emails for details closer to the dates.



Caring Ministry Update by Helen McDonald

The Caring Ministry continues to organize and fund the very popular monthly Fellowship luncheons – held on the last Wednesday of each month – except in December and during the summer. In December a Christmas party is held in the church hall, and this year it will be

on Saturday, December 10th. Please watch your bulletin for details.

The Men’s Coffee Morning and “A Morning Out” continue to be successful, and Rev. Laura and her musicians continue their monthly visits to several of the Care Homes in West Van. These

services are always very well received and appreciated.

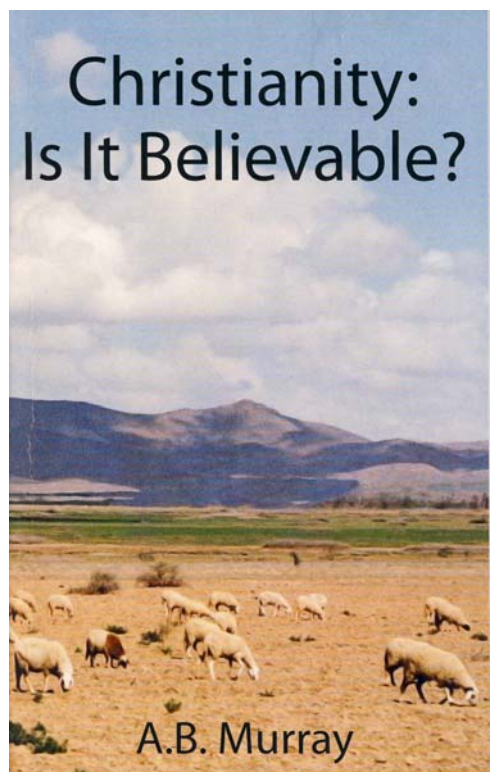
The “Honour a Life” service will be sponsored this year once again, on Thursday, December 1st at 6 pm. Caring Ministry has supported this service for the past three years. We will again

be delivering poinsettias to care homes and shut ins.

Please call Madelyne at the church office (604-922-9171) if you know of anyone in hospital who would like to be visited by Rev. Ross or Rev. Laura.

A new book for the Church Library written by WVUC member Dr. Andrew Murray!

What do you believe? A simple question but one that occupies a whole lifetime of experience and thought in light of God’s revelation in Jesus. After all, theology can be defined simply as “faith seeking understanding.” One of our church members, Dr. Andrew Murray, decided to put into words his quest for understanding the Christian faith in a beautiful new book available in the church library entitled, *Christianity; Is it believable?* Dr. Murray, Professor Emeritus of Paediatrics, writes with the focus and discernment of both a good scientist and a caring family physician. Murray tackles such difficult questions as “Does God exist?” and “Why does God allow people to suffer?” As you read this thoughtfully researched book it will likely spark your own reflection on faith and how you might articulate your pilgrimage with Jesus through this life. After all, our central purpose here at WVUC is to partner with the Holy Spirit in order to *help make disciples for Jesus*. Part of that “discipleship-making” is encouraging our members to share their faith with God’s broken and beloved world. We congratulate Dr. Murray on this fine work and hope it inspires others to share their faith that all may come to delight in God’s grace and walk in Christ’s way.



When Dreams Come to Life by Simon LeSieur



Christina, Jen, Grace, Theresa and Tammy

Jen Weidner (who has been attending youth group since 2010), 16, sits unassumingly, attentively pondering each question with gentleness and intention. This is the Jen her classmates and youth group peers have come to experience - a girl who infuses meaning and humble care into all that she does and says. Like many teenagers, her schedule is packed with activities. Between work and school, Jen finds time to be involved in dance, soccer, youth group, the Oppenheimer project, an upcoming trip to Nicaragua for her Global Ed class, and much, much more. But it is with that distinctive spark that she talks about her latest project.

"It took me a long time to build the confidence to put all of this together," she says. Several months ago, an idea sprung from a conversation with her aunt. How could she combine her expertise in dance (4 years of lessons in all sorts of styles), along with her passion for working with people with

developmental disabilities? "I have been spending time with a young woman from this church with Down syndrome. I noticed over time just how much she loves dancing. It is so inspiring to watch her dance and move, because to her, in that moment, it's the only thing that matters. I was talking about this experience with my aunt one day, when she suggested I could organize a dance camp for people with developmental disabilities."

"My first thought was "I can't do that!," she exclaims, traces of the initial fear still present in her voice. "But after thinking about it for a long time, I started making phone calls to see if I could actually put this together. I was so nervous. I even wrote a script that I could read while on the phone! Because of my age though, I was met with a lot of skepticism; some people just didn't seem to take me seriously. But others were really excited and seemed to get it. I ran the idea by my own dance teacher, who, without asking any questions, gave me

the space I needed at her dance studio."

A few weeks and some advertising later, Jen was sitting on the floor of the studio with the 4 women - Christina, Grace, Theresa, and her assistant Tammy - who would be part of her first dance camp. Over the course of 4 weeks, Jen taught them a routine that included lyrical, hip hop, and jazz components.

"Working with these women was so great," she recalls of the experience. "There is a simplicity and joy that exists that is so often hard for people to feel. I have worked with teenagers before, and many of them gravitate quickly towards discouragement. But these women were so happy, and found such joy in practicing the moves. One of the mothers told me that after the first class, her daughter spent all night singing and

dancing, practicing some of the moves I taught them, including the warm-up!" The result? New relationships, a lot of laughter, and a vibrant, high-energy, joy-filled recital (complete with award ceremony!) in front of family, friends, and dance students. "The best part is watching the joy and passion take over," she says with her customary big smile.

Jen, who is graduating from West Vancouver High School this year, sees herself living a life rooted in helping those around her. She has considered studying occupational therapy, as well as speech pathology next year, though her focus for the moment is on surviving this year! As for dance camps, the response to the first one was so positive that plans for a second one are already in motion!

Caring Ministry Christmas Tea Saturday December 10th, 2-4 pm in the church hall

A warm welcome is extended to all involved in the Caring Ministry, care givers, receivers, volunteers and all who attend the Luncheons and Teas, to join in a Christmas party of music, games, entertainment, and a delicious tea. Please call the Caring Ministry office at 604-922-9171 if you will be attending or need a ride.

Poinsettias

If you know of anyone who may be isolated or lonely this Christmas, please let the Caring Ministry know as we will be delivering poinsettias to shut-ins in mid December.



Youth 2011

Some photos from the youth, including: Thursday evening youth group, making sandwiches for Oppenheimer, distributing at Oppenheimer Park, fall retreat at Rivendell, and Mexico 2011.

Thank you to everyone who helped to support the various youth projects in 2011.



Stay in Touch

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If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail or read it on-line, please contact the church office by phone at 604-922-9171 or e-mail: office@wvuc.bc.ca

Calendar of Events

Baptism

Once a month on Sunday morning. Please contact the office a month or two in advance.

Communion

November 27, 2011

Christmas Service Dates and Times

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Sunday November 27 | -Annual Clay Event for children, during worship 10 am |
| Sunday December 11 | -Christmas Pageant, during worship, 10 am |
| Saturday December 24 | -Children's Christmas Eve Service, 4:30 pm
-Carols and Candlelight Christmas Eve Services, 8 pm and 11 pm |
| Sunday December 25 | -Christmas Morning Carols and Communion, 10am |
| Sunday January 1 | -10 Sunday Morning Service. Sermon "Eat, drink, and be merry!" |

Congregational Dates and Events

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| Thursday December 1 | -A Morning Out Program, 9:30 am |
| Saturday December 10 | -Caring Ministry Annual Christmas Tea, 2 pm |
| Monday December 12 | -Oikoumene UCW Unit potluck, 6:00 pm |
| Tuesday December 13 | -Committees and Full Board Meetings |
| Wednesday Dec 14 | -Men's Coffee Group, 10 am |
| Wednesday Dec. 14 | -Naomi UCW Unit Christmas luncheon, 11 am |
| Saturday December 17 | -Lockhart's Open House, 2 to 4 pm |
| Thurs Jan 5 | -A Morning Out Program, 9:30 am |
| Monday Jan 9 | -Oikoumene UCW Unit meets, 7:30 pm |
| Tuesday Jan 10 | -Committees and Full Board Meetings |
| Wednesday Jan 18 | -Men's Coffee Group, 10 am |
| Wednesday Jan 18 | -Naomi UCW Unit meets, 10 am |
| Saturday Jan 21 | -Youth Oppenheimer Park Project |
| Wednesday Jan 25 | -Fellowship Luncheon, 12 noon |

A Morning Out (continued from Page 1)

community – so please spread the word! Once the speaker is finished, parents are welcome to linger and have the opportunity to talk with other North Shore parents.

Our next meeting is Thursday December 1st and we have St. John's Ambulance coming to speak about first aid 101. It's probably been a while since you've taken your first aid, so this is a great opportunity to refresh those skills – all in an hour! In January we have West Vancouver Memorial Library's new Youth Services librarian, Shannon Ozirny coming to speak. I was at a parent training session for classroom read-

ers last month at West Bay Elementary, and I was struck that up to grade four, children learn how to read, but that after grade four they read to learn. As a result, educators notice in many children a slump in their literacy skills...they are just reading the bare minimum to get the facts to write their paper. Shannon will be addressing this issue, as well as resources in the library to encourage young boys to read and the all so important issue of internet/media literacy. We already have February's speaker lined up – Helen Yeung, RD, community nutritionist. When Dianne Allan came to speak with us in September, a lot of the parents identified body image in their children as a subject matter they wanted

addressed. Dianne recommended Helen, and we are delighted to have her speak to us on February 2, 2012. Helen is connected to the school system in the prevention of eating disorders.

Personally, I am really enjoying "A Morning Out". It's a great chance to meet other parents within the congregation and the broader community and to learn something new. It's amazing to see how supportive the parents are to each other and the preschoolers have a great time too meeting new friends. Join us the first Thursday of the month and bring a friend or two as well!