

News In The Pews

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Special points of interest:

- A message from Rev. Bethan
- Office closures and donation deadlines.
- First United prepares to serve Christmas dinner to the Downtown Eastside.
- A rally in support of Chilliwack youth.

Let Us Celebrate As We Journey to Bethlehem!

A sincerest thank you to the people who volunteered to “man” the Red Kettles for the Salvation Army on Tuesday, November 21. The donation of your time was very much appreciated.

Thank you to everyone who generously donated money to the Hamper Project for the Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children & Family Services Society. Your donations will help make Christmas a little bit brighter for local aboriginal families.

Today is the deadline to submit your Purdy’s Chocolate orders. Orders will be distributed on Sunday, December 10. We appreciate your participation in this fundraiser for the Mission & Service Fund of The United Church of Canada.

We have information about the family we are sponsoring through the Salvation Army’s “Adopt-a-Family” Project. Please take a moment to check it out in the Narthex or at coffee time this morning. Your help with support “our family” is very much appreciated.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Next Sunday, December 3 is the First Sunday of Advent. *We will begin our Advent celebrations with Breakfast in Bethlehem.* Tickets for this annual event are

available today or from the church office during the week.

“Wear Your Name Tag Sunday” - Do you have a name tag? Do you need one? We encourage everyone to wear a name tag so we can get to know each other better and help Rev. Bethan get to know peoples names.

Sunday, December 17 has been declared “Wear Your Name Tag Sunday”! Contact the church office if you would like to order a tag 604-792-4634. Name tags are \$8.50 for a pin attachment and \$10.00 for a magnetic attachment (plus applicable taxes).

Christmas Concert and Pot Luck Lunch— Come gather together to celebrate the Christmas Season with food, fun and music. Bring your favourite food to share with others following church on Sunday, December 17. Following the pot luck lunch, we will enjoy our annual Christmas Concert.

We continue to collect non-perishable food items for the Salvation Army Food Bank. Perhaps you might consider donations of items that might be useful during the upcoming Christmas celebrations.

Our Chilliwack United Church Women are still collecting postage stamps. The stamps are collected for Eastern Star and are used to purchase cancer dressings.

On a historic night at Christie’s in New York, [Salvator Mundi](#), a depiction of Christ as

‘Saviour of the World’ by one of history’s greatest and most renowned artists, Leonardo da Vinci, sold for over \$450 million. Watch the reaction of people as they view this amazing painting for the first time., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7omwQLuGJQ>





Welcome to the Season of Advent!

Advent is just around the corner. It is a time when we participate in a kind of cosmic “spring cleaning” or in our case, a “winter cleaning,” which clears the way for God’s intervention. In Isaiah 50 we read:

A voice is calling, “Clear the way for Yahweh in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley. Then the glory of Yahweh will be revealed.”

This is an exciting and anxious time and it is helpful to know what we are facing. There are some technical problems in our lives. Technical issues are those where there is a clear problem and a clear solution. The furnace breaks down, so we fix or replace the furnace. Some issues are less clear. Perhaps we know the problem, but we don’t know the solution.

These are technical-adaptive problems. Perhaps you have a diagnosis of diabetes, but learning how to adjust your diet, exercise, and medication take trial and error and experimentation. And then of course there are adaptive problems, where we don’t really fully understand the full extent of the problem and have no idea what the solution is. Why are so many people fatigued, on anti-depressants, and suffering from various illnesses in our society? Why are people becoming homeless at such a rapid rate? Why is there a suicide epidemic among teens in First Nations communities? All of these types of problems are present in our individual and societal

and congregational life. Yet it is the adaptive ones that pose the greatest challenge.

One of the entry points to adaptive work is to get rid of those things that prevent us from being ready for God’s next nudge on our lives. Clearing away, removing blockages as they become apparent. Some of these things we instigate, and others seem to happen whether we are ready or not.

It seems as though we are already part of a clearing of impediments that are in the way of God’s dream for the world. As various awful things have been and are being brought to light; abuse of so many aboriginal children who were stolen from their homes and placed into residential schools, the harassment of countless women, increased violence towards men and women of colour by police, I am reminded of one of my favourite promises that everything that is hidden will one day be revealed. Jesus said, “For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be known and illuminated.” This is already happening! Advent invites us to be proactive as well, to bring those things into the light that are obstructions to our lives and the lives of others.

Advent gives us the opportunity to do the spiritual work of clearing out the dross from our lives and society, so that we can be ready for God’s good news. Is there someone from whom I need to ask forgiveness? Is there something I am doing that is hurting my loved ones or myself? It’s time to clear it away.

As a congregation we have some technical challenges

around finances, and buildings, and our futures group are hard at work to help us with these. But far more challenging is the adaptive work in which we must engage. What is happening in the mainline churches in general and the United Churches in particular and why are they shrinking at a rate of knots? There are many opinions and suggestions, but in reality this is an adaptive problem. There are no single bullet solutions, and no quick fixes. We are called to advent work. Advent work is adaptive work. We can at least start by clearing out the things that get in our way, that prevent us from listening to and responding to God’s nudges, and then by placing on our way those things that enable us to be sensitive to God’s spirit.

Take a moment now to sit and breathe, and ask yourself, 1) what do I need to clear away? What hill is needing to be lowered? And then ask, 2) what must I add to raise a valley? What spiritual practice might I start or reclaim this advent that tunes me into God’s Spirit that connects me to my deepest self? Silent prayer? Bible reading? Attending the lectionary study on Wednesdays. I have a friend who tells me that her best spiritual practice is knitting! You will know what reconnects you to your Source.

Friends, this is a time to prepare. Prepare inwardly for our future. Let’s be careful not to rely on technical fixes for adaptive challenges. God is calling the church to prepare the way for an unknown future. Let’s all be open to God’s transforming grace and guiding purpose at this time.



More Chilliwack United News

As we approach the end of the year, please keep in mind that contributions for the 2017 tax year must be received by the church on or before December 31. The church office will be open on Friday, December 29 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for your convenience. We wish to thank all our donors for their wonderful generosity this year!

Offering envelopes for 2018 will be available soon for you to pick up. If you used envelopes to make your contributions this year, a new set will be prepared for you. If

you don't currently have a set of 2017 envelopes, but would like to receive a set for 2018, contact the church office at 604-792-4634.

The church office will be closed during the Christmas and New Year Holiday Season; Saturday, December 23 to Thursday, December 28, and Saturday, December 30 to Monday, January 1, 2018. The office will be open, and manned by a volunteer, on Friday, December 29 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for your convenience.

The staff of Chilliwack United Church wishes you and yours a blessed Christmas and New Year filled with hope, peace, joy and love.



The United Church Observer

My Year of Living Spiritually—'I don't believe in God. And I don't believe in heaven or hell. But I do believe in people.'

The United Church Observer is an award winning magazine that looks at life and world issues from a uniquely United Church perspective.

A few older copies of this magazine are available in the Narthex at the back of the church. Feel free to pick one up.

The annual subscription rate is \$25.00. Very reasonable for a magazine of this quality and reputation.

If you wish to join Chilliwack United's group subscrip-

tion, contact the church office at 604-792-4634. Your subscription cost will be pro-rated for the balance of this renewal year.

'I don't believe in God. And I don't believe in heaven or hell. But I do believe in people.'

First United Church Mission Society

Winter weather has arrived and there is a need for cold weather items; jackets, toques, gloves, sweaters, blankets, mitts and rain ponchos.

This Christmas, First United will be serving a beautiful turkey dinner for up to 350 people on the Downtown Eastside. You can help with donations in any quantity of;

fruit pies (40), turkeys (45), potatoes (150 lbs), brussel sprouts (75 lbs), cranberry sauce (10 L). Email volunteers@firstunited.ca for more information.

The First United Thrift Store is now closed permanently. This means less room to store and sort donations. Changes to donation requests

will be announced soon.

Unfortunately, Chilliwack United Church is unable to deliver your donations to First United Church. Keep in mind that financial donations can be made to First United to help cover the cost of some of their needs.





Other United Church News!

Imagine: A Children's Retreat—Children ages 8 to 11 are invited to Stillwood Camp & Conference Centre at Cultus Lake for a weekend of fun and friends; February 16-18, 2018. Registration is online at www.imaginechildrenretreat.ca For more information email marlynichol@gmail.com and talk with Mary Nichol.

Youth Justice—Indigenous Rights; An interactive workshop on December 1 for youth ages 12 to 17 on the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and how our faith calls us into action. This workshop will be held at Dunbar Ryerson United

Church, Memorial Centre, 2195 West 45th Ave. from 6:00–8:30 p.m. Email your RSVP to office@vanyaya.bc.ca

See Our Church in the 2019 Church Calendar!

If you have excellent quality images of our church, submit them for possible inclusion in the 2019



church calendar. For information on how to submit your photo, contact the church office 604-792-4634.

God's World Needs Creative Leaders—Ministry Personnel are responsible for leading, guiding, and support-

ing the community of faith in the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. They touch people's lives at various points of joy, pain, celebration and vulnerability, in a variety of way—by leading in worship, by providing pastoral care, by standing with those who suffer, and by working for justice and peace." If you have ever thought of a career in ministry, visit the United Church of Canada website; www.united-church.ca/leadership/entering-ministry

In Search of Our Kneeling Places

In each heart lies a Bethlehem, an inn where we must ultimately answer whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound, we experience our own advent in his.

When we are Bethlehem-bound, we can no longer look the other way conveniently not seeing stars, not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily tending our

sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.

In the midst of shopping sprees, let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos, let's listen for the brush of

angels' wings.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem and find our kneeling places.

By Ann Weems



Rally for LGBTQ2+ Youth

A rally in support of LGBTQ2+ students and youth will be held on Tuesday, November 28 at 5:00 p.m. outside the Chilliwack School Board Office, 8430

Cessna Dr. There is a Board Trustee meeting at 7:00 p.m. and an in camera meeting earlier.

Parents of LGBTQ2+ youth have organized this rally

and extend an invitation for you to come stand with local LGBTQ2+ youth and parents.



**CHILLIWACK UNITED
CHURCH**

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Our Mission

Ministry is the work of all who gather.

Together, we are God's people serving God in Chilliwack and around the world.

Mission Statement

As a Christian congregation, we provide opportunities
to celebrate God's presence
and to grow
together.

In so doing, we foster an atmosphere
encouraging fellowship and spiritual growth
and leading to being a caring Christian community.



**This Week at Chilliwack United Church
Monday, November 27 to Sunday, December 3**

Monday, November 27

No meetings scheduled for today.

Tuesday, November 28

Rev. Bethan is in the office

9:00 Centering Prayer in the sanctuary

10:30 Mission Ministry Unit Meeting

1:00 Thrift Shop Open

7:30 Choir Practice

Wednesday, November 29

Rev. Bethan is in the office

10:00 Thrift Shop Open

10:30 Drop In Bible Study

Thursday, November 30

Rev. Bethan is in the office

10:00 Thrift Shop Open

10:00 Celebration Ministry Unit Meeting

Friday, December 1

Rev. Bethan is in the office

10:00 Thrift Shop Open

Saturday, December 2

1:00 Thrift Shop Open

Sunday, December 3—Advent I

Rev. Bethan will be leading worship

9:00 Breakfast in Bethlehem

10:30 All Ages Worship Service

