



# THE ROCK GARDEN

DECEMBER 2008

An Alberni Valley United Church Newsletter

## *From the Minister*

Behold!

As we begin Advent and prepare for the Christmas season, I love how many of the scriptures begin with “behold!” It’s the biblical way of saying, “Look over here! Something amazing is happening!” And as we prepare for this wonderful season, there are many opportunities to see the amazing things that God is working on in our lives and in our church. Unfortunately, it can get so busy that we literally do need an angel shocking us into looking at the miracles that surround us with their booming **BEHOLD!**

So as we prepare for the coming of Christmas where we celebrate that God is in our midst, take time to enjoy the glory and wonder that surrounds us – in the excitement of the children, the beauty of the Christmas decorations, in the moments we share with loved ones through phone calls, Christmas cards and visits, in the hope and grace that surrounds our Christian family, and in all those places where we stop and take a breath and see the magnificence and blessing that is present.

Celebrating in God’s Service,  
Rev. Anna M. Constantin

## *From the Council*

An extended holiday in the summer is normal. A holiday at the start of a busy church season (not to mention swim club season) is quite another matter. It takes a while to catch up. Such is the case in our household. However, we did have a great time in Nova Scotia.

The coming Advent season finds the life of our church family in full swing. The teams are hard at work and Council is challenged from meeting to meeting.

We have three special task force teams currently at work: a team headed by Drew Hadfield has collected all of the terms-of-reference for positions in the church, and will be reviewing them in the near future; a team headed by Dwayne Parfitt is reviewing our marketing strategy to see if we are getting the best value for the money we spend; and a nominating team headed by Janet Schlackl will be challenging members to assume various roles within the church organization. Please consider becoming involved when asked.

With Christmas fast approaching, let us all pause from time to time and reflect on the birth of the Christ child.

Blessings,

Hugh Sproule, Council Chair

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## *Worship Team*

Boxes of Hope Campaign – Thanks to the great support from the congregation, the Boxes of Hope Campaign will be able to greatly assist homeless and transitioning individuals in our community. We will invite representatives from the Port Alberni Hostel and Alberni Community & Women's Services to White Gift Sunday on December 14<sup>th</sup> to accept the boxes and also speak about the work their organizations do in the community.

Cleaning of the Sanctuary – If anyone notices that there are deficiencies in the cleaning of worship spaces and/or items, please inform a member of the Worship Team (Gail Hadfield, Bev Herd, Shirley Fuller, Jean Sproule, Brenda West, Janet Schlackl) so we can get it rectified as soon as possible.

Cataloguing of Banners – Denny Hackett took photos of our current banners and catalogued them into a binder by church season. We are very appreciative of this great effort and it will help us to use the banners more effectively.



## *Children's Worship*

Children's Worship has been exciting this fall. We have participated in and conducted services. We thought about the talents shared by people around us, and the talents we've been given to share. We've had people from our church come to us and share their passions and ideas with us in our lessons. We've learned about Moses and how we are blessed by the gifts from God. We've also made soup and assembled 'boxes of hope' that helped us give food and things to people in our community who may not

## *Pastoral Care*

Your pastoral Care Team cordially invites everyone to join us at our Care Home Services on the 4th Thursday of each month (except December and July, August). We have such a great time providing work and song to the folks in the three Care Homes. More voices would be most welcome. The Young Voices Choir is joining us in November. The lovely smiles that these wonderful children bring is such a Blessing.

Advent and Christmas Services – As always, the Advent and Christmas seasons are exciting and busy times. Here is a schedule of the upcoming Christmas services:

Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent – Jesse Tree Service

Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – White Gift Service

Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – Christmas Cantata

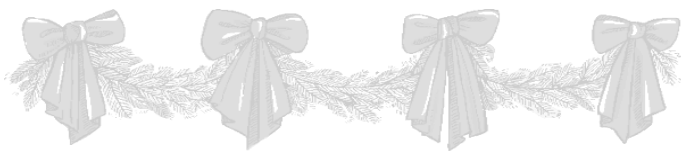
Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 p.m. service – Family service & 10:30 p.m. service – Communion Service

Please note that the December 28<sup>th</sup> service is **cancelled**. Services will resume on Sunday, January 4, 2009.

Jan. 11—Communion

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hadfield, Worship Team Chairperson



have the luxuries we have.

Money raised at the Children's Worship table at the United Church Women's Bazaar will be used to fill boxes of hope for homeless and in-transition people of Port Alberni. Thank you to Natalie for making the angel ornaments.

The Christmas Season brings a chance to sing together, prepare together and be excited together. We are looking forward to time with family and friends.

While you ladies are doing your Christmas baking, if you would keep Pastoral Care in mind and wrap up a dozen or so cookies for us to add to the "goody" bags we present to our seniors, shut-ins and those now living in Care Homes, we would be most thankful for your help. We will be putting the goodie bags together on December 14th after Service and distributing them during our Caroling the same day!

Thank you, Judy Vatamaiuck

## *Stewardship Team Appeal*

On Sunday, Nov 8th, the Stewardship team placed the following announcement in the bulletin. "To celebrate all that we treasure within our Family of Faith: inclusiveness, hospitality, service, sanctuary, worship, laughter, music, and fellowship the Stewardship Team invites you to contribute to a Special Offering on Nov 23".

On Sunday Nov 15<sup>th</sup> a Stewardship Service was led by the youth of our congregation along with the Stewardship team. During the service the following was read by Garry Korven on behalf of the Stewardship team.

"The things we treasure were identified earlier by the Congregation, in a series of meetings where we identified what was important to us and what we wanted to achieve. Stewardship has many facets: looking after our buildings, using our talents for the good of our community, helping with worship, choirs, pastoral care, youth activities, whist, just to name a few, and the community at large (local-bread of life; national – mission and service, international – Bawku Eye clinic)."

As part of the above planning process, we also identified that we needed and wanted full time Ministry

and thus Reverend Anna was hired on a full time contract which I think most people will agree has been positive for our congregation!

Now I will speak to the need for our request to you for a special offering. If one examines the monthly financial statement one sees that the council has not spent more than it had budgeted and that most of the revenue streams have reached or will reach their targets except for one; our weekly giving.

Full time ministry, and other staff, the wages/benefits were budgeted at 94,391 dollars. To the end of Sept. our weekly giving totalled 75,203 dollars out of a budgeted goal of 131,440 dollars. To meet our budget we need to realize 56,197 dollars over the last 3 months of the year.

We know that the end of the year does bring in additional givings. However, we have determined that in order to meet our budgeted targets we must ask everyone for a "Special Offering," that little extra. This past Sunday, those who were in church contributed, in special gifts, 4,200 dollars. For those of you who were not able to attend this past Sunday and contribute to this special offering, and for those supporters of Alberni Valley United who are only becoming aware of this special appeal through this newsletter, the Stewardship team asks you to contribute to the life of the Alberni Valley United Church by giving your extra special gift before the end of December.

Thank you.

Stewardship Team

## *Where some of your Coffee donations go ...*

What will your quarter, loonie, or toonie free will offering buy? This question was asked at our last FEED (Faith, Events & Education) meeting. Then we started listing all of our purchases, we were amazed and thought we should share our findings with the wider congregation.

Purchases to Date: Kitchen venetian blinds, all coffee, tea, sugar, milk, dish soap, fruit juice, paper towels, waxpaper, tinfoil, saran wrap, serviettes, a

few plastic bowls, water pitchers and table clothes.

At the present times, we have \$420.00 saved towards the purchase of a new lounge carpet.

The FEED team would like to Thank you for your generosity and hope that it will continue so that we remain a viable caring community.

Sincerely, Anne Gray



## *Important Notices and dates:*

God Talk is continuing on Tuesdays at 1pm, with the exception of Dec. 23 & 30.

Aerobics classes continue through the Christmas season with the exception of Dec. 24 & 31.

There will be a Decorating the Christmas Tree bee on Dec. 13 beginning at 10am.

January 18 is the Annual Budget review following the Service.

January 25 is the next Family fun event—Desserts

## *Hospital Visits*

Please note that, since the change in the computing system, the Pastoral Care Team no longer has access to the information that you are in the hospital.

You can assist us in making sure that you are not missed by: Phoning or asking a relative to call the church office to let us know; Asking the desk clerk at admitting, the x-ray department or the lab to add Alberni Valley United Church as a religious preference to your permanent record.

Thank you, Your Pastoral Care Team

## *Christmas Bazaar*

### **Bazaar Raffle winners:**

Christmas Centerpieces: Kathy Tetarenko

Tracey Thomas

Gingerbread Church: Mary Fletcher

Barbie & Wardrobe: Ann Waram

Basket Cradle: Donna Walter

Pooh Bear Clock: Betty Carlidge

Food Hamper: 1st - Alice Malachowski

2nd - Jill Webb

3rd - Gertrude Zemanek

The **Annual Christmas Bazaar** was a huge success! Total amount made for the event was \$3,543.90! And it's all due to the hard work and generous gifts of our congregation. The ladies made the displays beautiful and inviting, the men set up and took down all the tables and chairs, and everyone worked so hard providing food, drink and friendly sales. Thank You Everyone.

and Fun!

February 1 is the annual General Meeting following service.

And in February there will be a Funeral Planning workshop, watch for more details.

We are updating our church directory. If you need to make changes to your contact information, and /or if you would like to have your e-mail address on file to receive Newsletters and notices via e-mail instead of paper, please notify the office. Your e-mail address will be kept confidential.



## *Emerging Spirit*

The small but rewarding Emerging Spirit Team has enjoyed bringing 3 in the series of 4 Fall Church Family Events.

The **campfire** was a roaring success with participants of all ages enjoying games, hot chocolate and entertainment around a mysterious fire.

**Movie Night** in the sanctuary gave people a chance to laugh, enjoy and put their feet up for a couple hours together. If you missed the movie, "Because of Winn Dixie" we highly recommend it for all ages.

People came to teach their favourite game or learn someone else's at **Games Night**. From dominoes to charades, we had families of all ages playing together.

We have planned an **Evening of Caroling** for Tuesday, December 23. We will meet at the church at 6:30 pm and receive our maps with 6 – 8 stops and a final destination for hot chocolate or tea. Bring some goodies to share. All ages and voices are welcome!

We are also very proud to have new signs designating a clearer picture to newcomers to our church. Welcoming new folks is an important part to sustaining the vitality of our congregation and this is one step to making that easier. Thank you for your support.

