



News and Views

December 2007 - January 2008

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CHRISTIANS DREAM

This year we have had an amazingly full fall season and now we are about to load on Advent and Christmas activities. The first few weeks of Advent can be crazy until one season gives way to the other. We are never quite sure when or if the shift

can be made in time for Christmas.

This Advent, as we look at Matthew's story we are presented with dreams. Dreams are often called night visions. In Matthew's story nothing happens unless you go to sleep first. Dreams guide and direct the action of Matthew's Nativity story. Dreams make the Christmas story possible. Without going to sleep Joseph wouldn't have married Mary. Without falling asleep the Wise Men would not have avoided Herod and returned home by another route. Without falling asleep Joseph wouldn't have been warned to flee with his family to Egypt. Without falling asleep Joseph wouldn't have known when to return. Without falling asleep Joseph would not have been warned in a dream to avoid

Bethlehem of Judea and settle in Nazareth of Galilee.

In our modern Advent busyness we need to remember to sleep and dream dreams. The dream of Israel was the promise of God's New Day, a Shepherd King, a Righteous Ruler, Emmanuel - God-with-us. The Christmas story declares the fulfillment of Israel's dream of "peace on earth



Student Minister Valérie Vande Wiele with Erika and Stephanie

The Church Office will close on Friday, Dec. 21 and re-open on Jan. 3rd at 1 p.m.

to those whom God favours." Matthew and Luke each tell their different stories as fulfillment of the promise announced by the prophets.

We need to dream God's dream at Christmas 2007. We need to dream a vision of "peace on earth to those whom God favours." We need to be refreshed and inspired to seek the promised peace in our relationships, in our workplace, in our country, in our world. It is too easy to mock the hope of world peace. It is too easy to reject a world without war as only a pipedream. It is too easy to pretend to be too realistic. But the Christmas stories call us into prophecy fulfilled and promise made flesh. The Christmas stories are opening overtures to the life, death and resurrection of God-with-us.

In a world that is losing touch with the promise of peace and the hope of God's New Day, we need to dream dreams of light in the midst of

darkness, angels singing good tidings of great joy to all people. We need to dream dreams of Wise Men seeking the Christ Child. We need to dream dreams of the Prince of Peace born in us this Christmas.

Sweet Dreams,

Vicki

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS EVENTS

SUN./02 DEC.

- Advent I Service with Communion at 10:30 a.m. Kid's Program - The Jesse Tree
- Women's Advent Event @ 3:30 to 7 p.m. Theme: "Making Sense of Christmas" followed by a light supper. All women of the Church are invited.

SUN/09 DEC.

- WhiteGift/Mitten Tree Service followed by Potluck Lunch @10:30 a.m.

Donations of non-perishable food, mittens scarves and hats for the tree are suggested. You are also invited to bring some finger food to share for lunch. The food and mitts will be going to St. Columba House, the United Church Mission in Montreal.

SUN/16 DEC.

- Advent III with special music by the Choir @ 10:30 a.m.
- Contemporary Service at 4 p.m. in the Chapel. Theme: Advent Christmas, Blue Christmas

SUN/23 DEC.

- Advent IV Service @ 10:30 a.m.

MON/24 DEC. ★ CHRISTMAS EVE

- 7:00 p.m. Family Service followed by Christmas goodies. You are invited to bring some goodies to share.
- 11:00 p.m. Carols, Communion and Candlelight

SUN./30 DEC.

Joint Ecumenical Service at St. John's United Church, 98 Aurora, Pointe Claire at 11 a.m.

KID'S PROGRAM - The children of the Church have been enjoying theme Sundays with various leaders from the congregation. Some of the themes have been "Music for the Soul", Bubbles, Rain Sticks, Mirror Magic, Good Vibration Experiment and others. Come and find out what is happening!

YOUTH PROGRAM - Jen Owers has been keeping the teens busy so come out and join the fun on Sunday mornings and special events such as Improv. Night.

USED STAMPS - Cheryl Miller is collecting used stamps for the Leprosy Mission. Please trim them to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge and leave in the box on the table near the front door of the Church. The FOOD BANK is ongoing for local use and for St. Columba House. Donations of canned soups, meat, veggies, stews or dried food, juices and granola bars are also welcome.

OUTREACH AFRICAN LUNCH - Sunday, Nov. 25th at 12 noon. Under the guidance of Gisele and Oline Bisharhwa, Outreach will host an African Lunch after Church. This will be a fundraiser

with part of the money going to Vision Sisters, (a group of women in Kenya who are trying to better the lives of women living in slums) and part to Oline to help pay back her airfare for her flight from Kenya to Canada last November. Please plan to stay for lunch. Minimum donation - \$6.

COFFEE HOUSE & BLUES - Friday, November 30 at 8 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Featuring Linda Morrison, one of Canada's best and most multi-faceted singer/song-writers. She will be accompanied by Bill Gossage, on bass and Andrew Cowan, on guitar. Admission: \$10. Delicious desserts and coffee available by Twigs of Ste. Annes.

BOUTIQUE "24" (Thrift Shop) is open every Thursday, 12 - 4 p.m. Donations of good used

clothing, household items, toys and books are most welcome. The shop will close on Dec. 13 at 4 p.m. for a well-earned rest and will re-open on Jan. 17th, 2008 at 1 p.m.

STAIRWELL FUND UPDATE - As of Nov. 19th, 2007 the Stairwell Fund is up to \$5565.85 nearly half of the cost of the Stairs. Thank you to all who have donated and to Geoff Quaid for getting the project started and to Eric Norris and Nancy and Jim Gelsthorpe for completing the project. What a pleasure it is to be able to use the stairs in safety now. The response to the fundraiser from the Community Groups using the Church facilities has been very positive and we gratefully thank them as well.

CONCERTS

SAINTE-ANNE SINGERS - presents "Carols Around the World" at Union on Dec. 8th at 8 p.m.

SPECTRUM VOCAL ENSEMBLE presents "Childhood Dreams" on Friday, Dec. 7 and Saturday, Dec. 8th at 8 p.m., Briarwood Presbyterian Church, 70 Beaconsfield Blvd., Beaconsfield. Tickets available from Bonnie Norris, (514) 457-3568.

STEWART HALL SINGERS - Geoff Quaid, Sandy Davis, or Val Strong can provide tickets to this excellent chorus's seasonal performance, this Christmas of Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Songs of Christmas* Saturday, December 8th at 8 p.m. in St. Joachin church., Pointe-Claire.

UNION CHURCH BAZAAR

There is magic in the air---believe We did it again, \$3,620.62. Thanks to Nancy, Ivy, Helen, Barbara, Winnifred, and Shirley for convening the Bazaar.

Also, thanks to Heidi & Francis for putting on a delicious luncheon.

Many, many thanks to the volunteers for manning the tables, setting up, cleaning up and for all of your donations to the different tables. The bake table was awesome. It was a time for sharing and greeting the spirit of community.

May the magic of the season fill your holidays with joy, hope, wonder and love!

Winnifred

NEW CHURCH WEBSITE

You may not have noticed, but the URL - Internet address - of the Church website, printed on the 1st page of this newsletter, has changed. The site has been rebuilt free of charge (!) by Kent Chown for big yearly savings to Union. Bravo Kent !