



WHAT'S UP... IN THE CWM

Christmas in Review

Christmas in Review
January 2016



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Christmas in Review – New Year Ahead!

Thank you for perusing this special on-line edition of "What's Up in the CWM." You will see from the pictures and articles that each congregation does things slightly differently. In the end we all celebrate the birth of Jesus and we all enjoy the congregational fellowship of singing Christmas hymns, lighting candles, and re-telling that ancient story – sometimes in quite different ways. And then in our families we enjoy gift-giving and gift-receiving, decorations, lights, and way too much good food.

If I ask any of you what the Christmas story means to you as a person of Christian faith, I am sure I will get some variations on specifics, yet most will revolve around age-old themes: hope, love, peace, joy, the promise of the birth of a child, the miracle of new life, overcoming obstacles, living life in the face of persecution, seeing God in a baby, a saviour is born, perhaps even celebrating new life now while knowing the challenges and tragedy of the life to be lived.

My question as I write in mid-January is: What does Christmas continue to mean to you now and through the rest of the year? In response, let me leave this challenge with you: Find ways to keep the spirit of Christmas alive, especially in the weeks of winter that challenge us between now and Easter. Find reasons to be joyful. Offer and celebrate unexpected generosity. Sing a Christmas hymn or two just to keep you in the mood. Hold a baby. Delight in the exuberance of small but growing children. No matter what your age, enjoy the wonder of this marvelous world and the confidence that God expresses in us through the promise of each new day.

I wish you a happy and blessed New Year!

Your Servant through the Prince of Peace,
--Steve Thompson
CWM President and Financial Officer
January 2016



To those seeking a spiritual home, Community of Christ is a welcoming, loving, worldwide faith community that values the worth of every person as a child of God, and provides a safe space for you to explore and deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ and each other.

In Community of Christ, you will receive love and support as you discover renewed purpose for your life through compassionate, Christ-like service that ends suffering and fosters justice and peace.



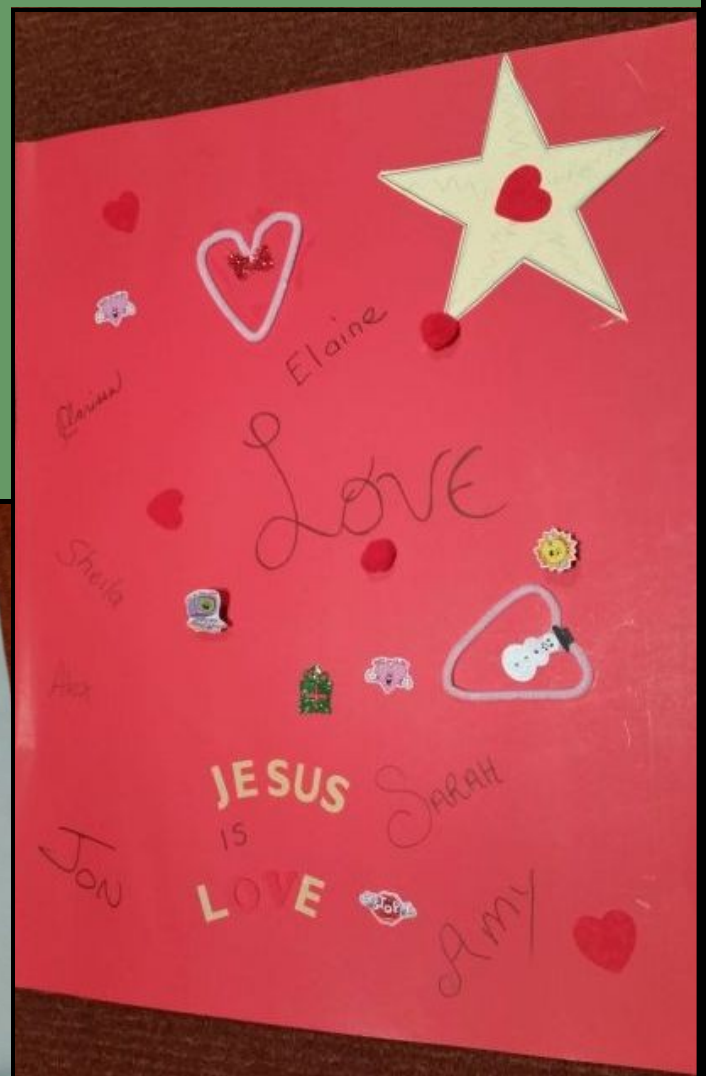
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SASKATOON



The snowmen were our Christmas craft which we made from socks. The posters are the Advent posters our scavenger hunt teams made.







VICTORIA



The Victoria Congregation at our annual Christmas Service.



I love these banners. When they go up I know that it is the Christmas Season at the church and in my heart. Wilma Duff, made all the banners except the manger setting. Helene McDonald made the banner of the manger scene, and Elaine Watson made all the modifications and characters for the Christmas story, which is played out each Sunday of advent. Elaine puts in hours doing this each Christmas season. To Wilma, Helene, and Elaine, I want to say a big thank you from all of us, in making the church really beautiful at Christmas.

Sally Glassier



VICTORIA



VANCOUVER



Our first event of the season is always the Women's Christmas Breakfast. We were a smaller group this year, and at first I was a little concerned that our room would feel empty. It didn't at all, and in fact there was a wonderful presence of the spirit with us. Our breakfast was a beautiful, intimate celebration of the women we know and love.



Of course it wouldn't be the Women's Christmas Breakfast without the help of our wonderful men. Robert Peters, David Donohue, Vic Suddaby, and Bill Thederahn were all helping in the kitchen and a new crop of young men have stepped up to help us now. Callum Reid, Nathan Christensen and Benjamin Christensen all pitched in to serve food and to help with the cleanup. I should also give a shout out to my partners in crime (co-planners of the breakfast) Sara Peters and Sky Lee. We closed the breakfast with a beautiful song written by Edith Wallace as a tribute to her daughter Lindsey, and to all the 'daughters' out there.

Below: Santa and the kids at our annual Christmas Luncheon.





Hmmm, looking at these photos, it appears some of the 'older folks' were hogging Santa's time.



Everyone loved Santa at our Christmas Party which followed our Christmas Service and Christmas Play. This year we had a great turnout for our service and luncheon, about 115 people! It was nice to see the choir loft used for seating instead of storage.

The Crew

Director - Debra Donohue
 Assistant Director - Celina Beer
 First Assistant Director - Faith Soupidis
 Artistic Team - Emmanuel Soupidis and
 Jo Riley
 Script Supervisor - Madeline Goheen
 Pianist - Bill Costin
 Sound - Dylan Baker and Brian Gibson
 Musical Directors - Katherine Goheen and
 Dan Beer



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"The Quest for the Meaning of Life"

A Christmas Play
 Written by Debra Donohue



A Kaslo Arts Theatre Production
 December 20, 2015

King Arthur - Nathan Christensen
 Sir Percival - Amelia Phelps
 Sir Lancelot - Zoe Soupidis
 Sir Gawain - Benjamin Christensen
 Sir Galahad - Kathy McAdam
 Sir Gareth - Dan Beer
 Sir Tristan - Celina Beer
 Sir Lamorak - Katherine Goheen
 Guinevere - Charlotte Goheen
 Lady Elibel - Savannah Goheen
 Merlin - Emmanuel Soupidis
 Dragonet - Jon Goheen

The Quest for the Meaning of Life
 takes place in the time of King Arthur
 and the Knights of the round table.
 These are peaceful, happy times, with
 no threat from enemies or war.
 However, it is in these times we may
 need to trust our faith in God the
 most.

Our Christmas play, The Quest for the Meaning of Life, asked us to find the meaning of life in the little things we do. It showed us that we don't always need to have a great quest to pursue, to know that God walks with us and cares for us every day.

Some highlights from the play:

Nathan and Benjamin Christensen in a real choreographed sword fight.

The Knights of the Round Table vows, which just happened to include our Mission Initiatives.

The mystery of the skulking thief.

The singing of 'What Child Is This'

It took 7 weeks of rehearsals, wardrobe sessions, and hours of painting to put this show up, and I'd like to thank everyone who helped make it happen. Oh and not to mention the 10 pages of script all the actors had to memorize! It was not an easy task.

**Thank you all,
Debra Donohue**



MEADOW RIDGE



The Meadow Ridge *Kris Kringle Mingle* took place on the first Friday of December. We played Christmas music, made Christmas cards and ate lots of delicious goodies. It was a great way to kick off the Christmas season and we plan to do it again this year.







**Meadow Ridge
Christmas party
at
Ed and Audrey
Salahub's
home.**





RIBSTONE



Janet and Richard Perry opened each Sunday School in Advent with readings, prayers and congregational hymns. Children read and placed nativity pieces each week. Tyler Ell is shown here with the Perrys.

The children at worship on the first Sunday in Advent are shown gathered around Pastor Joanne Fraser, as she leads them in a lesson during the children's moment.



This year we had 89 people in attendance at our annual Christmas Eve Vesper service. The theme was "Journey to Bethlehem."



Pastors Joanne Fraser (left) and Darleene Skinner (right) presented a cheque for \$400 to Tarla Olson, a Ribstone member who teaches at a local school. The money was donated to purchase new sports equipment for the school gym.

Tara Schaffer was the substitute teacher for Kathy Watson's elementary Sunday School class in the weeks leading up to Christmas (as Kathy was preparing for her daughter's wedding). Tara taught the students about how doing things for others can make our hearts grow in love. She had created a Grinch on which the kids would place hearts (that they had written their good deeds on). This photo is from the first week. The Grinch's heart grew many sizes larger before Christmas.



The largest number of shoppers in recent years bought gifts for their family members and had them wrapped (by a crew of volunteers) before taking them home to wait under the tree until Christmas. The sale this year was under the direction of Rachel Pawliuk and Leila Goheen.



The Eager Saints Troop met for their Christmas meeting at the church, where the kids were taught the lesson of the meeting (the names of Jesus) and did their eight standards. They acted out the Christmas story (complete with costumes), made an angel craft out of cupcake liners (seen in the photo), had Birthday Cake for Jesus, and received Christmas presents from the church.



Thirty-two cookie trays (and frozen dinners) were compiled and distributed to the seniors and shut-ins in the church and area. This year Arlene Morrison took over the job as organizer of the project. That same day, the church was decorated by volunteers, under the direction of Janet Perry and Bette Dallyn, the decorating ladies for the church.



Our Christmas JAM (Jesus and Me) meeting followed our usual format--opening and closing songs/rhymes with Darleene Skinner, craft with Courtney McCrea, playtime and snack. However, this month, instead of Leila Goheen providing the snack, the Pawliuk family volunteered. Olena and Keira were doing a "Giving Advent" and they chose JAM as one of the places they'd bless with their giving. They brought loads of wonderful snacks, including what is pictured--Baby Jesus (marshmallow) in the manger (cereal in cupcake liners).



Mitten Tree: 164 items were collected from the congregation and community to donate to those in need through a local TV station.



White Gifts: This year there were 42 white gifts donated to add to the mitten tree collection for distribution by a local TV station to children in need.



Taija Watson and Shawn Rosenfeldt were married on December 12 on her parents' (Kathy and Wayne) 46th anniversary. Pastor Joanne Fraser officiated.



Shown here are the elementary Sunday School class delivering candy canes to all those in attendance at the concert. The class had performed a skit entitled, "A Candy Cane Christmas."



Most of the Sunday School kids who were able to attend the concert are shown leading the congregation in "Go, Tell it on the Mountain" in this photo. Individually, the preschool class sang two songs. The elementary class sang a song and did a skit. The T'n'T (Teens and Tweens) class had recorded a skit (and made a movie out of it) called A Super Christmas, which ended with a congregational song, "Jesus, You're My Superhero."

EDMONTON



First Sunday of Advent: Sacrament of Baby Blessing--Jessica Moellenbeck (Parents, Nicole and Dwayne & sister Madison) blessed by Elders Mike Bock and Marian Thompson.

After the blessing Nicole Moellenbeck talked to the children about preparing for a baby and preparing for Jesus. Several Advent activities followed, including helping the children make advent wreaths. The service ended in the fellowship hall so we could snack on the cupcakes we decorated and for a presentation of a memory book for the Moellenbeck family with pictures of the occasion and well wishes from the congregation for Jessica.

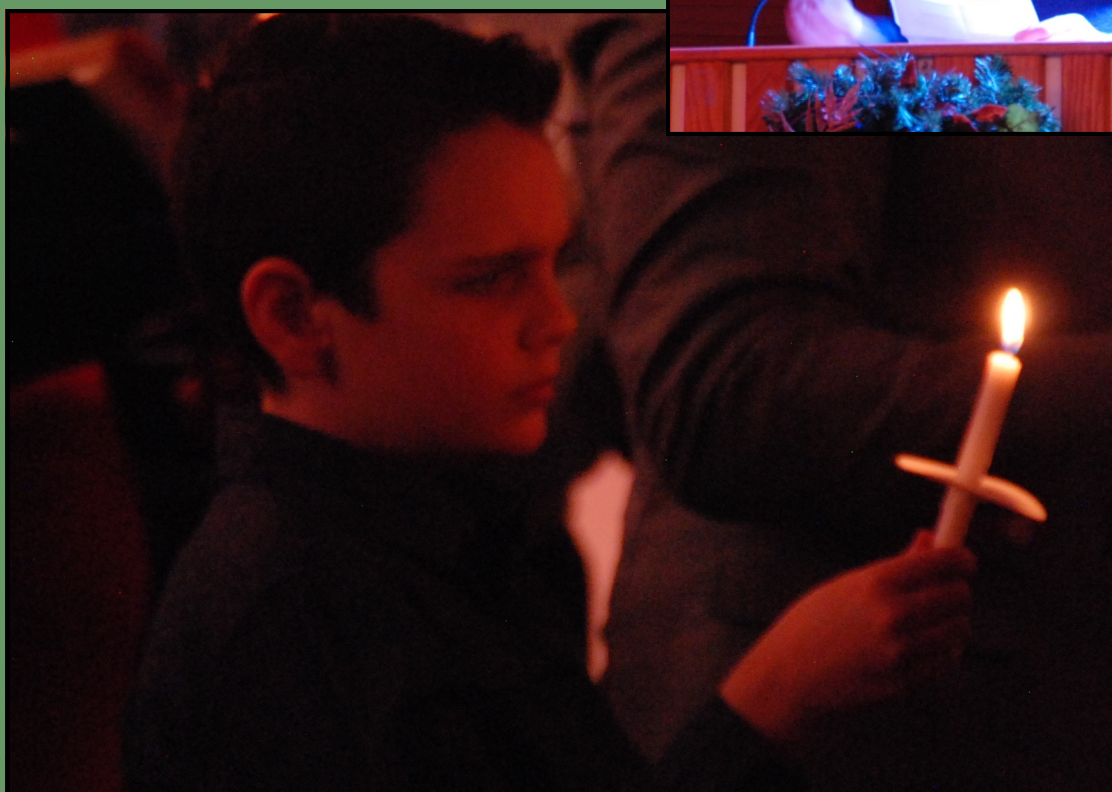






Pastor Marian Thompson

Jeremy Thompson



**Parker
Levitt**



Above: December Christmas Activity Service: This off-site children's activity service was held at Birch Bay Ranch and featured lunch, sleigh rides and a short worship. It was well attended by a variety of age groups and included friends and family who were invited to join the outing. The group shot was taken after the service (about 20 additional people came and went throughout the afternoon). I counted 60 people at lunch.

**The second sleigh ride picture (on the left) Dan Baines
(on the right) The Mason family.**

**Below: Eldon Watson is in the wheelchair (his first sleigh ride in 40 years!)
Marian Thompson**



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Coming soon...

WHAT'S UP...IN THE CWM **MAY 2016**

**Send your submissions for our next issue of What's Up...in the CWM to Debra,
debra@communityofchrist.ca by May 1, 2016.**

We'd love to hear your stories and see your photos!