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Newsletter May, 2012

Pentecost Practices

I write this newsletter message as I ponder the upcoming worship service for Pentecost, the Sunday which begins the season of the same name. Pentecost, the longest season of the church year, is a time for focusing on the presence of the Spirit in our lives and in the life of the church.

In her latest book, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (Harper Collins, 2012), Diana Butler Bass writes that when she facilitates retreats or speaks at conferences, she engages participants in conversation about the spiritual practices in their lives and in their churches. Many folks express an interest in the spiritual practices of the Christian tradition (prayer, hospitality, biblical reflection, justice-seeking, peace-making, etc.), but confess that they don't know where to start the process of deepening their spiritual lives. Butler Bass tends to answer questions with questions, so when they ask her to suggest a starting place, she says, "What do you feel called to do? . . . Pray more fervently? Work on behalf of outcasts? Make room for strangers in your community? Understand the Bible more deeply?" If the person still can't name his or her own starting place, she says to them, "Pick one—one activity that tugs at your heart. . . . Start there. Just one thing. Not all of them. Do one thing well, with passion, with depth, with openness and understanding. Engage it intentionally, pay attention to the practice. See where it takes you." In her book, she closes the discussion by asking her readers what spiritual practices give us "a powerful sense of freedom and direction, of mastery and maturity, of purpose in life." (p. 152)

Perhaps this summer, during the season of the Spirit, we can pick an activity that tugs at our hearts, engage it intentionally, pay attention to it, and see where it takes us. Then, in the fall, we can gather and talk about the spiritual practices we chose to explore, and where they have brought us by that time. Diana Butler Bass's sister-in-law, Dorothy Bass, lists some of those practices in her book *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* (Jossey-Bass, 1997), including honouring your body, hospitality, keeping Sabbath, testimony, discernment, forgiveness, healing, singing our lives. She even includes "dying well" as a spiritual practice, and certainly we can see how it would qualify as such.

Is there a spiritual practice that tugs at your heart? Are you feeling called to write, or to read, to paint, or to take photos *as a spiritual practice*? Are you feeling called to walk in the woods—or in your neighbourhood—to float in a canoe, to dig in your garden, to listen to music, to start a journal, to sit in silence on your balcony for a focused quarter hour, twice a day? Are you feeling called to help out with

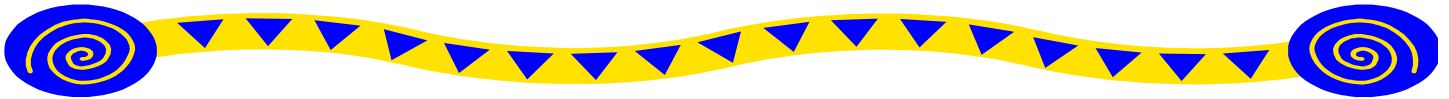
Harvest, or volunteer at North End Stella or Project Peacemakers as a spiritual practice? Then why not pick that activity, and get started? It's guaranteed to take you to interesting and challenging places.

If a specific practice does not come to mind for you, I recommend your reading Brian McLaren's *Finding Our Way Again: The Return of the Ancient Practices*.

I wish you a meaningful, reflective and exciting Pentecost season, and look forward to sharing with you in the fall about the spiritual activities that have tugged at our respective hearts. In the meantime, I'll be seeing many of you in Sunday worship, and will look forward to updates along the way.

Yours in the Spirit,

Nancy



WORSHIP AT IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH
DURING THE SUMMER OF 2012:

Please note that there will be no Sunday worship services
at Immanuel during the month of July.

Services will conclude with that held on the morning of June 24th,
and resume with on August 5th.

During the month of July, you are invited
to attend worship services
at John Black United (10:30 a.m.)

or at Gordon-King Memorial United Church (10:30 a.m.).

ADDITIONAL WORSHIP NOTES:

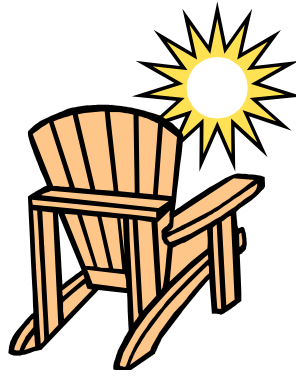
On Sunday, June 3rd,
we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion at Immanuel.

This also is the weekend of the Annual Meeting
of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario
of The United Church of Canada.

A Celebration of Ministries service
will be held at Knox United Church,
400 Edmonton Street, at 10:00 a.m.

The Sacrament of Communion will be celebrated.

All are welcome and invited to participate.



SUMMER DROP-IN:

During July and August, you are invited
to drop in for a visit and an opportunity to catch up
with other Immanuel folks
on TUESDAY MORNINGS AT 10:00 A.M.
in the upstairs lounge.

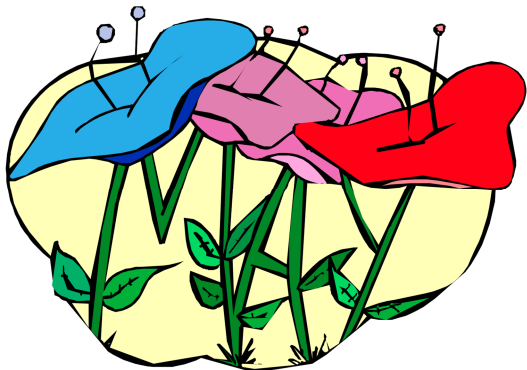
Thanks to the Tuesday Morning Study Group
for initiating and hosting this gathering.

A Room with a View

The office continues to be busy and I always look forward to seeing and hearing from people. As things start winding down I would like to wish you all a great summer!

In the month of June I will be working Thursday mornings, June 7th, 14th and 21st, returning to my regular schedule on Tuesday, September 4th.

Sharon Vandenberg, Office Administrator



Thank you!

A thank you card was received for Dianne Tucker and Immanuel United. It is posted on the bulletin board. The following is some of the highlights.

A note with "Big Thanks" for your continued support and presence at Partners in Mission meetings, donations of food and community supper preparations. It continues to make a positive difference...helps us to support, be present and encourage those we meet here on the corner of Stella and Powers.

Look forward to continuing to grow through and with transitions here. Blessings in all you do for us and others in your outreach.

With hope and love in Christ,

Adel Compton
Community Minister NSCM

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS for 2012-2013: Joy Weizel – Chair, Debbie Bilous – secretary, Sharen Jost and Arlene Gendre – co-envelope secretaries, Pat Schulz and Connie Kryschuk – co-treasurers.

PLAY: Total income (ticket sales and donations for fruit)	\$4,170.00
Total expenses	<u>\$809.02</u>
Profit:	\$3,360.08

DEFICIT: The financial books are now reconciled for the 2011-2012 year end and the deficit was - \$8,846.45. A year ago we had predicted a deficit of \$10,614.00. The finance committee has looked at the operational expenses for next year and compared the numbers to the operational income and the result is a projected deficit of \$17,656.00. There will be sufficient money in the congregational fund to cover the majority of this deficit, assuming we once again host both the fowl supper and the play this year. We would encourage members, if able, to consider making an extra donation to local or the Shortfall Fund to help defray the projected deficit.

CO-OP NUMBER: The support for the use of Immanuel's co-op number increased this year over last year. The total rebate was \$405.75, an increase of \$44.35 from last year.

SUMMER GIVINGS: The committee really appreciates the extra time and effort you go to in mailing in, dropping off and/or leaving post-dated cheques to cover the times you are unavailable to attend church. We thank you.

Donate Your Body to Medical Science

That is exactly what Elaine and I(Bill) plan to do. Medical students must learn about the various systems at work in the human body. We are among the people who want to make that happen in the most helpful way. We have made arrangements to have our bodies available after death for the medical studies of our doctors-to-be.

To make this effective you contact the Faculty of Medicine, Human Anatomy, of the University of Manitoba.

Phone 789-3652 or use the website

http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/units/anatomy/media/Body_Bequeethal_Brochure_Web.pdf. They will tell you how to make this arrangement. Our part is to encourage others to make this gift.

It is worth knowing that there is still room for a Memorial service. One simply says "body donated to science" in the announcement. The church approves this act. This is written to explain our behaviour and to inspire persons to consider taking such an action.

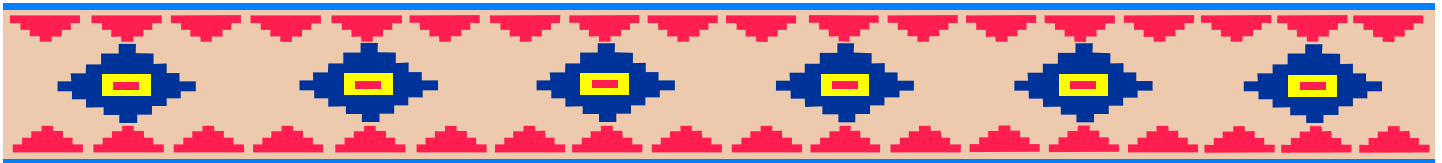
Bill Hickerson

C.E. Report May 2012

The Christian Education Committee is pleased to report the end of another successful year. We hope the congregation has enjoyed interacting and celebrating with, and being led by, our small but enthusiastic group of young people. We have certainly enjoyed teaching them, being taught by them, and planning for their involvement at Immanuel in as many ways as possible. The CE Committee is looking forward to one more gathering as a committee, to plan for next year and share a meal together.

In the fall, we will have a registration date on September 9th, with Sunday School to begin on September 16th. Jane Nicholls will be teaching the first block, with a theme of peacemaking. Look for more details on the web site later in the summer!

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Nicholls for the Christian Education Committee



Like a Great Peat Fire

Every now and again Lynne Strome sends me something to read – something that causes me to think. A year ago she sent me a Traditional Irish Blessing, and I want to quote the first sentences for you: “May the blessing of light be on you, light without and light within. May the blessed sunshine shine on you and warm your heart till it glows like a great peat fire, so that the stranger may come and warm himself at it, and also a friend.”

Now I’ve never seen a peat fire, and when Gwen and I were in Ireland not even a great bog, where the peat is dug out to make fuel. But recently I saw something that must be very like a great peat fire. I was at the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre when they were recognizing the change of the seasons with a special ceremony which included the opportunity to enter the sweat lodge. In the sweat lodge people gather in a circle for prayer around hot stones upon which water is poured to produce steam. The stones are called “Grandfathers”, and I’m sure that has a special meaning which I’m unable to explain to you. The stones are heated in a wood fire until they are red hot. When I saw them I thought immediately of the “great peat fire”, and of the blessing that our hearts be warmed toward others like that. It was almost too much to think about. The final words of the blessing were less passionate, “And now may the Lord bless you all and bless you kindly.” I can often use some of that. Also the “great peat fire” once in a while.

Doug McMurtry

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