



# St Paul's United Church Sidney

# Fall 2019

## Newsletter

We turned to the tall trees for inspiration and awe as we walked through virtual Nature's Cathedrals. We heard how Jesus literally connected with nature as he walked on water and brought order out of chaos.

**Dear Friends,**

Over the past two months of Summer we've been on a journey that seeks to move us to connect with Nature more.



We began looking at "The Secret Garden", a book that inspires us to dig deep and persistently in order to find the beauty and healing in the garden of life.

We spent time with "Annie's Song", in deep admiration and love for the vast generous stretch of

creation of which we are a part. We explored the idea of Sabbath which restores and nourishes.



We worshipped together in the church's garden and felt the breeze on our faces and the sun on our skin and dipped our hands in water and blew bubbles of joyful prayers.

On another Sunday we re-created a little beach on our central table and invited folk to do a little beach-combing of their own as we explored what is the treasure at our feet in our ordinary lives.

We connected with nature and each other. All the while we've been walking and moving together on Friday mornings on Sidney beach



front, taking in the glorious vistas, breathing in fresh air, engaging in conversation, connecting with earth and each other.



Going for walks, sitting on a bench in front of the sea, gardening, staring up at a tall tree, turning your face to the wind and feeling the cool air on your face, feeling wet sand under your feet as you take your shoes off on the beach... It's simply part of who we are, to connect with the environment around us.



We know, however, that sometimes life's situations take us out of our natural environment. We can get too busy and distracted. We can become ill or simply unable to do the things we once did. But sometimes, we just forget who we are.

All this call to connect with nature, or reconnect perhaps only emphasizes more and more that we



have become disconnected. Disconnected from the earth, disconnected from each other as human beings, from the creatures of the earth, from our planet's rhythms and cycles.

Sometimes we do need a reminder of who we are and when we participate in an activity, our bodies, as well as our minds, our emotions, our feelings, our senses are engaged and all these can remind us that we are already part of the cosmic heartbeat that is life. Let us breath the air deeply and gratefully as we affirm our place in the beautiful and mysterious universe.

Over the next month or so we'll be moving into "Creation Time" where we'll more deeply explore our connection to Earth and our environment and be challenged to change, compassion and care as we hear the prophets of old speak into our time. The message is not always easy to hear and often hard to follow. In the face of rapid climate change with drastic effects on the Earth, our increasing greed, we are armed with our "weapons of mass consumption" and we are destructively changing the structure and form of life that is causing even greater suffering to those already suffering, - people, creatures and the land, sea and air alike. Let us hear the call, let us take up the challenge to change something so that Earth may rejoice once more.

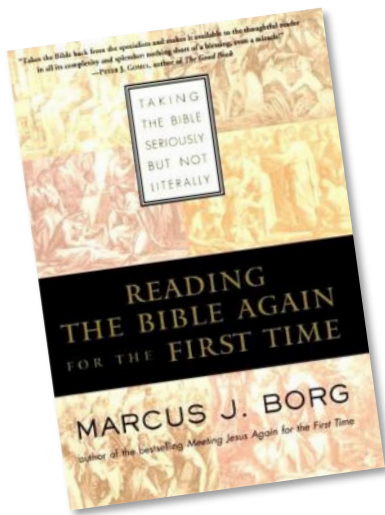
I found this little extract on a dog rescue website...  
*"I looked at all the caged animals in the shelter, - the cast-offs of human society. I saw in their eyes love and hope, fear and dread, sadness, and betrayal. And I was angry. "God," I said, "this is terrible! Why don't you do something?"*  
*God was silent for a moment, and then God spoke softly, "This is terrible! Why don't you do something?"* (alt. Author Unknown)

There is always *something* we can do. All is not lost. Hopelessness, like war, is not inevitable. There is always Good News because our salvation is inextricably tied up in the restoration of the world. May it be so.

Blessings always,  
 Rev. Suzanna Bates







## FRIDAY DISCUSSION GROUP

### *“Reading the Bible again for the first time”*

by Marcus Borg

**10 Sessions from Friday, 27th September - 29th November**

Coffee from 9.45am

Session: 10.00am - 12.00pm

Marcus Borg, an outstanding New Testament scholar writes this book to represent the “historical-metaphorical” way of reading the Bible in contrast to the “literal-factual” approach. He blends the best of biblical scholarship with a profound concern for authentic faith and how it can be lived out today.

For each session there is a 15 minute video component with Marcus Borg speaking. Those who register for the course will receive a copy of the book and a study guide.

Please register before 22nd Sept, either at church on Sunday or by calling the church office.

For more information, please contact:

Judy Bicknell - 250-656-7759

Sheryl Simpson - 250- 656-6777

Dorothy Wiebe - 7778-882-0746

*All are welcome to participate in a lively discussion and study!*

## MUSIC MINISTRY AT ST PAUL'S

The summer has been a wonderful experience for our music ministry. Throughout June – August we have had a **Summer Choir** averaging 18 members per Sunday. Each week we have introduced new hymns and songs during the Offertory and lead the congregation in singing of hymns throughout the service. We have also provided musical support for funerals/memorial services by leading in the hymn singing for these services.

Our Fall season started with a joyous Labour Day weekend. Guest artists, Bruce and Cheryl Harding from the lower mainland, led a joint Saturday and Sunday of music, prayer and praise. It started with rehearsals for both instrumentalists and singers on Saturday, August 31. Over 45 musicians from Central



Saanich, St. John's, and St. Paul's United Churches spent a remarkable 3+ hours learning, singing, and enjoying the Harding's gifts of music and spirit-filled fun. On Sunday, the musicians under Bruce's leadership helped a packed sanctuary worship, sing new



music, and be part of the “Welcome Table”. Three congregations worshipping together with energy, love and fellowship. What a spirit-filled day this was, and what a wonderful start to our new season.

The Music Ministry at St. Paul’s is alive and growing, both in numbers and number of groups.

The **St. Paul’s Choir** started rehearsals on Thursday, September 5, with a great turnout and lots of enthusiasm. However, we would still like new members to join us, especially men. The ability to read music is not necessary. All that required is a love of singing, the ability to carry a tune, and willingness to become part of a friendly, energetic group who wish you to join them. We rehearse hymns, both familiar and new, for Sunday worship, and work to prepare a special choral piece for most Sundays. The choir currently rehearsed from 6.30 – 8.30 pm in the sanctuary and all are welcome to join in!

The **Jam Band** is taking on a new look and musical feel this year. It is our hope that we will expand from basically a group of fun-filled ukulele players, to a group of fun-filled instrumentalists and singers of all types. We would like to make this a true “Jam Band”...a group of instrumentalists and singers that gets together to play and sing for fun. There will be one added component that is new this year. Part of our repertoire will be songs that we can use in Sunday worship. It is the plan that we will be the facilitating music group at Sunday morning worship about 5 – 7 times each year. We currently do not have a day or time for regular weekly rehearsals, but we would like anyone who is interested in joining us

to contact our Music Minister, Alan Whitmore at [musik\\_al@telus.net](mailto:musik_al@telus.net) or by phoning 778-587-5669. Once we have a roster of interested people, we will decide together the best time to rehearse. Call soon. We want you to be part of our group.

There will be a new music group at St. Paul’s this year. A **Women’s Ensemble** is in the formation stages. We don’t have a day or time for rehearsal yet, but we are gathering the names of interested people so that we can get started. This group is open to any women who would like to sing with us, both members of St. Paul’s and singers from the community. There are a few requirements, however. The ensemble will sing at Sunday morning worship once each month between October – May and singers are expected to attend unless excused by the director. Also, we would like singers to be able to read music or at least be willing to spend the time necessary to learn notes. The repertoire will be more complex and will usually be in either 3 or 4 part female harmony [SSA or SSAA]. Please contact me if you are interested in joining this fun-filled, but also hard-working choral group.

This is just the beginning of new and exciting venture in Music Ministry at St. Paul’s. Watch for announcements on other exciting, spirit-filled opportunities to give praise to our Creator through the gift of music. To God be the Glory!

Blessings

**Alan Whitmore**

Music Minister at St. Paul’s United Church





## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

We have an AMAZING Property Committee at St Paul's who have thoroughly enjoyed working together for some time. The time has come to expand the group and invite some new members to come and help out and join a joyful team. Looking after property may not seem like a whole lot of fun to most people, and yet, St Paul's has achieved what is seldom seen in any other church, - a team that enjoy each other, that love what they do and offer their service in the church in this way so willingly. Please would you consider joining the Property Team. It is such a vital service to the church. Please speak to any member of the Church Council or call the church office and let us know.



## CREATION TIME



The 'Creation Time' symbol consists of a tall tree with prominent roots and green leaves. It is a sign of life and growth. Flowing around the tree is a large blue circle, a symbol of God's eternity and the colour of the earth from space.

The four sections of the circle are reminders of the four seasons, the four directions of the compass, the four aspects of humanity (mind, body, heart and spirit). The four orange sections form a cross and the four colours included in the symbol represent the four elements of creation: earth/brown, air/white, fire/orange and water/blue.

## BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

Sunday, 6th October  
at 3.00pm

In St Paul's Garden  
*Come  
rain or shine!*



Our pets are such a blessing to us, bring yours  
and let them be blessed.

You're also invited to bring a photo of a  
beloved pet you remember with great love.  
Let's invite our neighbours to come and share  
in a beautiful outdoor service.

*Please bring a lawn chair and any supplies your pet may need. Please  
keep your pet responsibly safe. Donations to Victoria SPCA.*

## Pastoral Notes...

Please be in touch with me if you would like a pastoral visit or call. If you'd like Communion at home, I will gladly come and share with you.

If you are going to hospital and would like a visit please let us know or if you know that someone from St Paul's is in hospital we'd be grateful to hear from you.



**Rev. Suzanna Bates**  
**Tel: 250-4665993**  
**rev.suzanna@gmail.com**

## Weekly Bulletins

Each Friday we send out our weekly bulletins and news by e-mail to many of our members and friends. If you do not receive a bulletin by email, please contact the church office: [stpaulsuc@telus.net](mailto:stpaulsuc@telus.net) and ask to be put on the mailing list.

**Find us on Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/stpaulsunitedbc](http://www.facebook.com/stpaulsunitedbc)



**and on our Website:**

[www.stpaulsunitedbc.com](http://www.stpaulsunitedbc.com)

The United Church of Canada  
**St Paul's United Church**



2410 Malaview Avenue,  
Sidney, BC, V8L 2G4

**e-mail: [stpauluc@telus.net](mailto:stpauluc@telus.net)**  
**tel: 250-656-3213**

**Mission Statement:**

*"Celebrating God's love,  
St Paul's welcomes all  
and seeks to grow in faith  
and service to others."*

## COFFEE MORNING

**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday  
of the Month**



Please join us in the Lounge on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Meet with others from the congregation, make new friends, exchange news and views, share experiences, joys and concerns, enjoy fellowship and friendship.

Drop in, - bring a friend.  
***Everyone is welcome!***

Thou, Holiness, One,  
in morning stillness I walk among you.  
From dark earth beneath you branch out above me.  
From dark space beyond you shine down among us.  
In darkness hidden deep your invisible angels  
of bug and fungus fashion glory,  
working their feast of rot and fermentation,  
your millioned resurrections.

Your trees and I breathe each other, in and out.

They branch out in me.

I breathe in them, each breath a hymn.

I move through you,  
the holy space between us;  
the air of you is charged  
with light, with birds, with praise.

Our flights are song,  
our greenness is praise,  
even our stones,  
being, praise,  
their silence your purest praise.

I waken to my belonging.

How could we

— even I —

ever stop

— even in death —  
praising you?



(Steve Garnaas-Holmes, Unfolding Light)