

Pulpit Enemy #1

“Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.” Romans 12: 11

By Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart

Welcome home! Or if you decided to stick close to Vancouver this summer and soak up the record breaking heat – welcome to the cooler autumn season! A huge thank you to our amazing summer preachers and lay liturgists who offered one of our best summer series yet entitled “So Help Me God! Christian Witness in a Multifaith World.” If you were away please take the time to listen to the wonderful sermons at <http://wvuc.bc.ca/category/sermons>.

While the church family explored that theme Rev. Laura and I took the kids away (to our home away from home) in Northern Ireland. This summer was an incredibly helpful time to rest, recreate, reflect and any other R's you can think of. Engaging in a pulpit exchange with the good folks of Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church in the east Belfast village of Ballyhackamore was simply spectacular. A decade ago the congregation was down to 20 people in the pews and the denomination was ready to close the church. A change of leadership, major prayer power and a missional focus, now has Kirkpatrick marked as one of the fastest growing congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and it is crammed full of young adults and families. Needless to say simply observing the congregation in action offered much food for thought.

As we sat in our beautiful manse, puttered around Northern Ireland, spent time with my family in Markethill and enjoyed time with the kids, I couldn't help but reflect on my own ministry in Canada. I've now entered my 5th year of ministry at West Vancouver United Church and it was a good opportunity to reflect on the ups and downs; the moments of amazing grace as well as the dry spells; the faithful victories and the faithless sellouts along the way.

I think the big learning for me this summer was that moving from Ontario (via sabbatical in Northern Ireland) five years ago to Vancouver I made a mistake. I assumed moving from the diminishing Christendom of Ontario to the laid back West Coast lifestyle that *Pulpit Enemy #1* would be secularism. And at first glance – that's true. I was shocked [cont. pg 7]

Greetings With Gratitude!

As I sit in Ross' new home study, enjoying the beauty of Dylon Nofziger's craftsmanship inside and our Lord's craftsmanship outside, I am overcome with a sense of gratitude. I am deeply grateful that WVUC has been so supportive of my time on maternity leave with our newest child, Sadie Rebekah. I want to say thank you for the baby shower back in November, your congratulations cards and presents around the time of Sadie's birth, your prayerful support for her Christian nurture, and your understanding that it is challenging transitioning

back to ministry after a shortened maternity leave.

I have hit the ground running, so to speak, after our return from a ministry exchange to Northern Ireland. Both Ross and I have come back invigorated and super-charged over what God may be doing here at WVUC. We look forward to having discussions with all ages in our church family about how we can be faithful to God's call in our lives and how we can be supportive to God's mission in the world. I am also looking forward to welcoming Meghan LeSieur (our Children and Youth Minister, Simon Le-

By Rev. Laura Lockhart

Sieur's new wife) to our church family and our new ministry intern, Curtis Wilson. Both have such amazing ministry talents and we are richly blessed to have them reside with us.

As a side note, my ministry days are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Sundays. I am available by cell phone if there is a pastoral emergency (i.e. hospitalization, personal crisis, death) anytime at 604-349-5174.

God bless you and I look forward to reconnecting with all of you this fall.

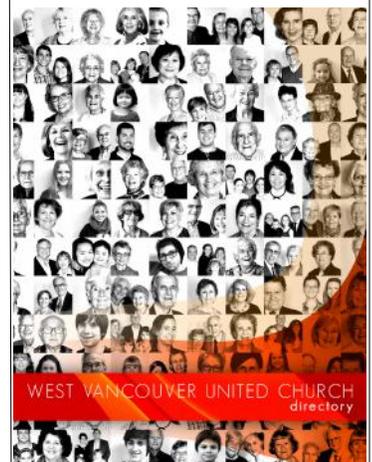
Grace & peace, Rev. Laura

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PHOTO DIRECTORY

One per family, available again for pick up after church starting September 15



WEST VANCOUVER UNITED CHURCH directory

Kids Learn to Stand Strong By Children & Youth Minister, Simon LeSieur

Every summer during **Summer Kids Camp**, the halls of the church fill with the unmistakable sound of children having a great time. They laugh, they play energetic games, they make colourful crafts, they hear captivating stories and eat delicious snacks - all of this while learning more about God. This year was our biggest crew of children and volunteers yet, and we learned together that God's love, family and friends, prayer, and Scripture help us stand strong in our faith - a theme particularly relevant for these children who are growing up in a culture where Christianity is no longer the assumed faith perspective.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to all of you who used your gifts this week to serve this new generation, whether it was through leading a station or a group, offering your hospitality through snacks, or, as importantly, keeping us in your prayers.

One thing struck me as we wrapped up our last day - next summer will already be our **FIFTH** year of Summer Kids Camp!



School... On Sunday?

How about "Sunday Club" instead? All Kids welcome!

From our Godly Play Director, Dylon Nofziger

September. It's that time of year when we turn our attention from things like vacations and camping trips to the academic year ahead. Parents are busy rushing about to get things ready for the kids, while the children wonder about all their new year will hold.

In the church year, we have our own ways of marking out the seasons and the times. We celebrate days like Christmas and Pentecost, marking them with symbols and candles and colours. But we don't have ways to celebrate the return to Christian Education. Perhaps it's because as Christians, it is part of our calling to ongoing learning and study. As Christians we are always learning, and we are always beginners in the journey of faith.

This past summer our church was blessed by a pastoral exchange through which we welcomed the lovely Ebbinghaus family and entrusted our pastors to the care and faith of Kirkpatrick Church in Ireland. Their three children: Patrick, Sophie, and Ruby were a great addition to our Sunday School classroom. But I was confused at first when they referred to what we did on Sunday morning as "Sunday Club." Didn't they know it was called "Sunday School"? It didn't take too long to realize that what we have been working towards in the community of children is not so much like a school classroom as it is a place where we work to create a safe and fun environment for children to learn about how good God is, and how much each one of us is loved. It's a place to be together, to hear sacred stories, to meet God in word, bread, and silence, and a place where we are free to respond to the living God who has blessed us with the gift of the Holy Spirit, alive inside of us. That wasn't my experience of school.

When the children were asked recently if they would like a new name for what we do on a Sunday, the Irish influence snuck back in, and "Sunday Club" was suggested! So it is with great excitement that we look forward to a new year, not of Sunday School, but a brand new year. We look forward to welcoming the children to our very own Sunday Club.

On Sunday mornings, after a brief children's time during worship, children follow their teachers to the Children's Sanctuary (room 304). After a time of welcome, Dylon Nofziger leads the younger group, while Simon LeSieur moves to the Youth Room with the older group. Curious parents and visitors are welcome!



Warmly Welcoming Curtis Wilson!

We are delighted to welcome Student Minister Curtis Wilson, who is shadowing Rev. Ross this year. Here is Curtis in his own words:

My name is Curtis Wilson and I am a seminary student at Vancouver School of Theology. My wife, Elaine, and I are entering our third year at VST in the M.Div. program. Elaine will be graduating at the end of this year and I'll finish in year and a half.

I am delighted to join you all this year as we walk together in our faith. I was born in North York, ON and grew up in Almonte, ON (a small town just outside of Ottawa). It was there that I developed a devotion to the Ottawa Senators (no matter how well they play). We moved to Vancouver in 1999 when my father preached for a call at Fairview Presbyterian Church.

I attended Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, BC for my undergrad and completed my BA in the Worship Arts program. A great passion of mine is music – playing, listening, and composing. Guitar is my instrument of choice (both acoustic and electric) and I have dabbled in bass guitar, piano and drums. My favorite band is Switchfoot from San Diego, CA. My favorite book (aside from the Bible) is N.T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope*.

I know God has an amazing year ahead for all of us. Blessings on you all and I look forward meeting you! - Curtis



Family Camp 2013: Revelation and Relationship by Simon LeSieur

What differentiates the church from social clubs? It is easy in the busyness of life to show up on a Sunday morning, buried by the layers of our lives to go through the motions. It is a whole other thing to remove the masks we often put on and to enter into community with our hearts vulnerable. It makes the difference between being a consumer of faith and feeling known and loved in the midst of a large congregation.

When you put 60 adults and children on a ferry headed to the Sunshine Coast to spend 3 days in the wilderness, away from everything that makes life comfortable, you really have no choice but to bring all of who you are to the table. And that is exactly what happened this past weekend at Camp Elphinstone during our 2nd annual Family Camp.

In the past, I've often shared words, pictures, and even videos to convey the depth of our common experiences, but this year, none of these seem to suffice; in one of those rare moments, I'm at a loss for words (which is awkward when you're supposed to write an article!) Let me say this though, this year's theme revolved around Revelation (those moments when we get glimpses of God's beautiful work in this world) and Relationship (one of those foundational elements of Christianity): R&R. Together, these two "R"s created a space for people to dialogue in small groups, to laugh and shed a

few tears together, but most of all, to pray together. Sure, the food was great, the talent show was hilarious, and the kayaking, swimming, archery and ropes courses were fantastic parts of the weekend, but what made this weekend different was the fresh spiritual hunger of the young families; an eagerness to be open and vulnerable with one another.

We closed off our Sunday morning worship with an opportunity for families to come forward for prayer. At first, a few teens hesitantly made their way to the back of the worship space for prayer. Moments

later, families were lining up to share what was on their hearts and to pray together. It struck me as one of those landmark moments in the spiritual life of our community here at West Van United, and what a refreshing one it was.

A huge thank you to the planning committee, Heather Walsh, Kari Ridd and Dawn Boddington, for their vision and hard work. A huge thank you to those who contributed their gifts to make this weekend come together. And most of all, a huge thank you to all you families for your flexibility, but most of all, for your vulnerability. Can't wait for next year!



Invitation to a Historic Process of Healing and Reconciliation

You are invited to participate in a historic process of healing and reconciliation - the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The Commission has been moving across Canada as part of its five year mandate. It will hold a Nation Event in Vancouver from September 18-21, 2013. This event is open to all Canadians. At this event we can: witness the truth and experience of Residential School survivors; support collective healing and reconciliation; work together for a stronger and healthier future for all; and share our stories.

For 150 years, until 1996, generations of Aboriginal children in Canada were taken from their homes, families and communities and sent to residential schools. The government, in partnership with Churches, sought to assimilate Aboriginal people into Canadi-

an society by breaking the bonds between parent and child, between child and their language, and between culture and heritage. The United Church of Canada operated 13 schools in this system, 5 of which were located in BC Conference. (Ahousat, Alberni, Port Simpson, Kitimaat, Coqualeetza) The cost of this policy has been damage to the body, mind and spirit of countless students, and an ongoing legacy of trauma and community disintegration among former students, their children and grandchildren.

In 1998, The United Church offered an apology for our role in the Indian Residential School system. In that apology we said: "Apologies need to be followed by concrete acts that demonstrate that the church is committed to living in new way in its relations with First Nations peoples."

Our church is living out its apology in many ways.

This includes taking an active role in the TRC process and inviting congregations and individuals to become involved.

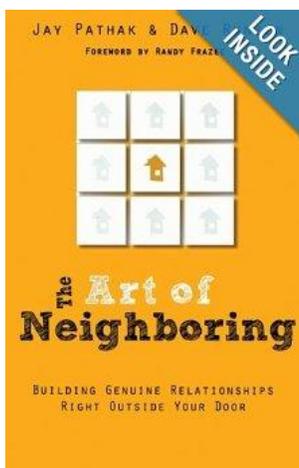
The Vancouver Event will actually be a "Week of Reconciliation" beginning on Monday, September 16th with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron. Tuesday, the Squamish Nation will welcome canoes from All Nations at False Creek, and on Wednesday the Truth & Reconciliation Hearings begin. Stories from all aspects of the Residential Schools are welcome. If you are a Survivor, Teacher, or Support Staff you are invited to share your story either in the Public Forum, or Privately. Speakers are asked to register at the TRC website, trc.ca. There is NO REGISTRATION for listeners. There will be a Concert on Thursday night that is open to everyone. On Sunday join the [Walk For Reconciliation](#) beginning at the Queen Eliza-

beth Library. Opening Ceremonies begin at 9am. The walk will make its way to Science World where the New Way Forward Event will celebrate new possibilities between First Nations and Non-Aboriginal people from Noon to 4pm.

[If you are planning to join the walk please register at \[reconciliationcanada.ca\]\(http://reconciliationcanada.ca\)](#) All other events do not require registration. Please find time to take in all or part of the Week of Reconciliation.

Many United Church folk will gather on Sunday, September 22 at St. Andrew's Wesley United Church for a service of Prayer and Inspiration with our Moderator, at 8am, and then proceed to the Library for the beginning of the [Walk For Reconciliation](#).

Find more information about these events at: reconciliationcanada.ca, and trc.ca



Library Update Donna Simon, Church Librarian

The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationship Right Outside Your Door

Book by Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon

Fiona Watts reviewed this new book in our library:

This book addresses the question, "What if Jesus meant that we should love our actual neighbours?" It discusses all the common reasons why we don't do this...not enough time, the "fear factor"...suspicion of the unknown – there must be something weird about that family that

hides behind closed curtains all the time, unease in case our neighbours values are different from ours, not wanting to enter the chaos of other people's drama or maybe it's the idea of a long term commitment. Our neighbours are always there unless we move or they do. Once we're invested, there's nowhere to hide. Loving our neighbours has the

potential of being a really messy business.

However, it is through loving our neighbours that we can share our Christian witness. "We don't love our neighbours so they will know Jesus; we love our neighbours because we already love Jesus and trust him. We are called to love our neighbours, even if our neighbours never show any interest in Jesus...we don't love people so they will believe what we believe.... We just love our neighbours. That's it." (p. 113-114) *The Art of Neighboring* explores what it means to really live in community and all that entails: receiving others, setting boundaries, focussing on others and forgiving. It invites readers "to begin a sacred journey, one that has the potential to change your block, your city, and possibly the world." (p. 184)

AUTUMN BOOK STUDY

"What We Talk About When We Talk About God"

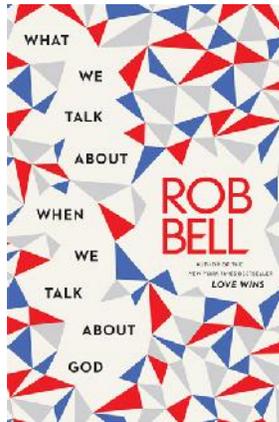
Rob Bell is a forty something former pastor of Mars Hill Church in Michigan. He has been a force in North American Christianity for the past decade publishing popular books such as *Velvet Elvis*, *Sex God*, *Jesus Wants to Save Christians* & his controversial work *Love Wins*. Bell's latest work "What we Talk About When We Talk About God" continues in the tradition of his other works mixing deep biblical knowledge with a great sense of humour all the while molding and re-shaping Christian thought. Join us for this three night adventure in the church lounge as follows:

Thursday, October 3, 7-9 pm. Chapters 1 & 2

Thursday, October 17, 7-9 pm Chapters 3, 4 & 5

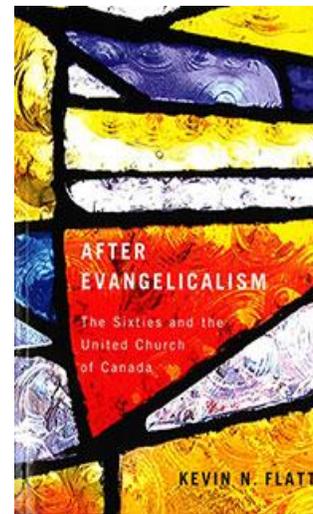
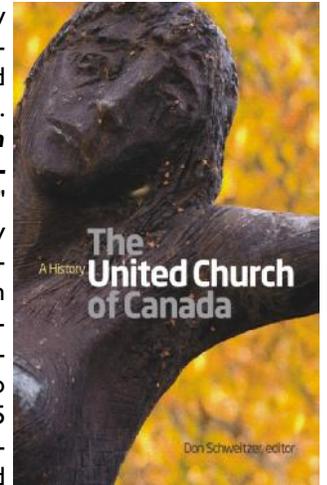
Thursday, October 24, 7-9 pm Chapters 6, 7 & Epilogue

Sign up will be at the Welcome Table on Sundays and Rev Ross will order you a book or feel free to grab one at a local bookstore or online.



NEW ADDITIONS to Church Library

There are two new books out on the history of the United Church of Canada. **The United Church of Canada: A History** is an "in house" collection of essays by United Church academics, edited by Don Schweitzer of St. Andrew's College, looking at the lead up to Church Union in 1925 and how our denomination has evolved since then.



The second more critical monograph published by McGill/Queen's University Press is entitled **After Evangelicalism: The Sixties and the United Church of Canada** written by Kevin Flatt and offers a hard hitting analysis of where the United Church has strayed from its Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist roots. Both of these

are excellent reads for those who are keen to explore both the past and ponder the future direction of our denomination.

Bronwen's Garden

...a continued blessing to our church and the community.

While many readers are aware of Bronwen's garden we wanted to remind everyone of this lovely ministry that continues to bless the church and community. The garden, named in loving appreciation for the life and Christian witness of Bronwen Gouws, contains a beautiful reflective space on Esquimalt Avenue with plants, benches and water features as well as a memorial wall. The memorial wall contains names of loved ones who have passed to glory and is dedicated annually in the spring (often on Ascension Sunday).

Sitting in the garden enjoying the mountain view, one is reminded of the beautiful words by Christine Gardner written in heart-felt appreciation this past spring for the life and Christian witness of Nancy Fox:

The sun is high in the sky when a vista opens out to a wide valley bathed in a pallet of pure gold. Like a tapestry, a long thread of blue silk is woven across the canvas, shimmering in all its tranquil beauty. It pulls her gently forward. This welcoming scene envelopes her tightly, wraps and holds her in memory for ever.



Ross' article continued from pg 1

moving to Vancouver how irrelevant the church appeared to be to most folks in the community. Unlike the boring debates back in Ontario with fans of angry atheists like Hitchens and Dawkins, I discovered that people on the west coast weren't angry at God, just totally apathetic. Where people still accessed the church for rites of passage back east (weddings, baptisms, funerals) – west coast folks were almost more honest in saying – “No thanks, glad that works for you but I'm going to have my wedding on the beach, my “baby naming” with a local secular officiant, or celebration of life at the Golf Course.”

After reflecting on the state of ministry here in Vancouver from a distance this summer I, in a prodigal son kind of way, *came to my senses* and realized that Pulpit Enemy #1 is not secularism – it's Cultural Christianity. What does that mean? I define Cultural Christianity as hanging one's hat but not their heart on the cross. It means “belonging” to the church but not seriously practicing the faith beyond “the Sunday show.” It is the polite and respectable liberal Protestant philosophy that says, “Being a good Canadian citizen and being a church member is essentially the same thing.” It's having a high degree of comfort “outsourcing one's baptismal vows” to professional staff rather than prayerfully discerning how God might use each of us for His glory. It is looking at the Church as a “nice” community organization somewhere below one's social connections, on par with the Community Centre and perhaps just a bit above the Girl Guides. The Apostle Paul (as usual) put it a bit more bluntly in 2 Timothy 3, “having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.”

Kenda Dean at Princeton Seminary has slammed this approach to Christianity in mainline Protestant Churches across North America as “Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism.” She claims that most liberal Protestant churches today offer a weak soup of moralism (be a good person), therapeutic (if it feels good – do it), Deism (the old heresy that God is like an absentee landlord who put the world in motion but won't return to fix a leaky toilet). Dean suggests this leads to a de facto theology in the majority of North American liberal Protestant churches of “benign whatever-ism.” Yikes, who's

going to show up for that?

The answer is – no one.

Long term, at least.

People are finding their social connections elsewhere.

But...I think that's good news. Even before I enrolled in seminary I was listening to “church gurus” wax on about the dying church and the reoccurring image offered was that of the Titanic. Well, I think the mainline churches (including the United Church) have finally hit the Iceberg (so to speak) and we can now see in so many congregations that last generation raised to go to church being followed by very few others. And the time is running out for a lot of congregations. The good news for West Vancouver United Church is that while other congregations have been declining we've been strengthening our ministry and presence in the community. Our relative strength compared to others brings with it some important decisions in these next few years.

The early church manual The Didache (Teaching of the Twelve) written around 100 AD begins with the best line, “There are two ways: one of life and one of death; and the difference between the two ways is great.” I love that.

I'm really excited and energized because I think today we literally can see the difference between the two ways. New people are joining our congregation not for a social connection. They can get that anywhere. Not for secular social service. You can go other places in town for a feel good experience. Not for the social status. The country club offers that. Not for the entertainment of the kids. The mall and recreation centre do that better. Not for the coffee. Starbucks wins. No, people are coming out of that restless heart that only finds its rest in God that Augustine so wisely noted long ago. They're coming...because before they knew or loved God, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit knew and loved them.

In the end, that's all we've got. That's all we need. Let's put Cultural Christianity out of its misery. Let's get back to work partnering with the Holy Spirit – making disciples for Jesus. Lest we forget there are but two ways: one of life and one of death; and a great different in between.

Hallowed Be Your Name - Address, phone numbers, and emails!

We are family! And families want to be able to stay in touch, call each other on the phone, email each other to share and receive news about our lives outside the church building. A big thank you to the office staff and the gift to the church for this marvelous publication! As with any directory, it is only as valuable as the quality of the information.

The office will be providing updates and edits to this directory as often as needed.

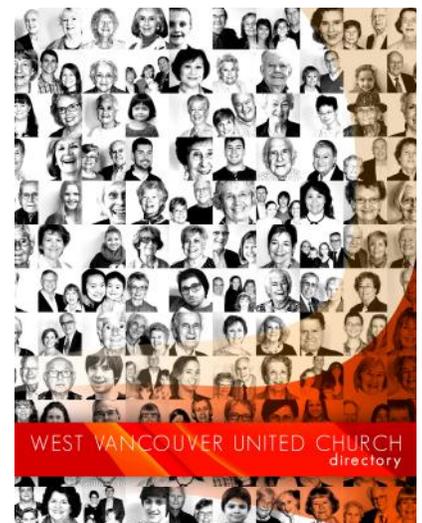
Please inform the office at any time regarding:

- Corrections to your contact information
- Additions to your contact information
- If you missed getting into this directory, and would like to be included in the next one.
- If you would like to add your own photograph

We are very pleased to keep this a living document, and make sure our ability to stay in touch Monday through Saturday is as easy as on Sunday mornings.

Email: office@wvuc.bc.ca Phone: 604-922-9171

If you have not picked up your copy, they are available on Sundays at the Welcome Table, or in the Church office during business hours.



Stay in Touch

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If you would like to receive this newsletter by email or read it on-line, please contact the church office by phone at 604-922-9171 or e-mail: office@wvuc.bc.ca

Office hours:
Mon-Thurs 8.30-4pm, Fri 8.30-12



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Church Website:
www.wvuc.bc.ca

Updated weekly
Hear Sermons
Follow Ross's Blog "Irreverent Orthodoxy"
See current and past "Stay In Touch"
Our Videos
Events, Concerts, Fellowship Opportunities
Children and Family Life
Youth Group
Caring Ministries
Worship and Music Updates



a few photos from the wedding are up at simonandmeghan.wordpress.com

Calendar of Events

Baptism

Once a month on Sunday morning. Please contact the office a month or two in advance.

Communion

The 2nd Sunday of each month at 8.15am we will be having early communion services.

We will be celebrating worldwide communion on October 6th.

Congregational Dates and Events

- Mon Sept 9 Oikoumene Unit Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Thurs Sept 12 Youth Group starts for the fall
- Friday Sept 13 Simon and Meghan's Lesieur's, BC Reception, 7 pm
All are invited
- Sat Sept 14 Annual John Gouws Golf Tournament and Dinner
- Sun Sept 15 Sunday Club (aka Sunday School) starts for the fall
Sundae Sunday for all kids at Sunday Club
- Tues Sept 17 Bible Study begins in the lounge, 1:15 pm
- Wed Sept 18 Men's Group, 10 am
- Wed Sept 18 Naomi Unit Meeting, 10 am
- Sat Sept 21 Oppenheimer Park Youth Project, 9am
- Wed Sept 25 Friendship Luncheon, 12 noon
- Thurs Oct 3 Autumn Book Study with Rev. Ross begins
"What We Talk About When We Talk About God"
- Sat Oct 12 Eat, Pray, Love, 5 pm
- Wed Oct 16 Men's Group, 10 am
- Wed Oct 16 Naomi Unit Meeting, 10 am
- Sat Oct 19 Oppenheimer Park Youth Project, 9 am
- Mon Oct 21 Oikoumene Unit Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Wed Oct 23 Friendship Luncheon, 12 noon
- Sat Oct 26 Congregational Dinner "Dining Out in New Orleans"
- Sat Nov 2 Fall Elegant Flea Market, 8:30 am to 3 pm
- Sat Nov 9 Eat, Pray, Love, 5 pm
- Wed Nov 13 Men's Group, 10 am
- Wed Nov 13 Naomi Unit Meeting, 10 am
- Sat Nov 16 Oppenheimer Park Youth Project, 9 am
- Mon Nov 18 Oikoumene Unit Meeting, 7:30 pm
- Wed Nov 27 Friendship Luncheon, 12 noon

Upcoming Concerts

- Sun Nov 10 Pacific Spirit Choir presents Faure Requiem, 2 pm
One of the most atmospheric, melodically beautiful works in the repertoire, performed with other Remembrance Day songs in honour of our fallen heroes; with special guests, the Pacific Spirit Children's Choir.