



Knox News

God is Here for Everyone

Please visit us at: www.knoxunited.ab.ca

Winter 2009 Edition -December

We are an *affirming* community
within the United Church of Canada
506 - 4th Street SW, Calgary, AB
Office (403) 269-8382

Services

Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

Wednesdays Communion at 12:10 p.m.

Nursery & Youth Programs during service

For those of you reading this edition of the newsletter who may not attend Knox regularly ... Welcome! To all, we wish you a blessed Christmas and all the very best for the approaching New Year.

A Knox Church has stood in Calgary for well over 100 years, with this historic building approaching its 100 year anniversary in 2012. Knox has evolved from being a community church (yes, the corner of 6th Ave. and 4th Street was once "the suburbs"), to one providing an important ministry and outreach in the downtown core.

An oasis of calm in the midst of the hustle and bustle of commerce, Knox is more than Sunday (or Christmas Eve) services. Unlike most other churches, Knox's doors are open during the week for quiet reflection and also provide much needed meeting space for a number of community groups such as ***Inn from the Cold*** and ***Alcoholics Anonymous***.

Knox has always been a popular venue for to exchange wedding vows, but over the last few years, Knox has also become a valued space for concerts and corporate events big and small. Currently, about 36% of the financial support needed for Knox ministries comes from such activities.

However, members and those who contribute to Knox regularly, along with visitors, are the most important when it comes to providing the financial support for our ministries -- accounting for about 64% of the support needed (2/3rds of which is pledged to Knox during our financial campaign).

The cost of providing our ministries in 2009 was budgeted at just over \$600,000 including salaries, administration, building operations, maintenance and repairs. In 2010, we are holding the budget to \$600,000 yet again, recognizing that the Canadian and Calgary economy has not fully recovered from the recent recession. Maintaining a presence in downtown Calgary is neither an easy nor inexpensive one.

We hope all who attends or visits Knox recognizes the importance of our ministries in the centre of Calgary. Our contributions to the outreach of Inn-from-the-Cold, Calgary Urban Projects Society (CUPS) and recently to Sanctuary@Knox (for street kids education) and up to 30 other charity agencies in Calgary are significant. Our adult educational programs and the teaching of current theology is recognized throughout the City. If you do, please consider a generous donation to Knox so that we might continue our 126 years of service and ministry to Calgary.

While at Knox, donation envelopes (black print) can be found in the backs of the pews for your convenience. Such donations directly support our ministries. Red print donation envelopes support the Benevolent Fund which supports those in need who visit Knox for assistance throughout the year. Cheques may also be mailed to the Knox Office at any time, and automatic withdrawals from your bank account can also be arranged (and Paypal is coming soon!).

Other ways that people financially support Knox include ...

- By directing some or all of their United Way donations to support Knox's ministries
- By donating stock (for some very favourable tax benefits)
- By including Knox as a beneficiary in their wills, life insurance, RRSP's or annuities
- By suggesting to their employer or others to hold corporate events in one of more of Knox's many room venues.

All types of donations are greatly appreciated and well used. Those above \$20 (in total) will receive a receipt for income tax purposes.

The Knox Family Christmas

For most people, this season of the year centres around family and friends with shopping sprees, house decorating, dinners and gatherings of one kind or another. And this is certainly a joyful and valid way to spend the season, as in the love we show for one another, we reflect God's love for us as demonstrated in Jesus' coming.

This same spirit of camaraderie also binds us together as a Knox family, especially at this time of year. There is no great central plan for this or even an organizing committee. But certainly as Christmas approaches, the Knox community is also drawn together more than usual with sanctuary decorating, play preparations, and special services, and as we host a myriad of concerts, participating in the bake sale, and helping with the organizing of the Knox/CBC Carol Festival. This year we enjoyed the added project of reimagining the decoration of the sanctuary as the old trees reached the end of their lifespan. By my count at least twenty-two people were involved in this endeavour from its inception to its realization.

And what always interests me about our gatherings at this time of year is what a wide variety of people gather together, bound by a common interest of participating in the life and joining in the ministry of Knox.

I know in our busy world today that belonging to long-term committees and volunteering on a regular basis is difficult for many of you. There are always so many other demands being made upon your time. Or in the case of some of our members transportation to Knox, especially at night, is difficult. But with Christmas events being held at all hours with no long-term commitment required, I find they are an easy and important way of meeting the Knox family not only to do worth-while tasks but also to share in friendship as well.

However and wherever you gather with your family or friends or your Knox family this Christmas season, I hope that the closeness, joy and support you find there will cause you to reflect on the love that oversees our lives at all times and to hear again with revived delight the Christmas story in which we are reminded of the fact that this same love is present with us not only during this festive season, but throughout the rest of the year as well.

Merry Christmas
Grant Dawson

Knox Christmas Wish List **Submitted by: Chuck Curry**

From time to time there are needs that cannot be met by the annual budget because they are One-Time and Out-of-the-Ordinary needs that our annual revenues will not cover. Therefore we have a wish list for those needs in case someone thinks that they may assist Knox in attaining these needs.

Big ticket items:

1. External lighting of the historic church building and tower - \$10,000.
2. Refinishing historic furniture including the communion table, collection plate tables, chairs and some beautiful oak tables we want to use in the recently renovated parlor and theatre - \$5,500
3. Donations toward the annual \$2,000 cost of serving Fair Trade coffee at Knox. This is a designated fund.
4. Portable lectern with light and sound system for lower level meeting rooms - \$2,500
5. New furniture for the Healing Touch room - \$1,500
6. Lighting racks for the theatre lights at the front of the sanctuary - \$2500

Small ticket items:

1. Supplementary sound system speakers (2) for the Narthex for ushers, choir and other persons waiting during the service - @ \$500 each including installation
2. Sound monitors for the EquiKnox Band- \$500

Contact the office (269-8382) if you can help. Thanks very much to those donors for helping some wishes come true.



Christmas Nostalgia

Submitted by: William Brindley

My first Christmas away from family and friends is still in my memory. I was in the forces then, of course, stationed in Calgary and a few thousand miles from the old home fires. I was feeling blue because very little mail was getting through, much of it I fear was going down to the bottom of the ocean.

An elderly lady who spoke to me after church service the previous Sunday evening kindly invited me to her home for Christmas dinner with her family. Being nearly broke and with nothing else to do anyway, I decided to accept.

In the evening, I duly stood on her doorstep at the appointed time, and straight away made to feel most welcome. I can't recall now if there were six or eight of us altogether at the table, but I sure remember the huge amounts of gorgeous food and the big turkey set before us. I could hardly move having never been so full in all my life.

Later, the family sat around the living room exchanging and opening gifts while I sat quietly in the corner watching them and feeling a little out of place. However, after a few minutes my hostess said, "I have a gift for you", and handed me a small package. It was only a couple of hankies of something, but it me feel a whole lot better having something of my own for Christmas.

Not all of the thousands of lights and sparkling shop windows can give joy to some lonely person who does not feel wanted anywhere. Happy indeed are the people who in their Christmas plans, make room in their family circle for a neighbour or friend.

Being invited sharing in the good food, joining in the fun, all bring the comforting thought that somebody **cares**. Make Christmas for others and you will be glad

Christmas Wonder



Gentle Baby Jesus dreaming,
Nestled deep in manger straw and hay,
Warmly swaddled against the night's chill
What do You dream of?

Are you dreaming of Your Father's, Our Father's Kingdom and the joy of being with Him?

For now You rest in sweetly smelling hay
Secure in Mary's Love and Joseph's protection.
The angels' lullaby sounding sweetly in Your ears.
Honored by wise kings and humble shepherds.
Welcomed joyfully on Christmas Day into the hearts of Christians for the
two millennia that have passed since Your birth,
that changed the destiny of all humankind from eternal death to eternal life by
Your amazing sacrifice of love for us all.
How blessed we all are by Your willingness to be on Earth with us all,
So very long ago!
Thank You for Your Tender Love!

by Kerri Wickhorst,
Through God's Blessing,
And For His Glory Alone.

Knox Centre Theme
Submitted by: Don Smith

Knox Centre launches new Ecological Spirituality Forum in 2010

Inspired by the work of Thomas Berry, the Forum on Ecological Spirituality and Evolutionary Cosmology will be launched by Knox Centre in early 2010.

There is an emerging conjunction of scientists, activists and faith groups on issues concerning the Earth Community. The idea of an Earth Community, looking at the entire planet as an integral, living and evolving system, is gaining acceptance throughout the realms of religion, education/science and even politics and economics. The late Thomas Berry, cultural historian, eco-theologian and self-proclaimed "geologian", has argued that this new awareness "changes everything". From human-centered cultures an Earth-centered global culture is being born. We live in the midst of this awakening to a new way of being in the Universe - it's an exciting time!

This Forum has a broad mandate to attempt the following:

1. Raise awareness of the thinking and ideas emerging within this "New Story". Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme provide an excellent conceptual model for easy entry into this thinking and this will be our initial focus.
2. Develop practices and disciplines which deepen our spiritual and emotional connection to this emerging awareness.
3. Provide a space where like-minded activists can form community, discuss ideas and implement action plans which move us to a just, sustainable and spiritually fulfilling future within the Earth Community.

There is much to learn and reflect upon - much to do and be - let's get started together. Come join us on the journey!

For more information pick up a brochure at Knox, visit our website www.knoxcentre.ca, email Don Smith at donsmith@nucleus.com, or phone Don at 403-281-7065. Programs start Tuesday January 26th, 2010.

From the Healing Touch Ministry at Knox United Church

The Healing Touch Team extends best wishes to all the congregation for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We will resume our regular schedule of offering treatments before and after church January 10 and 24.

Phone Elizabeth at 403-253-4969 to make an appointment.

Needed

A volunteer who is familiar with Microsoft Word to compile the Knox Annual Report.

The separate reports from the committees are submitted to the office, but we need a person to format and compile the master report for printing. Please speak to Mark Wiencki at the office (403-269-8382) or call Chuck Curry at 403-270-0742 after January 7. The report must be ready by January 13, 2010.

Christmas 2009 - Mission and Outreach

Submitted by: Pat Desaulniers

December 13, was White Gift Sunday, the generosity of your donations to CUPS in support of individuals and families in overcoming poverty was most welcome and heartwarming. Thank you to all who brought donations.

The Thanksgiving Offering was designated to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and a total of \$1,285.88 has been received. This organization helps provide food and development assistance to people in need around the world and advocates for such things as global food security.

Operation Eyesight receives donations from Knox through the recycling of beverage cans and bottles. Thank you to Gord McRae, Ron Matthews, Jean Reid and Michael White for their work. As of October, \$695 has been given to this cause in 2009.

The Federal Government has recently announced that it will no longer be supporting KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives), whose work involves promotion of human rights and advancing ecological sustainability. Many initiatives will be affected by this cut. More information is available on the United Church website united-church.ca and even more is available from there on the KAIROS website. Visit these sites for a better picture of what KAIROS and the United Church do around the world.

The Mission and Outreach Committee would welcome new members. Outreach and charity are an important part of our mandate, but so are education and advocacy. We receive many appeals for support for peace and justice initiatives. Information from the United Church of Canada, and partners such as Project Ploughshares and KAIROS, should be made available to the congregation, so that action can be taken. The Committee has only 5 members, and would like more representation from the congregation in making its decisions.

We thank you for your generous support for the many causes in which Knox and the United Church partake and wish you a joyful and peaceful Christmas season.

True Christian Christmas

By Joanna Fuchs (poemsource.ca)

Contributed by: Trifonia Barbosa



Christmas isn't showy gifts
Or glittering decoration;
It's honouring Our Saviour, Jesus Christ
In humble adoration.
It's serving those less fortunate,
Meeting their needs before our own;
It's making sure at Christmas time
That no one is alone.
It's taking what we would have spent
On things that no one needs,
And using it to help someone
With service and good deeds.
Our Saviour showed us how to live
With charity, faith and service.
It makes the holidays a joy,
More peaceful, and less nervous.
So let's remember Christmas is
About our Saviour's birth;
That's the way to happiness
The way to peace on earth.



Finding Grandmothers

Written by: Robin McClelland



Bob sat on the bus stop bench drinking his hot coffee. The steam fogged his glasses. He hummed, “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”. He thought, “I’m glad Mac let us off early for Christmas Eve. I’ll have time to get my turkey dinner from Edna and the girls at the diner. TV, bed, back to the warehouse to work Christmas Day, Boxing Day too, I hope. The double time and a half will come in handy. My phone call to my brother and his family will be good even if Grandma’s gone. Cards and gifts to open tonight, tomorrow with Mac and the boys. Good enough” he thought.

The bus came into sight, as Bob rose, he noticed an old lady moving along gingerly with the help of a cane. “I’ll bet she is nervous of the ice”, he thought, “Grandma always was.” “Would you like a hand onto the bus lady?” he asked. “I’ve helped my own grandmother lots of times. I know how. Want to take my arm?” “Thank you” she panted. He drew her hand through the crook of his arm. When they reached the bus, the driver grinned, “Come on in and take a seat! Never mind your passes, I know you both got them.” “Thanks buddy!” Bob replied. Two lanky teens got up from the front seats heading for the back of the bus. “Thanks guys! Merry Christmas!” he called after them. The old lady sat down with a deep sigh, Bob sat beside her.

“Want me to pull the bell for you, when we get to your stop?” Bob asked. “Thank you,” she wheezed. “I’m only going a couple of stops to the cathedral.” “I know where it is. I pass it every day on my way to work.” Bob answered. “You should go in sometime” said the old lady. Bob chuckled, “That’s what my grandmother always told me.” “Nice music, this time of year” she said. “You’re right. Here’s your stop lady. Say one for me when you’re in there,” said Bob. “I will. Merry Christmas” said the old lady. “Merry Christmas.”

When Bob got up to leave, the bus driver remarked, “Buddy, it’s good you helped that old lady. She doesn’t see so well these days” Bob nodded, “She was like my own grandmother. Keep on grinning and keep on ticking!” “More power to her. Merry Christmas buddy.” “Same to you guy” Bob swung off the bus whistling “The First Noel”.

Inside the diner there were twinkling decorations, and the rich smell of turkey gravy. “Hi Edna,” Bob greeted the gray haired manageress. “Coffee and the special please. What’s your dessert of the day?” asked Bob. “Plum pudding with custard sauce what else?” she winked. “Home made plum pudding?” Bob asked. The girls in the kitchen made it. We all stirred it 3 times for good luck.” She smiled. “Gotta have that then, Edna.” “You’ll like it! I’ve had two helping myself!” said Edna.

“So I get Grandma’s pudding after all” thought Bob. “I must tell my brother, Hope he gets pudding too!”