



# Bala United Church

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## Celebrating the life and work of our Church Rev. Sue Woods, Minister



### Minister's Chat:

I love Christmas. I love all the preparations, decorating, visiting and eating! It is truly a special time of the year that seems to begin earlier and earlier each year! I thought I would be very wise and hang the outdoor Christmas lights in October and now the hardest part is to leave them off! I try not to plug them in until the first Sunday of Advent but each time I enter the garage some sort of Christmas decoration makes its way into the house. In amongst all the decorations there is an array of angels, all shapes and sizes...some of my favourite characters of the Christmas story. They are the messengers of the good news this Christmas season but sometimes too easily to turn them away in the hustle and bustle!

We may take Christmas for granted. Our expectation is that this season will come, we will be merry, we will give and receive joy and laughter will fill our homes. We could still miss the real purpose and meaning of Christmas. As we exhaust ourselves in activities, it is difficult to let the angels' message be a part of our preparations.

How do we hear the angels sing? We hear the bells ringing we hear the clang of cash registers and the taped music in the malls. Can we hear the angels' song of goodwill? It is not as loud as the rest of the Christmas sounds. We are not forced to hear it. We need to be ready to listen with our inner ear, with our hearts. We need to make the journey to the manger in order to find the

peace the angels' song heralded. We must find and keep the spirit of Christmas alive in our hearts and in our actions. Hark the herald angels sing. Peace on earth, good will to all.

*God of love, the angels sang on the hillside of Bethlehem. They sang in the stable and in the towns and villages and in our noisy cities. Help us to hear their song of new birth. Help us to live the spirit of peace and good will that comes at this season. Grant that we may find the way to live the message of the angels' song every day of this season. Amen*

**Blessings of peace and joy to each of  
you this Christmas season**

**Rev. Sue**

### Chairman's Corner

Here we are on a beautiful sunny day . . . , July? No, it is late November! I hope this Newsletter finds everyone as bright and happy as this last month has been. Let's wish for continued sunny weather in December.

Although many have left for warmer climes, it has been grand to see so many attending services. Please keep it up; the more that come the warmer it will be.

Lots of activities are on the slate for this winter, and you can find details of these, and our special December church services, in other sections of this Newsletter.

As many of you know, our Jackson C.E. Wing foundation work has been completed under the watchful eye and leadership of our Property Manager, Bill Niess. Many thanks to Bill and his team!

We are also expecting our completed fire and emergency plan to be reviewed and approved by the Fire Marshall in the near future. Thank you to Bruce Patterson for directing and coordinating this project. The Plan will be posted in the church upon approval.

Your Council has had a very active year, and we continue to work hard on your behalf to make our church a warm and inviting place to be. We are also starting to look at fundraising activities for 2010, and are currently planning a dinner/silent auction for next summer. Good ideas are always welcome so make sure you share your creativity with Council.

As Andrea and I head for our winter home we wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous 2010! As December 25 approaches pause to reflect on what Christmas really is about and enjoy the spiritual warmth this brings you.

**See you in the spring!**

Steve Burdick, Council Chair

**Coming attractions . . .**



### **Trek to Bethlehem, December 5, 2009**

Don't forget Bala's Trek to Bethlehem on Saturday, December 5, starting at 5:30 pm from the Bala Community Centre.

It's your chance to be guided back in time on a journey that Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem. You'll experience wise men, shepherds, tax collectors, animals in the market and much more. If you're very quiet you may even hear angels along the way. This is a wonderful

way to begin the Christmas season while remembering its true meaning.



### **Annual Potluck Christmas Dinner for the Ladies of Bala December 7, 2009**

Bala United Church Women are hosting this year's potluck at the Bala Community Centre on Monday, December 7, 2009.

Nibbles at 5:00 pm Dinner at 6:00 pm

Please bring along your favourite potluck dish and canned goods for the Food Bank! The Bala UCW will provide wine, appetizers and roast ham.



### **Christmas Services**

December 13 - White Gift Service at 11 am.  
Gifts of food items wrapped in white tissue paper or money will be received. These will be given to the Christmas Food Drive for needy families in the area.

December 20 - Christmas Communion Service  
at 11 am

December 24 - Family Christmas Eve Service  
at 5 pm

December 27- 11 am Church Service

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**Knitting Group**

Every **Monday** 10 am - 12 noon  
Jackson C.E. Wing - Everyone is welcome  
Coffee is being served!

**Bala Church Council Christmas Breakfast**

**Thursday, December 3**  
10 am, 1037 River St.

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**"Mornings with Sue"**

**Thursday, December 17, 2009**  
10 am in the Jackson C.E. Wing  
Everyone is welcome!

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On November 12, our UCW met to plan next year's meetings and the disbursement of funds raised during the year. Donations made totalled \$5,200 and they include: \$300 for the Sound System, \$1,200 for the Church General Fund, Church Cleaning \$1,000, and \$500 for a new faucet in the church kitchen. We allocated \$750 for Mission and Service and \$150. each for the Alzheimer's Society, Meals on Wheels and Hospice Muskoka.

We are looking into different fundraising ideas for 2010. Watch for "Pot Pourri" and "Inukshuks" with Barb Bond, and turning your gold jewellery into dollars for yourself and the church a project co-ordinated by Susan Hemming. If you have any other ideas please let us know!

We'd like to thank the Gift Shop for their donation to UCW and also the Christmas gifts for our "shut-ins."

On Monday, December 7, our UCW will host the Annual Bala Ladies Christmas Potluck Dinner at the Community Centre. The social hour will start at 5 pm. For more information, look in the church bulletin or call Marian McDonald at 762-5178. This is a great time to get together for some great food, good fun and fellowship.

Our UCW has had an extremely successful year and we thank all of you for your support. At this time, we wish you all a Wonderful Christmas Season and a Happy New Year.

Andrea Burdick, President



**The Bala United Church Gift Shop . . .**

Don't forget our gift shop when you're Christmas shopping. The shop is open Mondays from 10 am to 12 noon or by appointment. Call Cee Cee at 762-2323 or Helen at 762-2625.



**NEW YEAR RESOLUTION**

I will seek elegance rather than luxury, refinement rather than fashion. I will seek to be worthy more than respectable, wealthy and not rich. I will study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly. I will listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with an open heart. I will bear all things bravely await occasions and hurry never. In a word I will let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious grow up through the common.

Author unknown