



# Bala United Church

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

### Minister's Chat:

I love setting out the crèche as part of the decorations for Christmas. I look at each figure and place it very carefully around the manger waiting to place baby Jesus on Christmas Eve. Now is the time to put them all away with memories of 2009, each wrapped carefully in newspaper. I always pause when I put away the shepherds, I guess because in some way their story touches me deeply.

Shepherds in biblical times were dirty and smelly. People did not pay much attention to them. They did their job and left everyone else alone. No one thought a shepherd was worth worrying about. Shepherds didn't make much money; they weren't very clean; and they lived with animals. They just didn't matter a great deal to anyone. They were unimportant.

But all that changed one night when the shepherds were out in the field watching their sheep. You know the story "while shepherds watched their flocks by night" an angel appeared to them and told them the greatest story ever. Yes, the angel told these poor uneducated people first!

Imagine that; here were shepherds who didn't matter to anybody. Shepherds whom no one cared about or paid any attention to, and YES, God

decided they should be the first ones on earth to receive the good news that Jesus was born.

This tells us something about God. It tells us that God doesn't care how much money we have. God doesn't care where we live or what we look like. God doesn't care what kind of job we have. God doesn't even care if no one thinks we matter, because we matter to God. We might be nobodies to everyone else but each of us is a "somebody" to God.

God could have sent an angel to the kings first but God instead chose to deliver this precious message to the lowly shepherds. In the middle of January, then, when the Christmas decorations are all put away, the crèche wrapped up in newspaper and back in the well used box, the snow up passed the windows sills and you are feel down and out, remember the shepherds and remember that YOU always matter to God.

Rev. Sue

### Notes from Council

Fundraising for the new sound system progresses well. Sometime in the spring, and with the exception of those who wish to remain unnamed, Marilyn Niess will share the names of those who have donated to ensure that contributors are recognized on a plaque that will mark this important milestone.

Property Chair, Bill Niess, has completed his search for an individual to assist with church cleaning on a regular basis. Bill hired Carol Hopkins, a capable and spirited woman from the community, to provide these essential services. Thank you and kudos go to Bill and to the women of UCW and the Gift Shop who have contributed \$1 500 for this new service.

It is very important too to recognize the creative and physical efforts of Mavis Legris, Cecilia Colwell, and Dick Colwell who decorated the Sanctuary for Christmas. It looked great.

Council decided in November, through funds given by the late Dr. George Woodward, to purchase 30 copies of "More Voices" for use of the congregation and summer choir. At the same meeting, Ministry and Personnel Chair, Bill Niess, pointed out that "M & P" is open to members' recommendations of individuals for the supply ministry list. Bill reminded us as well that Rev Sue's Annual Review has begun. Contributions in that regard are welcomed from any individual in our Church. These may be given to Marg Couture, Marian McDonald, and Bill Niess.

Council Members are very impressed by the work of United Church Women. Our Chair, Steve Burdick, recognized their generous contributions with you in December. Council Members are equally impressed and appreciative of the Ladies in the Gift Shop who recently gave \$200, the proceeds from Calendar sales, for Church use. These ladies, Jean Cameron, Cecilia Colwell, and Helen Taylor, also contributed \$200 for Christmas food hampers and \$150, through World Vision, to buy a sheep to benefit the poor in a South American country. In turn, these same wonderful women recognize and appreciate those who contribute to their efforts, including Monday morning knitters and individuals who have made contributions along the way, ever since this brain child of Cecilia was born.

With regret and appreciation Council has accepted the recent resignation of Jon Gurr as Treasurer and very active Council Member. In turn Members of Council greet and welcome back Leo Couture as Member of Council and Treasurer.

Wishing you a blessed, happy, and healthy New Year,

Brian McDonald, Vice-chair

### Knitting Group

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

### Bala United Church Council Meeting

**Thursday, January 7, 2010**

10 am, Jackson C.E. Wing

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#### Bala United Church Women

Welcome

Linda Atkin-Riddle, President  
Habitat for Humanity, Muskoka

Thursday, January 28, 2010

9:30 am coffee 10:00 am Presentation

Everyone is Welcome!

Plan to attend and hear all about the Bala  
Build, 2010!



#### The Bala United Church Gift Shop . . .

The shop is open Mondays from 10 am to 12 noon  
or by appointment. Call Helen at 762-2625.

#### HOLD THIS DATE:

**SATURDAY, JULY 24, 2010.**



**MORE INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW  
IN FEBRUARY!**