



Port Carling United Church

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Celebrating the life and work of our Church

Rev. Sue Woods, Minister

Minister's Chat

The awakening of new life all around gives one the true sense of spring. Yes the snow banks are melting away, the sump-pumps are running and in a short time the tree frogs will fill our evenings with music. How do you express all these new feelings that spring brings with paper and a pen? Have you ever thought of being a Psalmists and expressing your feelings to God. An assignment during our Lenten Study was to create a psalm. If you have ever opened your Bible to the very middle you will find the psalms. They are among the most human expressions you can find in the Bible. Some of them are so raw, we want to look away - and, in fact, many of our lectionary (readings chosen each week for the minister) texts skip over the passages filled with rage and violence. But the psalms give us confidence that no matter what emotion we are feeling, we can share it with God.

Psalm simply means song. In 150 chapters the writers pour out their innermost feelings to their God. They have written hymns of praise, songs of love and thanksgiving, and anthems to their kings. There are marriage songs, funeral songs, and songs about battles and war. Even today, these songs are among the most loved of our hymns and worship music. Like those ancient, faithful people, we sing in times of victory and triumph. We find it easy to sing in celebration. The hymns of praise when all is going well are full of joy, and our songs of thanksgiving flow in beauty and hope. But life is not always full of reasons to sing with happiness. There are times when the lullabies are silenced and the words catch in our throats.

Sammy was only 10 years old when he died and I had the honour of sharing in his service. His tiny body couldn't fight off the last virus and Sammy passed away surrounded by his family. In his 10 years, Sammy could not speak or see but his life was a wonderful example of how to be and he taught whoever came in contact with him, tolerance no

matter what our song was, to except and not to judge. During the celebration of Sammy's life I read from children Bible Psalm 23:

"I think of God as my shepherd who gives me all that I need; who lets me lie down on soft green grass, beside a quiet stream.

I think of God as my shepherd, who helps me do what is right. God helps me feel strong when I'm weak and afraid; when I'm crying for someone who's sad.

My shepherd is glad when I'm happy, and gives me good things to eat. I know I'm invited to live in God's house for all the days of my life."

Songs are a source of comfort. How many children have been comforted by the voice of a loving parent singing to them in the dark hours of their fear? Perhaps the example that touches all of us is at the time of death. When we gather to face that loss, we sing in share grief and faith.

To sing in the face of despair is to bring hope to the situation. To sing in the presence of fear is to bring a sense of freedom. To sing in the midst of sorrow is to bring comfort and healing. This next month in our churches we will feel the wide range of the psalms as we journey through Lent, to Good Friday and to Easter morning.

Blessings, Rev. Sue

Port Carling United Church Church Services for Lent and Easter

April 3 – 9:30 a.m.

Communion Sunday

April 17 – 9:30 a.m.

Palm Sunday Family Service

April 22 – 10:00 a.m.

Good Friday Service at Bala United Church

April 24 at 9:30 a.m.

Easter Service

Sunday, April 24th at 7:00 a.m.
Sunrise Service at Bala United Church
Breakfast to follow

“50 Ways to Pray” Lenten Study
Port Carling United Church, Hanna Hall
Continues each week at 10:00 a.m. Wednesdays
March 30th, April 6th and April 13th
ALL ARE WELCOME!

DECORATE OUR CHURCH FOR EASTER

Easter morning the chancel will be brightened by flowering plants donated by individuals and families in memory or in honour of loved ones. If you would like to purchase a pot of spring flowers for this purpose please contact Joan Wallace at 705-765-6268. After the service, you are welcome to take the flowers home that you have donated.

If you would prefer to make a donation towards purchasing the plants we encourage you to do so. Joan will be purchasing the flowers all at one time so if she could have your commitment by **Monday, April 11th** it would be appreciated

July 4th to July 8th, 2011
Vacation Bible School



You'll GO BANANAS FOR SONTREASURE ISLAND!

We're excited about **Port Carling United Churches Vacation Bible School** to be held **July 4th to July 8th**. This year's program is SonTreasure Island, a week of treasure hunting and adventure in the Caribbean Islands. (really Port Carling!)

Through their adventures children will discover that God's love is giving, kind, caring and forever! We will have a great time with lively songs, creative crafts, exciting games, Bible stories and tasty snacks - all things that make VBS so much fun.

Registration forms are available in the yellow pail by the much decorated bulletin board in Hanna Hall or online so hurry and set sail for SonTreasure

Adventure in Nunavut!

I have just returned from a ten day adventure in Whale Cove, Nunavut! Fifteen students and two teachers travelled to the snow covered town of 350 people over our March break. This was the second part to an exchange in which students from the North stayed with us in February. All transportation was funded through the YMCA. The town's people were all very welcoming and generous! We ate normal food (which was very expensive up there) but I also had the opportunity to try raw and cooked: caribou, walrus and beluga whale. I saw arctic fox and hare as well as amazing Northern Lights. Some of our activities included travelling out on the open land, building an igloo, kite skiing, watching an arctic fox skinning, talking with elders and hosting a feast for the community. It was lots of fun and definitely an unforgettable experience.

~ Laura Buddo



Taken at night under moon light with a 20 second time exposure to capture the northern lights. That's why it looks like daylight.

Wednesday, April 6th – 7:00 p.m.
Church Council Meeting in Hanna Hall

SATURDAY, APRIL 30th, 2011

12 noon to 2:00 p.m.

The Canadian Cancer Society's

“DAFFODIL TEA”

Hanna Hall, Port Carling United Church

We fight all cancers.



Admission by Donation. Monies raised stays in our area to assist in local good works. An income tax receipt will be issued for the amount of the donation.



March 17, 2011 Get Your Irish Up!

*"It's a great day for the Irish, it's
a great day for fair
The side-walks of Port Carling were
thick with Blarney
For shure you'd think Muskoka was Old
Killarney"*

It was a "Great Day" for the Irish at our annual St. Patrick's Day celebration. Over one hundred and seventy guests enjoyed the festivities along with a wonderful dinner which included "Bangers and Mash," and "Braised Beef in Guinness" cooked by Chef "Joan Wallace" and assisted by the ladies of our church.

Thank you to all the volunteers that came to help prepare the dinner, bake those wonderful scones and traditional Irish breads; decorate and set up the hall, servers, runners, dishwashers, sweepers, dismantling and on and on.

Thank you to **Dan Brookes** who so willingly accompanied the songsters on the piano and sang a few solos on his own. He must have a little of Irish in him to have so much talent and to be able to play beautiful music.

And to **Jenn Dennis, of Jam Sandwich** children's show. who donated her time and talent to lead the children in that old favourite made famous by the Irish Rovers "The Unicorn Song." As you can see in the photo below a good time was had by all.



A special thank you to **Richard Graham, at the Apothecary Shop** who so willingly provided a ticket outlet for our event and to **Byron Coker** who made and installed all those cheery Shamrocks throughout the town. Thank you everybody!

"Amazing Grace" (VU #266)

For quite some time I have been interested in an odd feature of this wonderful old hymn. Its first four verses seem to hang together stylistically. They speak of personal peril, fear of death, loss of faith, and then redemption. But the fifth verse is quite different – it looks tacked on, sort-of. It says

*When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no fewer days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun.*

... without doubt a stirring statement, but rather out of place (in my view at least.) According to the author information in VU, four verses are attributed to a John Newton (1779), while the fifth came from 'Anon' at a later date. So there is a mystery here.

Once I happened on an explanation about this verse, which goes like this: The 1700's were a golden age of scientific and mathematical discoveries. There was little concern then that religion and science might be conflicting belief systems - something far too few people think today. Indeed, many scientists of the time were also clergymen. The strange mathematical properties of infinity had recently been explored, namely: if you add any number to infinity, or subtract any number (like 10,000) the result is still exactly the same - infinity. And so the suggestion is that the last verse was added as a poetic celebration of this amazing fact, another affirmation by science of the glories of God's infinite creation.

This idea has seemed convincing to me - until recently I dug a bit deeper, and learned some interesting facts. First of all John Newton was a notoriously wanton and profane slave trader! But after nearly drowning in a storm at sea, he abandoned the sea, found God, and ended up as a clergyman in England. He wrote Amazing Grace as a poem for a prayer meeting, to illustrate God's willingness to forgive even the most disreputable soul (his). His original version had six verses, of which we only use the first four today. Next, it was not unusual in those days for people to alter existing hymns or create new verses to suit various purposes - there are documented versions of at least twenty other verses for Amazing Grace, and probably many more never written down. Anyway, the hymn in its many forms became wildly popular in the English-speaking world, especially once married to an old melody called "New Britain".

And now a final, amazing thing: the words of the last verse were found to have existed in African American slave tradition long before Newton (ironically, the former slave trader) wrote his hymn. It appears the last verse was attached to the original four in the southern United States in the early 1800s, where the hymn

became part of the Negro Spiritual canon before once again becoming widespread.

So the mystery may be solved, although as a scientist I still like the older theory. Perhaps the African slaves were more sophisticated mathematicians than anyone could imagine? In any case, the powerful message of the hymn is meaningful to anyone. To quote Johnny Cash, "For the three minutes that song is going on, everybody is free. It just frees the spirit and frees the person." Amazing!
by Perry Bowker



Friday, April 22nd, 2011

Celebrate Earth Day by recycling, reducing, reusing. Go Green & Help Save the Planet!

Child Identification offered by Granite Masonic Lodge #352 – Free of Charge

What is MasoniCh.I.P.?

MasoniCh.I.P. program uses modern, police-approved techniques to create a child identification kit for the ones you love.

The kit collects photos, video, voice recordings, digital fingerprints, dental impressions, saliva swabs as well as traditional statistical information (height, weight, hair and eye colour, etc.)

This information is matched to work seamlessly with Ontario's law enforcement providers. By being so compatible, the critical identifying information can be broadcast and shared more quickly than ever before to assist with the safe recovery of missing children.

The MasoniCh.I.P. program is brought exclusively to families by dedicated Masons and their volunteers, free of charge along with our sentiment that "We hope you never need to use it."

What's in a MasoniCh.I.P. Kit?

When a child has a kit prepared, their parent or guardian will receive a printed colour data sheet with several ID card inserts, a CD-ROM storing all the digital information, and a sealed bag with the dental plate and cheek swab.

All this material and information is given to the parent or guardian. No information is *ever* stored by the MasoniChIP program.

Where: Parry Sound Optimist Bldg (YMCA)

When: Saturday, May 14th, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

There will also be an OPP Booth, a Fire Department Demonstration as well as a "BIG TRUCK" exhibit to keep the kids occupied while waiting their turn.

Submitted by Jim Haller

Every Tuesday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Port Carling United Church

Come Quilt with the Muskoka Quilters

New Members and Visitors are warmly welcome. Experienced or beginners.

(Bring your own brown bag lunch)

Information call Bette Clark 705 765-5049

Saturday, April 30th 8 am – 12 noon

A SPRING TOGS & TOY SALE

at BALA UNITED CHURCH

To make a donation of gently used children's clothes, boys, books or gear please call Marion at 705 762-5178 or Marilyn at 705 762-2870.

Volunteers for April

Greeter: Susan Daglish

Kitchen Helpers:

Sunday, April 3 rd	Dawn Stephen
10 th	Louise Kirbyson
17 th	Hilda Brown
24 th	Pat Barty

The Last Word:

Do you remember???

In keeping with Rev. Sue's bible study topic 50 ways to pray; now I lay me down to sleep is a classic children's prayer from the 18th century. The version printed in The New England Primer goes:

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to KEEP:
If I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.*

Other Versions:

*Now as I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
Please, guard me Jesus through the night,
And keep me safe till mornings light.
Amen*

*Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep
God bless those who are so dear
And thank you Lord for all good cheer.
Amen*

*Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
When in the morning light I wake,
Teach me the path of love to take.
Amen*