

RAPPORT

Mountainside United Church

4000 The Boulevard, Westmount, Quebec



June 17, 2012

Thoughts for Summer

For the Beauty of the Earth

*For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies;
Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.*

Sitting outside on my deck, watching the birds and thinking about what I would write for the Rapport, reminded me of this old hymn. It was written in 1838 by a fellow named Conrad Kocher.

Kocher was born December 16, 1786, Dietzingen (near Leonberg), Württemberg, Germany. He died March 12, 1872, Stuttgart, Germany. Kocher studied piano and composition in St. Petersburg, Russia, in the early 1800s. He went to Rome, Italy, for further study in 1819, then returned to Germany in 1820. In 1821, he founded the School of Sacred Music in Stuttgart. He also served as organist in the *Stiftskirche* there.

Why am I telling you all this?

Well times are very different today than in 1838. People were leaving Germany and settling new lands. It was not the best of times, nor was it the worst. But Kocher wrote a hymn which has survived 174 years. As I watch the birds flutter about, and the flowers of spring seem to bloom before my eyes, the beauty of the earth amazes me. We all have a place to go to see this beauty. It may be a country house, or, like me, a garden, or the local park. Wherever it is, it is a place to enjoy and think of what we are blessed with.

As summer continues, remember to enjoy yourself but also remember to tell someone how important they are to you, put a smile on someone's face each day and remember that sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.

And remember that it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular. Enjoy summer and enjoy YOUR life.

God Bless,

Joyce

(Joyce Schaaf is our guest preacher during Rev John's sabbatical)

Summer Worship Services

Our summer worship services officially begin on June 24 when we move to the chapel. **The time of worship has been changed to 10:30 a.m. This time change was approved at the Annual Meeting and will continue when we move back up to the sanctuary in the fall.** Joyce Schaaf, our visiting preacher, will continue to lead the services until July 15. Our team of lay leaders has, once again, agreed to conduct summer services in the chapel during the minister's holiday. We have these fine folk to thank for sharing their faith with us:

July 22	Alan Greig
August 5	Debbie Zemnickis-Mofford
August 12	Ester Vicente
August 19	Linda Mount
August 26	Miriam Tees

Margaret de Castro will perform her usual role of Director of Music through August 5. Aldy Santos will provide music for the services on August 12, 19 and 26.

The service on Labour Day weekend will be in the chapel. Pastor John will be back following his sabbatical and holiday.

Fresh flowers add so much to the beauty of each service. If your garden is producing beautiful blooms, and you would like to share, please bring a bouquet to place on the Lord's Table.

Judy Johnston, Liturgy and Learning

Searching for God

I went to Saint Vincent searching for community and searching for God. I wanted to experience living in a place where people live in community and in the knowledge that God is real.

After four years of study in International Cooperative Development, I was ready to do the field work to complete my certificate. I chose Saint Vincent and the Grenadines because my father-in-law is Vincentian. I could live with him in his house and come to know the family that lives there. Being a developing country, Saint Vincent fit the criteria as a location for my field work. I stayed for four months, working in a secondary school walking distance from our family home.

Every day, I walked down the hill into a vast expanse of sky and ocean. Plants and animals everywhere, I was surrounded by the lowing of the cattle, the clucking of the chickens and the bleating of the goats, as the wind touched me and the ocean beckoned to me. Every evening, I returned up the hill, greeted by and greeting neighbours and family along the route. On Sundays, I attended a Methodist church, Belmont Methodist Church. I choose this church because of its proximity to where I lived and the fact that, in the Caribbean, a Methodist church is the closest to the United Church of Canada that you can find.

At the Belmont Methodist Church, I was very warmly welcomed and offered a lift to and fro, every Sunday, by a warm and generous couple named Williams. They are the sweetest people. Mrs

Williams took me under her wing immediately, and was so solicitous and kind I felt like I was part of the family. Not everyone was so friendly but they were definitely curious. People of my complexion,



as they say, are extremely rare. It was impossible to go unnoticed wherever I went. At church, the ladies and girls dress in colourful skirts and dresses and the men in plain pants and short sleeves. Everyone always looks so neat and tidy and smells so good. There is a mixture of young and old but a predominance of women in the congregation. This specific church is up in the mountains and small in comparison with other churches on the island. Most people live close to the capital, Kingstown, or along the shoreline. Over the winter, I was able to visit quite a few churches by attending special events. Each church had a distinct character and style, even though they are all Methodist.

Going to church in Saint Vincent is such a very different experience from going to church in Montreal. Spontaneity and heartfelt enthusiasm characterized

the services, and patience and tolerance was the rule. Even small children sat quietly and patiently through lengthy sermons; mind you, there was often more than a stern talking to administered in private

to a child who insisted on not behaving. The service at Belmont Methodist began some Sundays at 9 a.m. and some Sundays at 11, but actually it rarely began on time and it ended when it ended. Besides the vagaries of the time schedule, there was a different minister or preacher leading the service every week, and if that person showed up late, as was sometimes the case, the congregation got started on their own. Week after week, the style and character of the person up

front decided the direction and pace of the service. Church could be in excess of two and a half hours but it always lasted more than an hour.

The service usually began with what they call inspirations, songs to get you going. Accompanied by tam tams and other rhythmic instruments, like tambourines, the congregation is led through a series of choruses that everyone, including small children, knows by heart. One person will start a chorus and then others will come forward with another and another, on and on. And if it is not loud enough, or if the congregation is singing in the wrong key, someone invariably stops the proceeding to get everyone on track and in key. It is very important to make noise. Nothing is rehearsed and everything is lively. During the service, members may be called upon to make testimonials, offer prayers, blessings and reflections on the readings. No one is assigned

ahead of time to read but someone always comes forward to do the job without delay or confusion.

The maintenance of the building and grounds, along with the stocking of toilet paper, is all done by members of the church. They cut the grass, paint the walls and clean up. There is no paid staff. Even the preachers are not remunerated. Their work is voluntary but they are paid for weddings and funerals. Most preachers are women and most ministers are men but there are the exceptions. In the general population, more women than men are steady wage earners. The collection plate is passed sometimes two times in a service to collect money for different things. On Easter, all of the members of all of the congregations in the Methodist Church are called upon to give a day's wage into a disaster relief fund for victims of hurricanes and such. There is high unemployment and most people live very modestly with little money. The church is sometimes criticized for not helping the poor. I heard a minister respond to that criticism during a funeral service, stating that the true value of the church for the people is in the educational training that it offers its parishioners. The kind Mrs Williams confided in me sadly one day that she had only learned to read in

her fifties by attending bible study at church. As a girl, she had been unable to attend school and only in much later years did she have the time for Bible Study. Now she reads the Bible every day, praise God, she says. She is so grateful to have lived to see the day where she can read the word of God and study the Bible for herself.

Did I find what I was looking for? Yes and no, but I came away with a new perspective on my search.



For me, I found it easier to feel the presence of God in the more natural environment of a rural landscape; it is more difficult in an artificial, man-made landscape. In Saint Vincent, the plants and animals, the sky and sea, are present and visible daily. You literally tread the earth. There is space, and the sounds of the natural world surround you. As for the majority of

Vincentians, it is true that they see God everywhere, in every event, and in every gesture. At school, at work, in the government offices, God's hand is seen in action. Unfortunately, this is not always a good thing. Sometimes, God and religion are used to hold people, especially women, back from change, good change that works to reduce and do away with abuse and injustice. People in Saint Vincent

are taught to bear whatever the good Lord deals out and take refuge in the comfort of God. With that comes a sense that you deserve your lot; meaning that those who are better off are more deserving of it and those who are not must be less deserving. There are many who believe literally what is written in the Bible, taking the words of Genesis as fact and the age of the world to be 6000 years old. The Old Testament is very popular

there, along with a vision of God as an authoritarian parent to whom you owe your obedience, permeated by a strong sense of man's sinfulness and the need to gain redemption. Bringing God's love into action through their own

lives is lacking but no more than in our world.

As for community, when you have the opportunity to see people as individuals because there are fewer people around you — only 100 000 people live in the whole country, and that includes other smaller islands — and you see the same people day in and day out, it is harder to ignore them and pretend that they don't matter. Many families live next door to each other and help each other daily with child care and care for the sick and elderly. Living in Montreal, where people move around and few people know their neighbours or live in close proximity to their extended family, it is difficult to feel connected and in community.

Unfortunately, Saint Vincent is changing. Opening itself up to the world means people leaving the island and people coming onto it. It means the breakup of families and

RAPPORT

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Kids for Kids Concert



Massed choral ensemble

On Saturday evening, April 21, Mountainside United Church, Westmount, hosted a choral concert, Kids for Kids, to benefit Sun Youth's Children's programs. Almost 200 young choristers and musicians gathered with Mountainside Church Choir to make music. The audience loved it. As one of the directors said, "All comments I heard for the concert ranged from

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Mountainside Choir, Raphael de Castro at the organ, FACE Chamber Orchestra



Ticket sales in the narthex

Sun Youth volunteers working as ushers



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ecstatic to ecstatic!” Participants were the junior choir of the Choeur des enfants de Montréal, the McGill Conservatory Children’s Chorus, the English Montreal School Board Junior Chorale, the South Shore Children’s Chorus’ Junior Choir, the Montreal Chinese Children’s Choir, and the FACE School Chamber Orchestra. Each group presented individually and the program ended with Massed Junior Choirs and the Choirs and Orchestra joining in an extremely moving Grande Finale. The church was full and the event raised \$4,500 for Sun Youth’s children’s programs.

Margaret De Castro
Organist and choir director,
Mountainside United church

‘Kids for Kids’ allows Mountainside United Church to raise \$4,500 for Sun Youth



Tom Zukow (left), Front of House Manager - 'Kids for Kids', and Margaret de Castro (right), Director of Music of Mountainside United Church, presenting Sun Youth's Sid Stevens (center) with the profits from the evening. Photo: Nicolas Carpentier

On April 21st, Westmount's **Mountainside United Church** held a concert to benefit various Sun Youth children's programs. Entitled **'Kids for Kids'**, it brought together the **English Montreal School Board's Junior Chorale**, the **Choeur des Enfants de Montreal's Junior Chorale**, the **South Shore Children's Chorus' Junior Choir**, the **McGill Conservatory Children's Choir**, the **Montreal Chinese Children's Choir** and the **FACE School Chamber Orchestra**. Along with the **Mountainside Choir**, they presented a varied program which concluded with an exciting mass choir presentation, featuring over 120 singers and 25 musicians on stage.

The profits raised through this concert amounted to **\$4,500** and will be put towards **Sun Youth's Children's Help Program** and also its **School Program to prevent bullying and taxing**. Sun Youth wishes to thank everyone who took part in the event.

TM2 Coffee House

On Thursday, May 31, TM2 played about 10 numbers to a small but appreciative crowd. Ice cream sundaes were enjoyed by all. About \$160 was raised towards a new sound system.

Lynne Dawson



Attention all parents of toddlers and preschoolers!

On Sunday, September 16, we will be starting an early childhood music program which will complement a Christian education program for the preschool and early elementary school age group. Parents will be welcome to accompany their younger children. Cordell Henebury will be providing musical leadership for the program. Registration will take place after the service on September 9, with the first session taking place from 10:45 to 11:30 on September 16.

For further information please contact Margaret de Castro.



Earth Day Meditation

Let us celebrate this Earth that gives us oxygen to breath, water to drink and food to eat, along with joy and awe, as we experience the wonders of its beauty.

Today, Earth Day 2012, I would like us to take a few minutes to remember a time and a place where the beauty of this Earth spoke to us. A view from a mountain top, a shady seat under a tree, a repose taken by a stream that gurgles along its way, the hum of insects in a field as we pick berries, the cool dampness of the forest, a sunrise or a sunset, the stars, or the moon reflected on the water. Dostoyevsky, a Russian author and profound observer of humans and the natural world, said that Beauty will save the Earth. Please close your eyes and take a deep breath, recalling a memory of the beauty of this Earth, cherishing that memory, and reliving that joy we once knew. (Take two minutes for a silent reflection.)

Every week, starting today, let us consider how we can love this Earth through our actions. Let us now reflect on a single gesture that we can perform in our daily lives that will impact positively on this marvelous gift from God, our living planet. This week, schedule time for a relaxation activity that involves nature, once a day, and it needs to be once a day, even if it is just for five minutes. Take a walk, observe the stars, notice a sunset, smell the heady perfume of the blossoms that are carried through the air this time of the year, marvel at the explosion of green, as Montreal shakes off its grey and brown coat of early spring for a green coat with a brightly colored pattern, that is late spring and summer. By making the time to enjoy the natural world that surrounds us we will feel better and we might be more open to caring for our Earth.

Debbie Zemnickis-Mofford

This is the first in a series of reflections on how we can care for the beauty and health of our planet, prepared by Debbie and appearing weekly in the Sunday bulletin.

Baptism of Sofia Anica Novac



On Sunday, April 22, 2012, baby Sofia Anica Novac was welcomed into the Mountainside Church family by the Sacrament of Infant Baptism. Her parents were also welcomed to Mountainside United Church by transfer — her mother, Onyema Onyekwell, from St. James Anglican Church, and her father, Sorin Novac, from the Romanian Orthodox Church.

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the destruction of community. The fact that money plays a greater role in people's lives also creates changes. When the earth provides for your needs it is very different from going to a store and purchasing goods. More and more people are living from the money they earn rather than the land. The increased importance of money in people's lives also contributes to the breakup of families and communities. It gives people a sense of independence and works against a sense of interdependence. Do all these changes mean that we have to give up on community or God? On the contrary, but it does mean that we have to give a more thoughtful and concerted effort to both. We have to recognize that both community and a relationship with God require time and effort. Since the beginning, we have always had the same amount of hours in a day, but today, more than ever, it takes a conscious effort to use that time for what really matters. In amongst all the distractions of living in a commercialized and increasingly man-made environment it is easy to get lost. If we take the time to listen and we let God's love shine through us, then instead of searching for God and community, we will find ourselves making community and affirming God's presence. God is all around us.

Debbie Zemnickis-Mofford

Notes from Julie

BIRTHDAYS: As we did last year, we will celebrate July birthdays along with June birthdays on June 10 (the day of the picnic). Also we will be celebrating August birthdays along with September birthdays in September.



USED CLOTHING: Anne Hamilton, Grace Hodgson and Margo Tessler will be sending off the last bags of used clothing on June 14. After that the cupboard will be closed until after Labour Day.

Thank you, ladies, for your commitment and hard work in the name of Mountainside United Church.

Come to the Fair!

TTrue, it's still spring, but it's never too early to start thinking about how you can help with our annual bazaar, our major fundraiser (and fun-raiser) of the year.

The 2012 edition will take place on **Saturday, November 3, from 10 to 2**. All of the usual boutiques will be featured, including our biggest money raiser, "The Pantry." Please make an extra jar of jam or pickles in the next few weeks when the produce is irresistible. Homemade baking is a huge hit too.

Save your deliveries until September when we will be in high gear again.

Judy Johnston and Julie Dawson

Building and Property Report

In late winter we did some paint and plaster repairs inside, for an immediate cosmetic uplift. The peeling paint, though, was a symptom of a larger problem — water infiltrations through



chinks in the mortar of the exterior walls. We have been soliciting quotes and estimates. Our approach will be to target the priority areas (principally on the east face of the building) using high-reach equipment, with the expectation that this can be done at relatively low cost. John Mateica has already done some excellent repointing on the lower levels on the Lansdowne side and will do more of this elsewhere.

Other work outside is proceeding or may be done as you read this: our ironwork in general has needed attention, renewing the metal where it has rotted, and generally priming and painting. In addition we have removed one of the handicap parking spots to be more in line with our needs. If we can narrow the two remaining spots, a further regular space might be possible.

We have Sandy Chisolm to thank for tending to the grass. Our green space is a wonderful asset this time of year!

With best wishes for a good summer,

Alan Greig
Chair, Building and Property

Annual Congregation Meeting

The Annual Congregation Meeting was held on Sunday, April 1, immediately after the worship service. Since the budget and slate of officers for the year 2012 were approved at a congregation meeting in November 2011, the purpose of this meeting was to accept and approve the reviewed financial statements and committee reports for the 2011 year. It was also an opportunity to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the United Church Women. The UCW was formed in 1962 as an amalgamation of several women's groups. Dorothy Sutherland has been a faithful member since its beginnings and has represented our congregation at many meetings. Nancy Walkling took this occasion to recognize and thank Dorothy for her many years of involvement in the UCW.



JULY – OCTOBER 2012

JULY		
July 1	5th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
<i>July 2 – 30</i>		<i>Church building closed except on Sundays</i>
July 8	6th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
July 15	7th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
July 22	8th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
July 29	9th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
July 31		church office re-open
AUGUST		
Aug. 5	10th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
Aug. 12	11th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
Aug. 19	12th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
Aug. 26	13th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
SEPTEMBER		
Sept. 2	14th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m. in Chapel
Sept. 3	Labour Day	Church building closed
Sept. 9	15th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary
Sept. 13		Session Executive Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Sept. 16	16th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary
		September Birthday Celebration
Sept. 19		Liturgy & Learning Comm, 5:15 p.m.
Sept. 20		Choir practice, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 23	17th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary
		August & September Birthday Celebration
Sept. 27		Session, 7:30 p.m.
Sept. 30	18th after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary
OCTOBER		
Oct. 4		Choir practice, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 7	19th after Pentecost	World Wide Communion / Thanksgiving Sunday
Oct. 8	Thanksgiving Monday	church building closed
Oct. 11		Session Executive Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 14	20th after Pentecost	Stewardship Sunday
Oct. 18		Choir practice, 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 21	21st after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary
		October Birthday Celebration
Oct. 28	22nd after Pentecost	Service at 10:30 a.m., in the Sanctuary