

Easter 2017

THE  **ritannian**
BRITANNIA UNITED CHURCH

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Peter Bain, Editor

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Editorial

Spring cleaning (again)

My mother in law recently moved from her house to an apartment. That meant clearing out a house full of bits and pieces she and her late husband had accumulated over the years (anyone need a choke cable from a 1964 Rover?) Leigh and I have been having fun carting the stuff back from Kingston and triaging it: what do we want to keep, what to sell, what to donate to the garage sale, what to pass on to our children, and so on. As I went through all the nice things from the house, my first thought was “that’s nice. I want that”, followed shortly thereafter by “why do I need it, I already have one” or “is it useful enough to find space for it”. I was reminded of a concept called the *paradox of choice*, a term coined by psychologist Barry Schwartz. In a book of the same name, he says:

Autonomy and freedom of choice are critical to our well being, and choice is critical to freedom and autonomy. Nonetheless, though modern Americans have more choice than any group of people ever has before, and thus, presumably, more freedom and autonomy, we don't seem to be benefiting from it psychologically.

In the end, we put much of it in boxes for the garage sale. I was happier with less stuff and more room.

Peter Bain
Editor

Minister's Message

In a little more than two months, our son Shawn and his fiancée, Kristen, will be getting married. It was sixteen months ago, while on vacation with Kristen's parents that Shawn popped the question. At the time, June 4th, 2017 seemed very far away; mostly because we were very excited by the news. That said, it did occur to me that the time would fly by, and it certainly has. The older I get, the more that seems to happen.

I was reminded the other day, of something my mother used to say. Whenever I was anxious for a special day to arrive, wanting a challenging time to be over, or voicing my desire to be a teenager and then an adult, she would always say, "Don't wish your life away." I didn't get it then, but I sure do now.

New Age speakers would call it being in the moment, or being present. Christian folk would say, "Stop and count your blessings" and the author of Psalm 46 said "Be still...and know that I am God." The wisdom is really quite ancient and the message keeps coming back to us in many ways.

What is it about our human nature that makes us yearn for the future, and hurry through life, only to get there and wish we had spent a little more time being present in the past? Meanwhile, you can walk through the self-help section of any bookstore and find shelves full of books, encouraging us to do just that.

I was reminded of the importance of being in the moment just today, when I took our dogs for a walk through the wooded section of our yard. I was struck by the stillness and the silence of the woods. It was unusually quiet and still for a Saturday afternoon. Perhaps the heavy snowfall had dampened the sound. The branches of the trees were bending almost to the ground, but every now and then as the sun shone and the snow began to melt, one of the branches would release its burden of snow, and as it sprang back towards the sky, the snow would fall through the branches below with the sound of a crystal wind chime; each piece glistening like diamonds in the light.

It was a simple thing really; insignificant perhaps. And yet a moment of beauty that filled me with joy and awe. It was the kind of inspiration that nourishes the soul. Only a day before I had walked the same path and trudged through the snow, and was annoyed when it fell down the back of my neck, or ended up in my boots, leaving me wet and cold. And I joined the chorus of complainers wishing that winter would finally be over, only to hear my mother's words once again "Don't wish your life away." Be in the moment. Choose to be present. Count your blessings. Be still and know that I am God. What a difference a moment can make when we use it to draw closer to God and to see the moments of inspiration that can fill us with joy and awe.

Lent is one of those "moments." It is a time to slow down and to be present and to honour the God who sent the Son into the world, to lift our burdens and fill us with new life. Lent is the time when we, as Christians, give up some of the distractions that keep us from experiencing the message of Holy Week and Easter Sunday. It is a time to consider what Christ did for us, what the message of our faith can do for our lives, and how we may be transformed by the grace of God's love.

If that sounds like yet another task to add to our “to-do list” than perhaps we need to try doing it a different way.

Along with our tendency to hurry through life, is the expectation that we have to fill every moment with activity. This even happens with prayer. All too often we feel like we have to fill our prayers with words, and we rush through them so we can get on to another task or cram them into the few moments of silence we have before we close our eyes to sleep.

Maybe one of the things we can give up for Lent this year is words, and then we can use the time to listen. Silent prayer isn't something we are really used to in The United Church. Whenever there is a time for silent prayer in church, there is always an underlying restlessness and a tendency to get it over with. People often tell me they are uncomfortable with silent prayer in church because they are afraid they might cough, or the baby might fuss, or they simply don't know what to say. The truth is, we don't have to say anything at all. We can just listen and let God speak.

Maybe when our neighbour coughs, we'll be reminded of someone who is sick and could use a visit or a phone call. That crying baby might inspire us to pray for our own children – now grown – or the Sunday School teachers who dedicate their time and energy each week, or for that parent who is likely feeling embarrassed and needs our reassurance that their family is loved and welcome in our church. When we are silent and still, thoughts come to mind, and these thoughts may well be God's leading; showing us what is important in our lives, and directing our prayers and actions for the day.

In Voices United there is a lovely hymn that reminds us of being still and listening for God to speak, and it comes with the reassurance that God is there.

In the quiet curve of evening, in the sinking of the days,
in the silky void of darkness, you are there.
In the lapses of my breathing, in the space between my ways,
in the crater carved by sadness, you are there.
In the rest between my phrases, in the cracks between the stars,
in the gaps between the meaning, you are there.
In the melting down of ending, in the cooling of the sun,
in the solstice of the winter, you are there.
You are there, you are there, you are there...

Upcoming Events

- The Friends in Song Spring Concert on April 22 from 2:00-5:00 PM at Britannia United Church. Maggie Taylor and Carol Dicks are both members of this very talented choir!
- The Murder Mystery Dinner is Friday, May 5 and Saturday, May 6 at the church.
- Garage Sale is May 13 at Britannia. Please bring items to the church the week of May 7.
- Church Picnic is June 11 after church at the Britannia Beach Trolley Station.
- And let's not forget the famous Strawberry Social on June 28th.

A radiant smile is a thing of beauty
For it is born of joy and of duty.
With a thoughtful word and a kindly deed
These are all the tools you'll need
To make of the world a better place
For you and all the human race.
You had best get started without delay,
The world has need of you today.
Lloyd Rintoul

Garage sale

Free to a good home: more space in your house, closets, basement, and garage. The annual garage sale is **Saturday, May 13 from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM**. This is a great chance to clear out your garage, basement, and closets of things that you don't need but someone else does. It's also a great fundraiser for the church. Please consider donating surplus sporting goods (no skis, please), electronics, kitchen and household goods, luggage, books, and toys.

Please no clothes, large furniture or CRT TVs/computer monitors. Drop off items at the church starting May 7. We can also use your old grocery store bags.

We also need people to help. You can help by setting out items on the table before the sale, keeping track of the money, guiding cars in the parking lot, helping customers during the sale, and cleaning up after the sale.

I would like to have a snack bar/bake table, so organizers and bakers are welcome.

Do you have a van or pickup truck? If you do, can you help transport surplus items to Value Village after the sale. If you know an organization which would like the surplus from the sale, please let me know.

Peter Bain

Our Sympathies...

To the families and friends of deceased members of the congregation

- Don Hallam, 14 December 2016
- Cal McKay, 29 December 2016
- Gary "Gus" Saunders, 12 January 2017
- Reginald George Kearns, 30 January 2017

Birthday Best Wishes

A big "Happy Birthday" to Marilyn Bruce on her 75th Birthday. Thank you for all you have done for Britannia!

Congratulations to CHRI-FM Radio (99.1) on their 20th anniversary!

With Thoughts Of You

I thought of you this morning when the wind blew softly by,
When the sun shone down with laughter from a clear and endless sky.
I thought of you this morning as I heard the Robin sing,
As I saw the grasses painted green, as I shook the hand of spring.

And as I worshipped God in song I thought of you once more,
Of friendship strong between us that'll last for evermore.
With loved ones all around me, my life was ecstasy
And then again I thought of you and missed your company.

I thought of you this morning while visiting with friends
And then I took a pleasant walk and thought of you again.
They say that pleasant memories will never disappear
And so I often think of you and the friendship I hold dear.
Jamie W.L. Hill

Thank you, Stewards and Garden Committee

As you can see from the Annual Report, the Stewards Committee is short-staffed, but is still doing great work. The Stewards look after the practical aspects of running the church: they handle the money, manage the property and facilities, look after utilities and services such as the office computer systems and web site. Thanks for the many repairs and improvements over the last year, including roofing, electrical upgrades, plumbing repairs, maintenance on the furnace, and upgrading our office printer and web site. They need your help, so please think about volunteering for this group.

I think of the Memorial Garden committee every time I come in to the church. The flowers and new tree in memory of Earl Tupper really improve the look of the church.

Youth Activities 2016-2017

Youth Movie Night

In keeping with a recently established tradition, Britannia's Youth Group was hosted by Woodroffe United Church (WUC) for a Youth Movie Night on Friday, November 4, 2016.

We watched the movie *The Intern* starring Anne Hathaway as the Chief Executive Officer of a fashion website and Robert De Niro, who decides being retired isn't all it's cracked up to be and becomes her senior intern. A good time was had by all; we enjoyed popcorn and drinks, but the highlight of the evening was the ice cream sundae bar, with lots of candy toppings!

Thanks to all of the volunteers at WUC who made the evening a great success, especially Kim Stewart, their Youth Coordinator.

WE Day

Britannia United Church (BUC) was active in putting together a group to attend WE Day in Ottawa on November 9, 2016. WE Day brings together world-renowned speakers and award-winning performers with thousands of young people to celebrate their contributions to local

and global communities and kick-start social action. This year's celebrity line-up featured Justin Trudeau, Margaret Trudeau, Rick Hansen, Paula Abdul, Serena Ryder and Hedley.

"I had the honour of participating in this year's WE Day 2016. We were joined by youth members of BUC and WUC, as well our invited guests from Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI)," wrote Mary Lou Farrell, Chair of Christian Development, on her Facebook page, following the event.

Shirley Dagg, Coordinator of Education at TI, thanked us and our group, stating that "the students and I had a wonderful time at WE Day. Let us know of any events you hold and I'll share them with the other programs, as well as our distribution list."

Kathy Anderson commented, "Thank you for taking Jake; he had an amazing time! :)"

"We had an amazing time too! Jake and Kevin [Jake's cousin] were a delight to have along." Diane Houston, who attended as a coordinator, continued, "I look forward to hearing how the experience may encourage them to participate in future actions to help their community. It sure gave us lots to reflect upon."

Finally, Susan Aiken, observed that, "WE Day was great! I was pleased to have gone but a bit pooped at the end of the day."

Appreciation goes out to Susan Aiken who reached out to TI and helped coordinate arrangements with them. Mary Lou Farrell and Diane Houston acted as drivers and chaperones from Britannia. Rev. Kathryn Peate attended from WUC, while Shirley Dagg and Jamie Lecompte oversaw the TI youth.

The youth learned that everyone can make a difference. Collectively, by changing ME to WE, we can have a world-changing impact!

Beading for a Cause

With the WE Day message in mind, Britannia's Youth Group and Mission, Service and Outreach Committee hosted the youth from WUC on Friday evening, November 25. We all had fun making bracelets for the United Church of Canada's Hurricane Matthew relief fund. Six youth attended from Britannia and there were three from Woodroffe. A special thank you goes out to Wendy Gallant and her sister, Linda, for purchasing the beads and providing guidance with respect to the beading. The kids all did an impressive job; they designed and crafted about 40 stylish, colourful bracelets and necklaces. Between the two Churches, we raised an impressive \$271.00!

Baking for Our First Responders

On January 27, 2017, the two groups got together again to bake oatmeal cookies, banana/chocolate muffins and brownies for our first responders. We had 8 kids (4 from Woodroffe and 4 from Britannia), plus 3 adult volunteers (Ray and Kim from

A Springtime Wish

*May the springing of spring, like the newness it brings,
Give you hope and a love that's profound.
May your worrisome woes, like the vanishing snows,
Disappear and then never be found.*

Jamie W.L. Hill

WUC, and Helen from BUC). We boxed up the goodies in colourful containers, with labels saying who they were from.

Half of the baking was delivered Friday evening to the firefighters at the station at 1397 Richmond Road. The firefighters were very appreciative and showed us around the station. The two newest members of their team even showed us how they slide down the pole. The kids got to sit in the trucks and climb up onto the back.

On Saturday morning, Kim and her daughter, Lexie, delivered the other half of the goodies to the Huntmar Police Station in Kanata. This is the closest one to us that is open to the public. Lexie's uncle, who works out of this station, later texted to say what a hit the goodies were and that our youth groups were just outstanding.

The students really enjoyed this activity. It is important for them to experience what it is to give back to the community.

Nunavut Evening

On Friday, February 24, Britannia hosted WUC for a Nunavut evening. About a dozen people attended for a great evening of learning and having fun with friends.

We had an entertaining and informative presentation by Susan Aiken. She showed us photo montages developed from the one and a half years that she spent in the Arctic doing field work on arctic plants for the Canadian Museum of Nature and as an interpreter on sixteen cruises of ten days each. Did you know that that the geographic North Pole is water, that the mace of Nunavut rests in the hands of an elder with a youngster reaching up to lead in the future, that there are four official languages in Nunavut (Inuktitut, English, French and Inuinnaqtun), that the Inuksuk is a stone monument which guides people on a land where there are no trees, that St Jude's Anglican Church in Inqualuit is impressively igloo-shaped, that Rankin Inlet is noted for its ceramics production, and that Pangnirtung is home to some of the most accomplished Inuit carvers in the Arctic?

We played traditional Inuit games (Back Push, Owl Hop, Arm Wrestle, Finger Wrestle, Walrus Race, MuskoX Push), with prizes for our winners. We snacked on authentic bannock made by Susan and some Inuit friends from Larga Baffin, a full service boarding home located on Richmond Road for residents of the Baffin Region of Nunavut who are seeking specialized medical treatment in Ottawa.

It was a very enjoyable evening. Many thanks to Susan for her engagement and enthusiasm in reaching out to those in the Inuit community, preparing her presentation and making the evening a success.

Helen Hutcheson

Easter Services

Maundy Thursday – April 13 at 7pm

Good Friday – April 14 at 10:15am

SonRise Service – April 16 at 8:30am

Easter Service – April 16 at 10:15am

Je veux de Toi Seigneur / I Need You Lord

By Franci-Lynka Keza

Tu es ma vie, Seigneur et Roi,
Tu es ma vie, Seigneur et Roi.

Je veux de Toi Seigneur dans mon cœur,
Je veux de Toi Seigneur dans mon cœur.

Et Ta présence, qui fait du bien,
Et Ta présence, qui fait du bien.

Alléluia.

You are my life, Saviour and King,
You are my life, Saviour and King.

I need You Lord, in my heart,
I need You Lord, in my heart.

And Your presence is good for us,
And Your presence is good for us.

Hallelujah, Amen.

Bible Study

From Repentance to Renewal: Following Christ from Lent to Pentecost

With Deb Suddard

Travel through the four Gospels to getting a deeper understanding of the scripture and history behind Jesus's temptation in the desert, his last days with his followers, his death and his resurrection. From there we will go through the first chapters of the Book of Acts and see the new churches grow as they are filled by the Holy Spirit.

Our journey started March 26 but feel free to join in any time.

Week Two	April 2	Holy Week
Week Three	April 9	Easter
Week Four	April 23	Ascension
Week Five	April 30	Pentecost

Start time for all dates is 7:00 p.m.

Deborah is an author, speaker and educator. She brings a background in Cultural Anthropology and Liturgical Theology, to the study of the Early Christian Churches. Deborah specializes in Contextual Theology, and brings history and ancient cultures alive as she places the Christian

Scriptures within their time and draws parallels to the modern world.

In addition to her work in the first centuries of the Christian Church and Christian history through the past 2000 years, Deborah is a homeschooling mother of four teenagers, and uses her experience in alternative education and Contextual Theology to rewrite Biblical stories and create Christian Education curriculum for today's children and youth.

Deborah is the owner and main crafts-person of Devlyn Originals, a small business making dolls and knitted sculptures, some of which she uses in her teaching about characters from the Bible and people throughout Christian history.

In her spare time she is a trainer and leader with Girl Guides of Canada/Guides du Canada, and was the Communications Senior Team Lead for their National and International camp in 2016.

Local Syrian Refugee Family Support - 2016

Salem, a Syrian Canadian neighbour of Britannia United sponsored six members of his family, including his parents Raymond and Nadia, his sister Rim and her husband Abboud, along with their sons Jack, aged 10 and Christian, aged 7.

It has been a busy time as Salem, who is married with two infants of his own, needed help to assist his family. Many “angels” at Britannia United Church and the neighbourhood came forward with their support of temporary housing, furniture, clothing, financial assistance, transportation to appointments, and hospitality. Dental and medical issues have complicated the newcomers’ lives.

Grandparents Nadia and Raymond moved in January 2017 into an apartment on Croydon and are continuing with English studies. Rim and Abboud are living in Gatineau where rents are cheaper and there is language training, as well as financial assistance for childcare. Abboud has continued with language courses and is hoping to take evening business classes. Rim, an obstetrician in Syria, is studying hard to try to qualify for a midwife training program at Ryerson in Toronto. The boys are adapting to French and English, and are taking swimming, skating and first communion classes.

They are all still a family in transition. There will be continued needs in 2017, and your support and prayers, as in the past, are greatly appreciated.

Coordinators: Don Cullen and Marie Therese O’Sullivan

Come Sing with Us Sundays

Would you like to sing with the choir – not forever, just this once? Come out to church on the last Sunday of the month at 9:45 a.m. and join the choir. Mary Lou chooses a well-known or easy to learn hymn.

Spaghetti Dinner

The 96th Ottawa Troop CJ Crew would like to thank Britannia United Church and the members therein for all the support around and during our Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser!! We were able to raise just over \$2000 with the dinner and silent auction!

Thank-you!

Candice Armstrong

Sound System Operators

Ole Jensen is still looking for two more volunteers to help with the Projector and Sound System on Sundays. If we have more volunteers then each person would only have to run the equipment once a month. Training, Documentation and Assistance is available. Please contact Ole Jensen after the service if you can help.

A Good Life

A good life is when you

Assume nothing

Do more

Need less

Smile often

Dream big

Laugh a lot

and

Realize how blessed you are

Dieux merveilleux pour toujours / God, Wonderful for Always

By Franci-Lynka Keza

Dans le désert de la vie,
Où toutes les portes sont fermées,
Tu es là Dieu merveilleux,
Pour toujours.

In the desert of life,
When all doors are closed,
You are here God, wonderful,
For always.

Refrains :

Comme je sais que tu es là,
Je ne crains rien pour moi,
Car Tu es Dieu merveilleux,
Pour toujours.

Refrain:

As I know that you are here,
I fear nothing for me,
As you are God, wonderful,
For always.

Dans ton vrai amour plus beau,
Les parents peuvent donner,
Car Tu es Dieux merveilleux,
Pour toujours.

In your true love,
The best parents are given,
You are God, wonderful,
For always.

Ma vie va être forte,
Avec Toi je me sens bien,
Car Tu es Dieux merveilleux,
Pour toujours.

My life will be strong with you,
I feel love for you,
'Cause you are God, wonderful,
For always.

Dans Ton parfum odeur,
Nous soufflons de l'espoir.
Jésus vient fortifie notre cœur.

In the desert of life,
Where doors are closed,
You are God, wonderful,
For always.

In your perfumed scent,
We both hope.
Jesus comes to strengthen our Heart!
Wonderful for always.

Turn It Around

A month or so ago someone shared a post on Facebook that caught my attention. It's a list of ten ways to turn negative thoughts or ideas into expressions of gratitude, and you will find it printed on the back of your bulletins:

- Early wakeups = children to love.
- House to clean = safe place to live.
- Laundry = clothes to wear.
- Dishes to wash = food to eat.
- Crumbs under the table = family meals.
- Grocery shopping = money to provided for us.
- Toilets to clean = indoor plumbing.
- Lots of noise = people in my life.
- Endless questions about homework = kid's brains growing.
- Sore and tired in bed = I'm still alive.

I have no idea who wrote the list, but I think at one point or another in my life, I was able to identify with all ten of the complaints on the left-hand side. I'm naturally an optimist, but even an optimist can be overwhelmed from time to time, especially when he's sick, or over-worked, or over-tired.

Heartache, grief or disappointment can make it difficult for even the sunniest of personalities to shine, but in the spirit of "what you put energy into, you get energy back from" making a conscious effort to turn negatives into positives can be the first step to turning our emotions and our lives around.

Personally, I think we've become a society of complainers – or maybe the complainers just have the loudest voices – but we seem to be bombarded daily with negativity.

We hear it in politics, sports...even...in church! I remember the time I was invited to sing at an anniversary dinner for a church just outside of Ottawa. I had just gotten over a throat infection, but I didn't want to disappoint the congregation or put them on the spot to find a replacement, so I went and I sang my song.

When I returned to my seat, the self-declared vocal expert who was sitting next to me leaned over and said "I like that song...but I think it's a little out of your range."

First of all, I have to admit that – on that particular night – it was a little out of my range, and I hadn't quite hit the high note the way it was intended to be sung.

But as I consider her criticism, it occurs to me that she wasn't my vocal teacher, I hadn't asked for her opinion, I was a guest in her church, there were extenuating circumstances, I really didn't need anyone to tell me I had missed the note, and there were a thousand other notes in that song that were quite lovely, and she hadn't mentioned a single one.

I knew the person involved so I was able to keep her comment in perspective, but twenty years later, that is what I remember from that night so it obviously affected me. Missing the

note was unintentional...it was a mistake. Commenting on it was very intentional. It took energy, and it's energy that could have been better spent. As a psychologist, I know that her comment said more about her than it did about me, but it also reminds us that our words and our actions matter. They not only affect the people around us, they can also define our happiness.

Studies have shown that optimistic people are happier in life. They still deal with the same struggles, challenges and disappointments as everyone else, but they are better able to move forward in life, and they demonstrate a much healthier physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. There have even been studies that show a strong correlation between positive thinking and physical healing.

Not an optimist? That's okay. Because there are also studies that show you can reprogram your thought process and bring positive energy to your life, simply by changing your patterns and practicing gratitude and positive thinking every day...whether you feel like it or not.

So I have an idea. I'm going to suggest that this year, as a congregation, we give up complaining for Lent and turn our negatives into positives as we journey towards Easter.

Just as a reminder, Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, that lead up to our celebration of Easter. The word itself comes from the Anglo Saxon word "lencten" which means "spring" and translates literally as "long days."

The number 40 is significant in the Bible. It typically refers to "a long time" and it can also symbolize a period of testing, trial or probation. Moses spent 40 years in captivity and then 40 years wandering in the desert with the people of Israel. Each time Moses spoke with God on the mountain, it was for forty days. Noah endured 40 days in the flood, Jonah spent 40 days warning the people of Nineveh about their impending doom and Jesus spent 40 hours in the tomb after his crucifixion. Following his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his people for another 40 days. But perhaps the most significant 40 day period for the purposes of our study, was the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, where he was tempted and tested.

We read that Jesus fasted for those forty days, and we know that this was a period of ritual purification that accompanied meditation and prepared him for the ministry he was about to undertake. As the church developed the liturgical year, with its seasons and holy days, it was decided that a period of forty days of fasting, meditation and prayer would help Christians to prepare for the celebration of Holy Week and Easter each year.

This is intended to be a time of repentance, fasting and preparation. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church it was a time to prepare new converts for baptism. Today, Christians use the time to focus on their relationship with God. Some choose to give up something that stands in the way of that relationship. And it has become increasingly popular to take on a new project or to support an existing charity; sacrificing energy, time or money to support the work of healing, peace or justice.

Each year I am asked what Lent means, and how to observe the season. This year, in the discussion of whether to give something up or take something on, I suggested that whatever we chose to do, it should deepen our spiritual relationship with God and one another.

In an article entitled “40 Days of Lent: Find your own spiritual path.” author Joe Lovino of the United Methodist Church, affirms that there is no one prescribed way to observe a holy Lent and he gives a list of some suggested practices:

Fasting is one of the more common practices but now it tends to focus on a personal vice. “We fast to reorient ourselves away from the distraction of those things, and back toward God.

Devotional practices like Bible study and prayer can be incorporated into our routine – perhaps in exchange for some of the time we engage in social media or are consumed by the current political reports. This can be a great time to experiment with different types of prayer, or even silent meditation to see how it can enrich our lives and our experience of the season.

The spiritual practice of observing the Sabbath has become increasingly difficult in a society where Sunday as a day of rest competes with work, sports and other pursuits. But if the purpose of the Sabbath is to be still with God, we can try working this into another time of the day or week.

Lent can be a time for learning. We can research the meaning of Lent, look into the celebrations of Holy Week, or do some research on the traditions of Easter around the world. Learning the meaning behind our rituals can enhance our experience of worship and deepen our spiritual practice.

One of the things I suggest from time to time, is that you take a Sunday bulletin home with you, so that you can read it through the week. Focus on the meditation that is printed at the top of the page, take the time to read over the words of one of the prayers that is printed, or look up the history of one of the hymns. Re-read the scriptures. And if you have access to the Internet, you can always go to our church website and listen again to the sermon for the day.

This year, as an aid to our Lenten meditations, I will be including a portion of a “Lenten Call to a Holy Fast and a Holy Feast” in our bulletin each week. It was written by Rev. Tom Sherwood who is a United Church minister in Ottawa, and it expands on the idea of turning our thoughts and actions around, as we turn negatives into positives on our journey and in our spiritual practice. Each week I will print one stanza in the bulletin for you to take home and meditate on during the week, but I would like to begin the practice by reading it in its entirety today.

Lenten Call to a Holy Fast and a Holy Feast Tom Sherwood, Gathering – Lent 2017

We are called to a holy fast...and a holy feast in each day of this Lenten season.

Let us... fast from worry and feast on trust in God,
Fast from complaining and feast on appreciation,
Fast from negatives and feast on affirmatives.

Let us...fast from emphasis on differences
and feast on the unity of life,
Fast from hostility and feast on tenderness,
Fast from anger and feast on empathy.

Let us...fast from judging others
and feast on the image of God within them,
Fast from words that pollute and feast on phrases that heal,
Fast from idle gossip and feast on purposeful silence.

Let us...fast from self-concern
and feast on compassion for others,
Fast from discontent and feast on gratitude,
Fast from bitterness and feast on forgiveness.

Let us...fast from facts that depress
and feast on examples that inspire,
Fast from discouragement and feast on hope,
Fast from anxiety and feast on prayer.

May these words inspire you through this Lenten season, so we may grow ever closer to God and to one another as we approach the story and the glory of the cross. Amen



Newsletter submissions

We love hearing about your news, stories, poems, and jokes. Are you involved with another group or organization in the community? Please tell us about your activities and events.

You can send articles to newsletter@brituc.ca. We have had some problems with our e-mail service, so if you don't get a confirmation within a couple of days, please contact me directly at pd bain@acm.org.