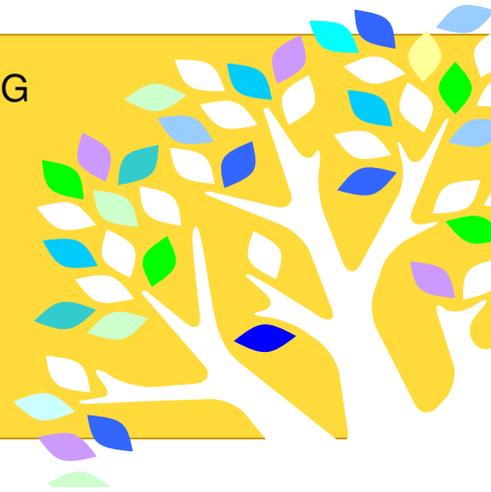


## THE LIGHTHOUSE AUGUST 2009



### Inside:

**P2 Mission Statement  
Board of Directors**

**P3 Sunday Service  
Schedule**

**P4 The Emotional Aspect  
of Community: Joy  
Emmanuel, Tracy Koebel**

**P6 Responses to Retreat  
Survey**

**P8 Invitation for Open  
Discussion  
Our Purpose and Mission**

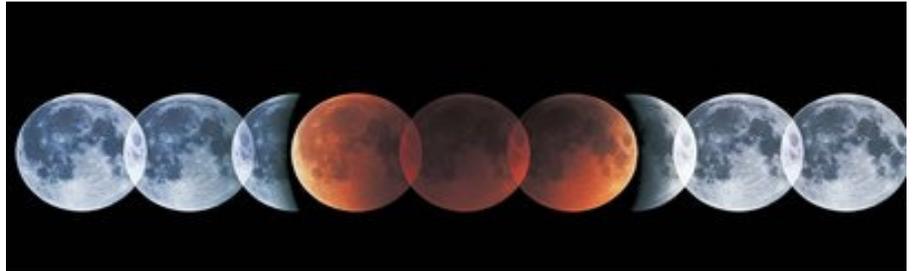
**P10 Birthdays  
Andy Rooney Article**

**P 12 Angels Needed  
Evaluation Form**

### Contact:

**111 Superior St.  
Victoria, BC V8V 1T2  
250-382-5412**

**<http://cot.rd123.ca/>**



## Journey into the Unknown

Journey into the unknown is hard to describe. It can only be felt and experienced. It is the all and the nothing. It is the unknowable where potential exists and the fullness of myself lies. It is with the depth of my heart and the willingness to venture forth, that my life can truly evolve. So is it my plan or Divine plan?

Do I really know what is next in any given moment, truly!

Even when I think I know, do I ever really know?

How much control, or should I say the illusion of control, do I actually have? I have often chosen what is comfortable, what is known, even when it does not work. I have allowed the fear, the doubts, expectations, judgments to settle in. How many of my well thought out plans have gone awry when another thing slips in to change them? Sometimes I have gone so far as to resist the change and force the existing plan into action rather than accept what is. Why do I insist that my way is best for me? Do I really know that for sure? Familiar pattern? That was the past. As I relinquish control I experience the magic of the moment when it is least expected: a chance encounter, an unexpected event, new beginnings, observing the awe of life. What do you choose for yourself? What stories do you tell yourself and others about the control you have in your life? Does it give you freedom or keep you stuck? Does it allow for the unexpected to present itself?

Continued on page 3

# *The Lighthouse August 2009*

**A Newsletter for Friends of the Church  
The Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living**

We are a supportive community of spiritual discovery that encourages and supports the concept that the responsibility to connect with Spirit or the Divine is ultimately that of the individual.

Through study and contemplation we can attune to Spirit or the Divine, giving us greater insight into our place in the structure of life as well as our interconnection with all things. We respect the inter-connectedness of all life. Moreover, in achieving a deeper attunement with Spirit we can be of greater service to our community and to our world.

We acknowledge and respect the contributions of all established religions.

Programs established or sanctioned by the Community respect each individual's path to spiritual growth.

“Within our Church community there exists a rich field of changing elements made up of the collective energies of our community. We strive to reflect the ecology of our community in ways which encourage exploration and respect for our diversity.”

**We welcome all who want to share this sacred place, this adventure, this CELEBRATION**

## **Sunday Service - 11 am Working for you - Your Board of Directors**

<b>President</b>	<b>Brian Martin</b>	<b>778-430-1872</b>
<b>Past President</b>	<b>Roy Leaman</b>	<b>778-430-1905</b>
<b>Treasurer/SDC Liaison</b>	<b>Esther Hart</b>	<b>294-6416</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Eleanor McKinnon</b>	<b>474-2715</b>
<b>Rentals</b>	<b>Patricia Huot</b>	<b>385 0941</b>
<b>Inside Maintenance</b>	<b>Nathaniel Poole</b>	<b>984-4024</b>
<b>Outside Maintenance</b>	<b>Marie Logan</b>	<b>652 8586</b>

**Community Care Liaison – Lorna Rennie 361-2079**

**Newsletter—EstherHart/Deborah Hawkey Email [esther@estherhart.com](mailto:esther@estherhart.com)  
Newsletter Submissions welcomed by the 15th of each month**

### **Spiritual Directions Committee**

<b>Brian Martin</b>	<b>778-430-1872</b>
<b>Cedona Holly</b>	<b>642-1060</b>
<b>Joyanna Wilkinson</b>	<b>361-3181</b>
<b>Esther Hart</b>	<b>294-6416</b>
<b>Nikki Menard</b>	<b>1-250-537-9380</b>

Linda Chan <http://cot.rd123.ca/>

**Rev. Joan Hopper Pastoral Care for free consultation call 250-384-3637**

# Sunday Service Schedule for August 2009

## Journey into the Unknown

<b>Sunday August 2</b>	Speaker: Nikki Menard – Celebrate the Magic Moderation: Brian Martin Meditation: Nikki Menard
<b>Sunday August 9</b>	Speaker: Ella Brown – The Illusion of Control Moderator: Patti Huot Meditation: Esther Hart
<b>Sunday August 16</b>	Speaker: Gordon Thurston Moderator: Heather Thurston Meditation: Marie Logan
<b>Sunday August 23</b>	Speaker: Joyanna Wilkinson – Choosing the Joy in the Opening Moderator: Meditation:
<b>Sunday August 30</b>	Speaker: Community Service – Unexpected Blessings Moderator: Brian Martin Meditation: Brian Martin

Continued from cover

So what would happen if I actually allowed for the unknown to show itself in the moment with consciousness? By choosing joy I could reap so many benefits. For myself, I have learned that going with the flow and journey into the unknown is where my life is most creative, joyful and inspiring. That's what I call celebrating the magic in my life. When I journey into the unknown, Divine essence flows through me through my paintings, channelling, talking with the trees, birds, dragonflies, through life itself. I experience life in such a profound way that that IS when my true light of love shines into the world.

How would that be for each of us to be fully present and journey into the unknown? How would that change your life and that of the planet? What gifts would come your way through living the unknown that control promises but cannot deliver? With that in mind, can I not choose consciously the unknown? Why yes I CAN!!!!!! I choose the journey into the unknown, the path of least resistance, the Divine.

And YOU? What are some of your unexpected blessings?

Nikki Menard, SDC

The SDC regretfully accepted the resignation of Carol Douglas. Thank you Carol for your valuable input. We are pleased to welcome Nikki Menard. Thank you for stepping in.

Here are two more of the talks presented on Sunday, June 14.

## THE EMOTIONAL ASPECT OF COMMUNITY

Good Morning Everyone,

I am away this weekend but I was asked if I would still contribute a few reflections on the theme of this week's service on the Emotional Life of our Community. As you may have already heard, Carol, June, Tracy and I met for an evening of exploration and sharing around our experience of this theme. As we talked, an image that came to me was that the emotional life of this – or any community – is a bit like a string of beads – sort of like pray beads. Every week, every encounter we add more beads to our string and they come in all different flavours and shapes.

Some beads are honey-coloured moments when we greet dear friends. Others are like precious crystals when we are deeply touched by some aspect of the service, such as the heartfelt words of the speaker or a grounding moment in meditation. Some beads ring out like pearls of laughter – especially on talent night and other special community events. There are golden beads that hold a precious glimpse into the soul of another and can be as fleeting as an exchange of smiles across the room when eyes connect or they may be steeped in long conversations and walks after the service. There are also silver, elongated beads that hold tender, shared memories of grieving the passing of loved members of the community.

And then there are other beads that have a darker, heavier quality - like when someone responds in a harsh, reactive way or when the clash of different views about what is important scratches our heart. These gems must also be acknowledged. As Carol, June, Tracy and I talked I was reminded of a quote from the editor of Intentional Communities magazine: Community is the longest, most expensive, personal growth workshop you will ever take.

While the emotional life of the community is nurtured by the beads of light that connect us all in a common heart space, it is the darker crystals that challenge us. When I think of all these moments like crystals on a string of prayer beads I am reminded to hold each with great reverence, tenderness and care so that the Divine Light may filter through and reveal the lessons and gifts of Spirit tucked within.

I hold each encounter as a spiritual gem that has touched my heart in different ways – stretching, soothing, nurturing, and opening up new spaces.

May we continue to find our way forward together and create nurturing spaces for our tender souls to grow.

Blessed Be,  
Joy Emmanuel



Good morning. I very much appreciate this opportunity to be here with you today to share my thoughts about the emotional components of community. It was a pleasure to spend an evening with Carol, June and Joy sharing our thoughts and reflections on this theme in preparation for this morning.

I first started coming to this church about a year ago. My husband and I noticed this little church on the corner when we moved our boat to Fisherman's

Wharf where we now live aboard. I remember walking by a few times and wondering what the church was all about. I finally picked up a church flyer from outside and after reading it thought this might be a good fit for me and that the church might be a community that would support my journey of self-discovery.

Being new to James Bay I was also looking for an opportunity to participate in the community and hopefully find a sense of belonging. When I first

started attending the church I felt very welcomed by church members and was aware of a loving and accepting energy within the community. After attending Sunday service for a few months, I began to feel that this was a community where I would be accepted for who I was and supported in my own spiritual path. Through opportunities to be of service to and be involved in the community, such as helping with coffee, being a greeter, leading a Sunday meditation, I have come to feel a real sense of belonging to this community.

I have come to value that this church does not say “this is the way to spiritual enlightenment” but rather creates an environment which allows for a diverse expression of beliefs. I appreciate the sense of wonder and possibility that we as a church community create in supporting the spiritual growth of our members. It is a privilege and a blessing to have been accepted into this community. I believe it is largely the emotional components of this community that have lead me to have such a strong sense of belonging.

Some of the most important components of community that I value are:

**Safety** – feeling I will be supported and accepted for the person I am without criticism or judgment.

**Trust** – developing a sense of trust among community members is important for me to risk sharing my story and beliefs.

**Respect** – I think mutual respect is a necessary requirement of a healthy community.

**Service** – I value a commitment of service to each other and to the greater community.

**Love/Compassion** – to have the experience of loving and being loved, of treating community members with compassion.

**Belonging** – a feeling of being “home”, of being held by the community.

**Friendship/Connection** – an opportunity and openness to develop friendships and have deep connections with others.

My experience of being part of the church community over the past year, including participating in the two think tanks is that we as church members demonstrate these emotional components of community in our interactions with one another. This is such a gift we give to one another. I know as a community we are going through a difficult yet rewarding process of transformation; I believe these emotional aspects of community that we share will support this process.

My experience is that for a community to remain healthy and viable it must be open to and embrace change. I feel honoured to be involved in our community’s process of transformation. Being a new church member I value those members who have been a part of the community for a longer period of time including those who have been members since its creation. These members can tell the story of the community’s evolution. It is obvious that the church community has had a rich and spiritually rewarding life over the past 25 years. That it has been an evolving entity and that it will continue to evolve.

I believe it is important that we value and honour the community’s history as we move forward. I also think it is important that we as church members are knowledgeable and aware of the emotional components of our community as we go through this process of change together. I look forward to the retreat and believe it will be a very fruitful process. I also look forward to opportunities to continue deepening my connection with each of you

Thank you,  
Tracy Koebel

## Responses to the Retreat Survey

Dear Spiritual Family:

July 7, 2009

We have collated your responses, below. We suggest that your wisdom and the genuine willingness to further deepen the spirituality of our Community should be read by all. In this way, we will all share in the process instigated at the last Annual General Meeting.

The large majority of us, with two exceptions and two uncertainties, wished to eliminate "Church of Truth" from our name. The most favoured seemed to be;

Community of Conscious Living

Centre for Conscious Living

These answers will be submitted to the Board for consideration and action.

Our thanks go out to both Bhavananda and Raku who collated and typed all of the attached material

Here is a list of Core Values submitted by you on the retreat questionnaire:

Awareness	Autonomy
Creativity +1+1+1	Love +1
Kindness	Generosity
Gentle Humour	Insight
Authenticity	Tolerance
Joyfulness	Truth
Commitment	Wisdom+1
Open Hearts	Community +1
Reverence +1	Making a Difference
Forgiveness	Spiritual Evolution
Oneness	Acceptance +1
Unconditional Love	Touch
Integrity	Honesty +1
Respect+1	Compassion +1+1+1
Joy+1	Appreciation
Responsibility to others	Speaking my Truth

Your answers to question no.3 Do you want more:

Spirituality	13 yes
Retreats	16 yes
Community Activities	13 yes
Social Activities	13 yes

Your answers to question no.1. Can you formulate a Mission Statement?

1. If people volunteer to work on re-visiting it, great!
2. A Community of like-minded individuals who are committed to inner and outer growth in an accepting and loving environment. To be engaged in an ongoing process of self reflection and evaluating leading to changes that will better reflect the needs of members
3. To embrace and be open to all, sharing our diversity of spirituality through love and peace.

4. The mission of our church is to deepen spirituality.
5. We are a supportive, compassionate, non-directive, inclusive community of unique individuals on a spiritual path.
6. To nourish and deepen the spiritual path of us all.
7. Wish to review current purpose and mission statement.
8. Comfortable with the present one – living up to that description is a different matter and the same dilemma would apply no matter what was written.
9. I would like to review our present one – as long as we are all included.
10. I like the one we have.
11. Please see the existing one and draw from this.
12. To encourage spiritual growth in individuals and the church community. To learn, grow and have fun together.
13. To support each other in spiritual growth.
14. To become a community that supports individual and community growth through an ever-deepening spiritual process.
15. To nurture and deepen the spirituality of a community of different beliefs.
16. To acknowledge and embrace the spirit of God in everyone and everything and to value all equally.
17. We are a gathering of different individuals, exploring and accepting diverse expressions of belief in spiritual discovery.

Your answers to question no. 6.(a) Do you feel welcomed at the church?

(b) Is there anything we can do to make you feel more a part of our church?

1.A. yes.

2.A. Welcoming is not consistent. Some are not terribly welcoming, there is a feeling that if it works for you fine, if not, “too bad”.

3.B. There is a Think Tank Comm. On this and I’ve submitted other Church Welcoming Packs to them because there are many great ideas.

4.A. yes.

5.A. very welcomed.

6.B. Will there be another retreat to work on community of the church re: core values, strengths and qualities?

7.B. More activities to get to know people better, and at more depth.

8.B. Offer me more opportunities to interact with all of you.

9.A. yes B. If we want to attract new members, suggest a retreat focused on the questions: Why do we exist as a Community? What is different about this Church?

10.A. yes

11.A. yes B. Would like to see suggestion box for Board re-instated. Would like more real communication to keep us all informed – especially during times of change.

12.A. yes B. Make sure someone speaks to newcomers.

13.A. yes.

14.A. yes.

15.A. yes

16.A. yes

17.A. yes B. More activities which appeal

18.A. yes B. Lessen the amount of “borrowed Eastern Religious” doctrines/language etc.....stick to our own culture’s way of speaking and “keep it real”!

There were twenty questionnaires completed, an excellent response. They will all be submitted to the Board for reference.

## INVITATION FOR OPEN DISCUSSION

On Wednesday, September 9 @ 7:00PM in the Sanctuary, all Community Members and interested friends are invited to participate in an Open Discussion. This offers us an opportunity to dialogue with each other regarding those issues that have been raised, i.e.: finances, name change, purpose, mission statement, core values and any other issues that would be of benefit to the Community.

Please come prepared with your proactive suggestions as we prepare to take the next steps in manifesting our future.

For those unable to attend in person, we invite

your written contributions to be sent to the Board. All submissions will be read and shared with those present at the gathering.

As this is not an official extraordinary general meeting, there will be no voting taking place. Our intention for this form of interaction is to contribute to a deepening sense of unity and commitment within our community while building upon that which has gone before. Your presence and heart-felt participation are appreciated. Thank you and blessings.

Brian Martin, President

## OUR PURPOSE & MISSION

Subsequent to our June Retreat, a few church members have had informal discussions re our Church Purpose. A committee emanating out of our recent Think Tanks already had drafted a revised Purpose and Mission statement and presented it at the 2nd Think Tank meeting. The Committee members were Tricia Coleman, Lorna Rennie, Patti Huot, & Genni Eden who now consider their work on this committee to be complete. It has been suggested by other members that this draft revised Purpose & Mission Statement be put forward for consideration.

We understand there will be an open meeting in September for church members to offer suggestions with respect to our process of reflection as a spiritual community. It would seem helpful at this time to address the following questions:

- Why do we exist as a spiritual community?
- What is different about this spiritual community? That is, why would people be drawn to it rather than the dozens of other churches, centres, etc. in Victoria?

The answers to these questions can be reflected in a Purpose & Mission Statement.

Some further rationale for focusing on our Purpose and Mission (whether it's the existing one, the draft revised version or an entirely new version):

- If some members want to attract more people to the church, it would seem helpful that there be a consensus about Who we are, Why, What's different (as above)
- It's healthy to have a periodic review of what we're about and to be open to change - the existing Purpose and Declaration of Principles were approved in 2001
- Several people have expressed need for change; revisiting our foundation may be a good place to start
- To renew focus - many of us were not even aware of the pamphlet outlining our Purpose, Mission, and Principles or hadn't read it for years.

The following is the draft revised Purpose and Mission Statement for possible discussion at the September meeting should there be interest by others in carrying forward this aspect of our process.

## **DRAFT REVISED PURPOSE & MISSION**

### **Our Purpose:** (revised May 18, 2009)

- a) To provide a supportive and respectful environment for spiritual exploration and discovery and to expand our awareness to enhance our own lives and those of others. We recognize there are many paths that can lead to spiritual growth. We respect and support every individual's freedom to explore their own path.
- b) To know that, while individual paths may reflect a diversity of beliefs, we can be united in our recognition of a universal spirit, the interconnectedness of all things, the power of love and appreciation, and a reverence for all life.
- c) To be open to guidance from universal spirit and to recognize that our openness to others' ideas may facilitate our own learning.
- d) To welcome those who wish to share their journey with us through their insights, reflections, experience and creative self expression. Our community is comprised of a rich field of individual and collective energies changing and evolving.
- e) To acknowledge our basic human need to socialize, to bond, to cooperate, to celebrate, and to have fun, in an accepting and light-hearted way, through a variety of events and activities.
- f) To encourage and support service to others through individual and group activity. We share our sacred space with the larger community. We recognize our opportunity to be agents of change in the world. With gratitude, we strive to live gently on the Earth with kindness and compassion for all.

### **Our Mission:** (revised July 12, 2009)

“We are a supportive community of spiritual discovery, exploring and accepting diverse expressions of belief. We welcome all to participate in our collective creation. Together, we share our sacred place, this adventure ... this celebration!”

**Fall Garage Sale – September 12th, 9 am to 2 p.m.** Church of Truth – (Corner of Superior & St. Lawrence). Rain or Shine. FASCINATING AND USEFUL ITEMS FOR EVERYONE! Donation of items in good repair and volunteers appreciated. Queries to Marie at (250) 652-8586

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

*We celebrate with you!*

August 16 Genevieve Eden  
August 20 Linda Chan  
August 25 David Coleman  
August 29 Liz Bennett  
August 30 Patti Huot



When you come to the edge of all the light you know, and are about to step off into the darkness of the unknown, faith is knowing one of two things will happen: There will be something solid to stand on or you will be taught how to fly.

Barbara J. Winter

Submitted by Patricia Coleman

## Andy Rooney Article

This was written by Andy Rooney , a man who has the gift of saying so much with so few words.

Enjoy.....

I've learned .... That the best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.

That when you're in love, it shows.

That just one person saying to me, 'You've made my day!' makes my day.

That having a child fall asleep in your arms is one of the most peaceful feelings in the world.

That being kind is more important than being right.

That you should never say no to a gift from a child.

That I can always pray for someone when I don't have the strength to help him in some other way.

That no matter how serious your life requires you to be, everyone needs a friend to act goofy with.

That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand.

That simple walks with my father around the block on summer nights when I was a child did wonders for me as an adult.

That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.

That we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.

That money doesn't buy class.

That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.

That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.

That to ignore the facts does not change the facts.

That when you plan to get even with someone, you are only letting that person continue to hurt you.

That love, not time, heals all wounds.

That the easiest way for me to grow as a person is to surround myself with people smarter than I am.

That everyone you meet deserves to be greeted with a smile.

That no one is perfect until you fall in love with them.

That life is tough, but I'm tougher..

That opportunities are never lost; someone will take the ones you miss.

That when you harbor bitterness, happiness will dock elsewhere.

That I wish I could have told my Mom that I love her one more time before she passed away..

That one should keep his words both soft and tender, because tomorrow he may have to eat them.

That a smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks.

That when your newly born grandchild holds your little finger in his little fist, that you're hooked for life.

That everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it.

That the less time I have to work with, the more things I get done.

Submitted by Patricia Coleman

## MONTHLY EVALUATION FORMS

The Spiritual Directions Committee invites you to respond to our monthly programs in a heart-felt and candid manner. We encourage you to respond in ways that go beyond that of personal likes or dislikes to evaluate the essence of what has been presented.

Please consider and respond to the weekly presentations in terms of their continuity and coherence, depth of coverage of the theme or topic, relevance to your own life and that of the community, implications for spiritual growth and understanding, plus value and meaning they inspire in you that extends beyond the actual Sunday

service. Do they challenge you to think outside the box in any way? Do you feel supported in your life journey and a deeper connection to others as a result of your presence or participation in any of the services?

All responses will be held in confidence and given due consideration by the SDC for the purpose of refining our future presentations.

Please know that your sharing will be an ongoing strengthening contribution to our community Spirit. Thank you

There is a tear-off form on the back.



## ANGELS NEEDED

We are looking for volunteers to assist with preparing coffee/tea Sunday mornings before the service and/or helping with clean-up afterwards. The morning duties involve arriving at church about 10:30am to start the coffee urn and ginger tea, set up the tea service cart (with cups, saucers, spoons, sugar), put the snacks on a plate etc. The clean-up involves putting dishes in the dishwasher, washing the coffee urn and teapots and general tidy up in the kitchen.

It seems to work best if a volunteer can assume the job for a month at a time although any assistance would be much appreciated. If you are able to help or would like more information about the job please feel free to talk with Tracy or Lorna at church.

Thank you,

Tracy

---

### July 2009 MONTHLY EVALUATION TEAR-OFF

Please complete this form and give it to a board member or drop it in the collection basket. Or alternatively, copy the form, paste it into an email and send it to Brian Martin at [martinlex@shaw.ca](mailto:martinlex@shaw.ca)

Week 1 Cedona Holly - Opportunities for our Soul's Evolution    Attended \_\_\_\_\_    Didn't Attend \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2 Esther Hart - Opportunities for Experiencing Abundance    Attended \_\_\_\_\_    Didn't Attend \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3 Brian Martin - Opportunities for Greater Intimacy    Attended \_\_\_\_\_    Didn't Attend \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4 Joyanna Wilkinson - Opportunities for Sharing Your Personal Awakenings    Attended \_\_\_\_\_    Didn't Attend \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_