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Ode to Joy

La,la,la,la, la,la,la, la,la, la, la,la, laaa aa....
Joy and Understanding.....

It seems appropriate the overall theme for the month of December is "Ode to Joy", a celebration of the best in us.

Ode to Joy, an ode written by German Poet. Playwright and Historian, Friedrich Schiller in 1785 and set to music by Ludwig Von Beethoven in 1824 as the final movement in his 9th Symphony. This symphony celebrates the ideal of unity and the brother-sisterhood of all humankind.

Ever since I have been blessing everyone before and as they speak at our SDC meetings I've experienced more of a peaceful simplicity. Joy was definitely present at our last meeting leading to "**Joy an Ever Present Reality**," as the topic for our first weeks service on Dec.5th with Rev. Joan Hopper speaking.

The second week of this Joy-filled month brings us to, "**Lightness of Being**" with Nikki Menard speaking in her inimitable manner on this subject.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.... On Dec 19th the service "**Love and Joy**" is our Christmas celebration as we celebrate the return of the Light and other traditions of the world.

After the service there will be a wassailing potluck of Christmas finger food, holiday baking and hot apple cider, followed by lovely entertainment which you are all welcome to join in.

For our last week of the year's service "**Gratitude Rocks!**" will bring some surprises as we end the year on a grateful note with a Community Service.

May we all be blessed with an abundance of Joy and Love as we make our way deeper into this ever present moment.

In Love and Service
Paul Monfette-SDC

The Lighthouse December 2010

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

We are a spiritual community supporting each other in exploring our personal journeys regardless of spiritual path or belief.

Our community is comprised of a rich field of individual and collective energies that is ever changing and evolving.

While we are accepting of diverse expressions of belief, we recognize the interconnectedness of all things and the power of love and appreciation. We hold reverence for all life.

We welcome those who wish to share their journey with us through their insights, reflections, experience and creative self-expression.

We are open to inspiration and recognize that our openness to others' ideas may enhance our own awareness and expansion.

We meet our basic human need to socialize, bond, cooperate, celebrate and have fun, in a warm-hearted way, through a variety of events and activities.

We acknowledge our opportunity to be agents of change in the world and we encourage and support service to others through individual and group activity.

We share our sacred space with the larger community.

With gratitude, we live thoughtfully on the Earth with kindness and compassion for all.

We welcome you.

Sunday Service - 11 am

Working for you - Your Board of Directors

President	Esther Hart	
Past President	Brian Martin	
Vice President/SDC Liaison	Carol Douglas	
Treasurer/Outside Maintenance	Jan Falkowski	
Secretary	Genevieve Eden	
Rentals	Tracy Koebel	250-857-8185
Inside Maintenance	Lorna Rennie	

Your Spiritual Directions Committee Members are:

Cedona Holly	
Nikki Menard	
Marvelous Trudeau	
Paul Monfette	

Newsletter—Deborah Hawkey Email dbhawkey@gmail.com

Newsletter Submissions welcomed by the 21st. of each month

Linda Chan <http://cotvictoria.ca>

Sunday Service Schedule for December 2010

December Theme: ODE TO JOY

December 5

Joy: An Ever Present Reality

Moderator: D. Joan Thomas

Mediator: Jan Falkowski

Speaker: Joan Hopper

December 12

Lightness of Being

Moderator: Bernadine Sperling

Speaker: Nikki Menard

Mediator: Patti Huot

December 19

JOY AND LOVE

Moderator/Organizer: Trish Coleman

Mediator: Laurence Beale

This service will be a Music Filled Christmas Holyday Celebration with community participation. It will be a little longer than the normal service time.

A Christmas party with fun, singing, Wassail and snacks will follow the service

December 26

**Gratitude Rocks!
Community Service**

Moderator & Mediator:

Deborah Hawkey & Marvelous Trudeau



Cleaning and Decorating Party

Come and join us at Church on Saturday, December 11, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

There are many chores that our cleaner doesn't have time to do or that aren't part of her duties. They include such things as brass cleaning, stove and fridge cleaning, reorganizing kitchen cupboards, dusting, sorting and cleaning library and other cupboards, window cleaning, etc. A list of jobs will be posted so you can choose one that suits you or you may think of something yourself. There may be some outside work too, weather permitting.

As the special Holiday Celebration will be held on December 19, the cleaning party can also be a time for preparing and decorating, at least to some degree, for this service.

You're welcome to come for the morning and stay for lunch or come for lunch and stay for the afternoon or stay for the whole day! Lunch will be pot luck unless someone offers to make a big pot of soup or chili. An announcement will be made when we know.

It's always fun when people get together to share work, especially at our special Church. Mark this day on your calendar and plan to be part of it!

Thanks!

Lorna Rennie

Member-at-Large for Inside Maintenance

Letter to the C of T Community:

Greetings Dear Friends,

I am delighted that I will have the opportunity to see many of you during the Oneness Wednesday evenings in December. I will be leading a four-part evening series exploring the theme of *Birthing the Universal Human* - a topic dear to my spiritual path at this time.

As many of you know, I am now living at OUR Ecovillage in Shawnigan Lake. OUR is a 25 acre learning and demonstration site known for its pioneering work in intentional community living in British Columbia, for its programs in natural building, and its permaculture approach to designing human settlement and agricultural systems to be in harmony with natural ecosystems.

I am learning so much here about myself, about living simply, about living in a different way with others, and living in greater harmony with the natural world. I will be weaving some of these insights into the Oneness Wednesday program along with the teachings of deep ecologist Joanna Macy and futurist Barbara Marx-Hubbard.

I hope you can join us. I look forward to this opportunity to share the journey with those of you who resonate with this call.

Blessings, Light, and Love,

Joy

**Oneness Wednesdays in December
Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living**

Birthing the Universal Human
with Joy Emmanuel

We live at a significant period in Earth's history! This is an age that some refer to as The Great Turning. It is a time when the community of life on earth faces major environmental, economic, and social challenges, but it is also a time of great potential for collective spiritual awakening.

Over the last century, many spiritual teachings emphasised attending to our inner healing and spiritual practice (which is still vitally important). At this time, emerging spiritual insights reveal the potent force of creation as we move beyond accessing more than our own Higher Self and shift into greater alignment with the power of Universal Intelligence. In this developmental journey, we awaken the synergistic, co-creative impulse to evolve that runs through all of Creation, and deepen our relationship to the process of birthing the Universal Human. In nurturing that impulse within each of us, we uncover more of our full potential as we discover and live our particular, and then collective, contribution to birthing the post-shift world.

Weaving together the work of deep ecologist Joanna Macy and futurist Barbara Marx-Hubbard, *Birthing the Universal Human* is a four part exploration of what it means to collectively awaken the Universal impulse to evolve at this time on the planet. Joanna's work guides us in keeping our hearts fearlessly open to the healing of the world; Barbara's teachings illuminate a soulful collective path for co-creating the future with the Universal force of Creation.

Each evening will be a blend of reflective exercises, guided meditation, gentle movement, and spiritual ritual. The series will culminate with a special winter solstice celebration on December 22. As we approach the darkest time of the year, let us soulfully engage the transition from Greatest Darkness to Deepest Light.

Please join us! December 1, 8, 15, and 22

7:00 pm

Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living

111 Superior St.

Evenings are Free or by Donation

Joy Emmanuel is a Transformational Coach, Adult Educator, Organizational Developer (specializing in Co-operatives), and Community Animator. Joy offers transformational change programs for individuals and groups of all sizes. One-on-one coaching sessions can be arranged at any time. For more information you can contact Joy at:

joye@telus.net

James Bay Community Project - Restoration of Garden Beds

My name is Nate Poetker. I was encouraged by Linda Chan to help restore some of the garden beds around the James Bay Community Project.

Periodically throughout the month of September, I would arrive at the JBCP with my car full of materials. I would fold down the back seat, put down a tarp and load it full with peat moss, bark mulch and compost. When I first tested the soils around the JBCP, I was astonished that even the weeds could survive such conditions. What I found was a few inches of nutrient deficient soil that resembled something like wet concrete. I spent most of my time there building the soil, and preparing the beds for perennials. With a delivery of compost from Pedal to Petal, I was able to increase the fertility of the soil, by turning it in with a broad fork. I also added peat moss, to help "fluff up" the soil. This allows the roots to grow freely, and improves drainage as well. With the beds prepared, all I needed was to find some plants. Thankfully, the good folks down at the Garden Works in Oak Bay graciously donated a truck load (car load) of perennials. With the Subaru station wagon loaded with life, I came back to the JBCP to give these plants a new home. I designed the beds according to the types of plants that I had.



For instance, the edible herbs in this bed, the wall flowers and hyacinths in the other, and finally a bed for aesthetic ornamentals.

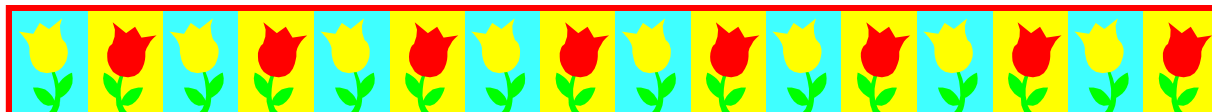
To finish the job, I topped off the beds with a healthy top dressing of bark mulch. This will help to suppress weeds and retain moisture.

There is always more work to be done in the garden, and that is my pleasure.

Sincerely Green, Nate Poetker

Currently Nate is in New Zealand learning more about permaculture and good growing. We look forward to his return to Victoria in Spring 2011.

We thank Oneness Wednesday donations for making this Garden Bed Restoration Project a possibility. For the latest reports and pictures of the James Bay Community Project's Kitchen, please visit <http://jbsc.ca> (JBCP Kitchen Garden + Restoration of Garden Beds)



Upcoming Events that You May Like to Attend.....

Victoria Downtown Winter Farmer's Market

Date: Saturday, November 20 (on 3rd Saturday of each month)

Time: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Courtyard Level, Market Square, 560 Johnson Street

Details: <http://victoriapublicmarket.com/>

Film Screening - Simply Raw - Reversing Diabetes in 30 Days

Date: Friday, December 3

Time: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Location: Sacred Space Academy, 2565 Blackwood Street

Details: <http://vegbc.conscious-choices.ca/?cat=4>

Telling A New Story: Our Community After Oil

Date: Sunday, December 5

Time: 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Location: St. John Divine Church Hall, 925 Balmoral Rd. at Quadra

Details: <http://transitionvictoria.ning.com/events/telling-a-new-story-our>

Seasonal Outreach by the Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living

At a recent Board meeting, an opportunity brought forward from a Church member was discussed. A decision was subsequently made to donate \$100 to The Create Homefulness for 99 cents a day Fundraising Campaign of Woodwynn Farms, as part of the Church's seasonal outreach.

The therapeutic farm has a goal of welcoming more homeless individuals into the program at Woodwynn Farm in Central Saanich. To help kick-start the giving, an anonymous philanthropist has committed to match the first \$80,000 until Christmas Day.

Richard Leblanc, the founder and executive director of the Woodwynn therapeutic community, spoke to our community earlier this year and generated interest for some of the church members to volunteer at the farm.

If individuals are interested in pursuing this opportunity on their own, more information about the program and the fundraising campaign is available at

www.woodwynnfarms.org

Contributed by Lorna Rennie on behalf of the Board

For the Love of Elephants...

It appears that South Africa is getting ready for a large scale culling (killing) of elephants. CoreLight has launched a world wide Prayer Circle on 12/12/12. I invite the Community to participate as you feel called. I welcome anyone who wishes to join me in the Quiet Room between 12:30 and 12:45 on Dec. 12.

We will open our hearts in prayer to support these gentle sacred creatures...Thank you, cedona



Happy
Birthday

We celebrate with you!

*December 12 -Joan Hopper
December 31- Gordon Thurston*



Active Sound Meditation

Hosted by Galilee

A 2 hour program harmonizing body soul connection

This form of meditation is a bridge for you to remember your relationship with the one...the creator. In this meditation, (as it is active) we loosen the body with dance first and sing a little for the harmonization of group energy. In our traditions, we have been taught how to meditate, truly, you cannot learn meditations; as meditation is not born from connectional reality; its movements are directed by a quality of being called, "honesty, tenderness, freedom and respect for all that is." After we relax the body.

Galilee has journeyed the world, unraveling some of the mysteries of sound and its healing potentials; she sings and chants into a Turkish A-frame hand drum using a spell-binding range of tone and overtones, providing a soothing mystical lullaby for the soul. Songs of light pass through her body. Powerful and revealing, this meditation evening is a magical inward journey, giving you the opportunity to experience the inner soul while guiding the movement of your body.

Galilee's gift has graced temples in India, the Pyramids of Egypt, including the Pyramid of Giza in Cairo, The Railway Performance Centre in New Mexico, numerous Basilicas across Canada and many other cities throughout North America.

December 12, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Church of Truth

111 Superior St.

Investment: \$20.00

Bring a blanket, yoga mat & water



GIVING

Giving (called Dana in Sanskrit) is one of the most important virtues. It is basic to all other virtues or soul qualities since it is expressed through the physical body. In fact, it is the primary means of overcoming inertia to which our physical nature is inclined. The Buddha considered it the foundation of the spiritual journey, and that it is.

Our practice of giving helps us to develop a sensitivity to others and to circumstances around us. It helps us to grow in respect and in generosity. Giving begins the process of transformation, even without seeking it. The Buddha said: “Before giving, the mind of the giver is happy; while giving, the mind of the giver is made peaceful; and having given, the mind of the giver is uplifted.” It is through giving who and what we are that we experience happiness.

The soul always seeks to manifest something of value to the world through your thoughts, feelings and actions. Soul is not motivated by what you will get out of it, but rather by what you can give. It is motivated by awareness of need. It knows that you have the ability to respond to that need, thereby restoring something or someone to a stature of dignity or value.

Giving and receiving

Giving is not done to fulfill a psychological need to receive. That would be self-centered egoic manipulation. Giving is done as a natural expression of the soul beginning to awaken the heart. To give with true generosity, we need to cultivate the ability to receive graciously without taking or grasping. When we are able to receive with equanimity, we have the spirit to give without expectation.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, giving and receiving are the same when done with detachment. This implies that one both gives

and receives with gratitude. It is as much a privilege to give as to receive. And one can do both without being attached to them. This requires that one focuses on the love that is shared more than on the object or act through which it is expressed. This way, one stays soul connected. The detachment that accompanies giving then does not give preference to anyone. One gives to strangers as well as to familiars.

Be aware of your motives

Putting forth efforts to reach out, such as by doing good deeds, helping others, and the like, are fine, but they do not necessarily lead us to be less self-centered. It all depends on our motivation. Do we act out of a desire for comfort or security or appreciation? Do we act to make life around us conform to our image of the way life should be? Or do we respond with detachment to what we perceive as real need? We have to know ourselves sufficiently to know what our true motives are.

Helping others as a way of fulfilling one’s own psychological needs is not necessarily harmful to others, but it is not the healthiest approach. The motivation to help others can be mixed altruism and selfishness. It can be a way to avoid dealing with what is going on within ourselves. If we are to honor the soul, we cannot use others to get the comfort, solace, security and love we feel we are lacking.

Our motives will usually be mixed. We give because we recognize a need, and we feel good or get some appreciation because of our giving. We must not stop giving just because our motivation might not be pure. To gain greater awareness does not necessarily require us to stop our practice that was conducted without awareness.

Being aware during the act of giving purifies intention and can help us develop

detachment and get beyond our self absorption.

Our gifts to life

On the spiritual journey there are always two essential elements. One is relating to a reality greater than oneself, and the other is helping or giving to others. These two elements speak to one reality – that is, our unity with all life and our specific duty to serve the other in the situations in which we find ourselves.

The Buddha taught that “the greatest gift is the act of giving itself” because it portrays the true nature of all life, which is to give itself that all might live and love. Although the motivation is not self-centered, giving to

help and free others also helps and frees us because I and the other are one. It was with this understanding that when asked why he gave so much and helped so many people, Gandhi humbly replied: “I don’t give to anyone. I do it all for myself.”

To make our giving a true gift, we could be aware of some guidelines:

- True giving requires some sacrifice on the part of the giver.
- True giving must show respect, and not condescension, toward the recipient.
- We are grateful to the recipient for making the act of giving possible.

Andrew Schneider submitted by Deborah Hawkey

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



Anonymous