

THE LIGHTHOUSE MARCH 2010



“GOD by Any Other Name”

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God has become a controversial word. When I was growing up, God was predominant in my life. And, of course, it was the God that my father believed in – the way he believed - that was the one and only “True” God. I gradually moved away from that notion of God. I moved so far, in fact, that eventually I wanted nothing to do with anything called God.

One day my friend Linda told me excitedly that she had read a great book called *Conversations with God* and the author Neale Donald Walsh was going to be in town. Would I like to go?

Absolutely not. I thought, “Poor Linda. I thought she was doing so well. And now she’s been sucked back into that God crap.”

I’m not sure how long after that I felt compelled to read *Conversations with God*. I giggled as I read. Here was a God that I could relate to. Here was a concept of God that fit with what I had been calling “the source” or “the voice”.

I once again allowed myself to feel free to use the word God as it fit my understanding. God to me is gender neutral. Not a male God and not a female Goddess. To me, God is It. (See the article called IT later in the newsletter)

For the month of March we will be exploring our relationship with God – the word and the essence of God. We begin with “God Speak.” A panel of people will share their experience of God through different religions – or no religion. Then we will hear from Robert Keegan, a local author who has written a book called *The Logic of God*. This is Robert’s first time speaking to us. You can learn more about him at www.alliswell.com. Next we will hear from our own beloved Gordon Thurston who will address “The Evolution of God – an interpersonal experience.”—during the services and in conversation before and after.

Esther Hart – SDC/Board liaison

The Lighthouse March 2010

**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

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

Community Care Liaison – Lorna Rennie 361-2079

**Newsletter—Deborah Hawkey Email dbhawkey@gmail.com
Newsletter Submissions welcomed by the 21st of each month**

Spiritual Directions Committee

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

Web Site: <http://cotvictoria.ca>

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

Sunday Service Schedule for March 2010

“God by Any Other Name”

March 7 – “God Speak” –

A panel presentation of the voice of God presented by people of different religious (or none) backgrounds

March 14 – Robert Keegan – The Logic of God

March 21 – Gordon Thurston – The Evolution of God – an interpersonal experience

March 28 – “Your Relationship with God” - community service

Continued from page 1

We will end the month with a community service where we invite you to share “Your relationship with God now” – if you have one and what it means if you don’t.

I suspect that there are as many views of God as there are people and I look forward to hearing many of your stories and ideas– during the services and in conversation before and after.

Esther Hart – SDC/Board liaison

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Love is what we are born with. Fear is what we learn. The spiritual journey is the unlearning of fear and prejudices and the acceptance of love back in our hearts. Love is the essential reality and our purpose on earth. To be consciously aware of it, to experience love in ourselves and others, is the meaning of life. Meaning does not lie in things. Meaning lies in us."

Marianne Williamson

Here Comes the Munch Cart

By Esther Hart

At 10:15 am on Wednesday, February 10, members of the Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living watched with Ms Janice Matthews, principal of James Bay Community School as students Kaedon and Caitlyn walked toward them wheeling the “Munch Cart.” Almost immediately a bell rang and students lined up at the cart to choose their snack. The choices included apples, wholesome granola bars and other nutritional snacks for 25 cents or an apple for free.

The Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living is a local James Bay spiritual community which welcomes anyone regardless of their spiritual/religious beliefs who wants to be supported in their own personal journey.

The members were on hand to make a contribution to the morning snack program which according to Matthews has become fondly known as the “Munch Cart.”

When the spiritual community, which contributes regularly to “Our Place” wanted to make a contribution to a worthy cause in the local James Bay area, they sent D. Joan Thomas to investigate. She recommended this snack program.

Matthews explained that while the ministry ensures that every child is supplied with lunch, there is no such program for children who come to school with little or no breakfast. The morning nutrition is important to assist the children’s ability to concentrate and learn. Matthews was not sure when the program started but it was in place when she first came to James Bay Community School in 2001.

The morning snack program relies heavily on community contributions and was supported earlier this year by the Fisherman’s Wharf Association. Brian Martin, president of the board for the Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living presented a cheque in the amount of \$300.

Anyone interested in contributing to this program is invited to contact principal Janice Matthews at 250-384-7184.

Esther Hart is a local author who inspires and supports others who are writing books.

www.authorssolutions.com



Church of Truth- Community of Conscious Living member D. Joan Thomas (left) and president Brian Martin (right) donate \$300.00 to the James Bay Community School's 'Munch Cart' Program gratefully accepted by students Kaedon (left) and Caitlyn (right)."

Conscious Living in the Time of the Great Turning

Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living

Oneness Wednesdays - March 2010

Facilitated by Joy Emmanuel

We live at a pivotal moment in human and planetary history, a time some refer to as The Great Turning. The way humans choose to live on the planet over the next fifty years may well determine the destiny of all life on earth. Yet the Great Turning is not about despair and hopelessness, it is about empowerment, hope, and being present to what each of us is called to do.

Inspired by the passionate work of eco-activist and Buddhist teacher Joanna Macy, this five-part, Oneness Wednesday series will offer opportunities to connect with our own deep feelings around the unprecedented global challenges of this century and how we can each be a positive force for change.

Wed March 3 - We Begin in Gratitude

Gratitude has been called the first movement of the human spirit. Gratitude awakens us to the precious gift of the present moment and the extraordinary privilege to be alive at this time on the planet. Appreciation for the richness of our lives and the beauty of Mother Earth can be a beginning point in our own contribution to healing on our planet.

Wed March 10 - Connecting the Emotional Dots - from Despair to Empowerment

Many of us carry deep feelings of despair, fear, and anger as we observe the changes in our planet's ecosystems and witness environmentally destructive processes in our own communities. It takes courage to be present to the pain in our world. It takes "great heart" to transform despair into hope and fear into compassionate empowerment.

Wed March 17 - Seeing with New Eyes

As we open to our deep connection with the Earth, we can also choose to open our senses to new ways of experiencing and knowing our place in the miracle of life on this planet. The profound beauty of a flower, the defenceless stance of inter-beingness, the visionary knowing of our connection to past and future generations can carry us to a renewed sense of commitment to live more consciously on our planet.

Wed March 24 - Equinox Celebration

A Cosmic Walk through Time to Honour all Life on Earth

Wed March 31 - Opening to our Calling

What does it mean to live consciously on the planet at this time? What is the unique role each of us is called to play in contributing to The Great Turning of our planetary course toward a

more just, sustainable, and loving world? Let us acknowledge and honour what each of us can do and the synergistic power of the collective to change the course of history.

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7:00 - 8:45 pm

Church of Truth - Community of Conscious Living

111 Superior St. James Bay

By Donation - Contributions go to Community Outreach

Joy Emmanuel is a Transformational Coach, Adult Educator, Organizational Developer, and Community Animator. Joy offers transformational change programs for individuals and groups of all sizes and hosts one-day retreats with a focus on Spiritual Awakening. In the fall of 2009, Joy was privileged to do a training program with Joanna Macy. She is also active in the Victoria Transition Town initiative – a global grassroots movement around creating a post-oil dependant society. She can be reached at joye@telus.net

IT

For a long time I have wanted to come up with a pronoun that would be gender neutral. As a woman it has been very disturbing to read so many books that refer to everything human as he. Recently many authors have tried to be inclusive and alternate between he and she. But even that feels inefficient because specifying either he or she still implies that the other is left out.

To add to the dilemma, many people are now acknowledging God as *all that is* instead of a white bearded man in the sky. How can we make that transition readily when we still refer to God as he?

I recently picked up Depak Chopra's *How to Know God* hoping that he would have a solution. I was

disappointed to see that even though he acknowledged that some faiths have referred to God as *It*, he chose to continue to refer to God as he. Words are so powerful and create such strong images. If we really want to change our perception of God, don't we have to use a different term?

I wondered if I were just being picky over something trivial so I prayed, "If this is not important, let me be at peace with using He in reference to God."

Since I am writing this you can guess that I did not receive peace. Instead I was given the following poem

IT

If a dog is an it

And a cat is an it
Why isn't a boy an it?

If a flower is an it
And a tree is an it
Why isn't a girl an it?

If the source is it
And the light is it
Why isn't God It?

I wondered if it is because we think that a *he* or *she* has more value than an *it*. I decided to look at all the pronouns.

1 st person singular	I	gender neutral	presumably only a person
2 nd person singular	YOU	gender neutral	person, animal or thing
3 rd person singular	HE/SHE	gender specific	person, animal or thing
3 rd person singular	IT	gender neutral	animal or thing
1 st person plural	WE	gender neutral	people, animals and things
2 nd person plural	YOU	gender neutral	people, animals and things
3 rd person plural	THEY	gender neutral	people, animals and things

From this analysis we see that every pronoun except *it* refers to people. My questions are, "How did it come to be this way? Does it have to stay that way? What would it take to change it?"

The answers that came were:
I have no idea how it came to be that way.
It does not have to stay that way.
It will take the courage of one person to do it differently.

The next question I heard was, "Do you have the courage?"

I immediately answered, "Yes."

Throughout this book you will find he and she used when the gender is specifically known. When it is not specified, I will use "it" to refer to a person. I will also use "It" to refer to God.

Excerpt from *Heaven on Earth* by Esther Hart



Notes from the Board

Music Director

Members of our community have requested more music. What comes first, the people who want to sing in a choir or a music director who would attract people who would want to come and sing in our choir? If you have any suggestions or likely candidates who would be willing to present a proposal to the board, please contact a board member

Service Recordings

The Sunday services are being recorded. If someone misses a service or wants to hear a service again, they can contact Esther Hart at authorssolutions@gmail.com to request a digital download. Only the spoken parts will be

provided. A donation to the Church of Truth – Community of Conscious Living as a token of appreciation would be gratefully accepted. [If you need it on disk, please provide a blank CD]

Piano Cover

Our lovely pink piano cover needs to be retired. If you have any suggestions for how we might acquire a replacement, please contact a board member

**CHURCH OF TRUTH - COMMUNITY OF CONSCIOUS LIVING
GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERSHIP Renewal**

1. Attendance at our services.
2. A strong desire to participate in our community demonstrated by attending services and getting involved as a volunteer and/or by giving your financial support.

Our Mission Statement says it well:

"We are a supportive community of spiritual discovery. We are a gathering of unique individuals, exploring and allowing our diverse expression of belief. We respect the interconnectedness of all life. We welcome all who are willing to commit themselves to participating in our collective creation. Together, we share our sacred place, this adventure ... this celebration!

Please complete the membership renewal application at the bottom of this form.
Your annual \$10.00 membership fee is due before the AGM in April.
Your continued membership is based on your active participation in our community.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail (optional) _____

Application for renewal of membership

Please indicate your birthday: Day _____ Month _____

Amount enclosed with application: \$ _____ (Rcvd. by Treasurer _____)

Please include me on the community contact list. _____

Check what you would like to have listed:

Name _____ phone _____ home address _____ email address _____



We celebrate with you!

March 2 Eleanor McKinnon

March 4 D. Joan Thomas

March 6 James Stewart

March 24 Roy Leaman

March 26 Michael Heaney