



Spirited Summerlea

United Church of Canada

Newsletter

February 2014



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CALENDAR

March

02	Sun	10:30am	Transfiguration Sunday
06	Thu	9:30am	Worship & Memb'ship
07	Fri	10:30am	World Day of Prayer

09 Sun 10:30am 1st in Lent

16	Sun	10:30am	2 nd in Lent
18	Tues	TBA	Executive Board mtg.

23	Sun	10:30am	3 rd in Lent
		3:30pm	Chamber Music Concert

30 Sun 10:30am 4th in Lent

April

05 10am-3 Artisan Fair & Book Sale

06 Sun 10:30am 5th in Lent & Outreach



Sunday

13	Sun	10:30am	Palm Sunday
17	Thu	6pm	Maundy Friday
19	Fri		Good Friday

20	Sun	7am	Sunrise Service
		10:30am	Easter Sunday with Communion

27 Sun 10:30am Musical "Once Upon a Parable"

Elders' Corner:

EDITORS:

Jane Cowell Poitras,
Susan Hawke & Lynn Closs

In February 2012, Jeffrey Kluger of Time Magazine wrote an article entitled "Lent and the Science of Self-Denial: The hidden health benefits of religious rituals that require willpower". We enjoyed this article and thought we would share it with you in place of a Lenten editorial.

When it comes to good-time holidays, Lent does not rank very high. Nor do Ramadan or Yom Kippur, of course, and no wonder. They are all about saying no to something (or many things) you love. Where's the eggnog and holiday joy in all that? But we observe these less-than-festive celebrations all the same — and we have good reason to do so. There are hidden benefits to so much ritualized self-denial.

One of the open secrets of all religions is that even if you don't care for the priestly raiment in which their traditions come draped, some of them can be very healthy all the same. And those, like Lent, whose secular message is nothing more complicated than practicing self-control, can be among the most salutary of all — something science is beginning to prove.

Willpower is a quality that can be in short supply in all of us but it's one that is increasingly seen as cultivatable. Indeed, the best way to think of willpower is not as some shapeless behavioral trait but as a sort of psychic muscle, one that can atrophy or grow stronger depending on how it's used. What's more, neurologists and behavioral psychologists generally think of willpower as what's known as "domain general," which means that the more you practice it to control one behavior — say, overeating — the more it starts to apply itself to other parts of your life like exercising more or drinking less.

Roy Baumeister, a psychologist at Florida State University and author of the straightforwardly titled book *Willpower*, has conducted experiments in which

subjects were given uncomfortable tasks to perform in a lab, such as holding their hand in ice water or squeezing an exercise grip. They were then sent home and given a random rule to observe for two weeks — not swearing, say, or using the non-dominant hand for certain things like opening doors. After that period was over, they returned to the lab. Those subjects who had been assigned a rule and had followed it did better on their ice water or hand grip tasks when they tried them again than a control group that had been given no such homework. The two weeks of practicing resolve seemed to have generalized itself to other situations.

The precise mechanism at work here is not clear. Changes in behavior are often reflected in — or enabled by — changes in the brain, but studies with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have not yet shown any physical differences in the brains of people who practice lab-assigned discipline tasks. Still, other kinds of focus and training do change the brain.

“Both exercise and meditation lead to greater neuron density in the prefrontal cortex,” says Kelly McGonigal, a psychologist at Stanford University and author of the new book *The Willpower Instinct*. It’s in that region that executive skills such as impulse control and judgment live — making it a very good place to be adding neuronal connections. Even if the short-term exercises Baumeister assigns don’t have the same demonstrable effect, McGonigal has little doubt that they still “train up the skill set involved in self-awareness and practicing habits consistent with your goals.”

That sense of conscious adherence and regular practice is precisely the reason religious observances that prescribe strict rituals of self-denial can be so powerful. Every time an observer of Lent craves — and resists the lure of — a forbidden indulgence is a tiny reminder of a commitment made. The same is true for Muslims who tolerate their Ramadan hunger until the sun goes down. And while the 24 hours of Yom Kippur do not provide the same weeks-long training the other holidays do, the rules are stricter — with no food, no water, no bathing or washing, from sundown to sundown. Most of the day is spent in synagogue as well, which can be a trial of its own for people growing woozy with hunger.

The expressed liturgical purpose of all of these holidays is to teach piety, humility and submission

and to atone for wrongs. But present-day spiritual leaders also speak of just the kind of willpower calisthenics the scientists do, though they call it “transfer training.” Prohibitions against shellfish and pork in Jewish homes may have begun long ago with health concerns over the cleanliness of both foods, but modern inspections have effectively eliminated that worry. Still when you can pass up bacon no matter how good it smells or say no to a just-boiled lobster with a cup of drawn butter, that same facility with discipline can be applied to other areas of your life.

Distilling religious ritual down to scientific principle can be tricky — not just because it diminishes the more transcendent experiences of believers but because it can seem to justify a sort of cynical dismissiveness in non-believers. But — culture-war absolutism notwithstanding — both truths can exist simultaneously. A vigorous workout at your gym may make you feel great — but so can a joyous round of gospel singing, clapping and foot-stomping. Are rising endorphins and lower cortisol levels involved in both? Probably. But is that all that’s going on? Not to the believers it isn’t.

The best thing about science is that hard, empirical answers are always there if you look hard enough. The best thing about religion is that the very absence of that certainty is what requires — and gives rise to — deep feelings of faith. Lent — and Ramadan and Yom Kippur — teach both.

Jane Cowell Poitras

A Word from the Minister

Lent is the 40 days (not counting six Sundays) that fall between Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday. Sundays are not counted in the 40 days of Lent because every Sunday is considered a “little Easter.” In the early church, Lent was a time of final preparation for people who were seeking to be baptized. During this period of baptismal preparation, the church community adopted a 40-day discipline of fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. Prayer was for healing souls, fasting for healing bodies, and almsgiving for sharing — which heals community.

Many people in the northern hemisphere have believed that the word “Lent” comes from the same root as “length,” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. Some now believe, however, that it may

actually derive from the Latin word *lentare* which means “to bend.” This understanding reinforces a sense of Lent as a time of preparation for personal and collective transformation. Having nurtured ourselves through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, Lent becomes the time to look truthfully at ourselves and make changes.

During Lent, the selected scripture readings remind us that God calls us to live humble lives filled with justice and kindness. When we fall short of this vision, scripture assures us that God will forgive us and help us start fresh. When we err because we take over-much upon ourselves, Genesis reminds us that we are made from the dust of the earth. When we fall short because of feelings of fear or desolation, we’re reminded we are made in God’s image.

The biblical theme of Lent is the journey to Jerusalem. As Jesus turned toward Jerusalem, we turn to face our own vulnerability. We come to healing and wholeness by allowing our former self to come apart. Just as Jesus’ body was punctured on the cross, our sufferings on the cross of our spiritual unfolding may be painful to body, mind, and spirit. We have to let go of many kinds of illusions which hold our false sense of security together. We have to let go of “false” attachments – anything we attach our souls to instead of to God. We have to open to what’s real and face the shadows.

Like the prophets of old, we go through our “dark night” to become the whole persons God intends. Risking coming apart, we come together anew in “at-one-ment.” To be whole is to be at peace with God. Atonement is the peace of God, a peace the world without God cannot give. Atonement frees us for justice and kindness.

Our personal Lent will not always coincide with a particular season of the Christian Year. But Lent and Holy Week shape us to be people who can deal constructively with suffering when we need to. As God’s creations, we will always have Lenten times because we are always “becoming.” We are constantly called upon to change. Lent draws us into the faithful persistence of transformation. With Jesus we yield, come apart, and even die – so we can be born anew for God’s future.

And time and time again God is present, not just in strength but in weakness. God is working creatively with pain in human history, and working creatively

in us. Our changing self is getting ready for our part in building God’s peace.

Rev. Scott A. Patton.



World Day of Prayer - March 7th at 10:30am

Summerlea United Church is hosting this year's World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 7th at 10:30am. A light lunch will be served after the service.



A Word from the Outreach Committee

Lenten Loonies for Haiti

We will once again collect Loonies beginning **Sunday, March 9th**, the first Sunday in Lent and will continue each Sunday throughout the Lenten period. Your “Lenten Loonies” will be used for direct support to midwifery education in Haiti.



Outreach Sunday April 6th. Learning how micro-finance (such as KIVA) can help reduce World Poverty.

Miles of pennies - Have gone metric! Please help us complete our 25th mile of pennies while starting our first Kilometre of nickels.

Loose change can be placed in the maple syrup bucket at the back of the church.

Plant Sale May 24th 9.00am - 12.00pm. Please think of us when you start to clear your gardens. Any empty flower pots would be appreciated and can be left at the church.

Artisan Fair and Book Sale

Saturday, April 5th
10 am – 3 pm

Mark your calendars! Sponsored by the Girl Guides & the Outreach Committee. Come shop for that unique handcrafted gift for Easter or a



special Mother's Day present. Or, come by and browse through our slightly used selection of books. The menu in the Lunchroom includes Soup, Quiche, salad and dessert. Call Linda Rodrigues 514-637-4916, or Sue McKenzie 514-637-7605.

Maundy Thursday Potluck Supper and Seder meal - April 17, 6 pm.

At the potluck, we will share in the traditional Seder, using symbolic foods and asking the same questions that are used in Jewish family observances. This reminds us of the Last Supper, and of the traditional Jewish meal that Jesus and his disciples shared before he was put to death. *Watch for a sign-up sheet during coffee hour in April for the potluck, and more information in the bulletin.*

Good Friday Walk & Worship - April 18th

Please watch for more information in the Sunday morning bulletin.



Easter Services - April 20th

Sunrise Service at 7:00 am

Gather at Church for procession to Summerlea Park at the bottom of 55th. Then we return to the church for a breakfast of Hot Cross Buns, coffee and juice.

Easter Service with communion will take place at 10:30am in the Sanctuary.



Anniversary Dinner and Variety Show



A wonderful evening was in store for those who attended Summerlea's 62nd anniversary dinner and talent show in February. A home-cooked meal of salad, pork goulash, mashed potatoes and apple crisp with ice cream was served to a contented crowd of almost 90 people. The entertainment that followed was truly a "variety" show – there were singers, stories, piano/flute music, a spoof from our "Mumbo Jumbos" and even a skit with performing dogs! Those who attended all went home not only with a "warm fuzzy" feeling but a real "warm fuzzy" to wear around their neck. Thanks to everyone who

worked long and hard to make the evening a success – cooks, servers, cleaner-uppers, organizers and entertainers.

Susan Hawke

RECIPE CORNER

Here are a couple of nice easy recipes that are a staple at our home



Baked Salmon Fillet

Topping

Dijon mustard	lemon juice
Mrs Dash's seasoning	Italian bread crumbs

Line an oven proof dish with aluminium foil. Place fillets skin side down. Spread fillets with Dijon mustard, then top with lemon juice, Mrs. Dash's seasoning and Italian bread crumbs.

Bake at 400 deg for 10 minutes, and then broil for 3-4 minutes.

Flu Season Ginger Honey Lemon Tonic

makes one serving

1 cup water
1" or so ginger root, grated
1 organic lemon wedge
1 teaspoon honey, or to taste

Bring the water and ginger to a boil, then lower flame, add the lemon (squeeze it into the water then drop the whole thing in) and keep at a low simmer for a few minutes. Pour into a mug and stir in the honey. Drink it in good health.

We make up a batch at a time and keep in the fridge then microwave as needed.



Music Notes

We are deep into rehearsing for our new spring musical, "**Once Upon a Parable**", which takes place on Sunday, April 27th during the worship service and again on Saturday, May 3rd at 7:30pm. This musical spans the bible from creation to the resurrection of Jesus. Quite a feat in 45 minutes! The various parables are told with whimsy and humour and the



music is lively and toe-tapping. I hope you will come out on one or the other (or both!) of these dates to enjoy the show the cast is working so hard to prepare for you. Tell your families and friends!

Also, we welcome back Elias-Axel Pettersson, pianist and his two colleagues, Roland Arnassalon (violin) and Noémie Raymond-Friset (cello), all of whom have played for us before, beautifully. Please join us on Sunday, March 23rd. The concert, I'm sure, will be wonderful! Please spread the word. Suggested donation: \$15.

As we go to print, I do not have a date to give you, but Octet Plus will be performing a concert here at Summerlea again this spring, in aid of our local Food Bank at Resurrection Church. This will likely take place in mid-May. Information will soon be forthcoming.

Along with the above concerts, our choir is preparing some new music for Easter, which we hope you will enjoy! Let's spring into Spring!

Connie Osborne, Music Director

The Book Nook

By Jane Cowell-Poïtras



The Astronaut Wives Club by Lily Koppel

Based on interviews with the wives of the Gemini and Apollo astronauts, this is a fascinating examination of the day-to-day lives of the women married to the first American astronauts. The space race was taxing not just on the men who flew in America's spaceships in the 1960s and '70s, but also on their whole families. The media scrutiny was unbearably intense. Astronaut wives were under pressure from NASA, their husbands and themselves to project an outward image of family perfection while dealing with fear for their spouses' safety and the challenges of maintaining a home and children with almost no help.

Husbands and wives were often separated for long periods, and there was a culture among the astronauts that encouraged dalliances on the side while training hundreds of miles from home. Meanwhile, the vast majority of their wives were popping pills, drinking themselves into oblivion and finding solace with each other. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of

these marriages didn't last much beyond the glory of the space race era.

At the time, the life of an astronaut wife sometimes rivaled the exhilaration of flying to space. And there were certainly perks to make up for the sacrifices, such as receiving the celebrity treatment on worldwide tours and meeting heads of state when their husbands returned from a mission. It has often been said that behind every great man stands a great woman and this book clearly demonstrates how the Cold War space race era Astronaut Wives supported not only their husbands, but also NASA and their country – while watching their lives and marriages go up like a rocket and come down like a stick.

An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth by Col. Chris Hadfield

I must confess that I started reading this book purely because of my admiration for its author. I had absolutely no intention of liking this book – but as a Canadian and a bibliophile, I thought I should at very least, give it a cursory glance. But to my great surprise -I really enjoyed it!

The author brings space travel down to our level, for those of us who have followed the program with interest and who will never have the opportunity to go.

He explains that astronauts are just like the rest of us, albeit with much more training. We feel like we are experiencing the launch, the time in space and the return to earth as he takes us along for the ride. Hadfield's explanation of his time in space seems to be through the eyes of someone who is full of wonder just at the fact that he is there in the first place. But he also gives us a first hand account of the highs and lows of being on the International Space Station.

This book is for anyone who has ever wondered what it is like in space or who has dreamed of one day being able to go. And it is explained in layman's terms by a man who is obviously fully qualified to carry out all the complicated tasks that space travel requires but at the same time is completely grounded.

Out and About

Welcome to our new column! The Newsletter Editors would like to provide the congregation with ideas of places to go and visit and easy, inexpensive, day-trips that can be taken alone, or with family and friends.

We welcome submissions for future columns. Do you have a favourite place to picnic? Do you ever hop over the border to Ontario, or New York State or Vermont for the day? Have you ever cycled through the Eastern Townships? If so, we want to hear your ideas! Too busy to commit words to paper? Feel free to call one of the editors and we would be happy to write down your ideas!

As the weather is still cool, we decided to concentrate on closer, indoor activities for this edition. Here are three local exhibits you may not have seen:

Until March 30th: ***Impressions de voyage*** – Four artists have put together a group of their paintings done in the rest of Canada and on different world travels. Free admission. Open Friday nights from 6 – 9p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Closed on holidays. L'Entrepôt - 2901 St Joseph Blvd, Lachine.

While you are there, why not pop downstairs at the Entrepôt to see the permanent Dawes Beer exhibit about Black Horse Beer that was, at one time, brewed on site? ***To Get a Drink You Have to Sell*** is a delightful look at the marketing strategies and socio-economic context of selling beer, with over 800 artifacts on display. Open Friday nights from 6 – 9p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Closed on holidays. L'Entrepôt - 2901 St Joseph Blvd, Lachine.

Dorval Museum of Local History and Heritage is housed in the former stables of the Forest and Stream Club, constructed in 1874. Featuring three exhibition rooms, its mission is to inform the public about the founders of Dorval and important events in its history. Thursday to Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. 1850 Lakeshore Drive, Dorval

News and Notes – “Spring Ahead”

After icy, frigid cold and very snowy weather conditions this winter, “hip, hip hooray” for Spring time which is just around the corner!! Remember to change your clocks on **March 9th** when Daylight Saving Time begins.

In a recent chat with **Edna Lee** from far away Dartmouth, Edna asked me to send her greetings and best wishes to her extended family at Summerlea. We miss you Edna, and love that you keep in touch.

In the past couple of months, Summerlea United folks were saddened with the loss of some long-time members. Our Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of: **Sarah McCall** who passed away on December 17th at the West Island Palliative Care Residence; **Robert Laing** who died on December 20th; **Doris Stewart** who died peacefully at Les Floralties on January 16th, and **Richard Carey** who passed away after a brief illness on January 30th.

Please continue to keep in your prayers those listed in our Prayer Circle in each Sunday’s bulletin. If you would like more information on Summerlea’s monthly activities, or would like to view Sunday’s service along with current events at the church, please visit us at www.summerlea.ca. You might even recognize some faces of many Summerlea members posted on the website.

Until the next time. Susan Ippersiel

