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Pinegrove United Church

New Address?

If you have a new address, please let the church secretary know. Call, email or drop off a change of address card.

Email Listing

If you would like to be added to the Pinegrove email listing, please send your request to Joan Bailey, Communications – bailey@tbaytel.net



Pinegrove Post

"Reaching Out to Others With God's Love"

Winter 2016 Edition

HOBBITS GET IT

A Message from our Pastor Hubert Den Draak



J.R.R. Tolkien's little book "The Hobbit" was first published in 1938. Just about everyone knows of it now, but it took a long, long time before this modest little novel became more popular. Tolkien really wrote it as a practice run for his now famous "The Lord of the Rings" which wasn't popular either, until it was "discovered" in the mid '60 by a whole new generation readers who finally "got it".



Hobbits are gentle creatures (not unlike you or me) with some interesting traditions. And for some reason they came to mind as I started thinking about the Christmas season. I guess because one of the traditions they have is – giving gifts, but with a twist.

You see, to new friends, Hobbits will only give new gifts. And old friends are given old gifts, like family heirlooms. So the longer the friendship, the more ancient the gift. As you might suspect, this soon turned into a perpetual gift exchange. Prized possessions simply flow back and forth between friends old and new, and there's not one Hobbit who has a problem with it. After all, if that gift is something that is loved, it seems appropriate to share the love.

In our culture, this "regifting" is a big no-no; if you get a gift you don't like, you can't just "regive" to someone else. The classic sitcom "Seinfeld" has a brilliant episode on regifting and the awkward situations it can cause, not to mention the painful embarrassment if you get found out you regifted something you didn't want.

But I think the Hobbits were on to something, something we might take to heart as we get ready for another Christmas season. Just because a gift is old, well worn and perhaps out of style doesn't make it any less valuable. In fact, it might actually add value to it; not so much a value that's expressed in dollars, but a value that is highly symbolic and highly treasured both by the giver and the receiver.

The longer we have had a possession, the more it is treasured. Our friends the Hobbits, remind us that all gifts are really symbolic. They remind us that we ourselves are the real gifts that are exchanged with others.

(See page 2)

Upcoming Sunday Services

Services are at 10:30 am unless otherwise noted.

December 14 (7:30 pm)

Blue Christmas

December 18

Multi-site Service

December 24 at 10 pm

Christmas Eve Service
with the Sacrament of
Holy Communion

December 25

NO SERVICE TODAY

January 1, 2017

Wassailing breakfast
service

January 8, 2017

Joint Epiphany Service at
Pinegrove
- with all South Ward
United Churches followed
by a light lunch in
Fellowship Hall

For info about upcoming events,
please check out Pinegrove's
website:
www.PinegroveUC.org

I heard the bells on
Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play
And mild and sweet
their songs repeat
Of peace on earth
good will to men.

This sacred concept that gifts are intended to be signs is often forgotten in the advertising onslaught we have to undergo during the Christmas season. We become more concerned with how big a gift is, or how cool or unusual or expensive.

And we forget what giving is about: sharing the love. And no, "gifts that matter" look very different from what those Mastercard ads want you to believe. May the Hobbit's simple but sincere gift-giving tradition put our usual holiday excesses in a different perspective and make us rethink what giving is about.

Let's remember that the oldest Christmas gift was the gift of that baby born in Bethlehem. It's a gift that we cannot throw out or exchange. A gift of God's love that is both symbolic and treasured by us, a real gift that matters and doesn't have a price tag. It is something that we receive and re-gift throughout our lives, over and over. And the more this happens, the more it grows in value. I know, it might not be good for business, but it sure is good for our soul and this world we live in.

Christmas blessings,
Pastor Hubert

A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR CHURCH BOARD

(Claire Belluz, Brenda Cheetam, Donna & Jack McNally, Marion Wilson, John Venasky, Lionel Schutte, Wendy Vistorino, Joan Bailey, Deb Paris, David Duncan, Sandy Vibert, Wendy McFayden)

Our wish this Christmas is for continued appreciation of the many blessings we experience here at Pinegrove every day. We are so fortunate to have many dedicated and faithful members of our congregation who give so generously of their time and talents all year long. We should be proud of ourselves for the way we can come together to welcome our community to our fundraising efforts, the way we reach out to those less fortunate, and the fellowship we feel towards each other as we go about the work of our Church.



Our Café del Soul project is in full swing now and becoming the place to be every other Thurs at noon for food, fellowship and fun. Congratulations to the hard working volunteers co-ordinated by Wendy O'Connor !

Remember your Church as the year end approaches for your tax receipts; the Milk Fund , United Church Gifts of Vision, and all the other ways you can give this Christmas season.

Many blessings
Claire Belluz, Chair

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE - The annual Blue Christmas Service will be held on Wednesday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m. This annual service provides an opportunity for people to come and be in the presence of God; to acknowledge their grief, despair and loneliness and give it to God. Buy a blue bulb in memory of someone, a white bulb as a greeting to someone. All bulbs are \$5 each. A sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex. All donations will go to Palliative Care at St. Joseph's Hospital. A time of refreshment will be held afterwards in Fellowship Hall.



Now in its fourth month of bi-weekly operation, Café del Soul is truly making a difference in the lives of local people who need a chance to get out, socialize, and enjoy a tasty, nutritious meal. It's very heartwarming to see people meeting old friends, and making new ones.

The number of guests at the luncheons is steadily growing, with more than 30 people usually attending, along with up to 10 volunteers who prepare the meal (sometimes a day or two ahead), greet the guests, and serve the food.



We are pleased to announce that Café del Soul has been approved by the Conference of Manitoba and Northwest Ontario for a second Mission Support Grant of \$5,500, which will contribute towards the Café's operations in 2017. A generous donor has also provided the Café volunteers with custom aprons bearing the Café logo - both attractive and practical.

With the growing numbers of attendees, the Café is always looking for additional volunteers, especially to greet and interact with the guests. Interested? Talk to Wendy O'Connor or Pastor Hubert, or join us for a meal at one of the Thursday luncheons, and see what all the smiles are about!

Outreach Opportunities

During the Christmas season, there are a variety of ways in which you can participate to help others. Below is Pinegrove's Outreach Christmas List. Clearly-marked baskets for donations of items can be found in the cupboard in the Narthex at Pinegrove.

- **Milk Fund** - make a donation to the Milk Fund in someone's name. Colourful giving cards are available in the Narthex. You get the receipt and they get the card.
- **Gifts With Vision** - Gift catalogues for special mission purchases can also be found in the Narthex. Give gifts to relatives, friends, and loved ones that are in direct support of the church's Mission & Service partners across Canada and around the world.
- **The Mitten Tree** - These mitts and hats, etc., are hung on our mitten tree at the front of the Sanctuary. They are later delivered to various schools to be given to children who are in dire need of them. Hang any donations on the tree or leave them on the front pew.
- **Faye Peterson Transition House** - Faye Peterson house is always looking for donations of personal care items, crayons and colouring books, new clothing for children, hats and mitts, etc.
- **Shelter House Christmas Gifts** - Gifts are given to the clients and include warm pairs of socks, t-shirts, underwear and personal care items.

Artwork at Pinegrove

As part of the Café del Soul program, the artwork of Heather Peden has been on display at Pinegrove for the month of December. Heather is a rural photographer and writer whose work shows a deep love and respect for our area. All the artwork is for sale and would make a unique Christmas gift.

SLOW COOKER CHOCOLATE CAKE

2 cups white sugar
2 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
Pinch of cinnamon
3/4 cup of cocoa powder, sifted
Whisk together.

In a separate bowl whisk together:

2 eggs
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup water or brewed coffee

Mix both together until moistened. Turn into greased crockpot. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips. Cook on high until tester comes out clean, about 2 hours. Turn off and let cool for 15 minutes. Serve with whipped cream. Makes 15 servings.

Café del Soul's
Secret Beef Stew Recipe

*This recipe has ample meat
and is gluten free!
(40 servings)*

- 10 lbs. stewing meat
- Small amount oil for browning meat
- 25 medium carrots, cut into chunks
- 30 small potatoes, diced
- 8 large onions, chopped
- 10 stalks celery, sliced
- 3 qt. beef stock (*made with Knorr liquid stock mix - about 1/3 a bottle*)
- 1 T. sugar (*opt. - the onions may make it pretty sweet*)
- ½ tsp. thyme
- ½ tsp. savory
- 2 T. Worcestershire sauce or to taste
- 4 bay leaves, whole
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Cube stew meat, and brown in a small amount of oil.
2. While meat is browning, add water to stock pot and mix up stock.
3. Place browned meat aside, use a small amount of stock to de-glaze frypans and add liquid back to stock pot.
4. Add meat and carrots to stock pot. Simmer for 30 minutes.
5. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer for 2 hours more.
6. Remove whole bay leaves prior to serving.

New Roofing - During the fall, much-needed repairs were made to part of the roof at Pinegrove, at a cost of \$5,300. If you would like to make a special donation to help offset this expense, please indicate that on your offering envelope. If you don't have envelopes or would like to go on Pre-Authorized Remittance, please contact the church treasurer.

Successful Fundraisers - Our Fall Supper was held on Wednesday, October 19 and was a great success. We just about had a full house and our profits were over \$6,500. Numbers for our Country Christmas tea, held on Saturday, November 19, were down a bit this year compared to last year's, mostly due to bad weather, but that didn't stop us from having a great time. Profits for this year's tea were approximately \$2,400. Sincere thanks are extended to everyone who helped out in any way or donated items for bake tables, specialty food, or silent auction items for both of these successful fundraisers.

Thank you to our Shelter House workers! - Pinegrove's two Shelter House groups have been providing nutritious and tasty meals at Shelter House once a month for many years. Recently, however, the tough decision was made to disband the groups, due in large part to a dwindling volunteer base. We would like to send out a huge THANK YOU! to all those who participated over the years on a regular basis or who took an occasional turn helping out.

White Gift Service and Pot Luck Lunch - On Sunday, December 4, the youngest Pinegrove members put on a White Gift play called "The New Star". Congregation members brought in non-perishable food items, wrapped in white bags. Monetary donations and gifts for the Christmas Cheer Fund were also accepted. Following the service, a wonderful pot-luck lunch was enjoyed in Fellowship Hall.

Christmas Eve Service

Mark your calendars for Pinegrove's Christmas Eve Service with communion. This year it will be held at 10 p.m.

There will be no service at the church on Christmas Day.



Looking Forward

- February 4, 2017 - Annual Meeting
- February 2017 - Annual Finnish Pancake brunch (watch for details)
- May 2017 - Green Thumb Tea

Merry Christmas!