

BUC COFFEE & CHAT



Welcome friends. In this edition of our newsletter we'll say farewell to summer, and welcome autumn in all of its glory. Pour yourself a cup of coffee and let's chat.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Autumn has always been my favorite season. Something happens to my energy, like blowing on a fire, it ignites with a sudden whoosh! Brisk winds clear out the last of the summer lethargy. Paradoxically, as the days get shorter my stamina gets longer. I want to do everything at once.

That autumn should be joyful is somewhat counterintuitive. It's a slow slide into winter's barrenness. It's a full-scale immersion in the experience of decay. Theoretically, that should be depressing. But the way I see it, autumn is also the sign of a year going down in a blaze of glory. It's a stunning last act, a vibrant refusal to just fade away. If fall had a mascot, I think it would be Iris Apfel or Emiko Mori, women whose auras seem to expand in old age instead of shrinking in the way the world expects. All the color, the scents, the foods: like the finale of a variety show, autumn pulls out all the stops.

I think of Wordsworth:

Wild is the magic of autumnal winds amongst

the faded woods.

Something I've been exploring lately is the idea of bittersweet joy: the joy that mingles with sadness, loss, or nostalgia. A poignant kind of feeling, it's a mature strain of joy, a joy that is somehow deepened by its imperfection. Many things become more complex with age: wine, houses, friendships. Our emotions do too. If

you've ever seen the movie *Inside Out*, it's that moment where the emotions start to become tinged with blue, holding sadness and joy together. As we age, we seem able to hold more contrasting ideas together in our minds, and more conflicting feelings in our hearts. If summer is pure,

unadulterated joy, then autumn is a deeper, less obvious pleasure.

That deepening and maturing also illustrates the experience of sharing our lives in companionship with Jesus. At first our journeying is full of innocent excitement that is easily thrown off course and distractable, but as we continue to walk with Jesus, the depth and



Praise to You, God, for long warm days, for buzzing bees and chirping crickets, for shade trees and gentle breezes.

Praise to You for the earth's rotation, for our cycle around the sun, for "sun, moon, and stars in their courses above."

Praise to You for the order of the universe, the variety of the seasons, and the gift of another summer.



A Song of Faith states,

God is creative and self-giving,
generously moving
in all the near and distant corners of the universe.
Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.
Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.
We sing thanksgiving.

Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,
of living things, diverse and interdependent,
of complex patterns of growth and evolution,
of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,
we sing of God the Creator,
the Maker and Source of all that is.

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator,
who is both in creation and beyond it.

All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.

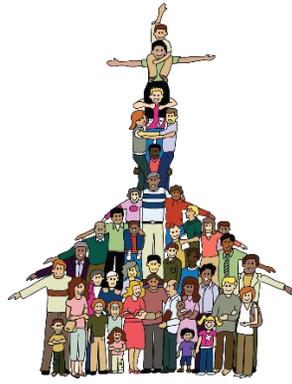
All creation is good.

We sing of the Creator,
who made humans to live and move
and have their being in God...

In grateful response to God's abundant love,
we bear in mind our integral connection
to the earth and one another;
we participate in God's work of healing and mending creation.

—A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of the United
Church of Canada, 2006





BUC COMMUNITY NEWS

"Rejoice with those who rejoice. Weep with those who weep."

Thank you to everyone for your continued prayers and financial donations.

- We pray for the leaders of our province and our country, and for all the voters.
- We pray for the people of Afghanistan who are under Taliban rule, all people who are attempting to leave the country safely, and all those who must stay. We also pray for the leaders of countries who will be receiving refugees from all nations, that they do so with compassion and understanding.
- We pray for the people of Haiti who have endured another natural disaster while still trying to recover from so many other issues.
- We pray for the countries around the world who do not have enough hospital beds or vaccines for their people, or are facing other challenges which threaten the health of their populations.
- We pray for all the people of Canada- those who are trying to heal from the multi-generational trauma, those who are the targets of systemic racism, those who are sick, hurting or lonely, those who are excited about new possibilities, those who are uncertain, those who want to make positive changes, and all those who walk their own personal journeys calling this country their home.

If you have news you'd like to share in the next newsletter or would like to share a word of encouragement with everyone, please email the details to Angela at balzacunitedchurch@gmail.com or call her at 587-229-3878.

Donna Watt sends cards to our BUC church family. If you know someone who is ill, is celebrating a birthday, is grieving, or just needs a thank you or a bit of encouragement, please email Donna at donnamwatt34@gmail.com

Walking Prayer – a Nature Walk with God

Updated: Sep 9, 2018

It is that time of year when we wake up to crisp, fresh air, colorful trees, and morning mist. Last fall when I had just moved to Colorado, I wondered if I had ever lived the change of the seasons more fully awake and in awe of its beauty. The bright colors of the aspen leaves and first snow on the mountain tops are magical. It is absolutely stunning here at this time of the year!

"Let the Birds Do the Heavy Lifting"

In spiritual direction we often say, "*let silence do the heavy lifting*". It is a gracious reminder of the fact that we are not in charge. God desires to reveal himself to us, more than we want to hear and see him. I recently read in Richard Louv's book 'Vitamin N' the following,

"Take a break. Look at the clouds. Listen to the wind. Let the birds do the heavy lifting."

What a lovely reminder it is of how God wants to meet us in and through his creation. When we feel tired and heavy-hearted by the complexities of our lives and this broken world, the birds of the air remind us of Jesus' words, "*Are you not of more value than they?*" (Matthew 6:26). And perhaps we come to release our tight fists a little and breathe a little more deeply and slowly.

"Let the birds do the heavy lifting..." Hmm.

Taking a walk outside is such a wonderful spiritual practice. In fact, research shows that most people's earliest memories of God, or spiritual experiences took place in the outdoors. Being immersed in God's wild creation is one of those "thin" or "privileged" places where God's reality and felt presence comes near to us.

Next time when you are outside, why don't you try some new ways of engaging with God, and his creation through imagination and senses?

Use Your Senses to Really Notice

Close your eyes, tilt your head slightly back and take a deep breath in through your nose to smell the air. Stick out your tongue to feel which way the wind is blowing and feel the temperature. Cup your hands around your ears to listen to what's in front of you, or cup them backward to better notice what you hear behind you. Form binoculars with your hands to imitate owl's narrow straight-facing eye view, and turn your head and body to observe your surroundings. Use your eyes to notice the wonders of nature by zooming into a pattern of a leaf, texture of a rock, or the form of a small insect. Don't only focus on fixed objects, instead look into the spaces in between the objects, movement, shadows and shades.



Touch, Play, and Make Something

God did not make the earth only for us to care for but also to enjoy. Nature is a source of beauty, rest, inspiration, and healing. Instead of just observing your environment from the distance get close and in touch with it. Gently rub your hands on the trunk of a tree, snack on the wild berries, hop across a ditch, imitate a bird tweet, or walk barefoot in a shallow creek. Do something that feels fun, playful, invitational, and allows you to embrace the child within you. I sometimes like to take close up photos or draw details of patterns that catch my interest. Depending on where you live and what the regulations are, nature can be a wonderful source for art, craft, nutrition, and building supplies. Simply enjoying the diversity of God's craftsmanship displayed in nature can be a powerful spiritual experience. For others, joining in the pleasure of creating through natural materials enhances the felt union with the Maker.

Prayer of Simple Regard

Prayer of simple regard is a way of praying while we hold a gaze with God on a person, nature, or an object without judgement or analysis. We spend a few moments simply looking at something, allowing this practice to be a channel of God's loving presence with us in the moment.

Here is a short prayer guide for your use as you go on "wonder walks" in the nature this fall.

You will need:

- Comfortable walking shoes.
- Drawing paper and clipboard, or a drawing pad with a hard back.
- Notebook or journal.
- Pencil (and whatever other art materials you may wish to use).

Prayer Guide:

Take a slow walk outside alone or with someone else. If you have company, choose not to talk to each other for a while so that you can be more aware of everything else around you. You can take a walk in your home garden, own neighborhood or out in the mountains, seaside, or riverfront.

Begin by standing upright and balanced. Pull your shoulders back and relax. Notice your body and its subtle movements, possible tensions and aches.

Become aware of Jesus being with you. Can you imagine what he looks like? What is he wearing?

He invited you to go for this walk with you. He is eager to show things to you and be with you. You can talk to him quietly in your heart and listen to him as you walk, or just be quiet together.



Start taking in your surroundings, the smells, sights, temperature and sounds. Do not rush. You might see something that you want to touch. Go ahead and touch it (if it's allowed and safe, of course!).

After a while, notice if there is something in particular that catches your attention. Pause and get closer to it. Hold your gaze on the object or creature for some moments. It can be a stick on the ground, a tree, a stone, a building, an insect, or even a person. If you can, hold it in your hand. Take time to study the details of it (texture, weight, smell, etc.). You might even ask yourself what it would feel like to be that object.

Peacefully, keep your eyes on this one thing or person. Remind yourself that Jesus is with you and is watching closely the same thing that you are. Hold this gaze with Jesus. Imagine what he sees. What do you see? Is there something that Jesus wants to tell you through what you are looking at? Don't analyze or try to explain anything. Simply look.

Draw what you see, or if you can you can pick it up and take home with you. Remember that some things should be left in the nature.

Next to your drawing, if you wish, write down any thoughts that came to mind.

If you were able to bring your object of observation with you, you can use it as part of a nature weaving or hanging mobile. Each time you go for a walk and your eye catches something that you want to spend time looking at with God, you can bring this home and finally you have enough to make a weaving. Alternatively you can simply place the object at your prayer table, or somewhere in your prayer nook.

Notice:

What was it like to go for a walk with Jesus? How was it different from any other walk, even though Jesus is always with you? What made this time different?

What did you notice about your surroundings?

What did you spend time looking at? How was it for you to pay such a close attention for a long time to one thing?

Reflection: Do you have a fixed "sit spot", a "sacred place" out in the nature where you can go, rest, and observe the world around and within you?

What is your earliest memory of you enjoying the nature? Where were you? What did you do?

How does weather and your physical environment affect your life with God?

What hinders you from spending time outside?





Autumn Word Search

B U G U N T L C Z M A D A O F
M Q A E A T Y I Q U R P E A L
E T A U H S P S T K P E M G F
A C N A N A N U E L O I W N E
Y J N Z Y R M I E R L I G F T
S K G V O N D C P Y O G Z U A
S M X C M Y I D S U X M B V T
H Y A K S D S C D A M O S E X
J E R Q E H A G B L E P U C U
C K G R L R W S I L M A K S W
K R U X E J I K K E B V E I J
J U M C V V D D C A O Q S P N
S T R K A C D P D V T J O S X
O O B O N F I R E E L U T A I
W E D I R Y A H R S S O M D U

ACORN
APPLE CIDER
AUTUMN
BONFIRE

FAMILY
HAYRIDE
LEAVES
PUMPKIN

SCARECROW
SMORES
TURKEY
THANKS

Thank you God for the colors we use on this page which have been inspired by the amazing creations made by your own hands. Amen.

Give Thanks

Ministry-To-Children

