



Fort Massey Star

Summer 2009

www.fortmasseychurch.com

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“Then followed that beautiful season... Summer.... Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light; and the landscape Lay as if newly created in all the freshness of childhood.”

~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tom Harpur, Anglican priest and journalist, writes about an interview with Michael Ramsey who was Archbishop of Canterbury at the time. He remembers that one statement by Ramsey stands out above all others when he asked him what he considered to be his major achievement. “*I think*”, Ramsey replied “*I have finally mastered the art of doing nothing.*”

Aware of his books, his work, his busy life, Harpur knew that Ramsey did not mean this in the sense of laziness or simply passing the time. He interpreted it to mean that he was talking about the art of creative, meditative sitting or being still.

Harpur notes, “*reflecting on this, you realize that most of the truly creative leaps in history have begun when the innovators were ‘doing nothing’.* That is true of scientific breakthroughs...Isaac Newton under the apple tree... Archimedes in his bathtub... Einstein sitting on a streetcar... and so on, endlessly.”

The art of doing nothing,

and being creative because we have spent the time reflecting, meditating, thinking, is often lost in our modern society.

In The Bible we have the story of Elijah, an older parable about those who look for God in the grand gestures - in the wind and the earthquake, in the thunder and the noise - who expect signs and miss the presence of God in the stillness, in the still small voice, in the faint murmuring sound.

This summer I invite us all to slow down and take the time to sit on the deck, walk on the beach, and cultivate the art of nothingness, so that we may head into the fall renewed, refreshed and re-created.

And I invite you to join me in praying this basic prayer of Harpur’s... *Lord, teach me to sit still.*

Shalom,
Rev. Trent





A Dear John Letter...

June 2009
Cedar Park, Texas

Dear John:

I recently attended your three lectures in Austin, Texas. You are an important person in my growth. I was raised as a fundamentalist, and you allowed me to begin and continue my journey. You mentioned prayer, and defined the prayers of most as "adult letters to Santa Claus." I must admit that it is an excellent definition. My question is this: What does prayer look like to you today? Thank you for continuing to educate.

~Jody Jones

Dear Jody,

I don't like to use the word *prayer*, because it is culturally translated as one person approaching the theistic God above the sky with a request. The word itself has

become bankrupt and not capable of redemption.

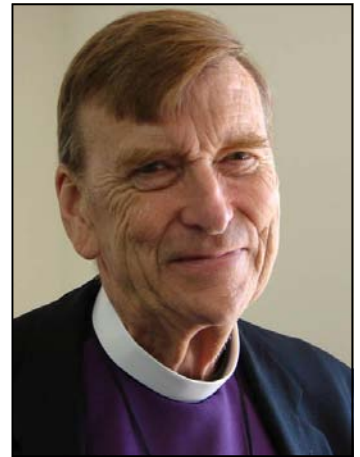
Instead, I think of prayer as communing with the holy, that which is transcendental, the power of life, the consciousness of the divine, the Ground of Being or perhaps the source of love. I do not commune with God in order to seek divine favor or to engage in religious flattery that people call praise. I commune to discover God within me and to be more open to that presence. I do not separate prayer from life. I do not think prayer is something I do, so much as it is something I am.

Public worship has elements of liturgical prayer in it and I engage in public worship every Sunday. I believe the purpose of liturgy is to open us to the presence of the holy in the gathered community. I resent having medieval patterns of liturgy imposed on me, as if somehow plain-song music and priestly

chanting creates holiness. To me it only creates irrelevant liturgy. I have written on prayer many times. I experience more in prayer than I can describe in words. That is as far as I can go.

I hope this helps.

~John Shelby Spong



John Shelby Spong is a prolific writer of contemporary theological scholarship and was Episcopal Bishop of New Jersey, USA

"My question is this: What does prayer look like to you today?"

"What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfillment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will ever fade."
~Gertrude Jekyll

Church Bulletin Bloopers

- The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around

- the house. Bring your husbands.
- Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super

- entertainment and gracious hostility.
- Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10 AM . All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.

Youth in Worship

The following blog is from the Senior Pastor in one of America's fastest growing congregations, Mount Pleasant Community Church, Greenwood, Indiana.

I've been thinking lately about what it means to have a multi-generational church. And please understand that when I use the term "multi-generational church" I'm talking about having a variety of ages worshipping together in our weekend services. Right now, we offer programming for children through the 4th grade for all of our services, and we include programming for 5th and 6th graders on Sunday mornings at 9:00. Children who are in the 7th grade and above worship together with their families.

From time-to-time I have conversations with people who wonder why we don't offer programming for 7th and 8th graders or even a separate worship service geared specifically for teenagers like in times past. At the same time, we have parents with children for whom we provide programming who choose to bring

them into the main services for a variety of reasons. So what's the right answer?

I don't claim to have all the answers or to always be right on every issue, but let me just tell you what I believe about all of this: I believe in the value of multi-generational worship. I believe that there needs to be a place for families to worship together, and I believe that someone who is in the 7th grade and up is not too young to come to the main service. (I actually believe 5th and 6th grade is not too young to come into the main service, either). What happens when families worship together? I can think of a number of things. First, worshipping together creates a living legacy of faith and faithfulness. What impact do you think it has on your children to see you sing, and pray, and study God's Word? What impact will it have on your children to take the Lord's Supper alongside you and see how meaningful it is in your life? What kind of memories do you think this will create? Worshipping together as a family can create a living legacy of faith and

faithfulness. Second, worshipping together provides opportunities to talk about matters of faith. In Deuteronomy 6, God instructs His people to take His commands and place them upon their hearts. He goes on to tell them to impress them on their children by talking about them when they are sitting at home, walking down the road, when they lie down and when they get up. Worshipping together as a family can provide the specific subject matter for these kinds of conversations. I'm not foolish or arrogant enough to believe that someone who is 12 or 13 is going to listen to and understand every single thing that I say from the pulpit, but I know that they will listen to and understand at least some of the things I say. And let's not forget that the communication of God's Word to anyone is more about the Holy Spirit than it is the preacher. Third, worshipping together creates unity in the church. I have serious concerns about what the long-term results are of developing age specific worship venues for every age in the church. Where will it end? Today's teens are

tomorrow's young adult; today's young adults are tomorrow's young parents; today's young parents are tomorrow's empty-nesters, etc. My concern is that making it your goal to program for every age has the potential to fracture the church and breed spiritual selfishness and immaturity. That might sound like an overreaction, but I've seen it happen. There are a lot of things that seem like a good idea in the moment but the long-term ramifications are not what we hoped for.

These are the things that I have been thinking about lately. I understand that not everyone will agree with me, and that's okay. I don't even mind if you share your disagreement with me (try to be kind...we all have the same ultimate goal).

Pastor Chris Philbeck

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

E-mail us at:

ftmassey@eastlink.ca



Photos submitted by Alison McDonald

Limiting Our Carbon Footprint

It is no secret that for many years Fort Massey has had a less than dependable heating system. One would think that something that is so unreliable would also be cheap – alas, that is not the case.

Over the past 3-4 years the annual cost of fuel alone has been approximately \$30,000 per year. Maintenance costs add another \$3000 to \$4000 per year—sometimes more. Nevertheless, we still find the congregation wearing their coats in the pews on many Sundays.

As a result of lengthy investigations and negotiations by members of the Property Committee, the Board of Management passed the following motion at its most recent meeting:

MOVED: that the Board of Management of Fort Massey United Church authorize the expenditure of \$166,000 for the supply and installation of a gas-fired, hot-water heating system, complete with piping, radiation units and ancillary equipment. Further, that the appropriate signing authorities be instructed to enter into a suitably detailed contract with Greg Turner Plumbing and Heating Ltd. for the execution of this work; all work is to be completed and fully commissioned by 30 Sept 2009.

Funds to complete the project, which will cost \$166,000 including taxes, will come from the Church's investments. Some of the taxes will be recoverable through a rebate of the GST/HST.

Estimates we have are that the annual savings in fuel costs by simply changing from oil to gas

will be in the range of 20% to 30%. In addition, the savings generated by changing from a steam heat system to a hot water system are estimated at a further 20% to 30%. There will of course also be significant reductions, if not elimination, of maintenance costs. As well, the new system will have zones, allowing for specific areas of the Church building to be heated as needed, without having to heat the whole building.

The result is that Fort Massey could save in the range of \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year in operating expenses, meaning that the cost of the system could be recovered within less than ten years.

It is worth noting that in effect the use of the investment funds for this project means a return on those investments in the range of 10% per annum, which far exceeds the return that has been available anywhere in the investment market in many years.

As the result of support received at the congregational meeting held 14 June 09, the heating renewal program is to occur!

By Peter Coulthard



It's that time of year again!

Our Annual

BLOCK PARTY

Sunday, Sept 13, 2009

11:30 a.m.

Following the 10:30 a.m.

Worship & Church School,

join us for food, fellowship & fun

on Tobin Street

as we welcome new & old friends!

**In case of inclement weather,
the Block Party
will be held in the Church Hall.**

