

Friday News from South West

February 17, 2023

[God Gives the Growth – 1 Corinthians 3-7b](#)

I would not call myself a hoarder, but I do tend to keep those things which have touched my heart deeply over the years.

So many of the prayers, the poetry, the pages of the book I am writing are stored in a large blue container. I must admit that the size of this container has grown over the years – in fact, friends in ministry will sometimes contact me for inspiration and the standing joke has become “do you feel like dumpster diving today?”



If you recall, last Sunday we read from Psalm 119, part one. Well, way back in February 2014, while a student minister in Lacolle, Clarenceville and Hemmingford, Psalm 119, part 2 was included in the day’s lectionary. Today I found the bulletin cover from that day. I kept it because the words on the back of the printed bulletin touched my soul.

So, this week, in a flash-back moment to 2014, I would like to share them with you.

They begin with the words from Leigh Sinclair:

"Happy are those who...seek God with their whole heart" (Psalm 119: 2)

We hear about God’s love watering and warming us to growth, but where is this Gardener in the dark of winter? Where is the fertile Lover in this season of parched, frozen ground and bare trees? Where is this Gardener in our spiritual seasons of parched, frozen prayers and bear hearts? Can we still seek God with our whole hearts when faith is cold and growth suspended?

Let us remember that God’s love is not season-bound, or dependent on how we are feeling or the weather. Look up at the night sky – imagine the Northern Lights nourishing your heart. Seek the Gardener’s voice not by travel or progress but by abiding in these quiet, waiting

times. For with God nothing is impossible. God made every season of faith (parched, fertile, or flooded) for all Creation. We are called to celebrate both growth and our time of Sabbath.

This season let us rest, trusting our inner dormant seeds of God's love. Let us prepare for the adventures ahead by strengthening our faith with the wisps of dancing colors!

Amen and in peace

Pastor Beryl, DLM

The Mission and Service of The United Church of Canada: God's Mission, Our Gifts

Lent Begins

Next Tuesday, February 21st, is Shrove Tuesday, and Wednesday, February 22nd is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Summerlea United does not have a tradition of holding a special service on that day; nevertheless, options are available for those wishing to receive ashes, as well as for those wishing to receive pancakes!

On February 21st at 7 pm, Rev. Christine and Connie (retired organist) will be hosting a **Taizé prayer service**. Rev. Christine will be giving ashes for those who want them. Pastor Beryl will also be present at that service.

On Sunday, the 26th, (joint worship at 10:00), Summerlea is having the Scouts and Girl Guides (almost-non-religious service) in honour of Lord and Lady Baden Powell. This service will be followed by a pancake brunch. For this special joint service, ashes can be given that day to whoever wants them.

[Montreal's Black History: Rev. Charles Este](#)

Charles H. Este ministered at Montreal's Union United Church from 1923 (while still a student) until 1968, dedicating his life not just to the church but to the Black community.

Reverend Este was born in Antigua. "In 1913, a CPR agent lured nine Antiguans to Canada - including Charles Este, future Reverend of Montreal's influential Union United Church - with hollow promises of lucrative employment." Once in Montreal, Reverend Este studied for the ministry at the Congregational College of Canada until April 1925. In 1923, the then Union Congregational Church asked him "to be its student-pastor for the 1923



Rev. Dr. Charles Humphrey Este
1972. Painting by Compton. Oil on canvas, 58.4 cm x 43.2 cm
Photo: Rachel Garber. Courtesy Union United Church, Montreal

summer. His performance was so satisfactory that his office was extended until May 1, 1925.”

Reverend Este served as the minister of Union United Church from May 1925 until April 1968. (Union was a charter member of the United Church of Canada, a new ecclesiastical body that was formed on June 11, 1925.)

During his 43 years as the minister of Union United Church, Reverend Este not only led his congregation, but was also an “active member and chaplain of the Universal Negro Improvement Association...and founded the Negro Community Centre.” The Black community turned to Union United Church and the Reverend with their questions and concerns. Reverend Este “became public health officer, immigration consultant, social and community worker, anti-discrimination activist, remedial education teacher, and recreation animator...In the Fall of 1927, therefore, Rev. Charles Este suggested to the congregation that a Negro Community Centre was an immediate necessity.”

The Negro Community Centre honoured its founder by rechristening itself the Negro Community Centre / Charles H. Este Cultural Centre. Six decades after its inception, in 1993, the NCC ceased all activity. The organisation experienced difficulties accessing funding for its programs and maintenance cost of the building was extremely high. In April 2014, the wall of the NCC building collapsed. In November of 2014, twenty years after it was last used, and after the organisation filed for bankruptcy, the NCC building was demolished.

In 2020, a citizen group issued a call for the revival of the NCC and held a march on August 1 to support the idea. In December, Montreal City Council voted to purchase the land where the NCC once stood. According to this [Global story](#), “The city plans to work with diverse community organizations to decide the future of the site.”

Union United Church established a scholarship in Rev. Este’s name in 1972 which stills exists today. Applications for this year’s scholarships are being accepted until April 30th, 2023. Interested applicants can find out more at <https://www.unionunitedchurchmtl.ca/index.htm>

Announcements

Sunday February 19: Transfiguration, SouthWest service at 11:30; Combined coffee time with Summerlea is at 11:00.

Tues., February 21: Taizé prayer service, 7pm

Sun. February 26: Joint service with Summerlea at 10AM.

EASTER falls on April 9th and 10th this year.

Please note: the new office phone number is 514 538-0624

Our Prayer List

Bridget McCarthy

Phyllis Luther

Shirley Mitchell

Patrick O'Leary

Natalie Lalonde

Doris Smith

Maurice Tringle

Gilles Gauthier

Helen Cameron

May Cook

Donna Cobb

Keith Wood

Violet L'Esperance

Roberta Roberts

Sylvia Vallee-Girouard

If you would like your name added to the prayer list, or if you are requesting on behalf of a family member, call the office or contact Pastor Beryl directly.



SouthWest United Church

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