

**University Hill Congregation  
- United Church of Canada-**

# **Annual Report 2015**

As presented to the

# **Annual Congregational Meeting**

**Sunday, May 15, 2016  
Chapel of the Epiphany,  
6030 Chancellor Boulevard,  
Vancouver, B.C.**

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## Letter from the Minister

Dear friends at University Hill Congregation

Giving thanks for all that is past ... and pressing forward towards “the upward call in Christ Jesus”, would be a good summary of my experience with you this year. As one (of many) who have admired and appreciated the ministry and witness of UHill and the leadership of Ed Searcy, I was delighted to be asked to consider being involved with you until the search for a new minister concluded.

Last summer I participated in 15 different UHill meetings and events, and agreed to work at three-quarter time from September through June, facilitating the transition between the long discipleship-building ministry with Ed, and the hoped-for beginning with a new congregational pastor. I believe we have had a good year, looking back and looking forward, maintaining the lively Sunday worship which is the hub of our congregational life, and continuing to live out the distinctive marks of the Christian church.

Weekly patterns for me during these months have revolved around planning for worship, getting to know many people who are part of the extended UHill community, following up with groups and committees, and trying to encourage forward movement through the uncertainties, hesitations, and hopeful expectations of a congregation in transition. Consistent weekly meetings have included staff times with Marjorie and Karen, worship planning with Gerald and Margaret, meeting the Wednesday morning Bible Study group at the Broadway White Spot, participating in supervisory hours with Karen, and trying to write a regular email circular to everyone on our list. I am grateful to the leaders of the Session, Stewards, M&P committee, Leadership group, Worship committee, and the Care and Share committee for the opportunity to actively collaborate in their ongoing work.

Janet Reid hosted a fall evening Bible Study in which I was involved, working through the letter of James, and a spring study looking at people and events critically engaged with Jesus during Passion Week. On several occasions I joined a lively band organized by Gerald, and tried to keep up with others on my clarinet. With members of the worship committee I helped coordinate the visits of a number of guest preachers, supported and worked with family members planning two memorial services at Epiphany Chapel, and helped coordinate and lead various special worship gatherings during the church year (e.g. the healing service on Nov 1, Advent and Christmas, Recommitment Sunday in January, Lent (including the wonderful Lenten Reflections, where almost 48 people offered their response to a scripture passage as a devotional to be shared through our membership and on the website), and Easter. Yes, it has been a busy year, stimulating, rewarding, and deeply encouraging.

I have enjoyed and been challenged by the opportunity to support Karen through her internship this year; I believe our weekly meetings have been constructive for both of us. Working with Marjorie, who as our Administrative Secretary maintains order in the midst of many details, has been a delight. Becoming involved with the leaders (and members) of the various groups and committees who do so much to contribute to the richly interwoven life of UHill has been nothing short of wonderful.

University Hill Congregation is blessed with a strong sense of identity, and a serious openness to new opportunities for mission and ministry. The quick engagement of many in response to the invitation to support Syrian refugees illustrates this heart for embodying the gospel of Jesus through our own lives. The same hands-on engagement of the monthly creation of sandwiches for First United Church is another illustration. A high commitment to worship reflecting the mystery and majesty of God is palpable through the breathtaking musical offerings each week by Margaret Skarsgard and The Singers, the spirited leadership and accompaniment of our beloved Gerald Hobbs (and his invited guests and collaborators), and the periodic gift of Jocelyn Pritchard's presence as well. The same is true of the many individuals who accept responsibility for one or another element in our worship life each Sunday. Care and concern for each person and for the fabric of our congregational community is demonstrated by many individuals through their attention to others.

As we look towards the arrival of Aaron Miller as your new minister at the end of June, I encourage everyone at UHill to continue in the future as you have in the past, with one addition. While there are many aspects to the uniqueness of UHill, none holds more potential than the intersection of our sense of identity and calling and the purposefulness of our worship and fellowship life with the proximity of the UBC campus where we are called to be salt and light. As a former campus minister (at the U of A), I believe the opportunities for creative engagement with individuals on campus, as well as between "the world and the church" through congregational initiatives with our campus ministry at UBC, constitutes a very significant element of our potential and God's purpose for University Hill Congregation.

What is the Holy Spirit calling the congregation to be and to do, as faithful and joyful witnesses to the risen Jesus, in 2016 and beyond? What new way of demonstrating the hope of the gospel might be open to us in our mission to UBC, maintaining the vision of the past, but in new communication patterns, and perhaps new ways of developing evangelism, discipleship, and community? Given the changes which continue to drive our world, and the increasing numbers of people who are both spiritually open (and hungry?) but relatively ignorant of the rich potential of "life in Christ" in community, what responsibility is God delegating to us to step beyond where we have been, out of our comfort zone, to create new communities of faith in Jesus around us here at UBC?

Being involved with you has been an enlivening journey these past months, which both Carol and I have deeply appreciated. We are excited about the path that lies before

you, and look forward to the opportunity of joining in worship periodically as we step onto the next stage of our life as well. Thank-you for your participation this year, and for the many ways you have challenged and encouraged me to keep growing. As we commit this year to God, we also look forward, to see whether we can glimpse where the Lord of heaven and earth is leading us now. As scripture everywhere reflects, (e.g. Isaiah 43:18), we follow the One who leads us always to let go of the past, in order more fully to engage the new thing God is doing. In that spirit, may I ask with Paul: shall we “press on” (Phil 3:14)?

I bless you with all that the Holy Spirit longs to accomplish and celebrate in and through you.

May the gift of community life at UHill be known by increasing numbers of people, to the glory of God?

Yours in our common ministry in Christ  
Eric Stephanson

**Minister’s Discretionary Fund**

Balance June 16, 2015  
\$74.15

Deposit		\$500.
Benevolence	\$240.	
Hospitality	\$144.10	
Adult Study books	\$ 64.86	

Balance May 1, 2016  
\$125.19

Respectfully  
Eric Stephanson

## **Report from the Chair of Leadership and Session**

It is fair to say that the most important and certainly most time consuming work of both leadership and Session over the past year has been finding a new congregational minister.

We came tantalizingly close in 2015 but God had other plans and we were faced with repeating the process, albeit with valuable lessons learned from the first go-round. A key lesson was to move quickly even if we were in the midst of Spring break.

But lack of success in finding a congregational minister did not mean that we didn't need a minister. After skating through the different meanings the United Church attaches to the word "interim", we were blessed indeed when God nudged Eric Stephanson into our sights. He started with us in September, 2015 and made this part of transition both easy and welcome. Just as rumblings began about whether he might like to stay for another year, Eric told us that he had a plot of land on Vancouver Island waiting for him and his son to put a house on.

So back to the recruitment dance went the selection committee, composed of the members of Session without Doug Goodwin who, because his position with the Conference, felt he could not participate. However, in addition to the Session members we were fortunate to have Gerald Hobbs and Aaron Anderson step in as the non Session members of the recruitment committee.

Although we did some of that in the first round, this time we were more aggressive in scouting out people who we felt would be a good fit with our congregation. We are absolutely delighted that one of those we scouted out has accepted our call to be our new Congregational Minister. Leadership and the Session are confident that God has truly sent us the right minister.

However, God could not avoid displaying his sense of humour in the process. The Session will now have three Erin/Aarons, one spelled differently but all phonetically the same. We will be forced to modify our references to Erin T, Aaron M. and Aaron A.

Aaron hails from a small farming community on Lake Erie in Ontario. Vancouver will undoubtedly be an adjustment for him, his wife Kate and their two sons. I am confident that our congregation will do what they can to assist and to make the Millers welcome and able to adjust to the Wet Coast.

The coming year will be my last on Session. It will be a time of adjusting to a new Minister and him adjusting to us. This is a Congregation that has a long and strong sense of its own identity and there will undoubtedly be a steep and even at times fraught learning curve for all of us.

Transitions will undoubtedly continue in the leadership of our congregation as different ministries look to pass their torch to a new generation.

The coming year will also involve the beginning of a process of revisioning the relationship between Campus Ministry and our congregation. Campus Ministry is a project of both our congregation and the wider church. It is overdue for a re-examination and with a new minister in place, the time is ripe to re-examine that project.

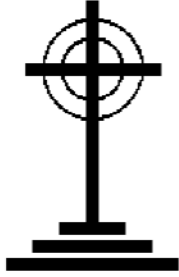
There will undoubtedly be other not yet discerned projects and challenges as we return to a more normal rhythm in both our governance and our worship life.

I want to thank my fellow Sessionistas: Erin Tarbuck, the Vice-Chair, Sumarme Goble, Susan Henry, and Scott Webster, all of whom have put in yeoman service during the past year. I want, however, especially to thank Doug Goodwin who is retiring from Session this year as he comes up against term limits. He has been our Secretary and has been a font of knowledge and wisdom about the functioning of the wider church and our congregation and in discerning God's wisdom for our flock.

I also wish to thank the Leadership Group: Eric Stephanson, Karen Hollis, Eric Hall, and Erin Tarbuck for putting in the extra effort to guide this small group of Christ's pilgrims.

Each year we try to recognize one among us who is deserving of special mention. This year I would like to do the unthinkable and that is to praise the efforts of my mother-in-law, Laurenda Daniells. At almost 93 years of age, Laurenda works in the Church office every Friday, prepares and cleans up after communion, bakes the monthly birthday cake, serves on the worship committee and overall brings a strong sense of continuity with a previous generation which helps to explain how we got to where we are. And she does all of this while quite deaf. Thanking one's mother in law can be challenging but I have no hesitation in saying "Thank you, Laurenda!" on behalf of the Congregation.

Walter Rilkoff  
May 2016



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**MINUTES OF  
The Annual Meeting of  
University Hill Congregation  
March 1, 2015  
The Chapel of the Epiphany, Vancouver, BC**

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**AUTHORITY**

The regular Annual Meeting of University Hill Congregation, The United Church of Canada, was convened on March 1, 2015 in The Chapel of the Epiphany. A quorum was present (31 members and 3 adherents).

**PRAYER**

The meeting opened in prayer led by Ed Searcy. During the prayer members who had passed away during the previous year (Ellen Lemen, Verna Splane) were remembered and candles lit.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR AND SECRETARY**

Ed Searcy explained that in the polity of the United Church the congregation at the Annual Meeting elects its own Chair and Secretary. He then moderated the election of the Chair and Secretary.

*MSC (Beth Howarth/Robin Anderson) that Walter Rilkoﬀ serves as Chair for this meeting and the coming year.*

*MSC (Lorraine Beckett/Barbara Fraser Tilley) that Doug Goodwin serve as Secretary for this meeting and the coming year.*

The Chair called the meeting to order.

**ADHERENTS VOTING & CORRESPONDING PRIVILEGES**

The Chair explained that congregational members could permit adherents to speak and vote on “temporal” matters, which include most matters at a congregational meeting. At this meeting the only matter that adherents would not be permitted to vote on would be the election of elders to the Session.

*MSC (Scott Webster/Michael Butler) that adherents of the congregation, that is, all those on the congregational mailing list sixteen years of age or over, who regularly contribute to the congregation’s life and work, be granted permission to speak and vote at this meeting on all “temporal” matters.*

**AGENDA**

*MSC (Doug Goodwin/Michael Butler) that the agenda as presented be adopted.*

**MINUTES**

*MSC (Trenor Tilley/Sumarme Goble) that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the congregation dated April 27, 2014 be approved.*

*MSC (Doug Goodwin/ Sumarme Goble) that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the congregation dated June 22, 2014 be approved.*



*MSC (Doug Goodwin/ Sumarme Goble) that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the congregation dated November 2, 2014 be approved.*

*MSC (Doug Goodwin/ Sumarme Goble) that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the congregation dated December 7, 2014 be approved.*

#### **REPORTS**

The reports from the Annual Report 2014 booklet were reviewed. Questions and comments were heard and discussed.

#### **SESSION**

*MSC (Trenor Tilley/Erin Tarbuck) that the Letter from the Minister and the report of the Session and Leadership Team be accepted.*

#### **DIMENSIONS OF MISSION**

*MSC (Sumarme Goble/Elizabeth Tilley) that the reports of Dimensions of Mission be accepted.*

#### **RESOURCES FOR MISSION**

*MSC (Brenda Reynolds/Robin Anderson) that the reports of the Ministry and Personnel Committee and the Church Office be accepted.*

#### **NOMINATIONS**

Barbara Fraser Tilley spoke to the Nominations report, explaining how most congregational positions were filled by volunteers who then needed to be accepted at the Annual Meeting by the congregation. A Nominations Committee, however, works to nominate people for the Session when needed.

The Chair asked if there were any further nominations. Hearing none, the report was put to the vote.

*MSC (Barbara Fraser Tilley/Lorraine Beckett) that the Nominations report, other than Session nominations, be accepted.*

#### **ELECTION OF ELDERS**

Barbara Fraser Tilley explained that under the policies of the congregation Session members can serve up to three terms of three years each. After their third term they would have to leave the Session for at least one year. This policy was adopted in order to ensure continuing change in the Session membership and to ensure no Session members felt compelled to remain on the Session.

She reported that both Sumarme Goble and Scott Webster have completed their second three year terms as elder. Both are eligible for re-election to one more term. She noted that the Session feels it is important to have both continuity and experience on the Session, especially through the next couple of years.

The Nominating Committee recommended that Sumarme Goble and Scott Webster be elected to a third three year term.

Ed Searcy also noted that the present Chair, Walter Rilkoff, and the Vice-Chair, Erin Tarbuck, will have their terms end at the same time, in Spring 2017. Under the present policies of the congregation, neither would be eligible for re-election since both would have completed their third term. The Session has asked that the congregation grant extraordinary permission for Erin Tarbuck to be eligible for re-election for one additional term after the completion of her present term in 2017. It is anticipated that Erin would serve as Chair beginning in 2017.

It was noted that only congregational members could vote on the election of elders.

Ballots were distributed to members to elect the elders to the Session. After being marked, the ballots were counted by the Nominations Committee. It was reported that Sumarme Goble and Scott Webster were elected to three year terms.

*MSC (Barbara Fraser Tilley/ Elizabeth Tilley) that Erin Tarbuck would be eligible for a fourth term should she be so elected in 2017. MSC (Trenor Tilley/Beth Howarth) that the ballots be destroyed.*

#### **TRANSITION YEAR**

Walter Rilkoff reported on the work through the past year preparing for Ed Searcy's retirement and departure and the welcoming of a new pastoral minister. Ed spoke about his experience working through this year and a half with the congregation and with Peter Short. He encouraged the congregation to continue to work on transition after his departure, noting that the transitional work really begins after June 30!

#### **MINISTRY PROFILE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Walter Rilkoff updated the congregation on the work of the Profile and Search Committee. To date a number of applications have already been received. Discussion followed on the process that would be followed going forward. The Committee is hopeful that a new minister might be found before very long.

#### **APPRECIATIONS**

The Chair expressed his appreciation to the congregation for their faithfulness at congregational meetings this year. John Culter expressed thanks to Marjorie Ross for her extensive work as the office manager. He also introduced and thanked the Stewards for their work. Finally, he thanked Lourette Swanepoel and Dan Sneep for their work as Envelope Secretaries.

#### **ADJOURN**

MC (Trenor Tilley) that the meeting adjourn after prayer.

#### **PRAYER**

Ed Searcy led the congregation in a closing prayer.

### **University Hill Congregation**

Walter Rilkoff, Chair

Doug Goodwin, Secretary



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**MINUTES OF**  
**The Extraordinary Meeting of**  
**University Hill Congregation**  
**November 15, 2015**  
**The Chapel of the Epiphany, Vancouver, BC**

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- AUTHORITY** An extraordinary meeting of University Hill Congregation, The United Church of Canada, was convened following worship on November 15, 2015. A quorum (21 members) was present.
- PRAYER** The meeting opened with prayer.
- CALL TO ORDER** The Chair, Walter Rilkoff, called the meeting to order, with Doug Goodwin acting as Secretary.
- The Chair explained that the sole purpose of the meeting was to receive and approve the audited financial statements. He noted that John Culter has been serving as Chair of the Stewards for many years and will be presenting the report. Eric Hall has been newly appointed as the incoming Chair of the Stewards.
- FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** John Culter presented the reviewed financial statements, July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015, with the meeting. He pointed out the highlights of the statements and responded to questions. He noted that the Statement of Financial Position improved due to an increase in the Endowment Fund but the Operations deficit was larger than budgeted. Due to a year where we are spending more for the Campus Minister and Congregational Intern, Karen Hollis, but less for the Congregational Minister, the present fiscal year would be an unusual one. Going forward, though, the congregation would need to see an increase in income in order to achieve financial sustainability.
- John expressed the appreciation of the congregation for the recent gifts from the estates of Gerry Mackenzie and Verna Splane which increased the Endowment Fund of the congregation.
- MSC (John Culter/Michael Butler) that the reviewed financial statements, July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015, be received.*
- STEWARDS** John Culter presented the Report of the Stewards.
- He noted that Shelly Jones had resigned as Treasurer of the congregation and expressed the appreciation of the congregation for her dedicated, exemplary work through the years.
- The congregation expressed its appreciation for the work of John Culter as Chair of the Stewards for the past many years. They also expressed appreciation that he had accepted his appointment as the new Treasurer for the congregation.
- MSC (John Culter/Michael Butler) that the congregation accept the Report of the Stewards.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*MSC (Michael Butler) that the meeting adjourn.*

Eric Stephanson closed the meeting in prayer.



**University Hill Congregation**

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Walter Rilkoff, Chair

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Doug Goodwin, Secretary

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**MINUTES OF**  
**The Extraordinary Meeting of**  
**University Hill Congregation**  
**April 3, 2016**  
**Chapel of the Epiphany, Vancouver, BC**

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**AUTHORITY**

An extraordinary meeting of the University Hill Congregation, The United Church of Canada, was duly called by the appointed minister, the Rev. Eric Stephanson, to consider the recommendation of the Ministry Profile and Search Committee to call a new minister. The meeting was called to order by the minister; Doug Goodwin served as Secretary. A quorum was present.

**PRAYER**

The meeting opened in prayer, led by Eric Stephanson.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Eric noted that the usual Chair of congregational meetings, Walter Rilkoﬀ, was absent and a Chair for this meeting needed to be elected.

*MSC (Doug Goodwin/Eric Hall) that Erin Tarbuck serve as Chair of this congregational meeting.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The Chair reminded the congregation of the purpose for this extraordinary meeting.

**MINISTRY PROFILE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

Erin Tarbuck introduced the members of the Ministry Profile and Search Committee: Aaron Andersen, Sumarme Goble, Susan Henry, Gerald Hobbs, Walter Rilkoﬀ, Scott Webster, Doug Goodwin, and Erin Tarbuck.

She noted that Ruth Situma was a member of the Committee in its early months and that Doug Goodwin did not participate in the selection of candidates because of the potential conflict related to his job as Conference Executive Secretary.

She then presented a verbal report on the work of the Committee and, in particular, its more recent search for a new minister. Following the verbal report a printed report summarizing the attributes of the proposed new minister and the terms of his call was distributed to all present.

**VOTING PRIVILEGES**

As the printed information was distributed, the Secretary explained that only members of the congregation have the right to vote on a motion regarding a call to a minister (Manual B.3.7.3). Others at the meeting are encouraged to speak and contribute to the conversation.

**DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS**

Questions and comments from the congregation were numerous, focusing primarily on the desire to better know the minister and the gifts and experiences he might bring. Members of the Ministry Profile and Search Committee present responded to questions.

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### **MOTION TO CALL**

*MSC (Michael Butler/Barbara Fraser-Tilley) that the members of the University Hill Congregation approve the recommendation of the Ministry Profile and Search Committee to call the Rev. Aaron Miller to the full-time position of Minister tentatively beginning July 1, 2016 with the following terms:*

- *Annual Salary: \$75,000;*
- *Sabbatical: 3 months after 4 years, every 5 years following;*
- *Salary increases: in accordance with increases mandated by the UCC; to be paid above the minimum in the same proportion as currently established, as stated in the time increments set by the UCC (subject to further negotiation with the M&P committee);*
- *Vacation/study leave: as per UCC minister guidelines;*
- *Benefits and pension: as per UCC minister guidelines;*
- *Mileage reimbursed at United Church of Canada rates (presently \$0.41/km);*
- *\$50 per month for cell phone; office phone supplied; and*
- *Negotiated relocation costs (estimated to be approximately \$6,000).*

### **DISBAND COMMITTEE**

*MSC (Trenor Tilley/Robin Anderson) that the Ministry Profile and Search Committee be disbanded following the covenanting service for the Rev. Miller, which will be planned for some time in the Fall of 2016.*

### **ADJOURN**

*MC (Doug Goodwin) that the meeting adjourn after prayer.*

### **PRAYER**

Eric Stephanson reflected briefly on the significance of this meeting for the life of the congregation and the newly called minister, gave thanks for the work of the committee, then led the congregation in prayer.



## **University Hill Congregation**

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Walter Rilkoﬀ, Chair

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Doug Goodwin, Secretary

## Dimensions of Mission

### Liturgia – Worship of God

#### **Worship Ministry**

*O, come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. (Psalm 95)*

The University Hill Congregation gathers each Sunday to worship God with a sermon, scripture readings, prayers, music, children's time, offering of gifts, and the sacraments.

The Worship Ministry Team at University Hill Congregation is responsible for general oversight of our worship services. We met 4 times in 2015 and we were blessed to gather around Laurenda Daniells' table for our meetings. We thank Laurenda for her warm hospitality.

Agenda items at our meetings included: a lively 15 minute discussion period about different aspects of worship and liturgy, an evaluation of recent worship services, planning for future services, inviting and scheduling worship leaders, preparation and oversight of the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism, reports from the Congregational Ministers, Minister of Music and Director of Choral Music, coordinating offerings of flowers and other seasonal decorations, and hospitality following worship.

Specific work of the Worship Ministry Team included the following:

- Barbara Fraser-Tilley, Esmeralda Cabral, and Diane Hobday arranged for Worship Elders, Lectors, Welcomers, and Coordinators for each Sunday. Brenda Reynolds arranged for Preachers and Presiders when needed.
- Laurenda Daniells and Trenor Tilley shared the responsibilities of Worship Service Coordinator. Lorraine Beckett, Marjorie Morrison-Ross, Diane and Brenda provided help when needed.
- Laurenda prepared Communion elements for the first Sunday of the month as well as every Sunday in Lent and Advent. Lydia Ruenzel kindly baked special bread for Communion services.
- We continued our practice of a Rite of Healing service twice a year.
- LENT/EASTER: Doug Goodwin led a Tenebrae service at 8:30 P.M. on Maundy Thursday. Karen Hollis, Robin and Aaron Andersen planned a meal and foot-washing for 6 P.M. The T. S. Eliot readings were well-received. The Good Friday service was well-attended at St. Anselm's. The Easter Vigil and the Easter Sunday service continued to be highlights of our Christian year.

- ADVENT/CHRISTMAS: The Christmas Eve Service at 5:30 was well attended by the congregation and many visitors. A Christmas day service was led by Gerald Hobbs.
- Marjorie continued to oversee the organization of sacristans for Sunday mornings.
- Diane and Brenda arranged flowers for Sunday services and special decorations for the Christmas season.
- Lorraine, Sue Zhu and Brenda continued to take responsibility for coffee coordination each Sunday.

We give thanks to Karen for her hard work and presence among us. We appreciate her involvement in Sunday Worship as preacher and presider, and for her referrals of students to be worship leaders.

Members of the congregation organized a special luncheon in June to celebrate Ed's retirement. It was a memorable time for all of us. We hold him in our prayers. The Worship Team hosted a luncheon for Ed at Diane's home to celebrate our time together as a committee.

We continue to be blessed by the wonderful music offered by Gerald, Margaret Skarsgard and The Singers each Sunday. It is an extraordinary gift.

We are truly blessed to have Eric Stephanson as our interim minister. Eric is gently leading us through this year of transition with enormous grace, and we give thanks for his presence with us.

Respectfully submitted,  
Worship Ministry Team

Esmeralda Cabral  
Laurenda Daniells  
Gary Gibson  
Myrna Gibson

Gerald Hobbs  
Diane Hobday (Chair)  
Karen Hollis  
Brenda Reynolds

Margaret Skarsgard  
Eric Stephanson  
Sue Zhu



## The Singers

*The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
A fountain ever springing;  
All things are mine since I am Christ's  
How can I keep from singing?  
- "My life flows on" VU 716*

These words by Robert S. Lowry echo the joy and commitment of this remarkable group we call The Singers.

By 9:00 am on Sunday morning The Singers have gathered, greeted one another over home-roasted coffee and warm muffins and are warming their voices on the service music for the day. Then comes a time of intense rehearsal on music we are preparing for subsequent Sundays and special services at Christmas and Easter. On Passion Sunday, March 29th 2015, we offered "The Cross-Cry" by Gilbert M. Martin, accompanied at the piano by Gerald Hobbs.

I am grateful to this group of faithful friends who "can't keep from singing" as they raise their voices in praise to God:

Barbara Fraser-Tilley	Aldyen Donnelly	Pat Reynolds	Tommy Nixon
Jillian Reynolds	Courtney Reynolds	Jennifer Griffin	Gary Gibson
Kirsten Bowles	Leslie Munro	John Culter	Lloyd Skarsgard
Myrna Gibson	Gale Walker		
Jennifer Rae Pierce	Grace Wei		
	Kaz Amaranth		

Respectfully submitted  
Margaret Skarsgard  
Director, The Singers

## **Didache – Training in the Way of Christ**

### **Little Ones Programme**

You will notice a familiar description of this programme for preschoolers since little but personnel change from year to year. The children and the teachers seem to be quite comfortable with the style that has been developed over the years. Using the Christian Reform, God Loves Me little books that span the Biblical story from creation to Paul's final journey to Rome, the children hear, sing and play a separate story each week throughout the entire year. The size of the class varies from the usual 3 to 4 children to a rare 10 to 12. On Sundays when there is no the elementary class, the kindergarten and grade 1 children usually join this class and are invited to work on more challenging activities than the younger children can manage.

We are fortunate that the staffing for this class again this year comes entirely from the congregation. Robin Anderson provides the emergency back-up for this class, especially during the summer when I am away. Tabitha Grass Elder, even with two young children willingly steps in when needed to ensure we always have two teacher/helpers in this class Normally, Ruth Situma, Patrick Fuller and Courtney Markin alternate weeks as the teacher of this class and are ably helped by Sumarme and Susie Goble, Helen Fu, Anna Durance and Elizabeth Tilley, who even when she is not the scheduled helper, will set up as much of the class room as she can before any else arrives. You can imagine how helpful this is. Words are inadequate to express my gratitude for the faithful willingness of these teachers who miss worship on a regular basis to share their faith and love for our children. Because of the willingness of the teaching staff to serve in this way, parents of our children are able to attend worship knowing that their children are being lovingly cared for and at the same time that they are learning many of the Biblical stories that will grow with them as they mature.

Again a huge thank you from all of us who are involved in the Little Ones programme to the congregation for your willingness to pay for someone to move table chairs, cupboards and rugs each week. It makes an enormous difference at the end of class to know that someone else will move all the furniture to the back wall behind the folding dividers and wrestle with the lovely but large carpet each week.

### **Birthday Cards**

Victoria Durance and I have been sending out the cards to all the children associated with this congregation. Victoria had great fun choosing the right card for the children she knows and then picking the sticker for the back of the envelope. Unfortunately children get older and have other interests. Presently I am sending out the cards myself. However if someone or a family would like making this connection

between our children and the larger congregation, please speak to me. Stamps and cards are paid for by the congregation.

One of the difficulties shared by Lorraine Becket, who sends out the Anniversary of Baptism cards, with this ministry is that people move and we often find out only when Canada Post returns a lovingly chosen card. For those families who have moved away with no forwarding address, unfortunately, their children will no longer receive birthday cards from UHill. If those of you connected to children receiving our cards pass on to Lorraine and me new addresses, if these children move, for those families who still want to be connected to UHill, so that their children will still be reminded of their 'old' church

### **Anniversary of Baptism Cards**

One of the unobtrusive ministries carried out by Lorraine Becket is that of sending cards to children baptised at UHill on the anniversary of their baptism. Lorraine matches the date of the child's baptism with the psalm for that Sunday. Perhaps by the time the child is grown, that psalm will become as much a part of him/her as an arm or a leg. Thank you, Lorraine, for this important ministry of yours.

Respectfully submitted  
Janet Reid

## **Elementary Church School**

### **Elementary Church School**

During 2015, there has been one class each week with Robin and Aaron Andersen leading the class, except for July and August where activity packets were available for children to work on while staying in as part of the service. This kindergarten through grade 7 classes has continued to enjoy having a second teacher for the lessons as we are able to deliver the lessons in a wider variety of ways. The class size was fairly consistent, with between 7 and 15 students and an average of 9 students per class.

### **Children's Choir**

Each week, the students from both classes gather around the piano to sing children's hymns. Robin plays the piano. It is a great way to open up our class sessions and have some time together as a whole group before going off into our separate classes. We are singing songs from Voices United as well as many different children's based Christian songbooks and do part singing and rounds. We often sing with instruments and add sign language or actions. We also try to incorporate new songs from the service into our singing time so that the children can join in the following week as they become more comfortable with the words and the melodies of the Kyrie and the Assurance of Grace.

### **Curriculum**

We have been using the Faith Alive curriculum with additional materials to compliment the learning created by Robin. We continue to create a class environment that will help to reach each child and their individual learning style by incorporating reading, art, music, drama, and games into each lesson.

### **Future Challenges**

With many children attending both classes each week, sound between the two classrooms can become quite overwhelming at times. We will continue to try and find ways to deal with the sound as well as deal with a less than optimal space. We continue to assess whether we need a second class for the elementary aged children. When we have more 10-12 students, we often break out into age groups.

Respectably submitted,  
Robin Anderson

## **Koinonia – Fellowship and Community in Christ**

### **Baptisms, Renewals of Baptism & Funerals**

#### **Baptisms**

Alina Andrée Hélène Webster                      April 19, 2015

#### **Renewals of Baptism**

Derek Rempel    May 24, 2015  
Glen Vincent Pierce                                      March 26, 2016  
Jennifer Rae Pierce                                      March 26, 2016

#### **Funerals**

Verna Marie Huffman Splane                      January 10, 2015  
Dorothy Elizabeth (Betty) Hilton                      July 11, 2015  
Richard Beverly Splane                                      November 22, 2015  
Bruce Griffin    November, 2015

## **Kerygma – Proclamation of the Gospel**

### **Campus Ministry**

#### **January - May**

Campus Ministry has had a tremendous year, full of the initiating presence of God and the Holy Spirit to help us bring our ideas to reality! Having only been hired at the end of November 2014, I spent much of 2015 learning about my new surroundings: UBC, UBC Interfaith Chaplaincy, University Hill Congregation, United Church of Canada, Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery, BC Conference, Youth and Young Adult Ministries in BC, Canadian Chaplaincy Network . . . UBC Campus Ministry intersects with many different cultures, sub-cultures and organizations! I managed over the last year to make some sense out of the web that intersects this position.

The primary expression of United Church Campus Ministry at UBC continues to be the Food & Faith Community, our United Church-affiliated UBC club. In keeping with the pattern set up by previous Campus Ministers, the group meets for Monday Night Meals, where we provide a soup, salad and bread dinner (catered by Western Catering at Carey Theological College) with an hour Bible study, followed by communion (for which I was licensed by BC Conference in February). In January we experimented with studying a book of the Bible at a time, beginning with Exodus. The students wanted a better grounding for our Christian story, so we started with the narrative we've inherited from our Jewish ancestors in faith. We loved studying Exodus so much that we decided to close out the term with a study of Esther.

The leadership team for our study of Exodus and Esther included 3 students. We met as a group in preparation to discuss the texts, give insight into each other's questions, and strategize how to best structure the study of our particular chapters, based on the content and themes. After the students led their studies, we met as a group again to debrief. I received positive feedback from the students on the process and experience of leading the text studies.

In addition to Monday nights, Campus Ministry made some other offerings to students. In February we gathered together at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Kerrisdale for a one-day worship retreat. We punctuated the day with worship, while engaging in conversations about various expressions and experiences of worship, including scripture, music, sacraments and ritual. Then in March (Lent) we partnered with the Presbyterian chaplaincy in hosting Rev. Bethel Lee and Yoga Chapel on Wednesday evenings. Bethel weaves scripture with yoga postures to create a wonderfully worshipful yoga experience. We had Bethel back in the fall to lead a few Saturday mornings of Yoga Chapel.

The term quickly came to a close at the end of April, which we celebrated with our annual banquet! We had quite a large group with many new faces – we could

already see the changes ahead with students graduating and others moving back home after their year abroad. Earlier in the term I had asked the students if they owned study Bibles so they could dig more deeply into the text on their own. Given that none of them did have such tools, Campus Ministry provided each student with a study Bible. Campus Ministry is in the business of equipping students to practice their faith, not only with a weekly practice of study, but a physical resource they can pull off the shelf.

### **June - August**

Given the unusually high number of students in town over the summer, we planned several outings to be a touchstone for students throughout slow season for Campus Ministry. We had two Theology Pub nights at a pub on campus and one at a coffee shop, at which we shared food, ideas about God, our lives and current events. Blessed with regional parks in our back yard, we walked down the hill from church one Sunday and walked the Spanish Banks, breaking for ice cream along the way.

I attended my first Conference General Meeting in May, where I made a presentation to the court on Campus Ministry along with Henri Lock, UCC Campus Minister at the University of Victoria. We had 7 minutes to cover the ways in which we respond to God's initiating presence in our particular context with university students . . . needless to say, it was a challenge.

### **September – December**

Campus Ministry had a fantastic fall start at UBC. Simon-Luc Noel, the Food & Faith president was extremely proactive about being at all of the student welcome events on campus to get the word out about Food & Faith and our Monday night meals. Simon-Luc and I spent hours together talking with students about who we are and how we practice our faith together. A few weeks into the term, UHill hosted our annual welcome BBQ for UBC students, who received the church's hospitality with great excitement and joy. Since September we've had an active group of 14 students, including 6 international students, 4 Anglicans, and 4 who would self define as United Church. Schedules continue to be a challenge for students, keeping several I'm aware of from joining us on Monday nights.

We've found our weekly pattern of dinner with conversation, Bible study and celebrating communion together to be hugely life giving. The students quickly gelled as a group in the fall, developed friendships and began investing in each other's lives. We continued our way through a few books of the Bible, beginning with Proverbs and finishing the term with the three letters of John. A few of our students are particularly musically inclined and often framed our short communion liturgy with music and song.

In October VST was finally open for use and the staff joyfully moved into our new offices with help of students and church members! Having a functioning office has been a welcome change and I've enjoyed getting to know VST staff and faculty, as well as the Anglicans and Catholics who share with us the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. I'm also now able to offer office

hours to students and the option of a confidential place to meet. I see on average one student per week on topics ranging from theology/faith to schoolwork and relationships.

In November I led a workshop at Evolve, the annual BC Conference youth and young adult retreat. The retreat theme was Sacred Space with a focus on spiritual practices, and my particular workshop was about letting go. I led the group through a discussion on this topic, weaving in scripture and the wisdom of nature to gain perspective, and closing with a simple ritual of letting go.

We held an End-of-Term inside BBQ the first week of December with special guests Rachel Hill, a missionary in Africa with Overland Missions, and her brother, Daniel (a UBC student). Rachel talked with students informally about her ministry. We're pleased to have this new relationship with Rachel and look forward to following her ministry with openness to opportunities it may provide for our students.

### **Congregational Ministry & Internship/Ordination Preparation**

With Ed's farewell early on in the summer and the beginning of my internship in preparation for ordination, my job description expanded to include congregational minister responsibilities. It was my pleasure to take up the weekly communication with the congregation, preach and preside in worship, attend Wednesday morning Bible study and pastoral care, among other ministerial duties.

Upon Eric Stephanson's arrival in September I continued to do some pastoral care, preaching and leadership as part of my internship. I also invited some members of UHill to be a part of my Lay Supervision Team, to offer feedback and constructive conversation about my goals and ministry during my internship year. The team includes Lydia Ruenzel, Michael Butler, Elizabeth Tilley and Lorraine Beckett. We met about every 3 weeks through the fall until mid-term evaluations in December. With Eric as my internship supervisor and this team of lay people walking with me, I've been engaging my learning goals, integrating feedback and taking UCC polity classes at VST while preparing for ordination in June of 2016.

Karen Hollis

## **Christian Seasons Calendar**

The 2015-2016 Christian Seasons Calendar is the fifteenth version published by University Hill Congregation. We are very grateful to all the artists who contributed their images this year and for the faith and creative force that inspires their work. Without them we could not continue with this ministry. This year's calendar included images from eight artists from the United States and one from Great Britain. Calendars were

shipped to congregations and folks in cities, towns and villages throughout North America, Australia, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, South Korea, Thailand, and the Netherlands. We sold approximately 3650 calendars from September 2015 to May 1, 2016 compared to 3700 in 2014/15. Revenue was up slightly, because of strong US dollar sales.

The creation of each calendar is very much a collaborative process that begins early in each new year. Work for this year's calendar began in February of 2015 with the call to artists for submissions. We found that we did not receive as many submissions as in the past few years and so chose to review our short list of images from the 2014-2015 submissions as well. We received many lovely images but as in most years, we found that there was a significant percentage of them that didn't fit within our selection criteria: artwork that represents scripture readings and themes within the Christian Year. Our calendar selection team included Ed Searcy, John Culter, Janice Love, Lorraine Beckett, Karen Hollis, and Marjorie Morrison Ross. The team met in person several times in May and June and also consulted through email. The final selections were decided by the end of June.

With Ed Searcy's retirement in June 2015, Janice Love is now the calendar editor and has taken over the leadership of keeping us on track with the process. She writes the texts and the artist summaries for each season, maintaining contact with the artists; she is our main proof reader and ensures that the listed scripture readings are all correct. She has updated our call from submissions and has written letters to a number of First Nations ministers to encourage participation by artists within their communities. Janice, we are very thankful for your continued commitment to the Calendar and all the various ways in which you contribute, especially your gifts as writer, editor, theologian, communicator and organizer.

Peter Fung continued to do terrific work as our graphic designer, pulling together the art images, format and design. His work starts once all images have been finalized and continues as Janice works on the text. The calendar team reviews each draft and communicates needed revisions by email. By mid August the final draft of the calendar was complete and ready for printing.

This year 6000 calendars were printed by Generation Printing with thanks to John Culter for orchestrating this aspect of the process. 3000 calendars were delivered to the Uhill Offices early October, after our move to the new offices at VST. The remaining 3000 calendars were delivered to PNC Fulfillment in Blaine, Washington. PNC is a shipping and receiving company that packaged and shipped calendars for all of our American orders this year. They have provided very accommodating, efficient and cordial service which significantly lessened the workload for our congregation calendar packing volunteers and Marjorie. A huge thank you to Susan Henry, Gary Gibson, Laurenda Daniells, Beth Howarth, Gale Walker, David Walker, Sue Zhu, Noelle Lamb, Janet Reid,



and Eric Stephanson for your assistance in preparing calendar shipments to Canadian and international destinations.

Promotion of the calendar is a big task and the goal is to get the word out to many places during October. Once again we sent out close to 100 promotional calendars to ministry personnel, theologians, Christian networks, and colleagues. We are so thankful to Ed Searcy for providing us with the names and contact information and to Karen Hollis and Eric Stephanson for their assistance. Our on-line presence through our websites is managed, edited, and revised by John Culter. Among his many contributions, he also sends out the promotional emails to our hundreds of calendar enthusiasts every year. Thank you John for this work and your commitment to the calendar project. Last summer we also sent off 200 promotional calendars to the Ekklesia Project Conference and 100 calendars to the CIVA biennial Conferences. We continue to rely on all of you to spread the word to your friends, families, and communities and are grateful for the various ways you do so.

The workload for the calendar is significant, particularly for the Church Secretary/Office Administrator. All the calendar orders are processed through the Uhill Office and the majority of the calendar related communication comes through to the office email or phone, generating many hours of work particularly in the fall and winter months. With our new minister arriving in July, it has been decided that we will hire an Operations Manager for this next Christian Seasons Calendar cycle separating out these tasks from those of the Church Secretary/Administrator. We hope to be hiring this person in the coming weeks. We also would like to have several more people join the calendar team to share the work and re-energizes this ministry. Please talk with John Culter or Marjorie if you are interested.

At this writing we are now back to the beginning of the cycle for the 2016-2017 Calendar. The call for submissions has gone out and we have started to receive art submissions. The submission deadline is Wednesday June 8. Please spread the word to those you know in the artist communities.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie Morrison Ross

### **Native Ministry Dinner**

This year we celebrated together our eighteenth annual dinner on Wednesday, July 22nd. This was our first year of hosting the dinner without Ed Searcy as our minister, but it was a wonderful way to begin a new journey as a church by celebrating reconciliation with the Vancouver School of Theology's Native Consortium.

Hosting these dinners started in 1998 as a response to the United Church's apology to Residential School students and survivors. Since then, we've hosted the Vancouver School of Theology's Native Consortium for a BBQ and agape meal in the basement of UHill every summer. We will continue to host this dinner every year as our congregation and the Native Ministries Consortium continue to be thriving communities.

It was a wonderful night of fellowship, singing, food, testimony, and breaking bread together. The evening started with some conversations around the tables and around the BBQ. Before we ate, we shared in an Agape Meal, with Karen Hollis leading the breaking of the bread for the first time. The Agape Meal is based on a practice within the early Christian church; it's a sign of love and compassion to break bread together and partake.

We continued in the night with sharing some food together and then John Culter, once again, as our Master of Ceremony, began a time of testimony and sharing in music. This is always a favourite part of the night to hear others' stories and share in some beautiful moments through worship.

For this year, the gathered community included around 90 people with a number of UHill members contributing. Aaron Andersen and Jim Ross were in charge of the BBQ and burgers. Our table hosts this year were Sandra Willing, John Culter, Aldyen Donnelly, Karen Hollis, Doug Goodwin and Teresa, Beth Howarth, Michael Butler and Leslie Munro, and Ralph Matthews. Thank you to all who helped with contributing food, donations, their time with set-up and clean-up, and talents in music. This dinner would not be possible without all those who volunteer and contribute their time to being gracious hosts and helpers, thank you!

This evening is one that we cherish and one that reminds us that we are all one in God.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lydia Ruenzel & Erin Tarbuck

## **Diakonia – Serving Christ**

### **First United Church Community Ministry**

***“Go into the world and preach the gospel and sometimes use words.”***

What is 1<sup>st</sup> Mission all about?

#### **Shelter**

60 beds each night– space for 40 men and 20 women. Shelter residents have 24-access to the building and are provided three meals a day, seven days a week.

#### **Advocacy**

Social Assistance/Welfare/Disability

#### **Foot care and hot showers**

Imagine you live on the streets in all kinds of weather, what would you need most after food?

The foot care program provides a chance for people to soak their feet in warm water, Epsom salts and tea tree oil; after the soak, each participant gets a clean pair of socks. It is a program run by volunteers and staff. Personally I can relate to how ones feet feel after wearing shoes and socks for a long period of time. While foot washing reminds us of Jesus’ call to serve, as in Jesus’ time the feet which the volunteers wash are not in great shape.

#### **Who are the people 1<sup>st</sup> serves?**

You might be surprised by the different circumstances which brings people into the mission.

*“Terry Charlie first walked through the big blue doors of First United five years ago. A committed father of two, he was left with an impossible decision when he and his live-in partner broke up. “I couldn’t afford my own place and also help out with the kids, so I came to stay at the shelter,” explains Terry.”*

To learn more about Terry check out the fall newsletter -

<http://firstunited.ca/newsletter>

At UHill we support the work of 1st by teaching our children they are part of this work as they bring forward our food offering. Recently Walter reminded the congregation of not only the importance of the food being offered but how disappointed the children are if the basket they carry is empty. So remember your food offering each Sunday for

both the hungry and our children as they learn to share with others.

On the 4th Sunday of the month we make 150 sandwiches for people served by 1st mission to enjoy on either that Sunday or the next day. My thanks to all of you who have participated so faithfully throughout the year?

If you wish to preach the gospel with your hands & hearts 1st can show you the way. Email [volunteers@firstunited.ca](mailto:volunteers@firstunited.ca) or call 604-681-8365 ext. 116.

Respectfully submitted  
Lorraine Beckett

### **Vancouver Burrard Presbytery**

This will be my final report as your Lay Rep to Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery.

It has been an interesting 6 years seeing "Church" from a wider viewpoint. As a person who has focused all her faith journey in the congregation of her birth, it was nice to take a look beyond the local faith family.

There were times I felt very much out of place and times I felt right at home. God lives in community and expects us to do the same, whether with a single congregation or multiple congregations or many denominations and finally many God fearing faiths, our light goes out very quickly when we are alone.

In 2015 I wasn't as engaged with Presbytery as much because I was backing out the door, however there were two events I would like to share with you.

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 UHill, VST & Campus Ministry shared hosting duties for Presbytery.

Richard Topping reported on VST, Karen Hollis reported on Campus Ministry and I reported on behalf of you, UHill congregation.

Here is what I had to say about our life together at UHill.

*Welcome to UHill congregation it is great having you here especially in light of Ed's retirement after 20 years with us.*

*Here is the story, from my viewpoint, of University Hill United Church.*

*What is God up to at UHill? It is a question we ask ourselves when we come together to deal with a big issue or each year when we take on 47 texts for our Lenten Devotional.*

*Truth be told we haven't always asked this question.*

*Some of you may know our story of starting here in the '20's, in the '60s building the large church on University Blvd and as the "church, moving into the wilderness, we returned in the '80's to our original home.*

*One thing you may not know about that big church built in the 60's is that it doesn't face University Blvd, it faces the trees. At the time of building the thought was the trees would be cut down and housing would be built. The trees still stand, now standing within Pacific Spirit Regional Park. The architect styled the roof to look towards the mountains to the north. "I look to the hills from whence...."*

*There is something of Abraham & Sarah in our story and perhaps in the story of the church. We make plans and God laughs.*

*In moving back here and with only about 35 people we narrowed our focus to:*

- 1) Good preaching*
- 2) Good music*

*While we waited for Alan Reynolds to accept the call to UHill Rev. Harding took on a one-year term with us. His lasting gift to us in asking us to take on the worship elder role. Now the people lead in the "Prayers of the People", the people approach God and make confession and the people send us out with the commissioning.*

*Alan's gift to us was the continuation of this congregation. At the time, I personally, wasn't aware that he fought for us to stay together before this Presbytery.*

*Ed's gift to us has been our working together to "Rediscover the Way of Christ for the sake of the world". With a focus on scripture and prayer we went back to the roots of the church. Rediscovering the story entrusted to us by past generations.*

*While at one time we tried to do fundraising by having a thrift sale, we soon discovered we don't do thrift sales very well. Which is OK, as the church is not in the business of doing thrift sales anyway.*

*Enter the Christian Seasons calendar, the brainchild of Ed & Janice Love. Other than our offering this is our only "fundraiser". Not only is the calendar beautifully made, but it reminds us of God's time and not our time, with liturgical years, colours, text each Sunday and special days. The calendar became a teaching tool for us and congregations around the world. For example, while the wider culture thinks of Easter as one day, with the Christ candle we are reminded of how special this period is to our shared faith, lasting 50 days. 50 days to explain the reason we are here today. It also makes for gentle evangelizing as some of us dare hang the calendars in our work places.*

*As individual and congregation we have been tested. 2 of these tests were and still are heart wrenching. The question of this community supporting same sex marriages and more recently Ed's illness.*

*In the marriage question I learned how important the table of Christ is to our shared faith. Called to Christ's table there is no room for barriers between us. Facing Ed's health issue, how does a congregation faithful hold up their minister through troubling times?*

*Where do we go? We come together, go to scripture; prayer and openly discuss our hurts and dreams. This is our strength as a congregation. Of course we lag behind in some areas of "church", but these strengths have made this place a gift too many.*

*I must thank Ed for giving us 20 years of faithful teaching and witness. Ed, when you looked to retire, you and God, gave us another wonderful gift. The gift of time to take in changes in our life together. We had time to meet in retreat with Peter Short who has guided us through the all too soon good-byes and helped to prepare us for our next minister amongst the ministers in this place.*

*Peter suggested, if we wish, to write Ed a letter. During Lent Ed would host only one letter per day.*

*My letter to Ed was more a letter to God. Both a thank you letter to Ed & God.*

***"You brought us a minister who was willing to wrestle with your most confounding Word. Ed never shied away from, nor allowed us, to shy away from difficult texts, even when Your Word made us squirm. Ed even went so far as to say he might not have it right. May not know what your Word is saying to us on a given day."***

*How does all this remind me of Abraham and Sarah? Remember when Sarah, having heard she would be the mother of many nations, laughed? She thought God's promise was unbelievable, but to see it happen she decided to help God with his promise by having Abraham lay with Hagar. The child would then be raised as her own.*

*God makes a promise and we just want to help God with that promise. We think we have to do the work. Are we really trusting God to do as God promises?*

*Remember those houses that were never built in front of UHill United on UBlvd? Well take a look outside and notice what is now around the chapel. Right, we had plans for housing around an owned space. Our plans did not happen. Could the housing around this rented space be God's plan for us all along?*

*When you leave tonight and are travelling on UBlvd, take a look across the street from the old church, you will see, past the recent graffiti on the signs, the Musqueam have plans to build housing.*

*And which way does the church face? It is still facing the trees.*

*The journey of this congregation is interesting and full of struggles and joys, however, it doesn't much matter because it has been and is today being held by God for reasons only God knows.*

### **May 2015 BC Conference**

Leading from the Heart - Trust, Love, Risk

120 pages of reports, Rev. Keith Simmonds elected as President  
Questions asked: Who do you trust? Who puts their trust in you?  
Dealing with deficit.  
What does it mean to be church?  
What does it mean to be Disciples of Christ?  
"Assimilation" of first peoples by settled peoples.  
Governance  
Do we really think we are poor?

Ed spoke of his journey as surprising in many ways. We have to expect to be thought of as "weird" to others. The next day we heard "weird" used in speech and prayer. Ed, I think we were listening.

Our youth leaders reminded us older folk who may be concerned about finances and/or declining church attendance. "Be still and know that I am God." UCC is in good hands.

I would like to end my report with what I enjoyed the most about my final trip to a BC Conference. The table I was at included two from Van Burrard, Carol & Linda, both lay reps. along with a lady who I first met at the 2012 BC Conference held at UBC's War Memorial Gym. Nearing the end of our time together, the lady opened up her heart to us about how she felt about one of the proposal we were looking at. The proposal itself isn't important, it was how one delegate among many felt at the time. She was very hurt, angry and sad. Linda, true to what it is to be a child of God, surrounded by the children of God, said, "Let us pray". We held hands and in a big noisy room, we prayed together.

I am fully aware this report is much longer than the usual reports each year, however, it is what I need to say at this time.

Respectfully submitted  
Lorraine Beckett

## **University Hill Welcome Programs for "Refugees"**

University Hill is a member of a group of west side churches working collectively to welcome and integrate newly arrived "refugees." We currently are supporting two young Syrian men, now Permanent Residents in Canada, who have good housing and are attending English classes at VCC. Leslie and I were very busy when they first arrived, getting them in for language testing and registered for classes, setting up bank accounts, and finding cell phones. All this happened at Christmastime. Now our role is much more relaxed as other churches' volunteers are following-up. However, we expect that the two young men will need more English conversation than classes alone can provide. We will ensure that UHill members are involved.

Our west side churches group is expecting a Syrian family - a father, mother and five girls under 13 - arriving, we hope soon, but maybe up to six months from now. The churches group has raised the money and is looking for accommodation.

At the same time, UHill is providing supervision for a group from the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association who are welcoming, soon, we hope, a family of a father, mother and two children. The FCSNA group has raised the money, which we hold in our accounts, and has secured accommodation in the False Creek South neighbourhood.

Among our volunteers are Susan Henry, Gale Walker, Joanne Haramia, John Culter, Eric Stephanson, Marjorie Morrison Ross, and Aaron Andersen.

Michael Butler and Leslie Munro.

P.S. Any thoughts on accommodation?

## **Resources for Mission**

### **Ministry and Personnel Committee**

The members of the M&P Committee (M&P) for 2015/16 are Jim Ross (Chair), John Culter, Anne Webster, and Peter Nosco. Ex-officio members are Eric Stephanson and Karen Hollis.

M&P regularly meets each quarter and in this reporting period we thus far have had meetings in October, February, and April. The next meeting has been scheduled for early June. M&P is responsible for ensuring that the relationship between the



congregation and all members of the ministry team remains positive and productive. M&P is responsible for reviewing the work schedules of our staff members and their financial arrangement. These discussions are of course confidential.

The October meeting had Eric Stephanson attend his first meeting after being with UHill for nearly two months and we discussed some matters related to his work priorities during his interim period with us, as well as some items looking forward which he resulting from his observations during his short time with us up to that point.

At the February meeting, we explored with Karen Hollis a Campus Ministry funding model that UVic has been successfully operating with for many years and discussed how that might be applicable in the UHill setting. It was agreed after discussion that a review will be initiated this spring on a two phase review for the Campus Ministry position (the second phase underway in the fall with our new minister's involvement).

At our last meeting (last month) we discussed some of the key tasks that need to be addressed in the upcoming months including the need for appointing a new coordinator for the Christian Seasons Calendar. We also spent time discussing the workplan for Karen Hollis in light of our new arrangement with her effective July 1<sup>st</sup> for a reduced work schedule for the Campus Ministry position (which will now be based on 23 hours/week). This came about due to a fixed funding amount that we receive from BC Conference (as vs being pegged to three-quarter time allocation).

We have had both Peter Nosco and Anne Webster announce to us several months back that they need to step down from serving on M&P and so the meeting next month will be their last with us. We will be in need of finding two from our congregation to serve on the committee with the goal of having this in place for our next meeting in the fall. Should anyone from the congregation have an interest in learning more of what is involved, please don't hesitate to speak with me in the next weeks.

We are grateful for the leadership and ministry that Eric Stephanson has provided for our congregation over the past 9 months. We have been in very capable hands during this interim period and yet we will be having to say best wishes to Eric the end of next month but are blessed to be able to look forward to the arrival of our new minister Aaron Miller and his family the beginning of July.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Ross,  
Chair M&P

**Envelope Donations for the year 2015**  
**(For all purposes, including M&S, First United, etc.)**

Average Weekly Offering (\$)	Number of Givers	Amount Given (\$)	Proportion of Total Givers (%)	Proportion of Total (%)
Less than \$2	17	\$965	20.0	0.4
\$2 - \$4	7	\$1,325	8.2	0.6
\$5 - \$9	8	\$3,263	9.4	1.5
\$10 - \$24	12	\$10,334	14.1	4.7
\$25 - \$49	20	\$38,695	23.5	17.5
\$50 - \$99	10	\$36,072	11.8	16.3
\$100 - \$200	9	\$63,298	10.6	28.6
More than \$200	2	\$67,575	2.4	30.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>221,527</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Average Weekly Givings (per person): \$50.11

### Church Office

It has been a busy year in the Church office with a number of changes alongside the familiar patterns of activity. It was a happy day when we were able to move into our new office space at VST. I am very grateful to the students and Uhillians, who brought vehicles, lifted furniture, carted boxes, and worked so efficiently and happily to get us set up in our new workspaces. Thank you to John Culter for setting up the computer network and to the Yanfen An at VST who assisted in sorting out our phone and voicemail systems. It's been a pleasure getting re-acquainted with staff and faculty at VST and meeting the folks from the Anglican Church and St. Mark's College who have offices down the hall. It's nice to know that we will be here for the foreseeable future.

Saying farewell to Ed Searcy at the end of June was a time of mixed emotions - deep gratitude for his time with us, concern for how we would manage without him, sadness and yet also expectation. Ed taught us to hold on to hope and God did not disappoint.

How fortunate and blessed we have been to have Eric Stephanson lead us through this year of transition with his perceptive wisdom, sense of humor, depth of experience, and his calm and gracious sense of perspective. Staff meetings with Eric and Karen have been a treasured time in my week and I have very much appreciated their camaraderie, candor and integrity.

Another goodbye this year was to Shelley Jones with her move to Chilliwack. Shelley has been Uhill's Treasurer for many years and was my resource person and teacher for bookkeeping and other related issues. Her support and friendship have been invaluable to me in this work and she is missed. Fortunately, John Culter took over the job of Treasurer and, as he is also our technology expert, meets with me frequently to problem solve and provide support related to the computer and accounting. He arranged the purchase of a new office computer which is a big improvement, set it up and switched us over to the on-line Quickbooks program. I am very grateful for his on-going support and expertise in these and other aspects of my work.

Laurenda Daniells has continued volunteering in the office on Friday mornings, from 9:30 to 11:30 am. I am so grateful for her help and long term commitment serving the congregation in this way. Laurenda does the final preparations on the bulletin each week and ensures that the copies get to the Chapel, assists with filing, receives deliveries from time to time, helps with preparing calendar shipments, and a number of other tasks.

Looking forward, we hope to hire, within the next month, a Part-time Operations Manager to take over the billing, shipping, customer support and related administrative work for the Christian Seasons Calendar to allow for Church Secretary/Office Administrator more time to support our incoming minister and attend to congregational matters. It is also time to increase my proficiency with Word and so I will be taking some training in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie Morrison Ross

## Nominations

### Session

Through 2017 Erin Tarbuck (Vice-Chair) & Walter Rilkoff (Chair)

Through 2018 Sumarme Goble & Scott Webster

Through 2019 Susan Henry & Aaron Andersen

### Stewards & Trustees

Eric Hall(Chair), Michael Butler, John Culter  
(Treasurer), Michael Moll & Dan Sneep

### Ministry & Personnel Committee

John Culter, Peter Nosco, Jim Ross & Anne Webster

### Nominating Committee

Lorraine Beckett, Barbara Fraser Tilley

### Offering Envelope Secretaries

Lourette Swanepoel & Dan Sneep

### Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery Representative

Lydia Ruenzel

### Leadership Team

Chair of the Session

Walter Rilkoff

Vice-Chair of the Session

Erin Tarbuck

Chair of the Stewards

Eric Hall

Ministers

Eric Stephanson & Karen Hollis