

# RAPPORT

## Mountainside United Church

4000 The Boulevard, Westmount, Quebec



November 22, 2009

### Christmas Creche

It is the first Sunday in Advent and the sanctuary is beautifully decorated in anticipation of the Christmas Celebration of Music concert and the forthcoming Christmas season. The trees are lit, the wreaths hung and the crèche is set up on the table in the narthex. How many people know how the crèche came to be a part of the traditional decorations at Mountainside?

The year was 1983 and Alex Farquhar was minister of Dominion-Douglas Church. Dawn Hosein was serving on the Executive Committee at the time and when the idea of having a crèche was suggested, she promptly and enthusiastically volunteered the services of her husband Esau to construct one, which he did in his basement. (Esau also made the wooden cross which we hang in the sanctuary in Lent/Easter and the cross for the Children's Church). The lovely stable was in place-but it was empty.



Coincidentally, that same year marked the death of the mother of one of the most faithful, long-standing members of our congregation. Beatrice Mary Armstrong Tees, mother of Miriam and Fred Tees, died on July 2, 1983, in her 100th year. Beatrice was baptized at the Dominion Square Church and attended worship at Dominion-Douglas every Sunday until January 1983, when her health was in decline. She was active in all of the groups of the church and in particular the Women's Missionary Society.

The Chancel Artisans found the lovely carved wooden figures at a shop on Notre-Dame St. When it was suggested to Miriam that they would be a very appropriate memorial to her mother, she was very happy to be able to fill the crèche.

So each Christmas season when we look at our crèche we will remember Beatrice Tees and thank Esau and Miriam for giving it to us.

– Betsy Zukow

**the musical ensembles of  
Mountainside United Church present**

**A  
CHRISTMAS  
CELEBRATION  
OF MUSIC**



*directed by  
Margaret de Castro  
with  
Rafael de Castro, organ  
and  
Caroline Derome, flute*

**December 6, 2009 at 4 p.m.**

## A word from Liturgy & Learning

This is a busy time of year! Elsewhere in this issue are reports from Lynne Dawson, Susan Salvati, Margaret de Castro, and Rev. John on the specific aspects of learning and liturgy at Mountainside -- the Children's Church and MYG, Music, and Adult Education, respectively.

Memorable this fall in a more general way are the address by Rev. Ellie Hummel of the Multifaith Chaplaincy of Concordia University who filled in (brilliantly) for Pastor John on October 18, the superb organ recital given by Margaret de Castro at the Oratoire Nov. 1, and the celebration of two infant baptisms, of Magnus Luca Srougi Nov. 1 and Ava Borzacchini Nov. 22nd.. And in November, add the bustle of the annual Holiday Bazaar on the 7th, the solemn significance of the Remembrance Sunday Nov. 8th, an organ anniversary service on the 22nd, and the always-magical Community Christmas Dinner Nov. 29, which date is also the first Sunday in Advent.

The Carol concert December 6th is the standard musical introduction to the Christmas season, a kind of proper orientation to guide us though the buzz and time-warp of December to the 24th and our now traditional 8 pm Christmas Eve service in the Sanctuary. Following this the next meeting will be Sunday the 27th in the Chapel.

At this time it seems appropriate to express our appreciation to Pastor John and to Margaret and the Choir for the privilege of their outstanding leadership, to our Communion Elders for the dignity and significance of their service, and to our Chancel Artisans without whose artistry and dedication our worship in Advent would seem so much the less.

*To all of you from L & L, our best wishes for the coming Season and for the New Year.  
Alan Greig*



## CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Rally Day was held on September 20th, launching the Children's Church school year. A covenanting

ceremony was followed by an open house downstairs including home baked cookies prepared by the children in previous weeks.

Lynne Walkling is back again this fall leading weekly Children's Church sessions. They follow the same readings used upstairs in the Sanctuary. Each week's gospel lesson is carefully illustrated by Lynne with comic strips for the children to read and colour. They discuss current event, listen to music and do puzzles and games.

The youngest children are watched in crib corner with my daughter, Katie Haentjens, who is volunteering her time as part of her community service requirement of her religion class at Villa Maria.

*Lynne Dawson  
Children's Church*

On November 1, 2009, All Saints Sunday, Mountainside welcomed into our church family through infant baptism Magnus Luca Srougi. He is the son of Nicholas Srougi and Christina Meaker- Williamson. The Godparents are Eric Schultz and Patricia Cameron. As is the normal practice of the United Church the congregation stands for the vows, since they also sponsor the child and assume with the parents the responsibility for his Christian education and spiritual growth.



## Advent in Every Moment

The prophet, Isaiah, expresses the frustration that many of his fellow believers feel after years in exile. They are longing for God to re-enter their lives in tangible, this-worldly ways. It's been a long time since God sent pillars of cloud by day and fire by night. It's been a long time since God rained manna from heaven or sent plagues upon Israel's enemies. It seems to these Judean refugees that God is no longer minding the store.

Isaiah refuses to pretend anymore. Too many years have come and gone without a sign of God's presence. In blunt and violent terms, the prophet begs God to come out of retirement, "Tear open the heavens and come down", shake up the landscape with forest fires – enough to boil water. Make the mountains quake. Isaiah seems to be saying, "Don't just stand there silently, God. Do something!"

Have you ever felt like Isaiah or the people of his day? Have you ever wondered where in heaven or on earth God is? And don't we sometimes think to ourselves, "With all the biblical proportions we read about at this time of the year, wouldn't it be nice if God just gave us a little Divine dazzle to push the scoffers back on their heels?"

Have you ever felt like this? If so, you've entered Advent, when we, like Isaiah, cry out to God to "tear open the heavens and come down." We challenge God to come down, to enter the public squares of life, to embarrass our enemies, to shout into our existence with a cosmic bullhorn. We want a loud Advent, a visible Advent, a tangible Advent.

But then, we know better than

this. Isaiah also knows better. After acting out, he laments. He laments that in their waiting, the people are emotionally withdrawn from God. They have lost their will to stay in touch with God. They fail to walk any more in God's way. And so Isaiah laments, "There is no one who calls on God's name anymore."

### Isaiah 64: 1-9

Unfortunately, we as a society always want someone or something to blame when things are not going right. We want to say that God has left us high and dry. But that is not the truth about God. We want to excuse our wandering away. But the problem isn't God wandering away. As Isaiah recognizes, reluctantly, it is not that God is absent; it is that we have tuned out or turned away from God's presence.

So in Advent, we as a society suddenly get religious again. We as a society also start paying attention to just how dark and dismal it is in November. We want God back in our lives right here, right now. We want the shining star and the glowing warmth. We want the glory back. Truth is, we have to readjust ourselves to where God is in the world.

God is always here. God is always the constant, creative, life-giving force.

The problem is not with God. It is with the darkness that we have turned towards. And so what happens? Our society over compensates. We want bright lights and flashy signs and

loud music. We want the whole-meal-deal to guide us as we grope in the darkness. And we can get more than a little indignant with God about how deep the darkness appears around us, especially in November! But we are the ones who are out of step. We are the ones who have turned to other things. Other interests. Other concerns.

Isaiah finally recognizes his or our place with God. There is still hope!

The faithful are the clay in the Divine potter's hands. We haven't hardened into brittle misshapen lumps. We are still a workable material. We can be turned toward the light. We can be fashioned into vessels of God's grace.

#### *The Application for Today:*

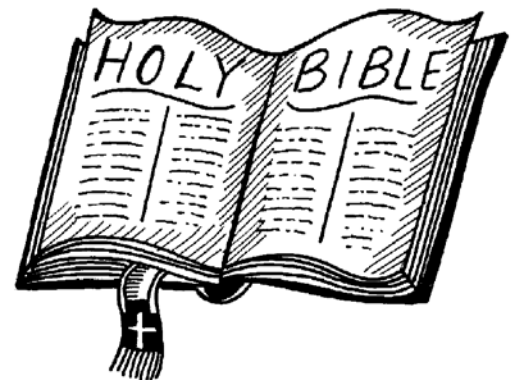
You can trust that God is already here and ready for Advent!

God is here in our Advent worship.

God is here in our Christmas church activities and congregational outreach.

The Christ Child is ready to be born anew in our relationships this Advent/Christmas.

– Rev. John



**BAZAAR 2009 RESULTS**  
**November 7, 2009**  
**\$9,100 AND COUNTING**

We are very grateful to:

Organizer – John Fraser and Elva Crawford  
 Art – the Lamonds  
 Baking – Miriam Tees  
 Books – John Dawson  
 Cards – Peggy Jean Thomas  
 Flea Market – The Salvatis  
 Linens – Frances Sault  
 Lunch – Elva Crawford

**Monday Group**

Nancy Day – homemade handcrafts  
 Dorothy Sutherland– knitted goods  
 Grace Hodgson - purses, scarves

Treasures – Beryl Bowser, Donna Fraser

Set-up - John Mateica

And to their dozens of helpers  
**THANK YOU**



**New Canadians – Mountainside  
 teaches English**

This is our second year of offering supper (soup and bread), English lessons with teacher Fahad Mutumba and conversation with us. It is not as large a group as last year, but they are very keen. Choi from Bangladesh can't wait for Tuesday evenings. Three attended our Bazaar on November 7th.

The week before Remembrance Day I decided they should learn "O Canada". I had the English version, French version and a ½ and ½ version, English first. With me thumping chords on the piano, we sang all three when a gentleman from the Welsh Choir (who practices on Tuesday nights) brought me his official version – ½ and ½ French first. By the time we practiced this a couple of times with his help, the young men had the tune and words down pat. I turned around to these beautiful young smiling faces and thought how lucky we all were to be in Canada.

We have 4 more evenings before Christmas. So far cooks have been Rev. John (famous chili), Julie Dawson, Diane Harper, Pat Roman, Mary Ross, Frances Sault, Miriam Tees and Kiki Tremain. They will tell you a simple soup for 15 with bread (cookies optional) can easily be prepared at home or at church to be served at 6:30 p.m. Please contact May Chan at (514) 486-1165 or sign up a church. We need help.

– Julie Dawson



*Far left: Diane Harper, Anita Carrier, Kay MacCallum and Mary Metcalf at the Bake Table*

*Left: Betsy Zukow, Susan and Vince Salvati at the Flea Market*

*Above: Donna and Rebecca Fraser and Beryl Bowser at the Treasure Trove*

## Stewardship

The theme of this year's campaign is "Do what needs to be done, give what needs to be given, 2010".

In past years we have asked you to be generous with your financial resources, and, of course, we again ask for your continued support, especially in light of our growing deficits, and to volunteer your time to serve on the various committees which form the governance of Mountainside.

This year, however, we are shifting our emphasis to more of an individual stewardship. By this I mean that all of us are stewards of the Spirit and thus we ask you to suggest to us where you feel the Spirit is urging you to do what needs to be done, and how it might lead to a ministry through our church.

I have watched with concern our dwindling attendance at Sunday services to the point where on most Sundays we would be hard pressed to fill the Chapel let alone the Sanctuary.

Why is this Happening?

Clearly we are not alone in this trend as it is being experienced by most mainline churches in Canada, but we can take no solace that we are not alone in this. We must ask why this is happening and what can we do about it.

The beginning of any rebirth in Spirit comes from individuals who have a passion and motivation to change the status quo and try new things.

Each of us must ask ourselves what we need to do differently to not only fill the pews on Sunday morning, but also to bring new life into Mountainside on a 24/7 basis.

I'm sure some of you are asking yourselves if this is possible?

Well I'll give you an example of the impossible becoming a reality.

There is a non-denominational congregation in Florida by the name of Calvary Chapel. If you look at them today, they are a 24/7 congregation providing everything from Bible studies to a skateboard facility for the youth, and they pack in a few thousand every Sunday.

This congregation is less than 20 years old. It all started with a minister from California who loaded up his family and took off to Florida. Their first services were held in a chapel in a funeral home, because the owner let them use it rent free. Over the years they have continued to grow and are an example of our Stewardship principle of "Do what needs to be done, give what needs to be given and check to see if it was

possible only after you have done it."

So it may be possible for us to accomplish what others have done but only if each of us is prepared to do it because to be successful we must believe that Stewardship is doing what needs to be done, giving what needs to be given and checking to see if it was possible only after you have done it.

– Vince Salvati  
Chair of Finance Committee



### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Here is a snapshot of 2009 at Mountainside United as of October 31, 2009

#### REVENUE

Givings	132,622
Fund Raising & Donations	10,410
Cost Recovery	10,943
Other (Investment Income)	
23,508	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$177,483</b>

#### EXPENSES

Salaries & Administration	313,574
Program	27,424
Outreach	2,700
Wider Church (M&S & Presbytery)	16,496
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$360,194</b>

Excess Expenses over Revenue	-\$182,711
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In 2008 Mountainside had 353 members of which 170 households contributed. Although the average gift was \$1,182, some households gave as much as \$6,000. Gifts were also made by adherents and visitors.

## Report from TM2

It's that time of year again ... time to bring Christmas cheer to folks near us who otherwise may not have the opportunity to go out and hear the joyful music of the season. For the fourth year in a row, we are inviting congregation members of all ages to join us singing Christmas carols at various residences in December. On Thursday December 10th, we will be walking to two residences in Westmount, starting with Westmount One and finishing at Manoir Westmount. On Thursday December 17th, we will be organizing rides to go sing at the Griffith McConnell residence in Cote-St-Luc; this was very well-received last year and they've asked us to visit them again this year. And finally, on Christmas Eve, Thursday December 24th, we will be meeting at Place Kensington to sing in the late afternoon. We will need singers for all 3 events (it is not necessary to know how to read music – words for the carols will be supplied), volunteers for December 10th to put on the apple cider at the church for when the carollers return, and we will also need drivers for December 17th to bring carollers to and from Griffith McConnell. Everyone is welcome to participate both nights. \*\*Keep in mind that December 10th involves a fair bit of walking, so for those who may have difficulty with this, the 17th and/or the 24th will be a great opportunity to take part in carol singing. Sign-up sheets will be in the narthex on Sunday November 22nd, Sunday November 29th, and Sunday December 6th; or speak directly to Vanessa Rodrigues.

In TM2 news, our young band is off to a very good start this year. We opened the season with music for our first in a series of alternative services, for which we learned and performed several popular songs with an environmental theme. TM2 will be participating in the Christmas concert on December 6th, and we have several events in the works at other churches in the Montreal area as well as a couple of upcoming road trips; we are looking forward to a very exciting spring season, and a reminder that we are always welcoming new young musicians (any instrument or vocals) who may wish to join the group.

-Vanessa Rodrigues, youth music director



## Rapport available on Mountainside United Church website

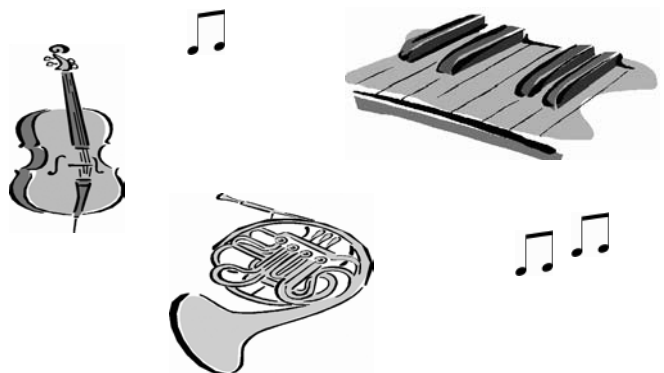
*Rapport* can be read by going to [www.mountainsideunited.ca](http://www.mountainsideunited.ca), clicking on **newsletter** and following the links to **download the current issue**. Many of you have indicated that you would like to view the newsletter in this fashion and not receive a copy in the mail. This would save in mailing expense. If you would like to try this option please notify the church by email at [may@mountainsideunited.ca](mailto:may@mountainsideunited.ca).

## Music Report

On Sunday, December 6th, at 4 p.m., the members of Mountainside Choir and Teen Music Mountainside will host the annual Christmas Celebration of Music concert in the sanctuary. The program will include seasonal choral and instrumental music and Christmas carols for all to sing. Flutist Caroline Derome will be the concert's featured performer. A festive reception in Tees Hall will follow the concert. Please plan to attend and to bring a friend or two!

The second contemporary worship service for the 2009-2010 year will take place on Sunday, December 13th, also White Gift Sunday. The focus of the service will be an intercultural approach to Christmas. The choir and TM2 will be joined by the members of the Montreal Intercultural Choir directed by Leonard Wosu.

- Margaret de Castro



## MICHAEL RECYCLE

is closing its doors. For many years, Michael D'Ornellas collected the returnable (deposit) cans and bottles left at the church by members, the proceeds of which were donated to the Generations Foundation. Michael thanks those who participated in this project



and urges everyone to individually carry on this work.



**Mountainside thanks Michael** for all of his time and effort in bringing recycling into the consciousness of us all.



The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs hosted a fund raiser at Restaurant Ruby Rouge in Chinatown. The money raised will be used for the prevention of HIV and Aids disease, through an education program to stop the spread of these diseases throughout poor African Nations.

Mountainside United Church congregants enjoyed a dinner of a variety of Chinese cuisine and danced to the fabulous music of The Blacksmiths. Excellent door prizes were given to the lucky winners one of which was our own Betsy Zukow.

– Susan Salvati

## THE EXECUTIVES OF SESSION

met for a planning meeting on Sunday October 25 from 1pm -5pm. We shared a light lunch before settling down to the business of the day.

As an opening exercise each executive was given an assigned role to imagine a scenario where they came to Mountainside for the very first time to a Sunday morning service. The roles covered ages from 15-75 years, and the individual reasons for coming were varied and specific to the individual. The ensuing interactions of the “new comers” within their group produced some interesting interpretations on the notions of “welcoming”.

You may have noticed that the recent Order of Service has included a responsive printed version of The United Church Creed as well as the Lord’s Prayer. Members new and old may find on reading these inclusions it is a renewal process of United Church beliefs and a way of welcoming strangers unfamiliar to the service.

The opening exercise was followed with a presentation by Rev. John based on the text of the Diana Butler Bass book, “Christianity for the Rest of Us”, demonstrating the characteristics of a vital congregation which should include practice, wisdom and tradition.

Then it was time to test our creativity and imagination against the reality of the work of the Committees and planning for 2010. Some sobering issues emerged which need to be a concern to all the congregation.

Presently, resources at all levels are diminishing. Membership numbers are decreased, the availability of volunteers is diminishing and revenues are down.

Yet the spirit of optimism was high. The reason: ideas and suggestions were proposed as possible solutions and while such ideas may be at an early stage they are positive and point in the direction of moving forward. A good beginning for renewal.

– Elva Crawford  
Chair of Session

## NOVEMBER 2009 – FEBRUARY 2010

## NOVEMBER

<b>Nov. 22</b>	<b>Christ the King</b>	<b>Organ Anniversary Service</b>
		<b>Baptism: Baby Ava BORZACCHINI</b>
<b>Nov. 22</b>		<b>Rapport distributed</b>
Nov. 23		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
Nov. 24		New Canadians Project, 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Nov. 25		Liturgy & Learning Committee, 4:30pm
Nov. 25		Adult Education - <i>First Light</i> , 7:30pm
Nov. 26		Session Meeting, 7:30pm
<b>Nov. 29</b>	<b>1st in Advent</b>	<b>Communion</b>
<b>Nov. 29</b>		<b>COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER, 4pm</b>
Nov. 30		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon

## DECEMBER

Dec. 1		New Canadians Project, 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Dec. 2		Adult Education - <i>First Light</i> , 7:30pm
Dec. 3		Choir practice, 7:30pm
<b>Dec. 6</b>	<b>2nd in Advent</b>	<b>A Christmas Celebration Carol Concert, 4:00pm</b>
Dec. 7		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
Dec. 8		New Canadians Project, 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Dec. 9		Trustees Meeting, 3:00pm
Dec. 9		Adult Education - <i>First Light</i> , 7:30pm
Dec. 10		Carolling, Westmount One, 7:20pm
Dec. 10		Carolling, Manoir Westmount, 8:15pm
<b>Dec. 13</b>	<b>3rd in Advent</b>	<b>Contemporary Service (<i>White Gift Sunday</i>)</b>
Dec. 13		EMSB Chorale Concert, 2:00pm
Dec. 14		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
Dec. 17		Carolling, Griffith McConnell, 7:00pm
<b>Dec. 20</b>	<b>4th in Advent</b>	
<b>Dec. 24</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Family Service</b>	<b>Carolling, Place Kensington, 4:30pm</b>
<b>Dec. 24</b>		<b>Pageant / Communion, 8:00pm</b>
<b>Dec. 25</b>	<b>Christmas</b>	Church building closed
<b>Dec. 27</b>	<b>First Sunday after Christmas</b>	<b>Service in the Chapel</b>
Dec. 28		Church building closed
Dec. 29	to Dec. 31	Church building open

## JANUARY

<b>Jan. 3</b>	<b>Christmas II / Epiphany</b>	<b>Communion</b>
Jan. 7		Choir practice, 7:30pm
<b>Jan. 10</b>	<b>First Sunday after Epiphany</b>	<b>Baptism of the Lord</b>
Jan. 14		Session Executive Meeting, 7:30pm
<b>Jan. 17</b>	<b>2nd Sunday after Epiphany</b>	
Jan. 18		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
Jan. 21		Choir practice, 7:30pm
<b>Jan. 24</b>	<b>3rd Sunday after Epiphany</b>	
Jan. 25		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
Jan. 28		Session Meeting, 7:30pm
<b>Jan. 31</b>	<b>4th Sunday after Epiphany</b>	

## FEBRUARY

<b>Feb. 7</b>	<b>5th Sunday after Epiphany</b>	
Feb. 1		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
Feb. 4		Choir practice, 7:30pm
<b>Feb. 14</b>	<b>Transfiguration Sunday</b>	
Feb. 15		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
<b>Feb. 16</b>	<b>Shrove Tuesday</b>	<b>Pancake Supper, 6:30pm</b>
<b>Feb. 17</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	
Feb. 18		Choir practice, 7:30pm
<b>Feb. 21</b>	<b>1st in Lent</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting, 12:30pm</b>
Feb. 22		Monday Women's Group, 12 noon
<b>Feb. 28</b>	<b>2nd in Lent</b>	