



RAPPORT

Mountainside United Church

4000 The Boulevard, Westmount, Quebec



October 2012

Old Arithmetic and New Additions

$3 + 1 = 4$.

Three month sabbatical + 1 month vacation = 4 months away: The longest time out of the pulpit for me x3 in 34 years of ministry. The unexpected thing for me was that I wasn't as rusty coming back as I usually am after just 5 weeks of summer vacation. I feel somewhat different coming back, a little more laid back perhaps, with a little shift of perspective on things.

Vicki and I spent a lot of time exploring the *wildness* of God, in the vast variations of creation, encountered on our 11,450 km trek. We spent a lot of time at *thin places* above 7,000 ft elevation in the western mountain ranges of the U.S. We spent a lot of time integrating the mystical with the everyday. We are the same but now somehow different. I suppose that's what sabbaticals are designed to do:

Reminder that our
**new time of worship is
10:30 am in the Sanctuary.**

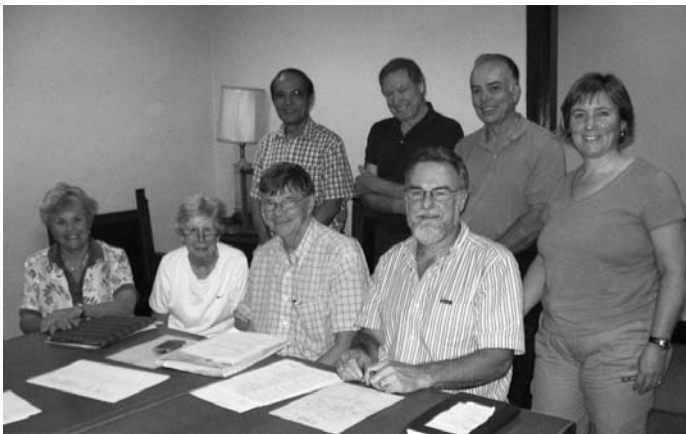
create a space to rest, refresh, reflect and so evolve. One thing is sure different: my 'bucket list' is now a lot shorter. However, we took over 1,000 pictures on our trip to the National Parks in the American south west and have yet to cull them down to a manageable number for sharing with others.

Another change, Vicki and I began our vacation phase as newly minted grandparents. Vicki's daughter Michelle gave birth to Charlotte August 1, a precious new addition to our lives. We sure weren't ready for this new adventure 5 or 10 years ago, but now we are happy campers! Vicki hopes to be called Nanna, and eventually just Nan. I am put in for Grandpa or Grandpa John. Time will tell, but with eight grandparents in the mix who knows.

I also return with a new outlook on the church, the ministry, spirituality and the practice of our Christian faith. In my time away I have discovered additional resources of grace. In fact, there is so much more grace available in our lives than we can comprehend. You will have to stay tuned for the unpacking of these additional learnings as we move through the liturgical calendar.

Old + new = more grace in our lives to share with one another.

Rev John



Executive Committee welcomes back Rev. John at their first meeting of the fall.

Since September 2011, a group of eight has been meeting here at the Church every Tuesday evening for meditation. We listen to a little music, to an audio tape on Christian meditation and then meditate for 25 minutes. We have become, without plan or expectation, a microcosm of this Mountainside congregation: a caring community of seekers under the Christian banner sharing a part of our human voyage through a journey into silence by letting go of thoughts, stillness by letting go of desire and simplicity by letting go of self-analysis.

This morning, I would like to tell you about the history of Christian meditation. To do this, I want to tell you about the life of the man who rediscovered the early practice of Christian meditation and shared this ancient form of prayer with the world.

To discover what meditation is, join me in journeying to 4th Century Egypt. At that time, many followers of Jesus had formed communities in the desert and were practicing their faith according to their understanding of the scriptures. These early Christians are now known as the Desert Fathers and Mothers. One of the Biblical passages that meant a great deal to them was from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (5:17): "Pray without ceasing." Many of these men and women, who worked serving the poor and sick, tried to follow a practice of continuous prayer using what we now call the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." Fortunately, the teachings of one of these early Christians, John Cassian, were recorded, and have continued to inspire through the ensuing centuries.

Now let us time travel into the 20th Century to January 21, 1926, in London, England, where Eileen and Patrick Main have just welcomed their third child into the family. He is baptized Douglas William Victor. Thus begins the life of the man who is responsible for the existence of the Mountainside Christian Meditation group.

Douglas grew up, one of six children, in a warm, loving family. From his father he acquired his pragmatic, dynamic, bon-vivant attributes and from his mother his imagination and insight into the world of the spirit.

In 1943, at age 17, he joined the war effort and became a wireless opera-

Thoughts on Meditation

Linda Guignon
Sunday, August 19, 2012
in the Chapel

tor. In due course, he moved up the ranks to more and more complicated intelligence assignments. His work, sparring with enemy German counterparts, required "attention, stillness and concentration," gifts he was destined to carry into his spiritual life as the years passed.

After the war, Douglas thought he would test his sense of calling to the priesthood, but found the spiritual training he received constricting. One thing he knew for sure was that his concept of faith was that it should be liberating, not limiting, and that its ultimate goal should be love. All of this reflection was done in the midst of working on a law degree which he received in 1954. He was then off to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to work for Her Majesty's Overseas Civil Service. Douglas Main, now age 29, was about to be introduced to another figure who would shape the remainder of his life.

In the context of his work in the Foreign Service, Douglas met an Indian Swami who ran an orphanage. He later wrote:

I was deeply impressed by his peacefulness and calm wisdom.... He asked me if I meditated. I told him I tried to and, at his bidding, described briefly what we have come to know as the Ignation method of meditation. He was silent for a short time and then gently remarked that his own tradition of meditation was quite different. For the Swami, the aim of medita-

tion was the coming to awareness of the Spirit of the universe who dwells in our hearts....

For Douglas, coming to an awareness of the spirit of the universe meant an awareness of the risen Jesus in his own heart.

Thus began a path for Douglas that changed his life and the lives of countless others whom he taught. He learned that the way to achieve the stillness, silence and concentration required for this type of prayer was through the use of a single word or mantra. The mantra should be repeated faith-

fully, continually and lovingly. For 18 months, Douglas met once a week with his teacher for a half hour of meditation. He was also encouraged to meditate both morning and evening, every day.

His teacher commented:

[D]uring the time of your meditation there must be in your mind, no thoughts, no words, no imaginations. The sole sound will be the sound of your mantra, your word. ... [W]e begin to experience the deep unity we all possess in our own being... the unity between you and your Creator.

In that, Douglas heard the words of St Paul to the Ephesians:

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Leaving the British Foreign Service, Douglas accepted a position teaching law at Trinity College, Dublin, and continued to meditate morning and evening

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~ Music Report ~

Early Childhood Activity Hour



On September 16, Mountainside kicked off a new program, the Early Childhood Activity Hour, which runs on Sundays from 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. in Leslie Hall. The focus of the program is on music but also includes a snack time and an arts and crafts activity. All preschoolers and toddlers are most welcome to attend. Parents are encouraged to attend with toddlers as parent and tot groups. Cordell Henebury, the director of Teen Music Mountainside, is coordinating the program. Cordell has had a great deal of experience organizing music programs for daycares and preschools. He is also head of the music program at Centennial Regional High School in Greenfield Park.

The Early Childhood Activity Hour will be held weekly from through December 16 with the exception of Thanksgiving weekend, October 7.

Seasonal secular and sacred subjects will be highlighted, including autumn and creation topics and Halloween and Christmas holiday themes.

Please join us and bring a friend — or two! For more information please call the Director of Music, Margaret de Castro, at 514-486-1165.

Mountainside Choir



Our choir jumped into autumn on Sunday, September 9, returning to the sanctuary for morning service. On September 16, Sunday rehearsal time moved to 9 a.m. from 9:15 a.m., in order to accommodate the new 10:30 a.m. service time. The first Thursday evening rehearsal took place on September 20 at 7:30 p.m.

New choristers this year will include Joslin Romphf Dennis, soprano lead, and Bruno Roy, tenor lead. On September 30 we will say goodbye to Jérôme Savoie, our outgoing tenor lead. Katrina Westin, our soprano lead in 2011–2012, has had to leave us due to a move which situates her too far away from Mountainside to make the Sunday morning commute feasible.

Please mark December 2 on your calendars as the 2012 date for our Christmas Celebration of Music concert. Note that we are moving our December concert time forward one hour to start at 3 p.m. instead of 4 p.m.

Teen Music Mountainside



Teen Music Mountainside had its first meeting on Sunday, September 16, at 11:30 in Leslie Hall. Any young people who are interested in music making are most welcome to attend.

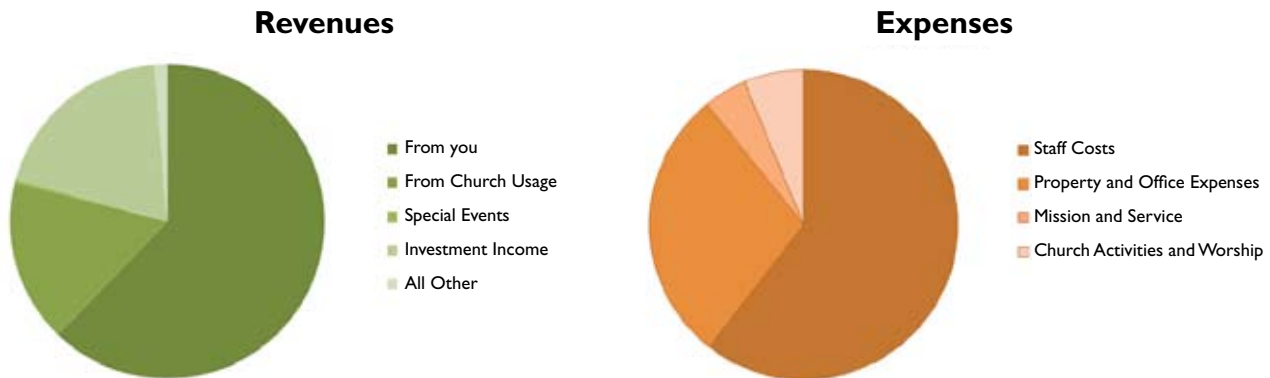
Toddlers and parents join the Birthday Lunch after the first session of the Early Childhood Activity Hour.



Finance Committee Report

Our Church Revenues from all sources through August totaled \$167,100, while our Expenses were \$253,700, for an overall deficit of \$86,600. Revenues were about \$13,000 higher than last year due to the full-year impact from the Korean Methodist Church and higher investment income. Overall expenses were about \$10,000 lower than last year, reflecting the decision not to replace the retired caretaker. A continuing concern remains that Envelope giving is about 8% below last year and 9% below budget. Hopefully with the end of the summer season we will begin to catch up with our giving projections.

Where does our money come from and where does it go?



A disturbing trend so far in 2012?

Your giving supported about 67% of our staff cost!

Investment income and church usage supported about 83% of our Property and Office Expenses!

The shortfall from the above is covered by withdrawing funds from our Endowment Fund, as has been the case in the past few years, and thanks to a somewhat favorable market and some one-time inflows over the past decade, we continue to function in a manner consistent with our past. We will soon begin our annual Stewardship Campaign with a theme of hope. Please reflect on our financial situation knowing that hope alone is not a long-term solution.

Vince Salvati
Finance Chair

RAPPORT

Rapport is published by
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Please send articles and
announcements to the church office:

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www.mountainsideunited.ca

Meeting Vanessa in Brazil

You will all remember Vanessa Rodriguez who worked for several years with our musical teens group. She had fallen in love with Brazil, and last winter she went to live there, hoping to find a job and be able to work there, especially with children in the favela's, Rio's notorious slums. I was invited to a July wedding in Brazil and e-mailed Vanessa to find out that she was in Rio and would love to have a visit from someone from Mountainside. Since we were spending a few days in Rio, we invited Vanessa to come and have a swim with us on the famous Copacabana Beach, a block from our hotel, and then to have dinner with us. We had a lovely visit with her and heard that she is having a struggle to get a visa to work, but that she is eking out a living, teaching her landlord's children piano, writing for tourist media, and getting a few musical gigs. Best of all, she has a little group of children, >>

Tuscany by Thomas Zukow

Friendship can be a wonderful kind of travel, perhaps that is why the word ends in ship. Finding a good friend can be a journey of a lifetime, a brief encounter, or a seamless mesh into your own being. Tom Zukow is our friend, a seamless passage into our lives from the first day we joined Mountainside United Church.

Our initial impression of Tom on our first day in church was when he asked us where our son Michael is living. We said, Oh, it is a small town in Orange County, CA. He asked, Where? We said Costa Mesa. He said that is where our daughter Lisa lives. How is this possible, we thought? Then he introduced us to Betsy and the journey of friendship began.

Perhaps our friendship would have been a brief encounter but the Zukows were too much fun to be with. They are gourmet cooks (always a good thing to have friends who will feed you), enjoy music, a good read, walking the mountain, and, especially for Tom, love the expression of artwork.

So we began the Salvati/Zukow friendship journey, down the roads of endless conversations and wishful thinking that usually ended in Tuscany. Laughter, banter, debating the issues of the day continued in our friendship.

But friendship is not linear, and Vin and I decided to change direction in our lives by selling our home and all the furniture, starting a different journey, a new and modern one. Tom was the first person to support our idea of changing lifestyles, even though he was not sure where we were going.



We did make a big change in our home surroundings and Tom and Betsy were the first to see the new and much smaller Salvati home. They loved our new home. To our surprise, Tom said that, as a house warming gift, he would like to give us one of his paintings. Inspired by our many joyful conversations of Tuscany and the modern theme of our furniture, his painting of Tuscany was made, and we love it. Not only do we like the painting, but we have had two well-known interior designers from Montreal and The NY School of Design who love his artwork too. The road of friendship takes many paths. Some of them end more abruptly than you would like, some you let linger more than you should, and some are God inspired, and those friendships are the best.

Susan & Vincent Salvati

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10 to 12 years old, from the favela, that she is teaching to play the violin. She invited us to come and visit her class the next day from 2 to 3 p.m. We climbed onto a local van/bus, and found ourselves in a large building devoted to education, and there in a little room was Vanessa surrounded by a dozen budding violinists. They found us very funny, and I'm afraid we distracted them from their lesson, but Vanessa felt they enjoyed the visit and playing for us. We were thrilled at the opportunity to see the real life of the favela. We took a lot of photographs which I hope to post on our photographic billboard so you can have a little taste of this great experience.

Miriam Tees



Mountainside Youth Group (MYG)

MYG is for teens ages 14 to 17. We meet Sunday mornings at the 10:30 a.m. church service.

At 10:45 the group meets at designated locations for food,

chats & fun. Join us this year!

Expect to meet friends, eat, play games, have Christian discussions, participate in the Church Community and have fun doing it all.

*Susan Salvati 438-288-3774
MYG Leader*

A year of Meals on Wheels

Our “reborn” Meals on Wheels is back for a second year, with an enthusiastic crew of volunteers and a hungry list of clients, who are keeping our cooks busy by ordering up to 21 meals.

Our year-ender in late May brought together old and new volunteers, who shared thoughts and ideas as we savored baked goodies with John Mateica’s fine coffee. Fresh-baked scones with jam made by Judy Clark and tangy lemon bread from Judy Johnston’s oven were in especially strong demand.

Getting together solved problems. Judy Clark noted a need for buyers, and in a twinkling, Miriam Tees offered her services — much appreciated! A list went around soliciting cooks and servers for August, and several people signed up. This allowed us to get through a particularly difficult time, when MOW returns after a month of absence due to the church being closed in July, and when many are away.

Participants agreed we should raise the price for a meal from \$3.50 to \$4 starting in August, to cover rising food costs. This has made collecting easier for the servers, as fewer quarters are needed for change.

We began August with a couple of setbacks. A buyer and a driver had to cancel, but others rallied and filled the gaps. Warm thanks to replacement buyer Joan Ferguson, and drivers Philip Johnston and Sandra Baines. I myself got some useful exposure — doing a bit

of buying, driving, cooking and serving!

Our office co-ordinator Felicitas (May) Chan offered to serve on Thursdays in August, so she could see our meal recipients in their home setting and assess their cognitive ability. She said visiting helps her prepare our servers for problems — for example, if clients are slow, confused or hard of hearing. Some clients wanted to see more of her. When I served one Monday, a gentlemen opened his door and asked with dismay, Where’s May?

It was Felicitas’ first time serving in three years, and it confirmed her belief in our service. “It’s great we re-started Meals on Wheels,” she says. “The clients seem really happy to see us. For some, I suspect we’re the only people who knock on their door regularly.”

The Sacred Heart girls returned in September as servers. Teacher Angelo Gallo says students across Quebec are now required to obtain a “social action certificate” as part of their education, so competition for volunteer gigs is strong. He’s extremely grateful to Mountainside for giving his students this opportunity to serve their community.

Susan Purcell
Meals on Wheels co-ordinator



The Annual Christmas Bazaar

The annual Christmas bazaar is being held on Saturday, November 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It is always great fun and a good way to get into the Christmas spirit!

Julie Dawson and Judy Johnston will want your help to make it a success. Let’s help out with our TREASURES.

We are looking for:



ART WORK



BAKED AND FROZEN GOODS

to supplement apple pies



PRESERVES



NEARLY NEW

gifts, toys, linens, art work

BOOKS

recent novels only,
records, CDs, tapes



TREASURES & COLLECTIBLES

JEWELLERY

real or costume



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

seasonal items



Meditation ... continued from page 2

as he had been taught in Kuala Lumpur. He wrote:

[F]or me personally there was all the joy and excitement of the pilgrimage of my morning and evening meditation. All the time there was a growing attraction to meditation and the morning and evening times became the real axis on which my day was built.

During this period, his young nephew died of an inoperable brain tumour. His life was a crucible in which he experienced his faith being tested. He wrote about his nephew's death:

The death of this child had an enormous effect on me and brought me face to face with the questions of life and death and the whole purpose of existence. As I reviewed my life at this time I was forcibly struck by the fact that the most important thing in my entire existence was my daily meditation. I decided, therefore, to structure my life on my meditation and sought to do so by becoming a monk.

In September 1959, Douglas entered Ealing Abbey in London. Now age 33, Douglas William Victor Main took the name of the disciple John. He continued his theological studies in Rome, exploring the relationship between contemplative experience and liturgical prayer. In 1963, he was ordained to the priesthood in the community church at Ealing and in early 1964, Father John began teaching in the middle school at Ealing.

In 1970, Father John was appointed headmaster at St. Anselm's Abbey School in Washington, D.C. While there, he received a call from a concerned father about his son, who had been experimenting with drugs and Eastern mysticism. Father John agreed to meet with the young fellow and suggested that he read two books: *Holy Wisdom* and *The Cloud of Unknowing*. In due course, he taught the boy to meditate. The mentoring of the young man reawakened Father John's resolve to commit his life to the teaching of Christian meditation.

Father John returned to Ealing in 1974 to research the Christian roots of silent, wordless, imageless prayer. He dug deeper into the connections between the tradition given to him in Kuala Lumpur, the teachings of Cassian as they were recorded in the 4th century and the first century letters of St Paul. He recognized that these three strands related to the same practice, Christian meditation, and that it dated from the time of Jesus and the Apostles.

His concept of faith was that it should be liberating, not limiting, and that its ultimate goal should be love.

Father John wrote:

[A]ll Christian prayer is a growing awareness of God in Jesus... and for that growing awareness we need to come to a state of undistractedness, to a state of attention and concentration — that is to a state of awareness... the only way that I have been able to find to come to that quiet, to that undistractedness, to that concentration, is the way of the mantra.

Father John recommended the phrase "Maranatha" meaning "Come, Lord Jesus." This word has its own storied past in our tradition: it is an Aramaic word — the language Jesus himself spoke. St. Paul ends Corinthians with the word and John ends Revelation with it as well.

Father John formulated the idea of the creation of a centre devoted to the teaching of Christian meditation. The invitation to carry forward this plan came from Montreal, where Bishop Leonard Crowley was interested in nurturing such a venture. Bishop Crowley later spoke about his October 1976 meeting with Father John:

I shared with him my desire to bring to our city various religious communities, each of which might deepen and enrich the spiritual life of our priests and people with a sense of stability at a time of great political and social unrest in Quebec.

On September 28, 1977, Father John Main and Lawrence Freeman, a young monk also from Ealing, arrived in Montreal to set up a meditation centre on Vendôme Avenue in NDG. This was the beginning of the Benedictine Priory of Montreal. The work began to grow. A community of people formed around the monks at the centre. In time, the McConnell mansion on Pine Avenue became the home of the Benedictine Priory. All along, the work of teaching Christian meditation and the local community of meditators continued to expand.

A mere five years after arriving in Montreal, on December 30, 1982, Father John died of cancer at the age of 56, but out of this loss emerged a new age in the teaching he had worked so hard to establish. Under the leadership of Father Laurence Freeman and the guidance of the respected philosopher and Christian theologian Bede Griffiths, the World Community for Christian Meditation was formed in 1991.

The World Community for Christian Meditation brings together meditation groups in 62 countries. There are meditation groups just like the Mountainside group in every province in Canada.

In closing, let us listen to these words about Christian meditation:

Sit still. Close your eyes lightly and sit as relaxed as you can. Your posture should be comfortable, alert, your back straight. Closing your eyes lightly you then silently and interiorly begin to repeat one word, a single word. You continue to repeat your word through the time of the meditation, silently, interiorly, sounding this single little sacred word. Listen to it as you say it, gently, peacefully, faithfully, come back to it if you get distracted; keep returning to it.

Keep it simple. Say your word. Maranatha. Amen.

- Scripture Readings: Matthew 6: 6-8; Ephesians 3: 14-19; 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18
- Further Reading: *In The Stillness Dancing* by Neil McKenty (1986)
- Further information: www.wccm.org

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2012

OCTOBER		
Oct. 4		Choir practice, 7:30pm
Oct. 7	19th after Pentecost	World Wide Communion / Thanksgiving Sunday
		Service at 10:30am
Oct. 8	Thanksgiving Monday	church building closed
Oct. 11		Session Executive Meeting, 5:30p.m.
Oct. 14	20th after Pentecost	Stewardship Sunday, Service at 10:30am
Oct. 18		Choir practice, 7:30pm
Oct. 21	21st after Pentecost	October Birthday Celebration, Service at 10:30am
Oct. 28	22nd after Pentecost	Outreach Sunday, Service at 10:30am
NOVEMBER		
Nov. 1		Choir practice, 7:30pm
Nov. 3		Annual Christmas Bazaar, 10:00am – 2:00pm
Nov. 4	23rd after Pentecost	Service at 10:30am
Nov. 8		Session Executive Meeting, 5:30p.m.
Nov. 11	24th after Pentecost	Remembrance Sunday, Service at 10:30am
Nov. 15		Choir practice, 7:30pm
Nov. 18	25th after Pentecost	November Birthday Celebration, Service at 10:30am
Nov. 22		Session, 7:30pm
Nov. 24		Community Christmas Dinner, 4:00pm
Nov. 25	Christ the King	Service at 10:30am
		Congregational Meeting immediately following the service
		Budget 2013
DECEMBER		
Dec. 1		Choir practice, 7:30pm
Dec. 2	1st in Advent	Communion Service at 10:30am
		A Christmas Celebration Carol Concert, 3 p.m.
Dec. 9	2nd in Advent	White Gift Sunday Service at 10:30am
Dec. 16	3rd in Advent	December Birthday Celebration, Service at 10:30am
Dec. 23	4th in Advent	Service at 10:30am
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Family Service	Pageant / Communion, 8 p.m.
Dec. 30	1st after Christmas	Service at 10:30am in the Chapel