



Comox United Church

Our Values: Spirituality, Openness, Care for the Common Good, Radical Love

DECEMBER 29, 2023 - JANUARY 5, 2024



Erwan Hesry-Unsplash

Dec 31, 2023

No Service at Comox United

Worship services are available in three ways:

1. Attend in-person at the church on Sundays @ 10:00am
2. Watch live on-line by going to our YouTube channel. Click on this link at 10:00 am on Sunday morning:
<https://www.youtube.com/@comoxunitedchurch3917/streams>
3. Watch another time from the "Virtual Services" page on our website:
<https://www.comoxunitedchurch.com/pages/online-sunday-services>

Contact Information

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OUR COMMUNITY

LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

WEEKLY

Mondays	1:30	Knitting Group (starts back Jan 9, 2024)
Tuesdays	10:00	Coffee and Conversation at the Comox Golf Club
Thursday	6:30	Choir Practice
Fridays	10:00	Men's Shed

MONTHLY

1 st Sun	1:30	Glacier View Lodge Music
2 nd Mon.	1:15	UCW
2 nd Fri	TBA	Social Singles Contact: Merrilee: tomyhome@shaw.ca
3 rd Sat	9:00	Men's Breakfast
Last Sun.	11:15	Soup and Bun Lunch



Eyestetix Studio-unsplash

COMOX UNITED CHURCH WEBSITE

I interrupt Joyce's regularly scheduled Website Tip to encourage you to watch the Christmas Eve Service. You can find it at the link below; a moving and celebratory event.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1_s4nBuF3Q

Another option is to visit the Church's website and click on the link.

Newsletters are also posted on the Comox United website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



BIRTHDAY COINS

A few weeks ago Council received a proposal from the Affirming Team to redirect the birthday coins from the Canadian charity Sleeping Children Around the World to Gukwas sa Wagalus (Rainbow House).

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on this proposal.

Based on your comments, Council decided that, for 2024, the money collected as birthday coins will be distributed evenly between these two worthy causes.

This allows us to benefit young people in our community while continuing to benefit young people in other countries. Thank you for bringing your birthday coins to share with children and youth, locally and globally.



Photo for Rainbow House by Ali Roddam

Solstice and New Years are celebrated throughout the world...

Some Indigenous peoples still maintain their traditional solstice practices and teachings today. However, many communities had their celebrations moved to December 25 or New Year's Day to align with the national calendar and government-recognized holidays.

Colonialism and the Canadian residential school system led to the forcible erasure of many of these traditions. Now, as more and more people are rediscovering and reviving those traditions, the solstice acts as a day to reclaim them and reconnect to traditions once thought lost forever.

For many Indigenous cultures, winter is a time to connect with the spirits of the past. The December solstice became a time to reflect on and thank their ancestors, share stories, honour their origins, and set intentions for themselves in preparation for the cold months ahead. It's also a time to recognize everyone's fundamental interconnectedness—with each other, nature, and the cosmos. *"Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council, CAMSC"*

The sun was always seen as a feminine figure. The pre-Islamic southern Arabians called her Atthar. In Mesopotamia, she was Arinna, the Queen of Heaven. To the [Vikings](#), she was Sol, to the Inuit the sun was Sun Sister — and the list goes on.

Some [Nordic](#) communities believed that the [winter solstice](#) was when their goddesses would give birth, bringing more light into our darkened world. That is why they called it "mothers' night".

The belief was prominent in other ancient nations, too. According to [myths](#), the Egyptian goddess Isis's son Horas and the Greek goddess's son Apollo were both born on the winter solstice.

In [Finnish](#) mythology, the legend explained that Louhi, the witch goddess of the North, kidnapped the sun and moon, and held them captive inside a mountain, causing the dark days of winter.

In the [Scottish](#) Highlands, they called the winter solstice "Grian-stad Geamhraidh", meaning "sun-stop winter". They believed the winter was brought on by a hag-goddess named Cailleach.

She was described as a scary woman with long, white hair who was so much bigger than humans that the waters of the Sound of Mull would come up to only her knees.

To get rid of her and the cold weather she brought, Scots would carve her likeness into a wooden log and burn it, hoping it would banish her and lead to brighter times ahead.

According to [Greek](#) legends, however, the hairy, gnome-like creatures called Kallikantzaros, who live underground, love the winter and don't want it to come to an end.

These beings can't be exposed to sunlight as it kills them. Therefore, for most of the year, they are busy sawing the trunk of the world tree underground, hoping to collapse it with our planet.

But during winter, for a few days, it is dark enough for them to come out and cause mischief, making them forget all about their evil plan to end life as we know it.

As such, the myth says they wreak havoc until Epiphany in early January, when the sun starts moving again and they must go back into hiding.

This is when they realise that the world tree has healed itself during their absence, so they start their sawing all over again until the same cycle occurs next winter. *"<https://www.standard.co.uk/>"*

SELF-CARE



Frauk Tokluoglu- unsplash

We've made it through the Longest Night of the Year and are looking forward to longer days.

Are you finding more ways of serving Christmas turkey, tofurkey, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, and other trimmings? Then there are the chocolate balls, butter tarts, Stollen, and so many cookies and bars to be frozen.

I like to reflect on the past year by lighting a candle, have quiet music playing, and reviewing my journal month-by-month to highlight major events, dreams, etc. I consider these questions:

What were three highlights this year? Meeting you, and you, and you! Working at the Church, and good health.

What is one event that was challenging? Saying goodbye to my soul kitty, Puma.

In what ways did this difficult time make you stronger, more compassionate, or increase your ability to shoulder the rough patches? I'm stronger than I thought I would be through it and my heart has a huge capacity to love.

How will you celebrate what you accomplished this past year? Spending less screen time (phone and computer) and more time, reading, creating, and writing. Plus, I have a lot of cookies to get through. ;)

Each year, I pick a word to represent the upcoming 12 months? What would your word be? Mine is **COMPLETION**. I have reno projects, arts, crafts, and so much more on the go that I want finish in 2024.

As an 'idea' person who thrives on creating new projects, it will be challenging to keep myself on task. I need an IDEA JAR 2025. I'm writing my '2024 great ideas' onto pretty-colored paper. Hmm, I may need two 1 gallon jar(s). ☺

If you'd like to **privately** share any of your 2023 reflections or word of the year, let me know.

Thank you all for being you and all you do for, and with, the Church and community!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER

25th, Sunday, **Karen begins her vacation – back Jan 10th**. There is no Bulletin this week.

31st, Sunday, we are invited to worship with St. Peter's Anglican Church, **there will be no service at Comox United Church.**

31st, Sunday, **CV Unitarian Fellowship, 4:00 pm in the Hall**, New Year's Eve - there will be a gathering to let go of the old year and welcome the new. We will have a Spiral Walk (like a labyrinth), and a Fire Communion (where we burn whatever we wish to 'discard' from the year ending). This will be followed by a potluck, and possibly games and singing. **All Ages welcome. Bring a friend. Potluck will follow the service. If you are able, please bring food to share. To ease the clean-up please bring your own.**

JANUARY 2024

Dec 26-Jan 1st Kwanzaa

This African-American holiday isn't religious or spiritual—rather, it's a cultural holiday celebrating African heritage. It lasts for seven days, from December 26 to January 1, and each day a candle is lit on the "kinara"—a candelabrum similar to the menorah used in Hanukkah.

1st, Monday, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

2nd, Tuesday, Office is **OPEN**

6th, Saturday, Celebrate Epiphany

7th, Sunday, Karen is away.

The Service will be led by:

Joan Gillies and Howard Robertson.

7th, Sunday, Baptism of Jesus

14th, **Sunday, Karen is back from vacation.**

14th, Sunday, Second after Epiphany

20th, Saturday, 1-5 pm. Art Experience for Caregivers

21st, Sunday, Third after Epiphany

21st, Sunday, Comox Valley Unitarian Fellowship and

Comox United Church, 2 pm, in the sanctuary, will share a joint service to celebrate the renewal of our covenant.

22nd, Monday, Chinese New Year

28th, Sunday, Fourth After Epiphany



Kelly Sikkem-unsplash

**Announcements should be sent to admin@comoxunitedchurch.com
or call 250 339-3966 by 8:00 am Thursday morning.**

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please email admin@comoxunitedchurch.com