



jacob'sWELL

December 2011



Looking for the Living Christ

BY JOYCE REES

We held our 10-year Anniversary Party on October 22, 2011, opening our doors to old and new friends and celebrating God's faithfulness to us over this last decade. In this article, Joyce Rees, our first director and long-time community member, shares some of her reflections on this time.

On my drive into Vancouver to attend the Jacob's Well ten year celebration I got thinking about the incredible odds that have been overcome to get here.

I spent my life in this community for the first eight of those years. Those were some very challenging days. Pioneering is never without hard work, disappointments, challenges, victories and failures. We grew slowly and surely, both in terms of the size of our community and in the scope of its influence. We also grew in maturity and faith in God, and in our ability to trust His presence to guide us in relationship with those who crossed our path or our threshold. I've often said we buried far more than we baptized in those years, but we still saw the breaking in of God's kingdom in numerous ways, despite our sorrow and the slow going of transformation.

As an alumnus and founding leader of Jacob's Well, I had tremendous joy in seeing the vitality of the community at the party. I didn't recognize the vast majority of folks who attended the celebration. Although part of this is due to the deaths of numerous friends, it also showed me that the community continues to thrive. New relationships have been forged, many more have found belonging.

Some folks may be unaware of how very difficult the past two years have been for the Jacob's Well community. During this time the community has navigated five major staff transitions, and survived a massive flood, which destroyed much of the storefront and left the community homeless for several months. They also learned to cope with the effects of the economic crisis and its detrimental impact on Jacob's Well's income. These have been major stressors, and communities and organizations have folded with far less to face.

The staff, in particular, have had to really have fortuitous character and a deeply rooted faith in order to carry the community through these troubling times. To have even reached a ten year anniversary was in many ways miraculous. We ought to take our hats off to the current staff for their hard work and strength. In many ways, they have faced more in the last two years than we faced cumulatively in the previous eight years. In other words, if it wasn't for them, there would have been no celebration.

I tried to bring some words of encouragement to them and the rest of the community when I shared during the party. I reminded them of Paul's words when he said, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings..." (Phil. 3:10). In the history of Jacob's Well we've known much of sharing in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. But we must keep looking for Christ, not only in his suffering, but also in the power of his resurrection. (continued on page 7)

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Visual timeline of our last 10 years, set up for the party.

From frustration to cooperation

BY BETH MALENA & ALBERTO JARAMILLO

Most communities are marked by particular rhythms and seasons. In our neighbourhood, there is a strong monthly rhythm revolving around Welfare Wednesday (or “cheque day”), when social assistance cheques are distributed. Single adults in British Columbia receive \$610 a month, but their rent is automatically deducted and paid to their landlord, so usually their cheques are just over \$200, which is meant to cover food and all other expenses.¹

Back in the May 2010 newsletter, we printed a Welfare Wednesday liturgy. We had been using it in our community prayers on this pivotal day in the DTES. Because the money our friends receive is not nearly enough to live on, because they do not have the dignity of earning money and offering their gifts and skills back to their community, and because many of them are fighting addictions, their anticipation of this day is mixed with despair. It can be a day of temptation, regret, hopelessness and waste. We have spent years watching our friends get caught up in this vicious cycle of having, spending and needing again. We have felt helpless, with no idea what to do except pray for signs of hope, and repent for our part in this broken system.

The good news is that God has begun to answer our prayers, and some light has broken into this dark day. It all started with our neighbour Grace Edge, who has lived in the DTES for many years and experienced many Welfare Wednesdays. Years ago, she decided to host a clean and sober space called “Place of Grace,” where her girlfriends could hang out on cheque day, eating healthy food, and enjoying time together.

Fast forward to June 2011, when Grace shared this idea with some of her friends from incarnational communities in the DTES: Servants, Salvation Army 6-1-4, St. Chiara’s, Mission Possible, and Jacob’s Well. These groups had already developed relationships with one another through Colleague’s Lunches at Jacob’s Well, and by joining together for a month of prayer every November. After listening to Grace, brainstorming, and waiting on God, we decided to try doing something together, as communities, that we could not do by ourselves.

On July 27, we held our first Alternative Welfare party. As people lined up at the Welfare Office for their cheques, we pulled couches out of the Servants office onto the sidewalk on Hastings, and opened the gate to our Red Clover gardens. We welcomed anyone who wanted a safe, clean, sober space to hang out. We set up amplifiers and invited friends to play live music. We bought a bunch of hamburgers and barbecued them. Instead of giving them away for free (which is what happens most often in the DTES), we charged \$2.50 for them. We told everyone that the money we raised would go to support Dalit children in India (www.dalitnetwork.org). Every few hours, we offered van rides to Superstore, to help those who wanted to buy groceries with their money. The party lasted all day, until 9:00 pm! And for all 24 hours of that day, members of these communities took shifts in the Jacob’s Well prayer room, asking God to protect our friends and to transform our neighbourhood. It was a wonderful day. As we fumbled through challenges, we were filled with hope at the potential of this kingdom-oriented experiment.

**Jacob’s Well
Christmas Tea**
Friday, Dec. 23rd
2:30—4:30 pm



*Everyone
welcome!*

We have now spent five Welfare Wednesdays partying and praying together. The event had to be moved indoors to Jacob’s Well starting last month, with the arrival of colder weather, but a kind friend donated some tents so we could still barbecue outside. As Aaron from 6-1-4 said last week, “it feels like we’re gaining some traction.” Some folks from the neighbourhood have been helping out every month at the party, establishing a new rhythm of serving others who are seeking a safe place in the midst of a chaotic day. Relationships that began a few months ago have deepened. We have witnessed people using the little money they receive to promote life rather than death; one person last week bought a whole stack of hamburgers to share with her friends! When we finish the evening with our regular Wednesday night worship, joined by many new friends, we can’t help but thank God for the gifts He has been giving us on this day.

As we at Jacob’s Well work in unity with these other communities, and with dreamers like Grace, we’ve found a lot of joy and life in a day that has traditionally been filled with frustration and death. Not all of our dreams or Grace’s dreams for the day have been fulfilled. But we’re learning to be patient with each other and with God in this season of Advent, as we wait to see what new things He will do in the fertile ground of our imagination, where new rhythms and habits can grow and take root.

¹ The welfare amount has been raised only minimally since the 1990s, despite inflation and the ever-increasing cost of living in Vancouver. British Columbia has the highest poverty rate in Canada, and the biggest discrepancy between rich and poor. See www.raisethergates.org for more information about this important justice issue in BC.

Arts Offerings...

Jacob's Cheer

Here's a yell,
 For Jacob's Well!
 Here's the tell!
 To Everyone, it's swell!
 It's the n'th degree,
 Better than hell!
 Sharon bakes cakes,
 What a sweet smell!
 We hope, it rings God's bell!
 Kat hurt her toe, got prayer from Alberto!
 I'll say'eth! Beth is jamming with Ricky,
 And it's getting tricky!
 Lean Stephen has a feel, to cook eel,
 For the meal?
 Wow, now it's a real surreal deal!
 We claim, there's a place to go,
 In the rain, on Main, where everybody knows your name!
 So let me explain!
 Be no strain, on the brain!
 How about some spiritual gain! Oh yeah, there's Jane!
 At Friday coffee, we're all the same,
 We refrain from acting insane!
 So don't frame the fame!
 It's not lame!
 We play the God's rules game!
 It's all just tame!
 Our interest doesn't wane! Amaine!

John Hyde

(a good friend from the neighbourhood who hangs out at Jacob's Well on Fridays... and other days too!)

We asked former community members to write messages for our 10-year anniversary party. This is from our friends, Sarah and Jonathan Nicolai-DeKoning, who spent countless nights at Community Kitchen. They now reside in Edmonton, AB, and work at The Mustard Seed.

A Prayer for Jacob's Well, for the next 10 years

May your coffee mugs never match;
 May your chili never stick to the bottom;
 May flooding never dampen your spirits...again;
 May new friends continue to become old friends;
 May your tables always be open doors;
 May your veggies be more plentiful than your rats;
 And may the God who greeted the woman at the well continue to turn strangers into friends under your roof.

Jacob's Well Gift Catalogue

(back by popular demand!)

A trip to the thrift store to replenish kitchen utensils.....\$10



A pack of bus tickets for trips to visit our friends in the hospital, in detox, or in housing outside the neighborhood\$21

Our piano was destroyed in the flood. We have a couple of musical needs for our gatherings.

Piano.....\$300
 Music stands (2).....\$35/each



Groceries to feed 45 people on one Community Kitchen night (supplemented by Food Bank).....\$50

A year's worth of paper towel for our bathrooms\$75



Our office internet and phone bill for the whole year\$1000

The staff members' exasperated landlords have refused to pay to deal with future bedbug infestations. Emergency bed bug extermination fund\$600



Pay Beth, Berto, or Jane's salary for a month\$1700

Contribute to intern program (Kat & Stephen) for a month.....\$1000

If you'd like to give a gift to our community, please send a cheque to Jacob's Well and write which item you'd like to give us in the memo line. Or if you like using scissors, you can cut out the item from the list above and include it in your envelope! If we have excess money for one gift, we will apply it to another gift. Thanks!

From Our Kitchen(s) to Yours

MARZIPAN BARS by SHARON MILLIGAN

Sharon has been a member of our community for 7 years. She is one of our amazing in-house bakers, gifting us with anything from apple pie to chocolate cakes. She comments, "I've made this for years and it has never failed. We used it for harvest and seeding time when lots of people needed lots of food!"

Bars

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Grease the pan you are using.
3. You need enough left-over unbaked pie dough to cover an 8 x 8 pan - rolled quite thin but not paper thin.
4. You also need raspberry jam to lightly cover the pastry pan (strawberry works too).
5. Beat 1/2 cup butter with 2/3 cup white sugar until well blended. Add 2 eggs and beat in until smooth and light.
6. Add 2/3 cup cake flour and 1/4 tsp salt. (I usually don't have any cake flour on hand and all purpose flour works pretty well).
7. Beat well and put batter on top of jam. The batter is pretty thick so be careful not to mix in the jam. You kind of ease it onto the jam.
8. Bake at 375 degrees F for 25-30 minutes.
9. Cool on the rack before icing.

Icing

1. Beat 2 TBS butter.
2. Blend the butter with 1 and 1/2 cups of icing sugar
3. Blend in 2 TBS milk and 1 tsp almond flavoring.
4. Spread over cooled cake

Kids' Corner

COLORING PAGE by JOEL ANDERSON

Joel Anderson studied Fine Arts at Trinity Western and Emily Carr and regularly shares his creative gifts with us. He has illustrated a children's book, "When Donkeys Bray," written by his dad and our current board chair, Mark Anderson.



My Daily Encounters via Hastings aka “The Warzone”

BY BARRY LEMAIGRE

Our friend Barry started a series of writings reflecting on living near Hastings or “The Warzone” as he’s coined it. Running east to west, Hastings is the center of the action in the Downtown Eastside. Below is Chapter 2 of his series, a thoughtful observation of unexpected light shining in the neighborhood. If you would like to read more chapters please subscribe to “Suscho Dene” on Facebook.

Exciting things occur on Hastings, and this time it was an invasion of Russian sailors. Ironically their stature just enhanced the “Warzone” stigma here in front of my building. Just looking at some of the reactions and facial expressions people were proffering, it was obvious that a lot of Vancouverites weren’t prepared for this sudden visit.

For those of us who are familiar with the Russian anthem, I must admit that it was going through my head as well. I felt like a kid in a candy shop for the first time. I was running around talking to random people, saying “we’re being invaded by the Russians.”

I wonder if any of the addicts and/or dealers had the audacity to blurt out “rock, powder, down?” to any of these officers and their sailors. I wonder what their initial reaction and/or response would be? From what I experienced today, very few spoke English, but just like in the movies, as striking as their uniforms are, they do possess an air of intensity one might see in a movie.

I went down to Canada Place to look at their two ships, and I was impressed with their constant saluting to each other as their colleagues strode up and down the gang plank. Some returned with valuables they recently purchased and others were hauling fresh supplies onto their massive well armoured cruiser.

Watching some of these visiting sailors here on Hastings proves that Hastings just doesn’t belong to the residents of the DTES (Downtown East Side). Hastings belongs to the world so to speak. Hastings is like a stage, a forum where you may experience protests, violence and even success. But as unique and powerful as Hastings claims to be, it is the people coupled with the history that makes Hastings exciting. It’s the hope of this writer that one day the real success will dissolve the ongoing violence, pain and suffering that endures here on Hastings. Hastings is about interaction, and watching the interaction between DTES residents and sailors brought a smile to my face. Mainly because while the rest of Vancouver is at work, friendly unbiased interactions were taking place right in front of my eyes.

I even had the courtesy to welcome some of the sailors to Canada and Vancouver, and to see them smile and extend their thanks, it made my day. I guess what I’m driving at is simply this: Hastings, despite its sometimes dark negative connotations and verbal onslaughts, also hosts a community of people who, for a brief moment, will put their addiction aside to welcome visiting strangers.

This type of exchange shows that there is hope for change for everyone here and visiting Hastings.

Message from Kat:

We have been having **Art Wednesdays** this Fall thanks to receiving a DTES Small Neighborhood Grant from the Vancouver Foundation. Hanging out at JW, I saw a need and desire for people in our community to create art as well as to share thoughts, feelings, and stories in new ways. Along with these desires, I saw a lack of space, supplies, and support. I wanted to use much of my JW internship time to invite the JW community and others from the neighborhood into our space to create and to express. This mix of neighbours gathers every Wednesday afternoon at Jacob’s Well enjoying tea, coffee, and goodies, and sharing of ourselves and our stories through creating art. Seeking to see the image of God in others, we gather to create as God creates, and listen and look for his image in the created works. We will showcase the created pieces and open our walls to the public in an art exhibit through December and January. Please stop in on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons to see what we have been up to!

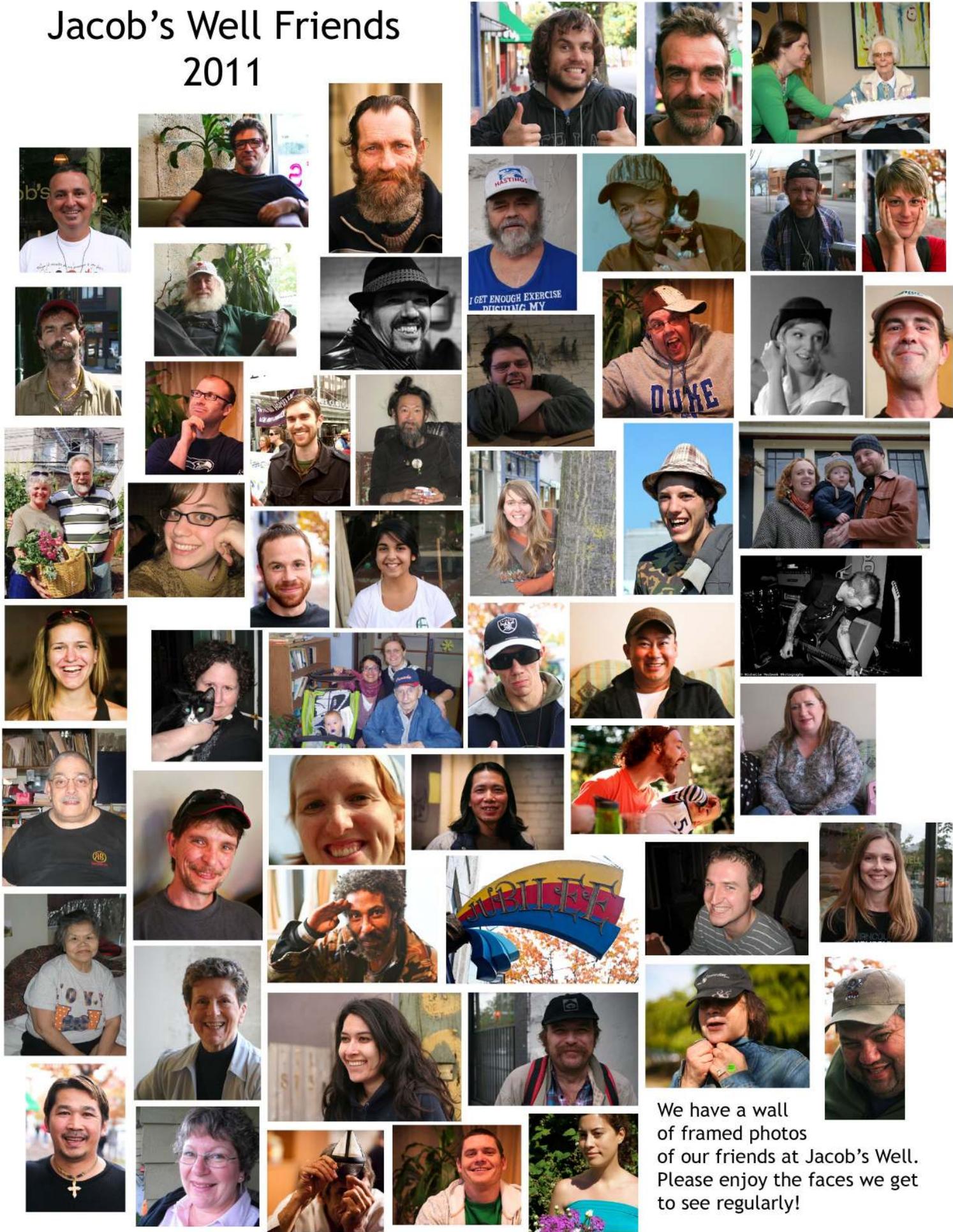
1st ANNUAL JACOB’S WELL ART EXHIBITION

Jacob’s Well

Dec 2011 - Jan 21, 2012

We will continue Art Wednesdays in the New Year.

Jacob's Well Friends 2011



We have a wall of framed photos of our friends at Jacob's Well. Please enjoy the faces we get to see regularly!

Looking for the Living Christ (continued from page 1)

I reminded them of the particular Lent season where I prayed daily that we would see a sign of the resurrection life of Christ in the DTES. We prayed all through Lent, including Easter weekend, and still we had not witnessed the resurrection power of Christ in a tangible way. The following week I heard the front door open. A man came in who I did not recognize. I heard him ask if any of his friends were still around these days. And then he asked, "Is Joyce here?"

I remember getting up from my desk and rounding the corner, with an outstretched hand, still wondering who he was. "Hello," I said. Even then I didn't know who he was, until he shook my hand. But when he touched me I recognized him. It was Dewey Dwayne. We hadn't seen this man in nearly two years, and had presumed him dead or in prison. The last we'd seen him he'd been broken in body and mind. To see him clothed, healthy, and in his right mind was so shocking I literally didn't know him. But when he touched me I remember feeling wonder and marveling that this must be how the disciples felt after seeing the resurrected Christ. I had my sure sign of the resurrection, even before Dwayne told us that he had surrendered his life to Jesus. This moment was so significant for me that it still stands out as the most important in my eight years here.

We must keep on looking for signs of the resurrected Christ, and not settle into discouragement with all the suffering we encounter in this life, and particularly in this neighbourhood. We must keep looking for Christ in all his vibrant, life-giving power. During Advent, we wait and watch for Christ to be "born" into the world and into us in new ways. We must remember that we are again celebrating Jesus coming to us, Emmanuel, God with us. And He is still with us, in spite of floods and disappointments, limited resources and friends dying. So we must let His Light override the darkness of our own hearts and invade our imaginations. This revelation will enable us to keep going, to press on, not to merely persevere but to go on with JOY! Who knows what signs of the resurrection the next ten years will hold?

Doronn's Surpresent

BY SHARON MILLIGAN

Do you remember a time when your face lit up with happiness because of an unexpected present? That light is a bit of joy. When someone brings you a present "out of the blue", it can really make your day! I have heard it described it as "surpresent" – a surprise and present combined.

Early last spring, on a Wednesday afternoon, I received a surpresent from Doronn. Knowing my passion for knitting and seeing me knit pretty much every time I am at the Well, he had noticed a couple of knitting books at the Carnegie and brought two of them to me. He said that he "thought I might like the patterns in these books" and he was absolutely right! I liked them so much that I have knit my little granddaughter a very sweet sweater from one of them – you can see her wearing the sweater as she gets ready for Halloween this year. She loves it and it keeps her warm and we all think that it looks really pretty!

I said that receiving a surpresent was special and I believe that we all receive surpresents every day; but sometimes we don't notice them. Maybe someone saw that your coffee cup was empty and filled it. Or they noticed that there wasn't any of the artificial sugar that a diabetic friend needs and went and got some. Or maybe someone fixed your computer or told you about a sale on yarn or started the laundry or the dishes. Or perhaps they made you your favourite dish or a birthday cake ... or left out a seasoning that you didn't like in a meal you were sharing. Maybe they noticed you were looking a little low and asked how you were and tried to cheer you up.

One of the things about a surpresent is that it shows that someone thought about you ... and did something about that thought. There are lots of ways that we bring light into each others' lives and many chances to show how we can be aware of our friends and their needs. I think that the friends at Jacob's Well realize the wide and wonderful opportunities for making one another's faces light up and we are getting pretty excellent at bringing light into each other's lives every day. Thanks Doronn for a useful and very much appreciated surpresent! Its light is spreading all around!



Emma, 3.5 yrs. old, on Halloween.

Information

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Giving:

To make a donation please mail us a cheque or donate online by visiting canadahelps.org. Visit our website for more information.

We are a registered non-profit charity.

About Jacob's Well...

Jacob's Well is a faith community located in the downtown eastside of Vancouver, Canada. This neighbourhood has complex difficulties some of which are extreme poverty (the poorest postal code in Canada), drug addiction (more than five thousand needle users), widespread disease (highest HIV & AIDS infection in the western world), and prevalent mental illness (estimated more than 50% of area residents).

We have a unique, relational approach to sharing life with residents of our neighbourhood. We seek meaningful friendships whereby we can both give and receive from one another. This guiding principle we have inherited from Pauline Fell who founded our community in 2001. She is a remarkable ninety-six year-old woman who has spent over thirty years building friendships with countless people in this neighbourhood.

Our life together is shared in a variety of ways and places. We spend our days visiting people, gardening together, gathering around the table, worshipping, praying and serving. If you would like to know more about our community we encourage you to visit our website or write to us.

Jacob's Well News...



We are pleased to CONGRATULATE **Mike Wartman** on his marriage to **Liz Nguyen** on September 4th in Toronto. He writes, "It was easily the best day of my life so far!"

CONGRATULATIONS to **Jessica Richmond** on her engagement to **Ryan Weemhoff** on November 19!



We also want to CONGRATULATE **Trevor & Julia Vanderveen** on the birth of their third son, **Philip Raymond**, on Nov. 28, at 8 lb. 9 oz., a brother for Gideon and Levi!

'Life in the Margins' Workshop in January

On January 20th (evening) and 21st (day) we'll be having another workshop here at the storefront and we'd love for you to come if you've not been before. To sign up please email workshop@jacobswell.ca. The cost is \$20.

'Life in the Margins' is a workshop geared to introduce you to some of the values and visions we have as a community located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Life-giving relationship is our highest goal at Jacob's Well. Through friendship we seek to encourage and strengthen residents and workers in the neighbourhood in practical and spiritual ways. At this workshop, we will share stories about places where we see the image of God on the DTES. We will also talk about the theological and biblical mandate to seek mutually transformative relationship with those who find themselves in the margins of society, not only in the DTES, but in all the places where we live and work. Please join us!