

believe



“HOW PRECIOUS DID THAT GRACE APPEAR THE HOUR I FIRST BELIEVED.” JOHN NEWTON

Believing in Our Community of Faith.

As the Christian movement began to expand beyond Judaism after the death of Jesus, there were great debates concerning who exactly was qualified to follow Jesus Christ and call themselves Christian. Paul, the great missionary who took the Good News to Jews and Gentiles alike, spent much time reconciling how it was that people who had little to no learning in Judaism and who did not practice any of the Jewish traditions or rituals—could follow the teachings of Jesus, a Jewish Rabbi? The answer, according to Paul, was simple—justification by faith. Having faith—believing in God—was enough to become a Christian. Martin Luther repeated this sentiment some 1500 years later when he nailed his 95 theses to the church door.

One does not need to perform specific rituals to be considered a believer; one’s faith is justification enough.

Belief is enough. To believe something in the absence of supporting evidence of that particular something is called faith. We are a faith community. We believe in God. We believe in Jesus. We believe in love, hope and of heaven on earth. We believe that together we are stronger than we are as individuals. We believe that we are called to continue the spread of the Good News—of God’s awesome and steadfast love for us and of God’s hope for healing for all of creation. We believe that we have love enough to share. We believe we have created a safe, welcoming sanctuary of space that encourages growth and allows for exploration within each person’s faith journey. We believe the Divine is in and amongst us at Symons Valley United

Church and that we are called to live out that great love with our friends, our neighbours, our communities, our city and our world. Come, let us have faith and believe that with God, nothing is impossible.

Vicki McPhee, Minister

A look inside:

Welcome Ministers/Vicki McPhee	2
Sarah Fanning	3
Welcome to God’s house	4
All-Church Event details	4

Good where we’ve been—
good where we’re going to.



2012

The last capital campaign, “ran in early 2006, with funds being received during the following 3 years. We hired expert consultants who...determined that we could expect to raise \$250-350,000... We had greater faith in ourselves—in total during the 3 years we were gifted with **\$469,546!**”
excerpt: Michele Middleton, Chair, Let’s Go Let’s Grow Campaign 2006

Vicki McPhee:

Seek justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

- Masters of Theology (completion Spring 2012); B.A Psychology
- Experience in Children and Youth Programming since 2006 at St. Thomas United Church; more recently employed as Children Youth Enthusiast at Lakeview United Church
- Has lead youth and adult exposure trips to Africa and Mexico
- In June 2011 participated in a trip to Peru to study Human Trafficking
- On the Board for Naramata Centre
- Will be Commissioned as a Diaconal Minister in June 2012 at the Alberta Northwest Conference meetings



Welcome to our New Ministers!

This year we have the great pleasure of welcoming two new ministers. Vicki McPhee joined us in July as the Lead Minister for Programming, Education, Faith Development, and Volunteer Engagement. She was asked to take on an expanded role until her ministry partner arrived, and she proceeded with energy and spirit to lead weekly worship, provide pastoral care, and lead a course of Bible study, all while getting to know us in her new church home.

Vicki has now assumed her original role, and she is developing exciting new programming and looking forward to realizing the potential within our church.

Sarah Fanning began her ministry with Symons Valley in January 2012, as the Lead Minister for Worship, Pastoral Care, and Congregational Growth. She came to us from St. Paul's United Church in Milton, Ontario.

Sarah arrived in Calgary on January 3, and immediately embraced her role in our ministry team. She is getting to know people in the congregation and on the staff, while unpacking her office, and settling her family into their new home.

How are we so fortunate to have a new team ministry with clear, vibrant faith in God and synergy with the visions of Symons Valley United Church? The Search Committee worked diligently over several months, and in the end we had faith that God has called Vicki and Sarah to be part of our church family.

Colleen Marchant & Patty Raina, Search Committee

God's space

Ground breaking for the new church took place June 2006. November 2007, the framework of the structure could be seen. The new church was completed by Easter 2008.





Vicki McPhee and Sarah Fanning: Answering God's call.

What first struck me about Symons Valley was being asked how I would relate to and include children in my ministry. Having four children of my own, I very much appreciated the point of view expressed at that moment. Children and youth are often referred to as "the future of the church" when, in reality, they ARE the church. Symons Valley gets that. Children and youth programming are important ministries to me.

To serve a congregation that holds up and recognizes the importance of children and youth in all aspects of congregational life was essential when seeking a call. I believe in looking forward as does Symons Valley. To be in team ministry so that the entire congregation may be served makes for exciting times. The technology and state of the art sanctuary allows for us to be creative and innovative in the worship of God and in 'beyond Sunday' programming.

Why else have I 'invested' in Symons Valley? Because I felt, early on, the great faith and love of this congregation and I wanted my family and I to be a part of its growth and faith journey as Symons Valley lives out God's call in the world.

Vicki McPhee, Minister

Sarah says:

In 2011 I entered into a time of discernment about where God was calling

me to serve in ministry. I prayerfully looked at the national vacancy list, and wondered about whether this was the time to reconnect with my roots in the west.

I distinctly remember seeing Symons Valley's posting for the first time, and thinking this was a really neat congregation—a modern, multi-use building, a progressive sense of faith and spirituality, the use of technology in worship, and a sense of inclusiveness that really appealed to me. But the position that was initially posted was the not the one I was interested in, and so I let it go.

The next month both positions were listed, and my spouse John took one look and said I needed to apply, because this was a congregation he felt I was called to work with.

In answering the call to SVUC, I find connection with the biblical story of Abraham and Sarah, who left the familiar surroundings of their homeland and journeyed to the place that God promised. My family has left behind friends, colleagues and familiar surroundings for less familiar ones, as Calgary has changed a great deal in the last fifteen years! And yet there is also a sense of excitement that is present—an opportunity for us to respond to God's call, to reconnect with our roots, and to be a part of a faith community that is growing. I look forward to exploring where God continues to call us!

Sarah Fanning, Minister

Sarah Fanning:

"To sing is to pray twice."

- Masters of Divinity and Ordination in 2001; M. Religious Education 1998; B.A. Psychology
- Experience in solo and team ministry in congregations in Thamesford, Toronto and Milton, Ontario
- Experience in spiritual leadership for all ages
- Presbytery work included the Education and Students Committee, with a love of mentoring ministry students
- Teaches through preaching; preaching is a passion and a calling for her; believes that church is a place for questions
- Loves music: "To sing is to pray twice".

God's grace

Since the completion of the new church, 36 baptisms and 12 weddings have taken place at Symons Valley United Church.



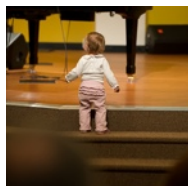
SAVE THE DATE!

The All-Church Event will be held on **Saturday April 14, 2012** in the Sanctuary at Symons Valley United Church. The Event, which will be catered by Roma Catering, also includes a party for the children in the Valleyview Room. See you there!

Welcome to God's house.

Symons Valley United Church—built on faith.

I began attending Symons Valley about a year ago. It was 'stewardship Sunday' so attendance was a little sparse! I was taken in by the spacious and beautiful sanctuary, by David's inspirational sermon,



and Sandy's motivational stewardship talk. I was hooked.

It is funny how I came to Symons Valley. We had moved neighbourhoods a few years ago and between changes at my old church and our moving, it just seemed too far to go to church. The truth was I wasn't feeling 'inspired' or 'connected' anymore. A good friend suggested that I look for a church closer to home—even one in another denomination. So I did. I selected two or three and decided to give Symons Valley a try. The morning before I attended I had a vision of a big, bright, open sanctuary! When I arrived that first morning I saw three people I knew from other parts of my life. Honestly, how many 'signs' does one need? Okay God, I get it. This was where I needed to be!

I felt very comfortable & happy attending. For the first time in a long time I looked forward to attending and felt disappointed when I missed! Then the big announcement—David would be leaving. I felt disheartened, but I told myself to have faith & trust that there would be good people coming to take his place.

Fast forward to December 2011. One day after church I asked Sandy about the possibility of starting a small study group based on the work of Adam Hamilton—the minister from his stewardship talk. Sandy

replied, "Sure. And by the way, can you come to a meeting next Tuesday—we need someone to do some writing?" To which I replied, "Sure", because, I had NO IDEA what I was getting into & I also didn't know Sandy well enough yet to know that he is famous for 'persuading' people to join committees!

So, I'm officially on the 'Capital campaign committee' and loving it. What a great group of motivated, strong, creative and committed individuals. A microcosm of this wonderful congregation!

Why am I telling you all this? Because I was downhearted, and dispirited. I prayed to be led and led I was. To here. To Symons Valley United Church. To this house of God. To this great, beautiful building and to this incredible congregation! A congregation with deep roots. A congregation with new growth all around. New ministers. New programs. New members. A community of faithful believers.

Do I believe in God? You bet. Do I believe we can achieve our campaign goal of raising \$500,000—no doubt. You've done it before. We will do it again!

Kelly Brown, Capital Campaign Committee

A note to all congregational members:

Did you know that you can receive your newsletters via e-mail or as a hard copy mailed to your home? If you prefer to have them mailed to your home please contact Jay Boutin at jnboutin@telus.net or call 403.370.0548.

The future belongs to those who **believe** in the beauty of their dreams. *Eleanor Roosevelt*

New
Growth
Deep Roots