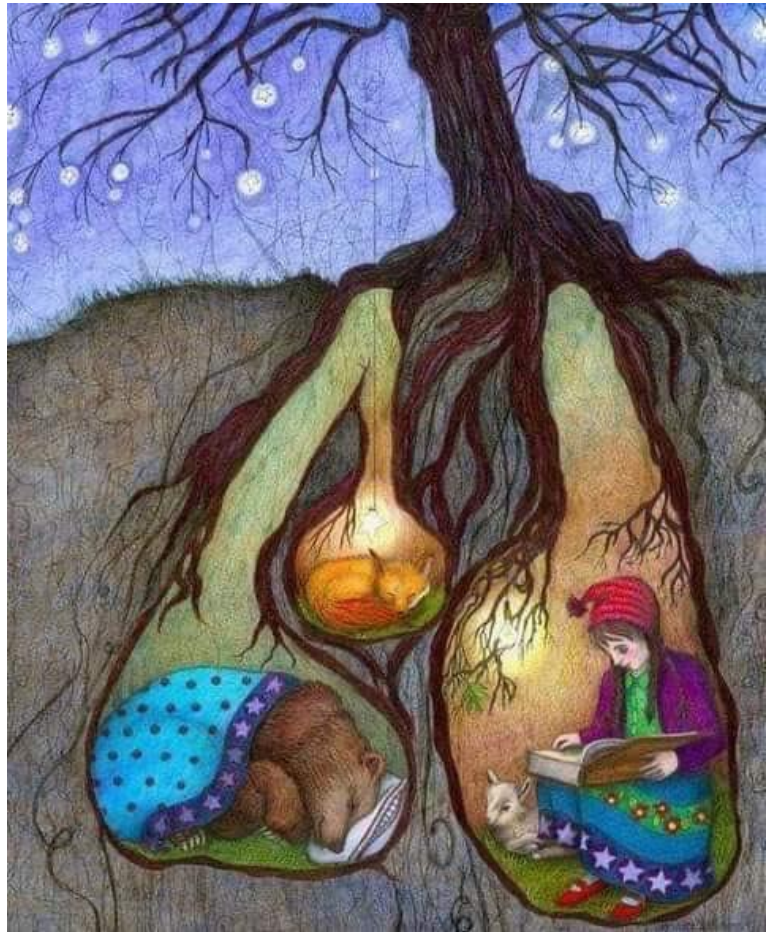


*Thoughts and Smiles.... Sunday, Nov. 20, 2022*

The winter solstice time is no longer celebrated as it once was, with the understanding that this is a period of descent and rest, of going within our homes, within ourselves and taking in all that we have been through, all that has passed in this full year which is coming to a close... like nature and the animal kingdom around us, this time of hibernation is so necessary for our tired limbs, our burdened minds.

Our modern culture teaches avoidance at a max at this time: alcohol, lights, shopping, overworking, overspending, comfort food and consumerism. And yet the natural tug to go inwards as nearly all creatures are doing is strong, and the weather so bitter that people are left feeling that winter is hard, because, for those of us without burning fires and big festive families, it can be lonely and isolating. Whereas in actual fact, winter is kind, she points us in her quiet, soft way towards our inner self, towards this annual time of peace and reflection, embracing the darkness and forgiving, accepting and whispering a loving goodbye to the past year.



Winter takes away the distractions, the buzz, and presents us with the perfect time to rest and withdraw into a womb-like love, bringing fire & light to our hearts. And then, just around the corner, the new year will begin again, and like a seed planted deep in the earth, we will all rise with renewed energy once again to dance in the sunlight

Life is a gift a Happy winter to you all...

*Written by Bridget Anna McNeil  
Artwork by Jessica Boehman*

"What is it that the child has to teach?  
The child naively believes that everything should be fair  
and everyone should be honest,  
that only good should prevail,  
that everybody should have what they want  
and there should be no pain or sadness.  
The child believes the world should be perfect  
and is outraged to discover it is not.  
And the child is right."

*Rabbi Tzvi Freeman*



## INTERGENERATIONAL MOMENT

*From: Drinking from the River of Light - the life of expression, by Mark Nepo*



In 1514, a young Michelangelo worked hard to sculpt his version of Christ the Redeemer. When close to finished, the statue was ruined when he discovered a dark vein running throughout the marble. I think if he had sculpted this later in life, he might have seen the dark vein as an unexpected dimension adding to the statue, not ruining it.

When first learning woodblock carving, I spent weeks carving the reflection of moonlight in a lake. When close to finishing the board, I slipped and chipped off a length in the middle of the scene. I was devastated and thought I'd ruined months of work. My gifted teacher, kindly put her hand on my shoulder and softly said, "Welcome to woodblock carving." I couldn't help but laugh.

She then said, "Let's do a rubbing of the board and see what it wants to be." With a quiet wonder, she looked at the rubbing and led me into a deeper relationship with the carving, saying,

"Remember, where you chipped the board it will hold no ink and print as white. So, let's see what other spots in the lake want to be white."

And so, the mistake and ruination of the board became the threshold for bringing the reflection of the moon in the lake to more significant life in the print.

My wife, is a potter. For years, she has participated in Anagama wood-firing, a semi-annual, collaborative process in which fifteen to eighteen potters take shifts raising the kiln's temperature to 2500 degrees over five days. Then, after a week of cooling, they open the kiln like a tomb to see what the fire has done to their work. Sometimes, the extreme heat will ruin a piece. But more often, the molten ash has scarred and beautified the pots in the most unexpected ways. Sometimes, a platter will be warped or peeled, extending the potter's design beyond what they could have foreseen.

Or a vessel will have a crack that makes it seem ancient and eternal. The fire has the last word, and the end of all this collective work is to discover and accept what the fire says.

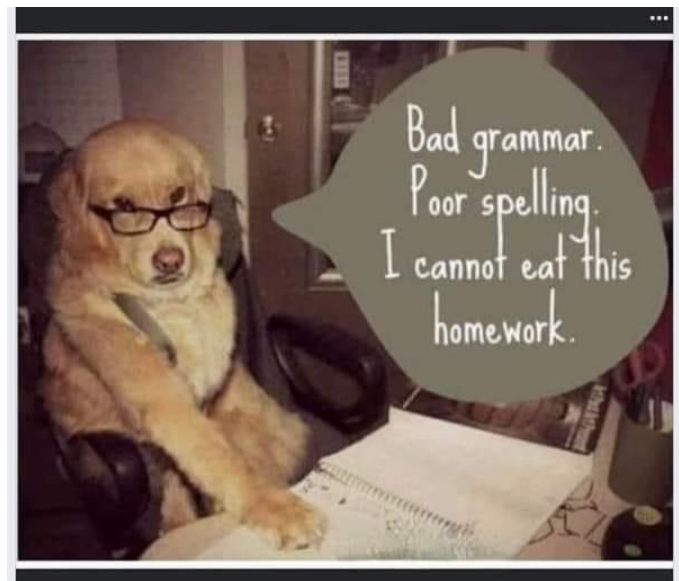
Beyond our most earnest intent, our creative efforts allow us to meet and co-create with life, not bend life to our design. When finally accepting that we relate to material rather than manipulate it, we discover what we create and are changed by the discovery.



And now the smiles...



If our churches had members with this kind of faithfulness and passion, we would change this world in no time.



*Have a terrific week!*

*Blessings to you all!*



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*Check out "David's Blog" on the Sauble Beach United Church website.*  
<https://saubleunitedchurch.ca/category/davids-blog/>



*Go ahead, groan.....*