



THE ST. GEORGE DRAGON FLYER

IN THIS ISSUE

- From Father Don
- Wardens Message
-

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. GEORGE'S OF FOREST HILL ANGLICAN CHURCH

CHRISTMAS 2007

FROM YOUR WARDENS

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

“PEACE ON EARTH AND
GOODWILL TOWARDS
ALL”

The month of December is a very busy month in the lives of most people, with Christmas concerts, shopping, decorating, parties and visiting with friends. Keeping up with family Christmas traditions is also a very important part of this season. Christmas is a time of giving, sharing and caring. It is a time for Peace!

As we reflect on this past year of 2007, we have noticed that St. George's is very much alive. Many people are actively involved in the various groups, committees and activities that our church offers. There is something for almost everyone if you read your bulletin or ask. Our church also offers meeting places for other organizations within our community. You need to make sure you book your meeting room with Val, well in advance. To know our church is so vibrant and well used, is a wonderful thing to see.

Try not to rush through this season of Christmas. Take the time to enjoy the month of December. Notice the Christmas lights and decorations around your neighbourhood. Attend some of the concerts that are available and sing your favourite Christmas carols. Send a card to someone who is lonely, or visit someone who finds it difficult to be away from home. Buy a gift for someone who may not receive one during this season. Buy a homeless person a coffee, or a sandwich. Spend time with the people in your family. Attend Sunday church services and enjoy the service of Lessons and Carols.

As in previous years, we need your generous support to avoid finishing 2007 with a deficit. Please prayerfully consider your financial support at this time. Special Envelopes are provided for your convenience should you choose to make a Christmas contribution.

If you wish to give Father Don a Christmas gift, it should be placed in a separate envelope addressed to his attention.

Most of all, slow down and remember the true meaning of

Christmas, why we celebrate this particular day and give thanks to God!

We look forward to celebrating Christmas with you at one of our Christmas Eve services or on Christmas Day.

Yours sisters and brothers in
Christ;

Your Wardens:

MaryLynn, Wayne, Jim, Reta

ST. GEORGE'S REACHES OUT

What does summer mean to you..... trips to the cottage, swimming in a lake, sleeping under the stars, campfires and s'mores!! Many of us take this yearly ritual for granted. Some have never had the chance to experience the sounds and scents of summer. St. George's sponsored a "Youth Adventure Camp" provided by ROOF this past August. It was offered to 10 homeless or at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 21. They spent 3 days away from the streets and left their survival mode lifestyle for a time!

Sarah (works with ROOF) came to our Outreach meeting in the

fall to share what the trip meant to these people as she helped to lead the camp. She brought a photo album that had been put together and we saw 10 people with smiles on their faces having fun! "A picture is worth a thousand words"!!

This camping experience has been offered before and many youth go back to school, find employment and withdraw from the streets. "The Three Tenors" donated a portion of the monies from the ticket sales of their concert to our Outreach Committee. Through this donation we were able to give the \$765.00 (not \$785.00 as printed in the Nov. 4 bulletin) that ROOF needed to fund the camp. Each youth was able to keep their new sleeping bag, back pack and bathing suit. ROOF purchased other items such as 2 tents, dishes and a tarp which can be used again, as well as all the food needed and insect repellent.

Thank you for making this possible from the Outreach Committee!!

THE STORY OF OUR ADVENT HANGINGS

The Advent hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" names Jesus using a series of titles taken from the Old Testament prophets, and from Advent antiphons which were sung by early Christians during the week before Christmas. It is from this hymn that the inspiration for the Advent hangings originated. In addition to the

hymn, I wanted the hangings to have further symbolic meanings and to reflect a particularly feminine slant since, in my opinion, Advent is possibly the only season of the church calendar in which specific women's concerns (fertility and birth) are consistently acknowledged and addressed.

The hangings are meant to be hung additively, with a new hanging appearing each of the four weeks of the season, watching the display "grow" at the front of the altar is meant to remind the congregation of the changes evident in pregnancy. AS well, each hanging has symbols of fertility, pregnancy, and birth.

Certain elements are constant on each hanging. Inside each circular medallion you can watch the changing phases of the moon, from quarter (on the first hanging), to half, to three-quarters, to full (on the last). For centuries, women's lives (and the changes their bodies go through each month) centred around the moon in both pagan and Judeo-Christian civilizations and I wanted the hangings to acknowledge this. The growing changes of the moon stand not only for women's lives, but also their pregnancies.

AS well, each hanging features an unusual candle, an impossible candle, it was designed around the structure of a DNA helix, the core of all animal life. This symbolizes the idea of God choosing to take a human form and the wonderful -impossible-ness of

the entire process. In "the real world" this candle could never burn or stand or even exist. But we are celebrating the mystical world here, and the entire impossibility of the season is celebrated through the candles. Flowers also appear on each hanging, all symbolic of either Jesus or Mary or both.

The first hanging -is named for Wisdom (Sapientia). Within the medallion of a quarter moon, a lamp is lit. This refers to the Biblical story of the Bridegroom and the wise and Foolish virgins and symbolizes our wait for the Messiah. A lit lamp has also long been connected with the idea of education and learning - many school boards and universities use a lighted oil lamp as a part of their crests - and in this case, also stands for our Advent readings which teach and help us as we wait for the birth of Jesus. In the readings for this week, Isaiah makes reference to "the tree of Jesse" from which will grow a flawless flower. I have chosen to symbolically interpret this "tree" as an apple tree. The flowers are the blossoms of the apple tree in spring. Apples are, of course, associated with the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Knowledge. But in addition to the negative connotations associated with the "Fall", the person of Jesus was referred to in medieval times as an apple tree. The Advent hymn sometimes sung here at St. George's, "Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree", reflects this. The apple in the bottom right corner symbolizes both the fall in the

garden, and the hope of the upcoming birth.

Royalty -is the theme of the second hanging, one of Jesus' names in the hymn is "Rex Gentium" or King of all Nations. A crown can be seen in the medallion, symbolizing this. John the Baptist prophesied the coming of the Christ and spoke of Him as royalty. The grasshopper (or locust) at the bottom of this hanging stands for John, the "voice in the wilderness crying" (another great Advent hymn). Specifically, John is referred to as living in the desert and surviving on "locusts and honey". (The "locusts" are actually locust beans, but I confess I always think of the grasshopper before I think of the plant, and I think most people do. Hence the little green hopper!) On this hanging, the flowers are lilies. Traditionally, lilies have been associated with both the virgin (paintings of the Annunciation often show either Mary or the angel Gabriel holding a spray of lilies), and with the Resurrection. By using them in this hanging, I wanted to have people think of both the beginning and the end of the story.

The third hanging reflects the story of the Annunciation, the idea of "God with us", which is the translation of the word "Emmanuel". The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove can be found on the medallion. This hanging is the simplest of all, since the story is told in Scripture quite simply. The flowers are irises. In some Italian paintings, an iris symbolizes both the purity of

the virgin, and the Holy Trinity. Within the idea of the Annunciation, we have an example of the three-fold nature of God - the Father (in the form of the message delivered by the angel), the Son (through the incarnation), and the Spirit (as represented by the dove). The secondary hymn for this hanging is "The angel Gabriel from Heaven came", with the "wings of drifted snow" represented -in the pearl beading of the dove.

The last hanging is the most complex of all four. It is the culmination of our long wait. The title "oriens" can be translated as "Dayspring from on High". The miraculous star which led the magi can be seen on the medallion, and stands for our personal journey which will end on Christmas Eve at the stable. The flowers are Christmas roses. Mary was called "The Rose of Galilee" in some old carols and Jesus is "The Rose without thorn" in others. The pomegranate has multiple symbolic meanings. Because it has many seeds, it is an emblem of fertility and life. When it is used as a symbol of immortality and resurrection, it is shown bursting open, seeds exposed, and stands for Christ bursting from the tomb to overcome death. Since, at this time of the year, we celebrate the birth of Christ while remaining ever aware of the rest of the story, a pomegranate seemed appropriate.

The chausible reflects the image of Christ as "Adonai", or Lord of Might. This was a Hebrew title for God, a substitute for his

name which could not be spoken. A burning bush was often used to symbolize this title. Our "Maranatha" lectern banner reflects the longing we feel both at Advent, and during the course of our daily lives, that Christ might be made manifest to us all, at all times.

I hope this explanation makes your enjoyment of the Advent hangings richer. I enjoyed designing them, and am grateful to all the members of the congregation who helped complete them in a remarkably short period of time. Marian Kidd, Gladys Grant, Jan Melaga, Nancy Mattes, Marg Wheeler, Ilene Gladding, Karen Baker, CheryT Fox, Marjorie Shorten, Shiela Mackenzie, Emily Berti", and Ruth Pearce all contributed time, skill, and energy to this project. Their work is visible praise.

1957 TO 2007 A CELEBRATION OF FIFTY YEARS

Many celebrations and special events marking our fiftieth anniversary took place at St. George's in 2007. Andrea Balfour, Lilian Cressman, Sheila Mackenzie (Chair), Terry McCoy and Laura Robertson were asked to form an *ad hoc* Anniversary Committee to plan and carry out anniversary celebrations.

Past rectors and honorary assistants were invited to each spend a special Sunday with us. Our guests were the Revs. Elizabeth Appleyard, Robert

Bennett, Donald Ford, Jim Horne, Herbert Horsey and Frank Thompson. Each special Sunday service was followed by a parish lunch, hosted by various groups within the church. These Sundays (and wonderful lunches) grew in interest and popularity as the year progressed. As well, a special Sunday service was held in October to remember those past clergy who for a variety of reasons were unable to be with us this year.

A special anniversary gala was held in April, with Bishop Bob and Kathie Bennett as guests of honour. This gala evening included a champagne and wine reception in Thompson Hall.

We presented three very special concerts: The Three Cantors in June; The Rev. Tim Elliott, with jazz quartet and stories in September; and a reading of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, in conjunction with CBC Radio and the Kitchener Public Library, in November. All three concerts were followed by receptions hosted by the Anniversary Committee.

The Committee's initial concept was that we would provide celebratory events all throughout 2007, make as many events as family friendly as possible, and make as many events as possible free of charge. Nevertheless, finances did play a role in our plans and deliberations.

The Committee was given a generous cash gift which we used as seed money to commission a design and

manufacture of a lapel pin for St. George's of Forest Hill. These beautiful pins were a popular item and we completely recouped our initial cost. Pins are still available through the church office for \$5.00 each.

At Vestry in January 2007, the Committee was given a budget of \$5,000. At the time of writing this article finances have not been finalized. Final figures will be available in the Committee's Report to Vestry in January 2008. However, a conservative estimate (all figures approximate) shows that we spent about \$3,300, coming in under budget by \$1,700. In addition, through ticket sales for the Three Cantors and the Dickens reading, we earned \$1,000 for the Huron Hunger Fund, \$1800 for St. George's Outreach Program, as well as \$1100 for the Kitchener Public Library's Foundation for Literacy (our co-sponsors for Dickens). As well, we will be able to provide approximately \$700 to St. George's for investment. We have become quite familiar with the parable of the loaves and fishes!

Of course, this would all have been impossible without the tremendous support we were given by the parishioners of St. George's. Many, many people worked extremely hard for us this year, particularly the lunch hosts (with many group members doing multi lunch duties). In addition, the loaves and fishes parable was possible because of the generous support of ticket buyers, cash donations, and gifts of food and wine. We hope this will be an anniversary

to be remembered fondly by all of us at St. George's. We extend a challenge to the Anniversary Committee of 2057 to meet the standard set in 2007!