



WINTER
2020

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE PEOPLE OF
ST. GEORGE'S OF FOREST HILL
ANGLICAN CHURCH
www.stgeorgesofforesthill.com

THE DRAGON FLYER



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Dear Friends,

I have been looking forward to the opportunity of writing you this letter for some time. Although I believe the Christmas experience is all about the birth of Jesus

Christ, I acknowledge that the celebration of that birth can be a mixed experience for many people. Some are joyful but some are in pain. Some are hopeful, but some are depressed. Some are in the midst of loving families, some are in the midst of painful separations. Some have a deep sense of peace and others are in the midst of turmoil. To add to all of that, this will be a Covid Christmas.

What is a Covid Christmas? Many people are beginning to ask that question as we enter the season of Advent. Traditionally Advent has been a season of hope, joy, peace, love. More specifically it began as a season of expectation. For centuries people had been expecting the arrival of the Saviour or the King of the Jews. Many would have languaged it as an expectation of the Messiah. Christmas is the celebration of the arrival of the Messiah. Today the season of Advent continues to be a time of great expectation. It is a season that is often filled with hope for the future, love for our family and friends, joy of the celebration of the season and peace in our world.

It always seems as if Advent is a short season in our church calendar. It often feels like it flies by. There are so many events and activities that we find it a challenge to get to all of them. That will not be the case this year. We will not only have a different Advent, but we will also have a Covid Christmas. Perhaps you are already disappointed by the

number of events that have been cancelled and a deep and profound sense that you have already lost much of what is the essence of the season. I have chosen not to allow my mind to leave me in that head space. Please join me in a new choice. I am choosing to create a new way of celebrating Christmas and indeed the entire Advent season leading to Christmas.

Now I must admit this is not my idea. I heard it from a well-educated and exceptionally trained psychologist who also happens to be a devout Anglican. Dr Christine Purdon has said that in the midst of the Covid winter experience, we need to first enjoy nature. Secondly find many inspiring and encouraging movies and thirdly listen to all our favourite music. Well my friends, this works for Advent and Christmas for us. In each pastoral letter I try to provide proposals for pondering and possibilities for prayer.

I know that it is at some risk but might I suggest a walk in God's creation with your favourite person. There are several well-groomed parks and trails awaiting you during the Christmas season. Perhaps this is the year to bundle up and take a trip through our community's recreational parks. Winter can be a season of beauty for the beholder. (Genesis 1-6)

What if you were to gather every inspirational movie you could and watched every single Christmas program you could get access to? As your priest, I'm obviously going to advise that the Christmas story needs to be your first pick. But I recognize that there are hundreds of Christmas movies that could well inspire and encourage you. (Matthew 1:18-24, Luke 2:1-20)

It's a little known fact that I absolutely love Christmas and that our home is filled with

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Christmas music by the first Sunday of Advent. No I'm not talking about the radio version of Christmas. Rather, a few dozen Christmas CD's and an endless supply of searches on Google for the best Christmas music of the 1950's – 2020. May I encourage you to join those of us who love Christmas music and fill your home with the sound of the carols, hymns and contemporary music as well? These inspiring tunes will uplift your heart and transform your soul. (Psalm 27:6, 57:7, 87:7, 95:2)

A couple of months ago I inherited many of my mother's belongings. In the boxes there were hundreds of Christmas cards that she had collected and never sent. Who would have ever guessed that my mother was a collector of Christmas cards? It was one of her hobbies to collect cards and she loved to send them to people. Now with her dementia, she is no longer capable. So in her honour, I will be sending Christmas cards to the people that Covid prevents me from spending time with. We will all need to find new ways to connect with family, friends and neighbours, whether it be with cards, phone calls, or zoom.

May I attempt to be transparent and hope that it results in you knowing that I care about you? I'm not the kind of person that talks about my fear and anxiety to everyone every day. I like to consider myself an optimistic realist. But here is the truth. You and I are going to need to be very intentional about having a healthy Christmas this year. Life is very uncertain right now and we need to be gentle with ourselves. May I suggest that you make a plan as to how you would like to spend the Advent and Christmas season, all the while realizing that the plan could change with a moment's notice. May God bless us all.

*Yours in Christ
Stephen*

Quillow Recipients This Year



Our tradition at St George's is to present graduating students that have had affiliation with our parish with a Quillow—a pillow that transforms into a quilt. The Quillow is a remembrance of their parish family when the venture on to their next phase of life. Once the Quillow is prepared, its knots are tied by hands in the parish and blessed, before being presented to the youth.

If you have a child or know of one who is a candidate for presentation this year, please contact Fran Rothenberg at 519-744-2502 or Val at the church office: 519-744-4751

“Happy” Christmas

Let's not say the usual things this year - it isn't a usual year. I would like to suggest that we put aside the idea of “merry” and for those of us who have a relationship with this Jesus guy think more soberly. Not to be a bummer, we need all the trimmings and rejoicing and fun this holy season can offer – it enables us to escape the cold realities of life and shake off the cares of this world. What I'm suggesting is that we get the message straight, and if led by the Spirit, we live it like we have never lived it before. “Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.” Romans 12:2

Having said that – I sincerely wish you a “happy” Christmas; I believe that to be more important this year than being “merry”.



Brother Mark presenting a “Good Deeds” award to Nicole at Stirling Heights LTC.

Update on the Deanery's Refugee Committee

As of the evening of October 21st—our most recent ZOOM meeting—the Committee has come to a pause in its work. After almost five years, we have completed six refugee family sponsorships, ranging from a Syrian family of two (a mother and her adult son) to a Syrian family of six (four sons). The formal commitment to our sixth family (Ethiopian) ended mid-September. Not surprisingly, our personal and informal ties to these families continues in various ways, and we often share news of these families at our regular meetings. For example, the Dad from our very first family is reportedly now happily working as an Amazon delivery driver, but still needs some surgery on an injured knee, and two of our families have added Canadian-born babies to their households since their arrival.



To put our committee's situation in context, since December 2015 our 13 churches have contributed \$104,347.69 to fund the families—a remarkable amount of money. Very thankfully, we have received an additional \$16,398 from two sources: a regional dental grant and a Shapiro Foundation grant. As of October 21st, our committee's bank account was down to \$2,281 which are monies that for the moment, will be kept in trust as possible seed money for a seventh refugee family. Truth be told, we are a tad tired from all of the work that is required to help a family become established in the region. No one is complaining, but quite a few parishioners in our churches have been active for the full five years—up to 61 committee meetings, both at parish halls and via ZOOM. And we're not getting any younger!

As a committee we have decided to postpone any further sponsorships until at least the spring or summer of 2021 at which point

- The government may have resumed its bringing in all refugee families from overseas
- There may be a COVID vaccine to protect everyone
- Our local churches may be in a better position to handle requests for financial support

We estimate we will need at least \$8 000 to start a seventh sponsorship, and roughly \$30 000 in total to sponsor a family of four for a full year. We do not wish to see our families burdened with an onerous debt at the end of their first year in Canada.

When--and if--we reinvigorate our efforts we are hopeful we may recruit a few new volunteers which will refresh our active subcommittees- shopping, transportation, medical needs.

I would like to thank all of the St George's parishioners who have helped along the way—in particular order (alphabetically) Debra Barclay-Zanon, Ruthanne Boos, MaryLynn Forrest, John Phillips, Wendy Sherlock and Jim Stirling. I would be happy to answer questions individuals have as we might move forward.

John Ryrie



Mary Ann & Greg assist in following seating protocols



Livestream 2 Weekly & Special Advent Services



Adriana is Smiling Behind her Mask!



Mom & Grandma Debbie minutes before Zoe's Baptism



Keep Smiling!!!

Parish Profile

Wardens' 2020 Christmas Message

Advent is a season observed in many Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the nativity of Jesus at Christmas as well as the return of Jesus at the second coming. Advent is also the beginning of the Western liturgical year commencing on the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

While preparing for an eventful Christmas season at St. George's, Advent also provides us with the opportunity to reflect on what was a very challenging year. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our parish. The pandemic forced us to close our doors to in-person services and find new ways to support our parish community including two LiveStream services each week on Wednesday and Sunday mornings as well as a Friday Morning Chat with various guests last spring.

September 13th saw a return to in-person services, with two services on Sunday morning and one on Sunday evening as well as the Wednesday morning service. Early in October, the service schedule evolved to three services on Sunday morning as well as our Wednesday morning service. Attendance has been strong both in person and on LiveStream.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on our ability to deliver outreach to the broader community. Our Outreach Committee continues to actively engage us with initiatives that support those in need through such projects as the Angel Tree, the Food Bank, and ongoing support for St John's Kitchen to name but a few.

The second wave of the pandemic is barreling down

on us and we are hopeful that in spite of temporary suspension of our in-person worship, we will be able to have our Christmas services together in celebration of the birth of our Lord and Saviour. LiveStream services will continue. Please, take note of upcoming dates and times—tentatively—of services listed in the issue of The Dragon Flyer.

As we look ahead to the start of a new year at St George's, the commitment of your time, talent, and treasure will ensure that our parish maintains its ability to meet your spiritual needs while making a difference in the daily lives of both parishioners and those in our community.

At Parish Vestry at the end of January, we will collectively choose parish leaders for the coming year, confirm our budget strategies and set the priorities and direction for worship, outreach and parish life. Please, plan to attend, provide input, and offer your support to decisions reached in a collective, collegial and prayerful way.

Thank you to everyone who helps in any way to strengthen the vitality of our parish each and every day. May we express our deepest appreciation for the way our parish members have prayerfully considered how to best lend financial support to St. George's. Your continuing generosity during Advent and our Christmas celebrations will allow our Treasurer to sleep well at night. From our families to yours, we wish you a blessed Christmas season and a healthy and prosperous New Year!

John Dale, Jim Fox, Tim Goodison



Welcoming Easton Butler to our Parish Family



Honouring Those Who Served- Susan Lee & Mike DuBoulay



Advent Worship



4 Generations of the Forrest Clan



Christmas Service Poster

Melanie's Health Minute

- Eat lots of green vegetables and fruits for their vitamin and mineral content
- Eat good fats, like olive oil and avocados, which promote brain function and good health
- Stay away from fried foods as they increase inflammation within the body
- As the winter months approach and we spend less time outdoors, look into taking Vitamin D supplement, along with a magnesium supplement; Vitamin D needs magnesium to properly absorb within the body
- Eat foods high in protein or try supplementing with a protein shake such as Ensure or PureProtein to help stay full longer, maintain and repair body tissue and balance hormones. Recommended dietary allowance for protein is 0.8 grams/kilogram body weight
- Mental health is just as important as physical health. Stay connected with family, friends and loved ones by calling them, sending a letter or emailing

An Offer...

For any of our parish members who need any PPE—masks, sanitizer,—please, contact our office @ **519-744-4751** and we will arrange for delivery, **free** of charge!!

Melanie Mitchell



FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

Who would have known last winter when we learned about this new Corona Virus, now Covid 19, that we would still be in a state of social distancing, wearing a mask, limiting our contacts to a few people and washing our hands nine months later! I have learned that grieving over the past certainly doesn't help. Looking forward to Christmas will be a challenge as we are unsure what our celebrations will hold. As challenging as it is, we need to remember what Jesus said, "Love one another". This can be done by making those phone calls, checking in on someone and giving a positive and caring word. We also need to love ourselves, not in the selfish way, but by acknowledging that this is not the normal previous way of life, but this is the way of life for now. Take out that Blessing Jar we talked about in the spring and read through all the ways that God has blessed your life. When you love what you have, you will have everything you need.

Deacon MaryLynn



Resurrection Kitchen & Food Bank, Nigeria

The Food Bank is a project of the women of the Church of the Resurrection in Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria where I worship. It was an initiative of the incumbent vicar's wife to ensure that less privileged in the community can always come to the church for foodstuffs. Raw food stuffs are donated by members, re-packaged and given to the needy. The kitchen was an offshoot during the Corona Virus Pandemic. The clergy wives supervise the cooking of the meals. Many homeless and needy come to the church where they are fed and given Scripture Tracts and copies of the bible. Many have been converted and now attend the church. Isn't our God wonderful!

Funke Tabali

Service of Remembrance to be Held in the Easter Season



Parish Life

Outreach Committee

Collaborating to do God's work by leading initiatives and partnering with KW agencies, impacting people's lives in our community and the world

Covid 19 has had a major impact on all of you. In spite of Covid and its many restrictions, your Outreach Committee has been active to find way to continue supporting our community. This year we contributed close to \$4 000 to:

- St John's Kitchen
- Monica Place Chaplaincy Program
- YWCA Emergency Shelter
- Ray of Hope
- Food Bank
- Council of the North
- CMHA Waterloo Wellington
- Refugee Committee
- Grand River and St Mary's Hospital front line workers
- Primates World Relief & Development Fund
- African Soup Kitchen
- Angel Tree –grocery vouchers to support two families and one youth



Previous Angel Tree Outreach

Due to Covid we are focusing our community support in a different way that is still effective in achieving our mandate.

YWKW - this agency is in need of gently used and new items. To see how you can support, please phone **519-576-8856 Ex 0** or email – general@ywkw.ca. For the Christmas season they are in need of gift cards from Walmart, drug stores, Tim Hortons , and grocery vouchers

Salvation Army – while there is no formal running of a Warm Clothing program, you can donate gently used winter clothing and outerwear by dropping them off at the Salvation Army store on Highland Road West (beside the Shopper's Drug Mart). Label the bag *Donation – St George's – Winter Clothing*

Future Activities – we will keep you updated through e-blasts on our initiatives.

Thank you for your generous support. We are truly making a difference in our community thanks to each and everyone of you!!

Contact co-chairs, Heather Murphy or Dianne McCandless for additional information. We meet once a month Via ZOOM. Join us!

Christmas Services

The situation for in-person worship is fluid. When we know--as soon as we know--there will be e-blasts and/or phone calls going out to all parish members.

Service of Lessons & Carols	Sunday, December 20th, 7:00 pm	Livestreamed
Christmas Eve	4:00 pm Children's Service	
	6:00 pm Family oriented, Eucharist	
	8:00 pm Family Oriented, Eucharist	Livestreamed
	10:00 pm Family Oriented, Eucharist	
Christmas Day	10:00 am BCP	
December 27	10:00 am BAS	Livestreamed
December 30	No Wednesday morning service	



Survey Monkey Please, make sure you have filled out the email survey and returned it to the office, OR phone the office **(519) 744- 4751** up to a week before the service to register numbers for attendance for your preferred service.

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