



WINTER  
2021

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
THE PEOPLE OF  
ST. GEORGE'S OF FOREST HILL  
ANGLICAN CHURCH  
[www.stgeorgesofforesthill.com](http://www.stgeorgesofforesthill.com)

# THE DRAGON FLYER



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Christmas Greetings,  
As I reflect upon the Christmas story there are certain circumstances and events that rush forward to the front of my consciousness. Thinking about an encounter between Mary and the angel

makes me wonder how our God chooses those for his special purposes. Mary was a young teenage lady with hopes and dreams for an exciting future and suddenly she is confronted by a heavenly being who invites her to be part of God's divine plan. She is informed that through His holy presence she will become pregnant and give birth to Jesus Christ. Can you imagine the overwhelming thoughts and feelings that she must have experienced? Despite her fears and anxieties she chooses obedience. She chooses humility. Indeed, she chooses grace. It's not easy to hear God's call in our lives. Sometimes the call comes from a stranger. It can even happen in a dream. The ways in which God approaches us are countless. Our God chooses to use young and old, uneducated and academics, women and men, people of all races and cultures. Perhaps you are struggling with God's call in your life this Christmas. Perhaps a conversation with someone you trust could help you discern that call. Shortly after Mary's encounter with the angel she went to be with Elizabeth. She knew she could speak her truth to her. She knew she could share her hopes, dreams, fears and uncertainty. We all need someone we can trust to walk with us through challenging times.

The Christmas story also brings Joseph to mind. One can only imagine a mature young man anticipating a marriage to a beautiful young woman, dreaming about an exciting future filled with hope, joy and love. Believing that somehow, all would be well. Joseph would learn through the visit of an angel, (a messenger of God), that Mary was pregnant with the Christ child. At the very least he must have been startled, if not puzzled by the news. But by faith he chose to stay with Mary and share their first child as a gift from God. Notwithstanding, he may have had many questions, fears and anxieties and yet his love for Mary and his faith in God kept him in relationship with both Mary and his heavenly Father. Men and women respond differently in a crisis. You are familiar with all of those differences. What is most remarkable about Joseph is his perseverance and persistence, all tied to his prayer life that gave him the strength to keep going and meet the challenges ahead.

One may find themselves drawn to the Christmas story and remembering that extraordinary moment when the angels filled the sky and met with the shepherds to announce the birth of the Christ child. It's fascinating to me that God chose what would have been considered the "least" in our society to be the first to receive the Good News. Perhaps this is a signal to all of us that our God has a tender spot for the poor, hardworking and dedicated in our society. They were truly a group who lacked financial resources and therefore had to take on the toughest job in their community. Indeed these were folks with the least education and had the least socio-economical privilege of anyone in their community. And yet, God chose them to receive the Good News and filled the skies with the brilliance of angels delivering this extraordinary message.

...cont.

Christmas is a time for giving and receiving. Mary received the Christ child in her womb. It was God's will that she would give her entire life to that child's care. Joseph received the Good News that he would be the earthly "step-in" dad for Jesus. At the same point he was asked to give the rest of his life to teach and guide the Christ child to be the best he could be with the guidance of his earthly parents and the love of God. The shepherds were given the Good News of Jesus' birth. They received this Good News with great joy and then they understood that they were to give this message to anyone and everyone that would listen.

It is my sincere prayer that you receive all that you need this Christmas season. It is also my prayer that the Holy Spirit guides you to give whatever you can to those around you in love. Some will need your time, some will need your patience, some will need your forgiveness and some will need your prayers. May God empower you to gratefully receive and graciously give during this Christmas season. May your experience begin by reading the Christmas story Luke 1:26-54

*Blessings, Stephen*

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## Wardens' Message

It is that time of year again when the beauty of the transition from fall to winter seasons is on full display for our senses; the colours, the smells, the food, the experiences with loved ones, families and friends (yes, it's been wonderful to be able to do that this year, be with loved ones!). One can hope as we look towards further reduction in COVID restrictions, we may soon get to indulge in singing of hymns and the choirs (both junior and senior) serenading us with anthems and song.

The Advent and Christmas season is a special time of year that allows us to be grateful for everything that we have and to give to those who are less fortunate. This time of year, can also be challenging for those who have suffered loss. One thing that is always a nice support mechanism is the special service that we hold a couple weeks before Christmas which is dedicated to help those in mourning. As a parish family, we must continue to surround those in our parish family and show them the love and support that we see pouring out of everyone all the time.

There is one thing that the Wardens are all eternally grateful for this year and it would be you the congregation (be it in person or via Live Stream) of St. Georges that continue to support us spiritually and financially. We have managed to come together and make sure that this church and its ministries are able to continue on and not only survive, but flourish. We the Wardens send our heart felt thanks to each and every one of you for everything that you've done to help us through these challenging times (the multiple opening / closings) throughout the year and keeping everyone safe in our worship spaces as we've



re-opened.

As we look to drawing a close out on this year, I want you all to take a look at where we came from at the start of the year. We went into Christmas / the New Year in a locked down state, we've survived multiple waves of lockdown / COVID, we've managed to re-open (on multiple times), we've had successful service and coffee hour during the summer months, multiple baptisms, multiple weddings, we were able to celebrate at St. George's the confirmation of many individuals and the beginning of other peoples' faith journey as an Anglican Christian, just to name some of what's transpired over the last year. Now take a step back and compare that to 2020 overall. Everything is moving in the right direction and we are inching closer to some of the familiarities that we had pre-COVID. I think one can even hope that in 2022, we may have the ability to start-up some of the outreach programs that we've had to shut down over the last year and a half!

We are very encouraged by everyone's strength, determination, leadership throughout the last year and hope that you all can carry the momentum into 2022. Let's continue to do marvelous things and continue to make St. George's a shining example of a church and parish that cares!

The Wardens of St. Georges would like to wish everyone a Blessed Holiday season, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

- The Wardens of St. George's (Catherine Carlson, Tim Goodison, John Dale, Greg Butler)

# Parish Life



The folks in mantles [capes] with the green cross are from the Order of Saint Lazarus/Saint-Lazare Canada - I am a Chaplain to that Order. Their standard [banner] was to the left [Gospel] side of the altar during the service.

I'm of the Order of Saint Andrew.

What did I receive?

I symbolically surrender my symbols of office once a year. Normally, I would be examined, make confession, receive absolution, and private communion. On the day of the renewal, the Cross of the Order is returned to me, including my brother's ring and ring of the Order. It has been my custom to have my ordination ring returned to me on that occasion as well.

*The persons taking part in the renewal of vows were:*

*The Reverend Father William White*

*who is my Spiritual Chaplain who resides in London, Ontario*

*Chev. Scott A Saunders - the guy with the bronze chain, who returned my rings and cross. He is from Southampton, Ontario.*

*He is the Commander of the Western Ontario Commandery of the Order of St. Lazarus.*

*And of course our Rector, Father Stephen*



## FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

Advent is the time we spend waiting and in anticipation of the arrival of that tiny baby boy called Jesus who will grow up and bring us Peace peace in our hearts, peace in

our minds and peace in our souls. The children hope for toys they want the most for

their treasures. Adults just want good health, to spend time with their families enjoying love, laughter and joy. Matthew 6: 21-- "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Jesus still gives us the greatest treasure of all Himself!

Christmas Blessings to Everyone!

*Rev. Deacon MaryLynn*



## DECEMBER

A magical month for Canadians more than any other month of the calendar year. So much so the term "Happy Holidays" has come into common usage in our society. Statistics Canada reported that Canadians spent 53.4 billion dollars in December last year. Part of that was an average household cost of \$630 on "Christmas" gifts, \$308 on travel and \$166 on entertainment.

It's hard to believe that we are doing so well considering all the appeals asking for money for toys, food, and causes.

Something doesn't seem to be right. I wonder what it might be?

In this peculiar month of celebration of secular and religious events and holidays ask yourself this question. How much is enough?

May our Lord Jesus Christ so fill us with the spirit of love and caring that magical December might become miracle December, when we share our abundance with others.

**Blessed Christmas Everyone!**



# Parish Life

## The Senator's Spot -

At Vestry 2021, the role of Senator at St. George's was approved. The intent of creating this new role is to have the Senator function as a mentor, coach, advisor and dispenser of wisdom to the incoming members of Parish Executive. The introduction of Senator acknowledges the experience and knowledge gained during one's past terms as Deputy Warden and Warden. In addition to the important role of mentor, the Senator may be appointed to chair a committee or assigned a specific task in consultation with the Rector and Wardens. In this regard I was asked to start the process of creating a 'book of guidelines or operations manual' that will delineate the authority of Canon Law in our decision-making and as a consequence how things get done at St. George's. This resource to Parish Executive and Parish Council members will evolve and expand over time but should serve as a useful tool for our leadership teams. A report will be given to Vestry 2022 which will more fully describe the contents of this resource manual. - *Jim Fox*



## Social Justice Committee – Peace & Reconciliation

As the hands and feet of Christ in this world we should be continually asking ourselves what can we do to make this world God's kingdom on earth. This last summer as a nation we were deeply anguished over the discovery of the unmarked graves at residential schools across our country. We cannot change our history, but if we pay attention we can alter the course of our present and consequently, our future.

Our Social Justice Committee is bringing two Calls to Action to the parish of St George's this year. Our first one is a Petition urging all governments to invest in immediate action to assure clean drinking water to all First Nations communities. Not some day, but today. To sign the petition in person, look for the table set up in the narthex. If you are still unready to return to St George's, please consider contacting the office by email or phone and have your name added to the petition.

Our second initiative is one we are working on in partnership with Rt Rev. Rosalyn Elm. We are planning on offering five \$500 scholarships to First Nations Youth who are entering post-secondary education. Look for more news in the coming months about how you may contribute to the funds for the scholarships. If there is interest and funds available we will expand the opportunities and number of recipients.

Ask yourself, what would Jesus do? Pray on both of these initiatives and respond to the Call to Action.



*Aiden Crassweller, Bishop Todd  
Towhsend, Fr Stephen*



*Welcome Zel & Ken!*

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321 Fischer-Hallman Road, Kitchener, ON N2M 4X9

519-744-4751

[www.stgeorgesofforesthill.com](http://www.stgeorgesofforesthill.com)

[church\\_office@stgeorgeofforesthill.com](mailto:church_office@stgeorgeofforesthill.com)