



WINTER
2023

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

www.stgeorgesofforesthill.com

THE DRAGON FLYER



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Advent marks a time of waiting. As children we open our Advent Calendars and look for the chocolate treat and count the number of "sleeps" til Santa arrives to place the toys we most desire under our Christmas tree. As adults, time moves in a more marked fashion. Deliberate. Cautiously optimistic. Thankful. Joyful. There is not the same urge to hurry. Rather, each ornament we place on our tree, each Christmas message we write, each present we choose with great care is done with as much reflection on Christmases past as the Christmas present.

At long last in this past year, we have begun to feel the shift in the mindset to return to in-person worship and joyful exchange of the Peace with one another in the sanctuary each time two or more are gathered in His name. Our enormous Christmas tree has been assembled and decorated and sits triumphant in the front window of the church. The lights twinkle and invite all persons who might be looking for the promise of the season to join us. The Blue Christmas service early in December pays special homage to those whose chair will be empty at our tables this year. We remember them and cherish them forever. We will celebrate a Community Carol sing with hot chocolate. Our choirs have rehearsed and lead us in music new and old this year. (Something which could not happen without creative nurturing and dedication.) The most beautiful service of Lessons and Carols with its scripture, carols and candlelight finds us uplifted and joyous. The Sunday School and Youth pageant—a first one in 3 years—allows us to experience the wonder of the babe born in a manger through their shining faces and sweet singing. Finally, on Christmas Eve we celebrate four services which allow us all to sing Joy to the World in earnest! The promise of the love of Christ is evident here at St George's. A time for reflection of how blessed we are.

Our Christmas Market returned with well over 200 folks coming to purchase baked goods and crafts and books and Christmas treasures and to take a cup of tea or coffee in the café at tables cheerfully decorated. Laughter and fellowship filled the Hall. The bulletin boards in the narthex allowed everyone opportunity to share the gift of giving with five families in need on our Angel Tree. And many of the residents at Winston Park will find a gift bag with cheerful tissue paper inviting discovery and a personal gift to bring that individual confirmation they are remembered on

Christmas Day through our Bells of Christmas outreach.

The Outreach in this community is humbling. Whether it is the coats and winter outerwear we collect for distribution or the donations of food we share with our sister church of St Andrews or the Ground Beef and cash donations for St John's Kitchen or the Women's Emergency shelter, or the Red Cross assisting those in the Gaza Strip, or the Music for the Spirit programme which provides art and music to First Nations Youth, our parish family can be justifiably proud of making a difference in significant ways. When we are blessed, we bless others. Truly I will say when I was hungry you gave me food, I was thirsty you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. And when I was sick or in prison you visited me... Just as you did it to one of the least of who are members of my family, you did it to me. Well done, my good and faithful servants. Well done!



Our renewal of faith manifests with each candle that is lit on the Advent Wreath on each of the Sundays in December. It is the anticipation of a baby born in a humble stable that assures us that the best gifts of the season are Love, Peace, Joy and Hope. By God's grace we wish those things for each and every one of you this Advent season and the year to come! Hallelujah!

Your Wardens: Cindy, Anne-Marie, Catherine, Tim



Rector's Message



Advent Letter

A centerpiece of the Advent season is hope. I agree with Bishop Desmond Tutu who once wrote, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." There is plenty of darkness in our world today, but I believe that there is still hope. Franklin D Roosevelt once wrote, "We have always held to the hope, the belief, the conviction that there is a better life, a better world, beyond the horizon." I pray daily for a divine intervention for our world. I share the opinion of Billy Graham who once said, "God's mercy and grace give me hope – for myself and for our world." When it comes to a very personal level in the midst of our own pain, the words of Robert H Schuller are appropriate. He said, "Let your hopes, not your hurts shape your future."

Advent is a season of preparation. In our homes we are cleaning and decorating. We may even be putting up a tree and attending social gatherings. In the midst of all of that our faith journey confronts us with John the Baptist. He interrupts the normal flow of thought with the recommendation of preparations of a different kind. Basically he says, "You need to get yourself ready for Jesus". The only way we can fully enjoy Christmas is to prepare our hearts for the experience. John insists that we examine ourselves and the functioning of our communities. Indeed we are charged with a message of personal and corporate self-examination. If we really want to be able to receive Jesus anew this Christmas we need to examine our lives, our values, our morals, ethics and priorities. This may require acknowledging our mistakes and choosing a new direction or a new approach both with the people we love and those we are not so sure about.

Life is unpredictable. We do not know what tomorrow holds for us but we do know, "Who holds our tomorrow." If we believe in a loving, forgiving, merciful Lord, then we know we are in His hands. Spiritually mature people learn how to live with unpredictability. Now I know that there may well be a great deal of stress in your life right now. I know for some people it is struggles with their children or their marriage. For others, it's about getting up every morning and going to a job they don't enjoy and for others it feels as if each time you get ahead of the bills everything starts breaking in your home. So, when discouraged remember this, there is a God who loves you and gives meaning and purpose to your life. Refrain from panicking. Don't make a permanent decision about temporary circumstances. As one author puts it, "put first things first". Try to avoid

approaching God in prayer only when you are in trouble. I encourage you to make that tiny adjustment to turn the corner as it were, and put God first always, in every situation.

Do you remember the Scrooge movies? The premise was that Scrooge had to look back on his life experiences before he could look ahead to changes in his attitudes and behaviours. Indeed history and experiences have their place. We would all love to learn a great deal from our experiences. There are many events and activities that we would repeat and there are many we would not. We learn from our experiences and our mistakes. Advent is a time set aside for new beginnings and it is also a time of transition. The gospel of Matthew tells the story about John the Baptist who invites people to contemplate the errors of their past and to make a specific decision to move forward in a new way. (Matthew 3:1-12)

It should not surprise you that the wilderness where John met the people was a place of loneliness, isolation, anxiety and fear. But it was also a place of revelation and renewal. We all have wilderness experiences. The difficulty is that we sometimes believe that the wilderness is about judgement when in reality the focus needs to be about redemption. John the Baptist reminds us of the importance of examining our motives and mission. He said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." More often than not, in the middle of the wilderness our minds tell us that repentance is about reaching into the depths of our soul to find moments of guilt or shame, perhaps in order to realize judgement. I would like to suggest to you today that repentance is not primarily about our moral worthiness but rather about God's desire to realign us to a healthier relationship with Christ. Our focus and energy needs to be about God's power to transform our lives into Christ's ministry. Remember the wilderness of our souls can be a place to rediscover renewal.

The Rev Canon Dr Stephen Hendry



Parish Life



Fall cleanup! A contrast in Fashion!



Scouts Present the Colours & Wreath



Smiles & Spuds for the Turkey Dinner



Spot the Super Hero



Children's Focus-Tell me Your Story



Preparing the New Parish Photo Directory

Parish Profile

OUTREACH NEWS BYTES

St. George's Outreach – a community working together to do God's work

- Collaborate to lead initiatives supporting those in need in our community
- Aid to KW agencies
- Reaching those in need in the world around us
- Environment of caring

Your Outreach Committee has been very busy over the past few months. Thank you all so much for your caring and generous support. We have been able to accomplish together some amazing things in support of others in our community and beyond.

Primates World Relief and Development Fund

Your Outreach Committee is proud that our congregation was able to contribute over \$8900 this year in support of this important national Anglican Charity. Thanks to all who contributed for their generous support.

Community Clothes Closet

On Saturday, October 21 we were able to support many local families by donating to them children's clothing, diapers, toys, play mats, exersaucers, and other items. Many parishioners kindly donated gently used items and generously donated their time to make this event successful. Thanks to all that donated and assisted.

St. John's Kitchen Ground Beef Collection

Thanks to all who contributed nearly 50 pounds of ground beef that has been donated to St. John's Kitchen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

St. Andrews Cupboard

St. Andrews Anglican Church is located in an area that has many newcomers to Canada. They have established a cupboard of food and supplies to support individuals in need. Thank you to all who have donated dry goods, food and other items. We are currently collecting donations of peanut butter and cleaning supplies, which would be greatly appreciated.

Share The Warmth

The Salvation Army collects coats, hats mitts, gloves, boots and snow pants for adults and children. We will be collecting these items for donation until the end of December. For those interested, a box is located in the Narthex to place these items. Thanks so much for your support.

Angel Tree and Bells of Christmas

We will be supporting families in need, youth and seniors at Christmas again this year via the Bells of Christmas and the Angel Tree programs. This program makes an immense difference to the recipients at Christmas. Please see the bulletin Boards in the Narthex that explains how you can contribute to this important activity.



Outreach- Angel Tree & Bells of Christmas



Children's Community Closet Set Up Team



Share the Warmth

OUTREACH NEWS BYTES

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Outreach Financial Support

The Outreach continues to be overwhelmed and impressed by the generosity and support by parishioners to our many outreach programs. We truly are making a significant difference in many people's lives in many different ways. Last year, our parish made financial contributions to 8 charities in the amount of \$300 each for a total of \$2150. This year, due to the incredible financial support of so many, we have contributed \$750 each to 11 different charities for a total of \$8300. We were able to add 3 additional charities to the list this year, with increased focus on local youth in need. In these difficult and turbulent times, the extraordinary Christian generosity that you all have shown is amazing. THANKS TO YOU ALL SO MUCH.

YWKW

We will be collecting again this year from January 14th to January 28, items in support of the YWKW emergency Shelter. Please see the bulletin boards in the Narthex for information about these items needed.

The Outreach Committee

Thank you for your continuing support! Your generosity has been amazing!!

Just a reminder, new members are always welcome. If you would like to get involved in Outreach, please contact Heather Murphy (519-998-4975) or Dianne McCandless (519-807-9205).



SS Teachers



Many Hands Make Light Work!



Ladies' Lunch



Snakes & Reptiles at Messy Church



Michael & Br Mark at Servers' Training



Spiritually Speaking...

I've come to the conclusion that life isn't easy...for any of us. I'm not sure why it took me so long to understand but I do now. It's not just me, it's everyone including creation. [Romans 8:19] Everyone carries a cross, or a beam, or bolder or ragged piece of glass or something. Life doesn't seem to be fair either and there are numerous examples we see every day. It may sound trite, but the only defence I have is my faith. I'm not talking about sentimentality, or wishful thinking, hopeful magic or a relationship with an imaginary friend. I'm talking about concrete rationale with a healthy, intelligent and reasonable approach to life. The Book of Common Prayer puts it this way in a prayer from the Office of the Burial of the Dead. "...having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope; in favour with our God; and in perfect charity with the world." [BCP 599] Each of us has to find our own path, it's always been that way. [Philippians 2:12] What works for you might not work for me. But one thing I do know for certain, it's got to begin with the Lord and celebrating the birth of our Saviour is a good place to start.



FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

It is amazing how quickly Christmas seems to come each year. My mother used to say that the older you get, the faster time flies. I never understood that as a child, but now that I am older, I get what she meant.

Christmas is nearing and with that we see Christmas lights on houses and outside decorations. Inside we have lights on our Christmas trees and mantles. We burn candles or have battery lit candles. We celebrate with lots of light.

Jesus came into our world as a baby and he is the light of the world. He lights the path ahead of us so we can see how to live. He removes the darkness from our lives and lets our light shine through.

This is part of a poem that I enjoy reading. "There is a little light, a little light in your soul. If we allow; it carries tremendous wisdom. It flashes sparks and thoughts of goodness. That little light in your soul. Let it shine."

No matter what we are going through in our lives, it is important to let that little light in our soul shine forth for all others to see.

May your Christmas season be filled with love and peace!

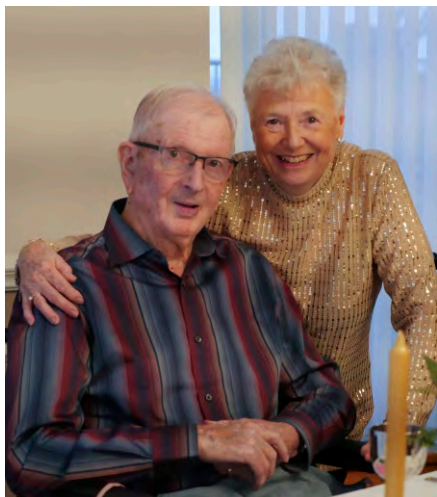
Deacon MaryLynn

May you have the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace of His love at Christmas and always!

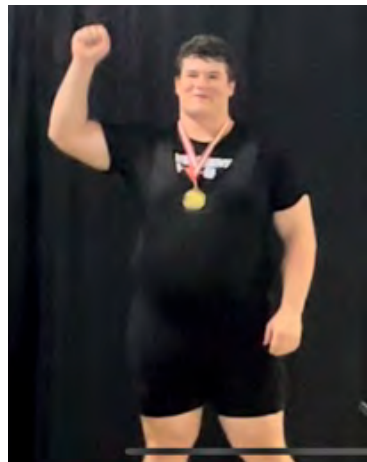


Brother Mark

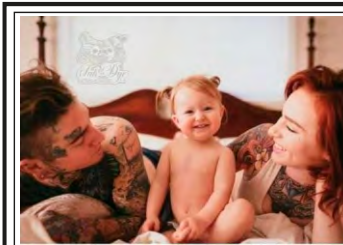
Milestones



Jack & Marilyn Graham mark 50th Anniversary



Riley Barclay Champion



I'm always surprised when heavily tattooed couples have a baby and it comes out blank.



Celebrating 20 Years of Valerie's Service



Brad Watson Remembered & Celebrated



Committal of Donna McIntosh



COME CELEBRATE WITH US

Advent Sundays

December 3rd, 10th, 17th
8:15 am & 10:00 am

Lessons & Carols

December 17 | 7:00 pm

Children's Christmas Pageant

December 17th | 10:00 am

Christmas Eve

9:00 am, 4:00 pm,
7:00 pm, 10:00 pm

Christmas Day | 9:00 am



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