

Merry Christmas to you and yours
from all of us at the Niagara Anglican



Scan to access the latest diocesan news

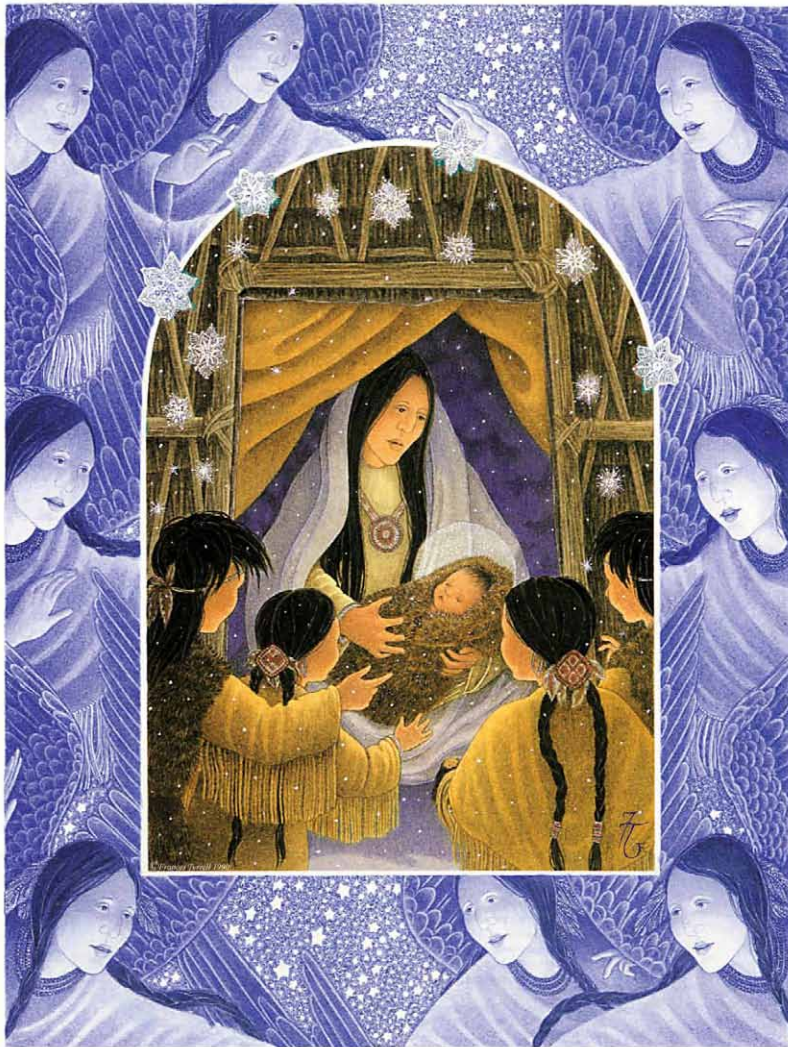


A section of the Anglican Journal

NIAGARA ANGLICAN

A Gathering Place and a Sounding Board for the People of the Diocese of Niagara

DECEMBER 2012



Artwork: Courtesy of Frances Tyrell ©1990 www.francestyrell.com

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14

The Huron Carol

'Twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled
That mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim and wandering hunters
heard the hymn,
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender babe was found;
A ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped his beauty round
But as the hunter braves drew nigh the angel song rang loud and high
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

The earliest moon of wintertime is not so round and fair
As was the ring of glory on the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt with gifts of fox and beaver pelt.
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

O children of the forest free, O seed of Manitou
The holy Child of earth and heaven is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant boy who brings you beauty, peace
and joy.
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

Words: Jean de Brebeuf, ca. 1643; trans. by Jesse Edgar Middleton, 1926

The art and message of a carol

HOLLIS HISCOCK

Our heartfelt gratitude is expressed to Artist and Illustrator Frances Tyrell of Oakville for allowing us to reproduce the Nativity illustration from her book *The Huron Carol*.

In 2011, when I was Interim Pastor at St. John's Rockwood, the Sunday School decided to perform The Huron Carol as

their Christmas pageant. While researching, I was introduced to Frances' book.

In 2011, I met Frances when she dropped off a copy of the book *Woodland Nutcracker*, which she illustrated and we featured in last December's *Niagara Anglican*.

In the New Year I emailed Frances seeking permission to include her nativity illustration

—See *HURON* Page 2



Christ's Church Cathedral · Diocese of Niagara

SUNDAYS 8:30 am & 10:30 am EUCHARIST · MONDAY-FRIDAY 12:15 pm & TUESDAYS 7:30 am

252 JAMES STREET NORTH, HAMILTON L8R 2L3 • (905) 527-1316 • CATHEDRAL@NIAGARA.ANGLICAN.CA • WWW.CATHEDRALHAMILTON.CA
THE RIGHT REVEREND MICHAEL A. BIRD, BISHOP OF NIAGARA • THE VERY REVEREND PETER A. WALL, RECTOR AND DEAN OF NIAGARA

Advent 4

Sunday, December 2, 2012

8:30 am Said Eucharist
10:30am Choral Eucharist
4:00pm The Ordination of Deacons and Priests
Sung by the Cathedral Choir

Ecumenical AIDS Vigil

Monday, December 3, 2012

7:00pm Guest Choir: The Hamilton Gay Men's Chorus
Guest Speaker: Rick Kennedy,
Executive Director of the
Ontario AIDS Network

Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24, 2012

4:30pm Family Christmas Celebration
9:00pm Organ Music by Michael Bloss with
Congregational Christmas Carols
10:00pm Choral Eucharist

The Feast of the Epiphany

Sunday, January 13, 2013

8:30 am Said Eucharist
10:30am Choral Eucharist
4:00pm An Epiphany Recital by Michael Bloss
4:30pm A Service of Lessons and Carols

Huron Carol's insights into Christmas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in our 2012 Christmas paper. I was thrilled when she readily agreed.

The carol has always been a favourite of mine. When planning annual Christmas Carol Services I also insisted that this great Canadian carol be incorporated in the worship.

Every nationality and generation interprets the Nativity in light of their own cultures and traditions. I have toured several Crèche exhibits which housed nativity sets from over 100 countries. Even though the birth of Jesus was the central theme to all, each was different



Frances Tyrrell

Photo: the artist

in depicting the people's unique characteristics and customs in their own language, lifestyle and symbols.

Father Jean de Brébeuf understood the importance of interpreting Christianity in the language of the people he served. As a Jesuit missionary among the Huron natives in Canada in the 17th century, he wanted to explain the importance of Christmas in the language and symbols of the Huron people. So he composed 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime'. In it, the "broken bark lodge" replaces the "stable of Bethlehem", "swaddling clothes" becomes a "rabbit skin robe", the angel songs attract the hunters as well as the shepherds and the "far away chiefs" bring their most valuable "gifts of fox and beaver pelts" - similar to the astrologers some 17 centuries earlier, who came bearing their valuable gifts of "gold, myrrh and frankincense".

Regardless of linguistics - God or Gitchi Manitou or any other name we humans may employ - the divine becomes human to bring us "beauty, peace and joy"



or "peace on earth, good will to all people".

Frances followed this tradition in her book. Here are some excerpts from her notes.

"The Huron carol was taught to my mother by a Sunday School teacher in a much-bombed suburb of London, England during World War Two. Forty years later in Canada, she asked me to create a Christmas card based on this carol. She liked the finished picture so much, a pen and ink rendering of the 'Chiefs from Far', that she took it to a local printer and then sold it to local gift stores.

One of the greeting cards found its way to a children's book editor at a Toronto publishing house. She contacted me and asked if I would like to create a 32 page picture book about the Huron Carol. And so this unique project, still my favourite, was underway.

It was a joy to work on this moving and spiritual carol which is loved today by people around the world. I was given full artistic freedom and a well qualified anthropologist friend swamped me with the historic and cultural information I needed to provide an authentic background to every picture. I visited the historic site of Sainte-Marie among the Huron in Midland, Ontario, where an accurate reconstruction of the 17th century mission, built on its original site, brings the compelling story to life.

At my drawing board, the sketches fell naturally into place. The faces were the most moving to construct and complete. I had

the responsibility to be true to type, without stereotype, to show ordinary people at their best, encountering the divine.

The Huron Carol is about North America's first people and culture, but it is also about the nativity: 'He pitched his dwelling among us.' In both respects it is a story told with dignity and joy."

I encourage you to visit Frances' website at www.frances-tyrrell.com to learn more about her artistic talents and works.

And as a Christmas exercise, I suggest that with Frances' illustration and The Huron Carol in front of you, you read the Gospel accounts of the Birth of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-24, 2:1-12 and Luke 2:2-20), and interpret all three within your own background: your culture, language and life experiences.

It may bring you new insights into the meaning of "Merry Christmas".

St. Nicholas came to church

LEO PODETZ, BURLINGTON

It was autumn, we were between Rectors and a different approach to the Christmas Eve Family Service was being considered.

Having conducted research on St. Nicholas and other legendary gift givers for my carvings, I was asked to consider portraying Nicholas, the boy Bishop of Myra (280 A.D.). I agreed, thinking this would be fun!

After weeks of preparing an appropriate garb and writing the necessary eulogy, Christmas Eve arrived. As the 4:00 p.m. service time approached, excitement in the Church reigned supreme!

Suddenly - the organ filled the Church with joyful Christmas music. The Processional Cross, followed by torch bearers, choir and clergy, led the way. Then marched St. Nicholas, complete with a jeweled crown (worn by Bishops in the Eastern Church), a brilliant scarlet cope and crozier. A 'throne' was placed in the



The "bishop"

Photo: submitted by Leo Podetz

Sanctuary for the special guest. Interim Pastor Ian Dingwall introduced the guest preacher - the atmosphere was electric! I moved from the sedilia and it happened. There was a surge of children! I was literally tackled by more than 100 munchkins at the Chancel steps. I never made it to the throne! I couldn't raise the microphone!

I was constantly interrupted by a staccato of questions about reindeer and sleighs, and are you REALLY coming to MY House

tonight?

After the presentation the children disappeared back to the pews, as quickly as they appeared.

Following the Service Canon Dingwall suggested that I do the same at the 6:00 p.m. service. I don't think I could have handled it! We agreed to do a second visit on the Sunday after Christmas.

That day arrived. The repeat performance was ready; however, the congregation was somewhat subdued.

The guest was introduced, inviting children to come to the Sanctuary. I moved to the 'throne' - alone! No children were attending the service!

I stated that - there MUST be some children in the pews still young at heart. Over 30 adults moved forward to hear the story of St. Nicholas.

Many favourable comments were received, with folks saying they had heard St. Nicholas' story for the first time!

It was a most enjoyable experience.

Brilliant lights expelling the pitch darkness of fear

MICHAEL BURSELM



The year was 1954, my last undergraduate year at McGill. I returned to my native country, Trinidad, to join my father, an oil driller in Fyzabad. The days before Independence were troublesome. One night a driller had senselessly been shot. The culprit easily escaped. There was no apparent motive. This demoralized all the oil workers, my father included. My mother and one brother were living in England, another in the army in war torn Malaya.

I arrived a few days before Christmas. My father was working nights. I went to the derrick with him. I was afraid. From the brilliantly lit deck one looked into utter pitch darkness. Anyone could have been out there. The roar of the machinery and the howls of the monkeys were both deafening. No other sound would have been heard.

My father took a few days off over Christmas. On Christmas Eve we went to the small church in Siparea. On the way we saw a

snake longer than the width of the road slither into the forest about 50 feet ahead of the car. On arrival we met a young lady who had walked barefoot. She slipped her dress shoes on before going into church.

There was a roof only over the sanctuary. We sat under the stars. Being the only whites, we were invited to sit up front, but we chose nearer the back. The reader was an Oxford educated inspector of schools. He later graciously invited us to his home. My former nanny, Brunette, baked a Christmas cake that had the only three eggs her chicken had laid that day. We were royally fed and entertained.

Such warm Christian hospitality and generosity were brilliant lights expelling the pitch darkness of fear and suspicion all around us.

NIAGARA ANGLICAN

The official publication of the Diocese of Niagara, published 10 times a year from September to June as a supplement to the *Anglican Journal*.

Editor: Hollis Hiscock
905-635-9463
editor@niagara.anglican.ca

Advertising: Angela Rush
905-319-2521
niagara.anglican.ads@gmail.com

Art Director: Craig Fairley
Imagine Creative Communications

Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

Publications Advisory Board:

Pam Claridge
519-941-6804
pclaridge@rogers.com
Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis
905-628-4176
purdell-lewis@sympatico.ca
Carol Summers
905-772-5641
crsummers@shaw.ca

Publisher: Michael A. Bird, Bishop

Printed and mailed by:
Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON

Subscriptions:
\$15/year. For new subscriptions or changes, please contact your parish or visit www.anglicanjournal.com.

Submissions:
We welcome letters, news and articles. Submissions must include full name and contact information of the author. We reserve the right to edit submissions. Contact the editor if you have an idea for a feature article.

Diocese of Niagara

Bishop:
Michael A. Bird
bishop@niagara.anglican.ca
905-527-1316

Administrative Assistant:
Alison D'Attri
905-527-1316 ext.310
alison.dattri@niagara.anglican.ca

Executive Officer:
Michael Patterson
905-527-1316 ext. 257
michael.patterson@niagara.anglican.ca

Congregational Support and Development:
Christyn Perkons
905-527-1316 ext.460
christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca

Cathedral Place
252 James Street North
Hamilton Ontario L8R 2L3
905-527-1316

For a complete staff directory and more information, visit our web site:

www.niagara.anglican.ca

The Diocese of Niagara lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, encompassing the Niagara Peninsula, Hamilton, Halton Region, Guelph and portions of Wellington and Dufferin Counties to include Shelburne and Mount Forest in the north and west.



Christmas greetings

Bishop Michael's Christmas letter

This year when it comes time to unwrap our nativity scene manger and the figures of the Holy family to put under our Christmas tree, it will have special meaning for me!

In March, during a very special Lenten retreat, I spent several days in Assisi, Italy, the birth place and home of one of my favourite saints, St. Francis. Francis was born in the 12th century, the son of a wealthy merchant and had everything a young man in those days could wish for, or so it seemed. At the age of twenty and in the wake of a number of personal experiences he traveled to Rome and at the gate of the St. Peter's Basilica he encountered a beggar asking for alms. He stripped himself of his fine clothes and gave them to the poor man and in exchange he put on the rags of the pauper.

For the remainder of his time in Rome he lived among the outcasts of society and it forced him to look at the world and his life in a very different way. Soon afterward he threw away his wardrobe and renounced his father's wealth and he devoted the rest of his life to caring for the poor and the crippled.

It was, therefore, not a surprise for me to learn on my trip that Francis had a special love for the gospel story of our Saviour's birth and in fact that it was St. Francis who first created a depiction of the nativity scene in the town of Greccio during a visit he made there to celebrate Christmas. In order to aid the inhabitants in their celebrations he prepared a manger and brought hay and rounded up an ox and a donkey. On that night he stood before the manger and preached a passionate sermon to the congregation about the poverty of the Babe of Bethlehem.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there



Nativity depiction in Assisi

Photo: Michael Bird

were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them... (Luke 2:6-9)

We have all heard many times that shepherds were outcasts and particularly detested members of society, but on this night they represented so many of the ordinary folk who lived lives of hardship and need. They also represented the marginalized and the outcasts that St. Francis encountered and devoted his life to, and they point us to the work of servant ministry that God calls us to engage in, in this present day.

At Christmas, in this humble setting, the glory of the Lord shone around an unlikely people with a message that has echoed down through the ages: that no life or no situation, no matter how difficult or how impoverished, is beyond the reach and desire of God to enter into and to change in dramatic ways. Our celebration of the birth of the Christ-child is an opportunity to

give thanks for the divine gifts of hope and peace and love that we have so richly received and that have empowered us, in so many ways, to proclaim this life-giving message as a diocese over the past year!

These will be my thoughts as I lovingly unwrap each figure of our nativity scene and place them under our tree on Christmas Eve and I pray that the glory of

the Lord may shine brightly in your homes and in each of our churches across Niagara as we gather to celebrate the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem once again.

Susan and I wish you a joyful and peace-filled Christmas season and every blessing for a happy New Year.

Bishop Michael



Bishop Michael and Susan Bird

Photo:Hollis Hiscock

We have all heard many times that shepherds were outcasts and particularly detested members of society, but on this night they represented so many of the ordinary folk who lived lives of hardship and need.

All Hope Invested

A Soliloquy for Christmas Eve

REBECCA CLIFFORD, CALEDONIA

*This night, above all else,
This night is, all at once, uniquely still.
Quiet, cold, soundless snow falls
Upon the pulseless earth.
How does it change?
When marks the moment?
Does eternity shiver and shimmer
And fade and resolve to
Identify, dignify, sanctify, glorify, magnify...
To reveal all hope invested in this tiny babe
Whose keen cry cracks the crystal sky,
Whose tawny skin, tender and new,
Is harboured in sackcloth and straw?
My frosted voice exhales an exquisite excelsis
In gratitude of the one chance for all.
How can it be? How shall it be?
How shall we be?
Cold and mute against the night,
I hold my breath... and wait.*

Rebecca's note: In my Caledonia backyard, on a night so dark I couldn't distinguish where the sky met the treetops of the forest, I saw the stars of the Milky Way spackled across the darkness. There's no urban glow; as I stood there, clouds blanketed the sky and it began to snow. I could feel more than see my breath. I thought that on a night such as this Christ was born. Had I been alive at the time, could I have felt that moment come? Could I have sensed it? Would the atmosphere have shifted to acknowledge this great event?

As Christians, everything we believe about our salvation hinges on the birth of this babe and the life that followed. I marveled at the idea of the sacrifice of the one life of Christ redeeming us all for all time and questioned how that should come about, and how we as the human race would respond. I felt that Christmas feeling of awe... and held my breath to suspend that instant.

A family Christmas play

HELEN BUCKTON
SHANNON, GEORGETOWN

It was Christmas 1939, the first Christmas of the Second World War. I was nine years old, living with my family near a small village in Sussex, England. My father's family always came to us on Christmas Day for 'Tea', and opening gifts under the tree.

That year we had two additions to the family, a brother and sister evacuated to the country from Peckham Rye in London. They were homesick at first, and cried at nights, but they settled down quite quickly. John was eight years old, Joan seven and my brother six.

My father decided to "put on a play" for the family on Christmas night and with a cast of four, he chose the Christmas story. My sister, aged two was not considered for a part.

Joan played Mary and John was Joseph. I had at least three parts, the innkeeper's wife, a shepherd and a wiseman. My

brother trailed around behind me. Our stage was very small, but our aunts, uncles and grandmother squeezed together and made room.

When we changed costumes, we raced upstairs where my mother and aunt tore things off us and draped us anew. Everything was far too big for us!

My father made a star by cutting it out from the side of a box, covering it with yellow paper and placing a bulb inside. We thought this was the very height of theatre and were most impressed.

Scenes were interspersed with carols which the audience sang and things went very well.

At the end when we were out of breath with singing and running up and down stairs, we four children gathered around the cradle, complete with my baby doll and Joan sang "Away in a Manger" by herself. She had a sweet little voice, and when I looked up, I saw my mother and aunts wiping tears from their

eyes, as they watched that little girl, not yet eight years old, who had been taken from her family and dropped into a whole family of strangers.

For the finale, the cast and audience combined and sang a carol that I have not heard since then. I am not sure whether it is even the first verse or not.

*"Faith sees no longer the stable floor
A pavement of sapphires is there
The clear light of heaven shines
forth on the world
And the angels' song still rings in
the air
And heaven and earth through that
spotless birth
Are at peace on this night so fair."*

The two little children, so far from home, stayed with us until 1942 when their parents took them home.

We never heard from them again, but it was a Christmas that I remember very clearly.



Advent and peacemaking

TERRY GILLIN

Advent is a time of reflection which precedes our Christmas alleluias with its promise of peace on earth.

We wait for the coming of our Lord. While we wait we reflect on what His coming means to us. We wait for a God who is already with us, and in self-reflection we realize His Spirit is not yet fully ours.

Alfred Delp was raised a Lutheran in Germany in the first half of the 20th century and subsequently became a Roman Catholic priest. He was falsely accused of participating in the Kreisau plot against Hitler, and was executed. Delp captures the spirit of Advent this way: "Advent is the time for rousing. We are shaken to the very depths so that we wake up to the truth

of ourselves." We must rouse our hearts so that they more fully embody God's peace, justice and mercy.

Thomas Merton in *The Nonviolent Alternative* gives us a context for this rousing: "We believe that Christ Himself is our peace." Christ comes as the Prince of Peace. As members of the mystical body we carry His banner and build His Kingdom. Remembering our baptismal commitments and strengthened by the Eucharist, we are called to a radical stance in the face of enmity and violence. We are to return love for hate, we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Like the gifts of sun and rain, we are called to love indiscriminately and boundlessly. How are we to do this? To begin, during Advent we need to be attentive to signs

of the coming of Christ in our hearts.

We wait expectantly. We reflect attentively. We search the depths of our hearts. We pray for the grace of love renewed and hope strengthened. We pray for peace in our hearts so that we can share God's peace with others – family members, co-workers, neighbors, acquaintances, strangers and enemies. Who exasperates us? Who riles us? To whom do we respond in anger? Merton writes, "Human and reasonable solutions are still open to us. But they depend on our climate of thought, that is to say, on our ability to hope in peaceful solutions."

Beyond personal troubles we need to construct peace and justice in the face of aggressive war, dire poverty, hunger and social inequality of all kinds. What is

our hope for peaceful solutions concerning the war in Syria? The famine in the African Sahel? The wrongly imprisoned? Child soldiers? Global inequalities? The complicated consequences of the Arab spring? The 65% of humanity who live on a dollar a day or less? How do these rouse our hearts, minds and imaginations? What reasonable solutions can we devise? This reflection leads me to ask, to which peaceful solutions will I contribute?

What are we to do? We are called to work toward a more just world, to lay the human foundation for the Kingdom of God. The Psalmist (Psalm 46) captures both the needed qualities of personal reflection and the hope of institutional change: *Come and see what the LORD has done... He makes wars cease...*

*He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
He burns the shields with fire.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God..."*

To bring the Risen Christ to the world, we must change our hearts and reflect on what domestic and foreign policies will most embody justice and mercy for our children and grandchildren.

For myself, there is no danger that I will be carried away in wild and misguided actions. I confess I am too timid. The danger is that I will rationalize away this call to establish the Kingdom of peace.

Terry Gillin teaches at Ryerson University in Toronto and is a member of St. Cutbert's Oakville. EMAIL: tgillin@soc.ryerson.ca

Buy nothing Christmas

SUSAN CURRAN

Greening Niagara invites you to green your Christmas, following the leadership of Buy Nothing Christmas (www.buynothingchristmas.org).

What Is Buy Nothing Christmas? It is a national initiative started by Canadian Mennonites who offer a prophetic "no" to the patterns of overconsumption of middle-class North Americans. They are inviting Christians and others all over Canada to join a movement to de-commercialize Christmas and re-design a Christian lifestyle that is richer in meaning, smaller in impact upon the earth and greater in giving to people

less-privileged.

Can I be a part of Buy Nothing Christmas even if I buy a few things? Definitely. We are all going to have to buy some things. However when you do buy things, you are encouraged to remember principles like buying locally, fairly-traded, environmentally friendly packaging, recycling or re-using, buying things that last and so on.

The main aim of this campaign is not to save money or to slow down the pace of Christmas (although each can be a side benefit), it is to challenge our over-consumptive lifestyle and how it affects global disparities and the earth. So, even though you might buy a few things at

Christmas, it's important to think in these global economic terms.

What's wrong with giving gifts at Christmas? Giving gifts at Christmas is a good thing to do - it's a small re-enactment of the incarnation of God's love. Gift-giving, as we know from other occasions like birthdays, weddings or housewarmings, serves as a kind of social glue that keeps us together. It shows affection, thoughtfulness and love. While gift-giving is a good thing to do at Christmas, that doesn't mean we have to go overboard.

*Susan Curran is a member of the Greening Niagara committee.
EMAIL: cursusan@gmail.com*

Alternative gift ideas

1. Make coupons for a massage, spring cleaning, child-minding, manicure, etc.
2. Create a menu of various culinary delights (Tantalizing Thai, Mexican Fiesta, etc.) and have the gift recipient choose one.
3. Buy a used book and on the inside cover explain why you chose the book for that person.
4. Purchase gifts at a fair-trade shop, garage sale or thrift shop.
5. Fill an old trunk or suitcase with fun clothing, hats and gaudy jewelry for your children to play dress-up.
6. Wrap gifts in newspaper, maps, scarves or interesting clothing.
7. Videotape and interview your elderly parents about childhood memories, how they met, etc., and give to siblings or children.

Further suggestions at www.buynothingchristmas.org

Christmas will soon be here

WILLIAM R. BLOTT, DUNNVILLE

Well, it's Advent again, Christmas soon will be here, bright fires, cheerful songs in the air. The darkness retreats, the light's growing strong; God invites us into the new year.

As the light of the sun drives the darkness away and quickens the earth with its rays; the grace of God's Son enlightens our lives and gives pleasure and hope to our days.

So with all of creation reach up to that light of God and the vision he gives. It's food for our journey, lamp for our path, and the spirit of Christ in our lives.

Come then, offer your gifts; for whatever they are, they'll be gold and incense and myrrh: the signs of the homage paid to your Lord for a life which is led by his star.

William's note: For the last few years I have been writing a poem for each Christmas. It helps me meditate on the meaning of the Incarnation, and hopefully may help others too. This one I used on a Christmas card several years ago.



Christmas memories ... of jail

CONNIE PHILLIPSON, ORANGEVILLE

For many years, I began Christmas day by driving to work to tour the jail.

An administrator attended the institution on all statutory holidays, and I was relieved that no one else wanted to be on-call on Christmas Day.

As I entered the inmate areas, it was unseemingly quiet. Absent were the flurry of police officers and the noisy activity of shackled inmates moving to and from court. In the full visiting room, mothers cradling young ones appeared more somber than usual.

During my walkabout, I

greeted staff and chatted with inmates to see how they were feeling on this special day.

Some men avoided my gaze and continued to play cards. Others smiled and whispered: "Merry Christmas, ma'am." It was inconsistent with the inmate subculture to be happy on Christmas Day.

From time to time, an inmate would express appreciation to me for being there. Little did they know that it was I who felt grateful ... grateful for my freedom to come and go and grateful to a mother who taught me to respect the dignity of every human being made in the image of God, not just those who looked physically different in our

white neighbourhood, but even those who chose to do evil in the sight of God.

Those were the days when I mingled more with people who broke the law than amongst those who obeyed it. There were many agonizing days when I struggled to see Christ in the angry and often remorseless hearts before me. But in my struggle, I always knew that these prisoners and their victims were in sacred hands.

This Christmas, I look forward to a morning service at St. Mark's Church Orangeville. And, as I gaze out on the faithful I will be remembering those inside the walls who suffer and who have caused pain to others.

Making the Connection

TRN Income Tax & Bookkeeping Services

Stay in the Comfort of Your Home. We Come To You.
Individual \$30.00. Pensioners and Students \$20.00
Family & Group Discounts Available

Telephone: 905-335-8286

E-mail: trnconsultingservices@yahoo.com

Unit 100 2301 Cavendish Drive, Burlington, Ont.

Simply Affordable... **Eco-friendly Biodegradable Funeral Products**

Affordable Burial & Cremation

Available 24 Hours

"Helping you make final arrangements as simple as ABC" With no funeral home required

Family owned & operated

Specializing in...

- Direct Burials & Cremations
- At need and pre-need arrangements
- Pre-paid options with "Guaranteed Funeral Deposits of Canada"
- Graveside or memorial services

205 Nebo Rd., Hamilton
905-389-2998
Toll Free: 1-888-389-2998
www.affordableburialandcremation.ca

SUNRISE

MEMORIAL WINDOWS
PROTECTIVE GLAZING

REPAIRS & MILLWORK
RELEADING & RESTORATION

SINCE 1979
97 Wharncliffe Rd. S. London, Ont. N6J 2K2
Toll Free 877-575-2321
www.sunrisestainedglass.com

D L Corry Coaching

www.corrycoach.com
linda@corrycoach.com
905-634-7858
1-877-778-3731

Rev. Linda Corry
Life & Leadership Coach

3017 St. Clair Ave, Suite 166
Burlington, ON L7N 3P5

Meet by telephone or in person.

Paper seeking Board members

The *Niagara Anglican* newspaper is recruiting individuals to serve on its Publication Board and you could be one of these people.

The purpose of the Board is to ensure the publication of the *Niagara Anglican* newspaper based on the mission, vision, goals, aims and aspirations of the diocese and parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Niagara.

Specifically, the Board will develop long and short term policies and strategies, prepare annual budgets, set advertising rates and provide recommendations for the good of the paper.

In addition members are expected to be part of and cooperate with any other diocesan communications initiatives, for example Facebook, web site or twitter.

We are seeking nominations from across Niagara Diocese, with one member being appointed from each of the six regions. We want the Board to reflect the variety and diversity of talents of the diocese.

If you wish more information or are interested in applying yourself or would like to nominate another person (with their permission), forward your contact information, stating why you would want to be on the Publication Board, to The Editor, *Niagara Anglican*, 252 James Street North, Hamilton, ON, L8R 2L3 or by email editor@niagara.anglican.ca

Application should be received by January 21, 2013.

See the terms of reference below:

Niagara Anglican Publication Board



Purpose: To ensure the publication of the *Niagara Anglican* newspaper based on the mission, vision, goals, aims and aspirations of the diocese and parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Niagara.

Members:

- Bishop
- Executive Archdeacon
- Editor
- Art Director
- Advertising Agent
- Proofreader
- One member from each of the 6 regions (reflecting the variety and diversity of the diocese, such as legal, ethics, theological skill sets) – appointed by the Bishop
- Two members (appointed for their special interest or expertise or to provide balance) – appointed by the Bishop.

Terms of References:

1. To develop long term plans (for example plan the general goals for the coming year) for the paper's content and to monitor or change as circumstances dictate in the short term;
2. To establish and implement policies and strategies for the *Niagara Anglican*;

3. To provide feedback, suggestions, advice, etc. for the good of the paper;
4. To prepare and submit an annual budget and receive periodic updates;
5. To be part of and co-operate with any other diocesan communications initiatives, for example Facebook, website, Twitter, etc.;
6. To establish policies and rates for advertising and to monitor advertising;
7. To consider other issues which may arise or be referred to the Board.

Special Terms of Reference:

The Executive Archdeacon and three regional representatives will form a group with whom the Editor may consult re the suitability of any particular submission for publication.

Term: Members are appointed for a 3 year term and are eligible for appointment for a second term only.

Meetings: As per workload and as determined by the membership.

Chair: Elected annually from membership.

An Island Christmas

NOREEN MCNAIRN,
BURLINGTON

Just after World War Two, our family went through a drastic relocation. Our large home in Rosedale was heavily damaged in a fire, and financial reverses necessitated a move to our cottage on Toronto Island.

That fall, through the kindness of friends, we took up residence in their much smaller summer home that was better insulated. We carried water from the fire hydrant down the street and disposed of our potty contents in the public washroom a couple of blocks away. A Quebec heater in the kitchen was our heat source, and to stoke it my brothers and I crossed the ice on the bay to pick

up coal from the piles at Cherry Beach.

For many years we had invited two couples to attend Christmas dinner at our large home in Rosedale and, in my mother's eyes, nothing would change that. Both couples accepted the offer and boarded the little icebreaker tug that plied Toronto Bay. My father met them at Hanlan's Point and escorted them on the so-called bus provided by the city – a former paddy wagon!

This was a true adventure for these couples from Forest Hill but tradition was important to all of us. We borrowed trestle tables from the community centre and used our linen cloths, best bone china and ruby crystal, as always. My mother maintained that a

well-set table was significant in how well a meal was received. It was our most memorable Christmas.

As the rebel in our Methodist family, I had joined the only Protestant Church on the island, St. Andrew by-the-Lake. There we had an annual tradition of carol-singing on Christmas Eve. Our small group of eight to 10 slogged through the snow from the church on Centre Island to Ward's Island, singing our cold lungs out to bring the sounds of Christmas to 200 or so hardy residents.

No one had much money to share but the delight in their faces gave us delight in lieu of financial support.

A Christmas mouse

CHRISTINE CLATWORTHY,
GUELPH

I fondly remember the Christmas when I was ten years old and didn't really believe in Santa, but maintained the charade for my younger siblings aged eight, five and four.

Christmas Eve we always went to church for the family service at 7:00 p.m. to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus and then it would be home for a snack and bedtime.

Later that evening, I heard a noise in the hallway and went to investigate. My father—dressed



in my mother's red robe, a red hat and white wool beard, just in case someone woke up and saw him—was coming up the stairs with an armload of toys to be delivered by Santa, all the while imploring my mother to be quiet so we would not waken. Imagine her surprise (and mine), when a small unwelcome visitor,

a mouse, scurried across the stairs and startled my father. In the fuss he dropped the presents and was trying to stop the mouse with his slipper, not too quietly.

He never did catch the mouse, and fortunately none of the little ones woke up during the kaffuffle. As Mom and I chuckled, Dad calmly picked up the presents (and his dignity) and placed the gifts at the foot of each bed. Santa had arrived and none were any wiser.

Over the years we have had many a chuckle as we reminisced about this interesting Christmas Eve.



Special tea party

St. Stephen-on-the-Mount Hamilton held an afternoon tea party to honour those who had reached the age of 90. Eight of the 13 who were able to attend the party pose with Rector Scott McNaughton.

Photo: submitted by Lynne Timmins

Book Review

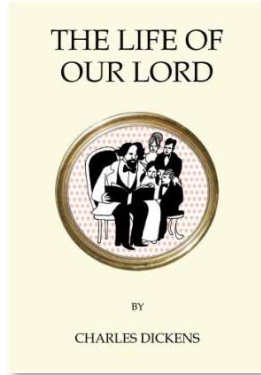
The Life of Our Lord
by Charles Dickens
(Oneworld Classics)

SHARYN HALL

At Christmas time, we associate Charles Dickens with his famous story, "A Christmas Carol", but early in the 20th century, another story by him was discovered to be a holiday favourite.

During the years 1846-49, when he was completing his novel "David Copperfield", Dickens was writing a simple retelling of the life of Jesus, based on the gospel of Luke. Since he wrote it exclusively for his children, he refused to allow its publication. For 85 years, the manuscript was guarded as a family secret, not to be published while any child of Dickens lived.

When his last child died in 1933, the remaining family decided to publish the book in London. The first American edition was published in 1934 and became a bestseller, especially in the holiday season. Though



the book has been published in various editions since 1934, it is often absent from lists of Dickens' works.

He called his little book a "children's New Testament." His purpose was to teach his children about the life and history of Jesus Christ. Dickens was a storyteller and there are delightful moments in the book when he is talking directly to his children, such as his explanation that locusts "belong to that country near Jerusalem, which is a great way off." Although written for young minds, he does not omit the cruelties in the

story, including the slaughter of innocent children by Herod and the scourging of Jesus by the soldiers at his trial.

Dickens was writing in the 1840s, so his quotes from scripture are from the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible. His simplification of some episodes in the life of Jesus may seem to miss their significance, but this is a retelling of the story for children, not a sermon. For his children, "The Life of Our Lord" was their father's voice telling them about Jesus, not the famous novelist creating another literary masterpiece.

The little book is a wonderful gift for a child, but it can be enjoyed by young and old alike. It reminds all of us that the story of Jesus is about living with faith in God and seeking to do good even when life brings sorrow as well as joy.

Christmas is a special time for children and it is the beginning of a story we all need to hear again and again.

Canon Sharyn Hall can be contacted at halls@cogeco.ca

Chocolate-covered memories

**MURRAY BLAND,
BURLINGTON**

So many Christmases have gone by, all enjoyed, but few remembered. One thing I will always remember about growing up... every Christmas under the tree there was always a small box wrapped in white tissue paper lying among the gifts—no pretty ribbon and no pretty stickers.

Oh! The excitement of Christmas morning—quickly throwing on some clothes and gulping down our sandwich and milk that mom insisted on before flying down the stairs where *they were*. (Mom insisted on this because we would be too excited to eat later.)

Finally, we got the OK. My sisters and I rushed downstairs, into the living room and into the magic of Christmas.

The tree was in its usual place—all ablaze with light. The

coat rack that dad had made for us when we were very small was loaded with five Christmas stockings (actually five ladies silk stockings) stuffed with goodies, and surrounding the tree – the gifts.

I looked and looked. It was there. Mom didn't forget. The small box wrapped with white tissue paper was there—my birthday gift from Mom was there. Most didn't remember my birthday was two days after Christmas, but Mom always did.

I knew what it was—a half pound of chocolate-coated nuts. God bless you, Mom. She has been gone now for many years—as has my Dad—taken at 53.

I often buy chocolate-coated almonds. My wife and I share them. When I bite into one, my wife smiles. She knows I'm remembering Mom. Gone these many years, but never forgotten. She was a good Mom.

Nativity

MARY CHISHOLM, MILTON

Their footsteps trod o'er rough terrain,
Knocks on doors were all in vain:
Then alas, they were told
There was a place like burnished gold,
Where life in all simplicity
Was there for everyone to see.
From bleat of calf, to low of lamb,
The angelic choir burst forth in praise;
While light of the eastern star, shone rays
That gave the place a hallowed grace
Where all mankind, of every race
Could come in awe, to see the place

THE HOLY PLACE
Where Christ was born!



Real gifts of Christmas

SHARON LATHROP, FERGUS

What does Christmas bring to you?
Does it bring you joy, the peace that's true?
Do you have any hope or love to share?
Does the birth of Christ lead you to care?
Be filled with wonder at this child's birth
For God has sent His Son to earth
He came for a purpose and with a plan
To restore us to God, the salvation of man
He has come, be glad and rejoice
For He's God's Son and speaks with His voice
He has come, be filled with hope and joy
Celebrate with all, the birth of God's Boy.



efs
Elora Festival SINGERS 2012-2013 SEASON

MESSIAH
An Elora Festival tradition!
Sunday December 9
3:00 PM \$40
St. Joseph's Church, Fergus

GLORIA DEO
The Elora Festival Singers perform works by Byrd, Sanders, Willan and Martin.
Sunday March 3
3:00 PM \$35
Church of Our Lady, Guelph

FESTIVAL OF CAROLS
A lighter look at the sacred and secular aspects of the holiday season.
Wednesday December 19
7:30 PM \$35
Friday December 21
5:00 PM & 7:30 PM \$35
St. John's Church, Elora

THE MUSIC OF DAVID BRIGGS
Don't miss works by this international organ recitalist and composer.
Sunday April 27
3:00 PM \$35
St. John's Church, Elora

uGO eyeGO
519.846.0331
www.elorafestival.com

Churches...vital partners with Food For Life

SUE CARSON

You need only spend a short time on the Food for Life (FFL) truck to realize that our success isn't about the food – it's about the people. True, FFL collects and delivers over one million pounds of food every year to those in need, but it's the almost 20,000 people every month who receive that food who can attest to the vital role FFL plays in helping people eat and live better.

While FFL has been in operation since 1995, our organization undertook a dramatic shift starting in 2007 when we examined our role in the community and our ability to effectively battle hunger. FFL had always been a food recovery program; soliciting grocery stores, restaurants and the corporate food sector to donate their surplus fresh food, but there was a need to change the structure of our service. In order to expand our reach to all corners of Halton Region, we knew it would require us to engage more community partners.

From that discovery came

the expansion of our Outreach Programs (OP). Each of our individual OP is located in a neighbourhood community where we deliver food to be distributed to individuals in need. Our goal is to establish an OP in conjunction with a community partner – a church, social service organization or a community agency. We identify and train a community member to serve as the volunteer co-coordinator, who is then responsible for managing the OP in a specific community and to ensure the program's objectives are met. FFL has established OP with six Anglican parishes: St. Matthew on-the-Plains Burlington, St. Alban the Martyr Glen Williams, St. Alban the Martyr Acton, St. Jude's Oakville, St. Luke's Burlington and St. Hilda's Oakville.

Recruiting a program coordinator is only the first step in developing an effective working partnership in these individual communities. Each outreach program requires many dedicated volunteers to receive, sort, organize and hand out the food. One amazing success story of a new outreach program was at St. Luke's in Burlington. Not only were they able to fill all their volunteer shifts with plenty of helpers, but volunteers would often show up whether they were scheduled or not! A nice 'problem' to have.

The clients who access these programs are diverse: seniors, single parents, individuals as well as families. One benefit of an outreach program is that food

is brought right into the community – which means regardless of our clients' situation, they don't need to travel far to have access to fresh nutritious food.

One measure of success for FFL is how these programs develop a life of their own – often expanding beyond the initial task of handing out food. The best example of this is at St. Alban's Acton, where the OP is part of a larger community initiative. The parish's community dinner night has turned into dinner and a movie since another church, within walking distance, now hosts a free family movie on the same evening. Some local social service agencies have started preparing the dinners, and a business in town provides free popcorn. In addition, Acton started a large community garden and the church has been very active in getting it up and running. The Reverend Brian Galligan understands that these programs are all about building relationships, strengthening a community and providing care and love to those in need.

As we look to the future and building upon this success, FFL is talking to some churches about developing a community kitchen to teach people how to cook nutritious meals. This is one way we can expand these partnerships to bring an even greater benefit to our clients.

FFL understands the role we play in helping feed those in need, but we also understand an even greater purpose. Our partner, the Reverend Sheila Plant,

captured it best by explaining how she has seen, first-hand, the benefits of their program at St. Luke's: increased self-esteem, positive changes in personality and more open communication with others.

Clearly, the impact on the cli-

ents' lives is greater than simply better access to food.

Sue Carson is Manager of Community Relations with Food for Life, www.foodforlife.ca, EMAIL: sue.carson@cogeco.ca



▲ Karen Bonham welcomes the Food For Life delivery truck to St. Luke's Burlington

▼ Doug Bryant and Jean Puckering packaging bread for distribution at St. Alban's Glen Williams Photos: Sue Carson



Deadlines and Submissions for Niagara Anglican

Deadlines ...

February 2013 – December 20
 March 2013 – January 25
 April 2013 – February 25
 May 2013 – March 25

Submissions ...

Articles – 750 words or less
 Letters to the Editor – 300 words or less
 Reviews (books, films, music, theatre) – 400 words or less

Original cartoons or art – contact the Editor
 Photos – very large, high resolution, action pictures (people doing something). Include name of photographer.

Questions or information: contact the Editor, Hollis Hiscock at editor@niagara.anglican.ca or 905-635-9463



Christmas Tree Sale

Buy a quality "Anglican" tree this year at St. Cuthbert's Church

(Maple Grove and Oakhill, two blocks north of Lakeshore Road East in SE Oakville)
 905-844-6200

Sale Hours (staffed by volunteers):

Monday to Friday 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
 Saturdays 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
 Sundays 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Advent & Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols
 Sunday, December 23 at 10 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship
 4:30 p.m.
 Family-Friendly Communion Service
 9:00 p.m.
 Candlelight Choral Eucharist

NIAGARA ANGLICAN PUBLICATIONS BOARD

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

We are seeking applications from across Niagara Diocese for volunteer members to the Niagara Anglican Publications Board (the Board). One person will be appointed by the Bishop from each of the six regions in the Diocese. We want the Board to reflect the variety and diverse talents of the diocese.

The Board ensures the publication of the Niagara Anglican newspaper based on the mission, vision, goals, aims and aspirations of the diocese and parishes in the Anglican Diocese of Niagara.

More information is available in an article on page 6 of this newspaper. **Application deadline: January 21, 2013.**

For more information or to apply:
 Niagara Anglican Publications Board
 % Hollis Hiscock, Editor, Niagara Anglican
 Cathedral Place, 252 James Street N., Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3
 or editor@niagara.anglican.ca

Diamond Jubilee Award

Robert Morrow, St. James' Church Dundas, was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award.

In a letter of support former astronaut Robert Thirsk said, "Of the hundreds of citizens I have worked with during my astronaut career, one star that shines particularly brightly is Robert Morrow. Bob is the oxygen that sustains thousands of flames of science learning across our nation."

Robert, continued Thirsk, is known as the human voice and face of a unique project called Tomatosphere. The project entails taking half a million tomato seeds that have been exposed to harsh conditions (even aboard space stations), and then having them distributed by project partners to schools across the nation. During his 10 year history with the project, two million grade school students have gained hands on experience with the scientific method.

Robert Morrow received his award from MP David Sweet.



Photo: submitted by Robert Morrow

Blessing of the animals



Lucy, held by owner Wayne Dickson, receives a blessing from Associate Priest Elizabeth Steeves at St. James Church Dundas during a St. Francis of Assisi Blessing of the Animal service. Sixteen animals—mostly dogs, some cats and a couple of frogs and lizards—were all very well behaved.

Photo: Sue Carson

Similarly, on a beautiful sunny afternoon, members of St. George's Lowville gathered outdoors for their annual pet blessing. In a personal appearance, St. Francis of Assisi (Nigel Bunce) talked about his early life and the establishment of the friars who became known as Franciscans. He then blessed the animals and their owners, including the pony belonging to Warden Donna Whitaker. (Photo unavailable)

People

Clergy appointments

Canon **Barry Randle** has accepted the position as Priest-in-Charge, on a half time basis, of St. Aidan's Oakville.

The Reverend **Wendy Phipps** was appointed Associate Priest (part-time) at Grace Church Milton. She also serves as Priest-in-Charge (part-time) of St. John's Campbellville.

The Reverend **Lyn Fisher** began her work as the Director of Justice and Servant Ministries at St. Matthew's Burlington. She worked as a Registered Nurse, as the Health Care Coordinator for the L'Arche Community in Sudbury and as a priest in the Diocese of Algoma.

Lay appointments

The following received their Lay Reader's license through Bishop Michael Bird:

Margaret Coupland at St. Mark's Orangeville; **Sandra Mansfield** at St. James' St. Catharines; **Terence Raybould** (renewed) at St. Luke's Burlington.

Ordinations

The Reverend **Connie Phillipson**, Assistant Curate at St. Mark's Orangeville and the Reverend **Leslie Gerlofs**, Deacon-in-Charge of St. John's Winona, will be ordained to the Priesthood on Sunday, December 2 at 4:00 p.m. in Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton.

Terry Holub will be ordained to the Diaconate at the same service, and will begin his ministry as Deacon-in-Charge (part-time), at Holy Trinity Niagara Falls the following day.

Retirement

Canon **David Linn** submitted his intention to retire from full time ministry and as Director of Canterbury Hills, effective January 31, 2013.

Anniversary

Happy 70th wedding anniversary to Canon **Peter and Anne Smith**, faithful members of All Saints Erin.

Please remember everyone in your prayers.

"Somewhere within the depth of our being may a birth take place this Christmas and may a light begin to shine. May our souls, feelings and bodies become transformed and illuminated by the presence of God being born once more in the 'stables' of our lives."

ISRAEL & EGYPT

APRIL 6-21, 2013

- TIBERIAS
- JERUSALEM
- DEAD SEA/EILAT
- CAIRO
- NILE RIVER CRUISE
- LUXOR
- ASWAN

HOSTS:

VEN. BRUCE & SUZANNE MCPETRIE
905-934-0361 905-935-4473
BMCPETRIE@SYMPATICO.CA

SHALOM JOURNEYS INC.
1-800-838-0656

Advertise in the
Niagara Anglican

Reach your audience
economically

For information or to
book, Contact Angela
905-319-2521
niagara.anglican.ads@gmail.com

Next month in the
Niagara Anglican

Planning for the Future
Report from Synod:2012

A living wage
Your questions answered

Herald the season by enjoying a dramatic reading of Charles Dickens'

A Christmas Carol

Church of the Ascension, 64 Forest Ave. at John St., Hamilton
Sunday, December 9, 2012, at 3:00 p.m.

Featuring readers John Laing, Judy Marsales, The Venerable Michael Patterson, Connie Smith
And choristers from the John Laing Singers

A fundraiser for the Achievement Breakfast Club for students in our community.

Tickets \$20.00. Students under 18 - \$10.00 ~ Call the church office at 905-527-3505.



Custom Cakes & Cupcakes

WEDDING | BIRTHDAY
SHOWERS | ANNIVERSARY

Whatever the occasion,
Cakes by Caitlin can fill your need.

Chocolate | Vanilla | Red Velvet | Butter Cream | Fondant
facebook.com/cakesbycaitlin
caitrush@hotmail.ca • 289-880-4583

Director of Music appointed

Ian Sadler, a Fellow of Trinity College England in Organ performance, has been appointed Director of Music for St. John's Ancaster. Sadler has served in similar positions in numerous churches in England and Canada. His recent appearances as a recitalist have included cathedrals and churches in the United States as well as four other countries. Since 1989 he has been the artistic director of the Stratford Concert Choir and artistic director of the Cathedral Singers of Ontario since 1999.

The 25 member St. John's choir regularly sings a repertoire that extends from traditional plainsong to contemporary Canadian, British and American composers of sacred music. They particularly enjoy singing unaccompanied 16th and 17th century motets.

Bill Murphy, the former Director of Music, retired after 11 years at the parish.

Ian Sadler at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, England

Photo: Submitted



Young people ... get ready to ...

SOAR and ROAR

SOAR means we are asking you to fly to new heights. ROAR is expressing your creative talents.

You can ...

- WRITE an article (500 words or less); a song (with or without music)
- COMPOSE a poem; a music score
- DRAW a picture; a cartoon
- CREATE an artifact e.g. pottery, sculpture, fabric piece
- MAKE a video

BE CREATIVE develop your own unique ROAR!

The only requirement: the piece must reflect a connection between your faith and your life.

WHEN: Submissions will be received between Jan 31 and March 31, 2013.

Prizes will be awarded by a jury of youth and adults in two age categories: 13 - 17 and 18 - 25, based on your age on March 31, 2013. Your entry may appear in the *Niagara Anglican* or on the diocesan website or displayed at the 2013 Youth Synod and the 2013 Diocesan Synod.

Want more information or would like to discuss your idea, contact Christyn Perkons at christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca or Hollis Hiscock at editor@niagara.anglican.ca

Submit your project to SOAR and ROAR, The Editor, Niagara Anglican, 252 James Street North, Hamilton, ON, L8R 2L3 or editor@niagara.anglican.ca Please include your name, birth date, contact information and a brief description of your piece that includes the connection between your faith and your life as illustrated by the work.

Pennies from Heaven for PWRDF



In 2012 when the Canadian government announced that it was taking the penny out of circulation by December 31, PWRDF's "Pennies from Heaven" initiative was launched.

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) is collecting pennies to make a difference in the lives of children and communities around the world.

Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal has collected more than 60,000 pennies for PWRDF's school feeding program in Haiti, <http://pwrdf.org/2012/pennies-for-haiti/>, one example of the creative ways that people are using to reach out in partnership.

How far can a penny be

stretched? It only takes one to start filling up a PWRDF savings bank and before you know it, you are supporting PWRDF partners around the world.

Once the pennies have been collected at home or church gatherings, take them to your parish and ask them to send a cheque to PWRDF at 80 Hayden Street, Toronto ON M4Y 3G2 for the amount you have collected. Have them note 'Pennies from Heaven' on the cheque.

Order PWRDF can wrappers by calling 1-866-308-7973, or chills@pwrdf.org.

Live choral excellence! Add your voice to the John Laing Singers.



The John Laing Singers is a chamber choir known for choral excellence and intriguing programming. Based in the Hamilton-Burlington-Oakville area, we sing a mix of engaging and innovative choral repertoire that spans the centuries, under the dynamic leadership of Artistic Director Roger Bergs.

We are inviting new voices to join us for our 2012-2013 concert season. For audition information – and to see, hear and learn more about us – please visit www.johnlaingsingers.com.

Anglican Communion Alliance

Meets 2nd Thursday of every month

King's Christian College
Burnhamthorpe and
Neyagawa Roads
Oakville, Ontario 7:30 pm

*In Essentials, Unity; In Non-Essentials, Liberty;
In All Things, Charity*

EVERYONE WELCOME

HOLLIStorial

What the census is saying to the churches

I spent several hours exploring the Statistics Canada Website (www.statcan.gc.ca) following the recent release of findings from the 13,320,615 private households (a person or a group of persons who occupy the same dwelling) included in the 2011 Canadian census.

Mainly, I wanted to discern what the Census was saying to the church, and how the church can respond to the new realities of Canadian society. The people behind the figures are more important than the census itself, and in order for the church to serve all God's people we must know what they are like.

Here are some impressions I detected about the changing face of Canadian families over the past 40 years ...

- married couples have declined from 91.6% to 67.0%;
- common law couples quadrupled;
- lone parent families doubled;
- more one-person households than couple households with children;

- multiple family households edged up slightly;
- more couples without children than with children;
- families are smaller;
- same sex couples (married and common law) number 64,575;
- higher proportion of seniors (65-85 years) live as couples; and
- the number of seniors residing in special care facilities increases with age.

In an accompanying article on the StatsCan website, *Fifty years of families in Canada: 1961 to 2011*, the writers explain that, "during the 50-year period from 1961 to 2011 which corresponded with the censuses of population, considerable social and economic changes occurred in Canada that influenced evolving family dynamics."

They noted that "the early 1960s was near the end of the baby-boom period (1946 to 1965), when many people married at a fairly young age and had relatively large families. By

the end of the 1960s, events such as the legalization of the birth control pill, the introduction of 'no fault' divorce, as well as the growing participation of women in higher education and in the paid labour force may have contributed to delayed family formation, smaller family size and an increased diversity of family structures."

What is true for the wider Canadian family is probably also true for the church and other institutions in our country. This brings me back to my earlier questions about the church responding to the new realities in Canadian life.

For the church, in particular the Anglican Church of Canada, how does the new Canadian family affect and influence worship patterns, services to people and outreach to individuals? What is the Church's mission and purpose in light of these new realities?

Bishop Dennis Drainville of Quebec Diocese posed one answer in his October 2012

letter, "A church on a mission", published in their diocesan paper, *Gazette*. He listed five realities facing his diocese: declining numbers, inactive church communities, severely limited Christian education, few young people engaged in Church life and most people viewing the church as irrelevant. Perhaps his apt description resonates with or mirrors other dioceses or parishes around the globe.

The Bishop suggested that the first major step is to "acknowledge these realities" and "admit that we are failing in carrying out God's mission to call people to repentance and to faith in Jesus Christ."

In expressing his personal belief, he said that "we are meant to live in communities that are characterized by inclusive, compassionate, supportive relationships based on faith, hope and love. These communities are to be marked by energy, enthusiasm and a passionate searching for the way to serve Jesus Christ beyond ourselves and in the

larger society."

Centuries ago, Jesus Christ (Luke 10:1-3) appointed 72 workers and sent them in pairs to various towns and cities as advanced teams to prepare for his arrival, bringing a message from God. As words of encouragement, he reminded them that there are many people ready to be harvested, but few workers to get the job done. He asked them to pray for more workers. Then he warned them, "Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves."

If the census is describing the fields ready for harvest, and Bishop Drainville is describing the task to be carried out by the Church workers today, then our response to the 2011 census is to get on with it.

Praying for more workers may be a good idea too.

Hollis Hiscock can be reached at editor@niagara.anglican.ca

Something for everyone at Earth Festival

JOHN DENNIS

On Saturday September 30th, St. James the Apostle Church in Guelph partnered with a number of social justice and environmental groups and sponsored the Earth Festival of St. Francis. The day included a Sunrise Service, the Blessing of Animals and ended with Vespers. An afternoon Medieval Fair featured presentations on a wide variety of topics and a focus on children's activities. Interim Pastor Barbara Sykes said the day's purpose was "for the church to connect with the greater community in a proactive way."

Habitat for Humanity - Guelph Wellington County Dufferin received the St. Francis Award at the Blessing of the Animals Service. This award, given annually by St. James', acknowledges local environmental and social justice groups working in the community. The parish has partnered with Habitat for Humanity on a number of builds in Guelph and will work again with them on the upcoming Faith Build in 2013.

Executive Director Diane Nelson said, "She was pleased to accept the award and was thankful to St. James' for being such a strong and consistent supporter of Habitat for Humanity."

Saint James and Transitions Guelph, a local environmental advocacy group, jointly organized the Medieval Fair. Visitors and presenters were encouraged to dress as their favourite medieval character. Speakers included the City of Guelph talking about backyard composting, Wild Birds Unlimited covering how to attract different song birds to your backyard and the Council of Canadians speaking on the Universal Declaration of Rights of Nature. Organizing committee member John Dennis commented, "The intent of the speakers was to reflect the preaching of St. Francis and his advocacy for the poor and the environment."

The fair also filled the church hall with vendors selling environmental products as well as local advocacy groups such as Amnesty International Guelph, Guelph Community Orchard

Project and St. James' own Living on Less program. Local artisan and parishioner Mark Evans displayed his beautiful pieces made from recycled computer parts, and Spoil the Dog Bakery cooked organic animal treats for any four-legged visitors.

The children's activities took place in a large tent set up on the church parking lot. A member of Transitions Guelph brought the spirit of St. Francis to life by dressing in costume and having a parrot sit on his shoulder for the entire fair. Other activities included face painting, colouring houses for Bracelets of Hope, building bird houses with Habitat for Humanity and learning about the role of bees and insects from Pollination Guelph. The tent had a large stage where jugglers, a puppet show by Heads and Tales, and a presentation by Justin Moses on Medieval Knights entertained the children. Sally Ludwig of Transitions Guelph said she thought that it was a unique way to entertain and educate children about important environmental issues.



Parishioner Eileen LaBerge summed up the day's success: "Our visitors became much more aware of the beliefs and values of St. Francis and the role of the church in promoting both social justice and environmental issues."

Children learned to make bird houses
 Photo: John Dennis
John Dennis is Church Warden of St James the Apostle Church Guelph. EMAIL: jkdennis@hotmail.ca

Advent Reflections: in light of our hope and vision

SUITABLE FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS

Editor's note: This condensed version was prepared for the Niagara Anglican. We thank the VISION VALUES group for preparing a much fuller and detailed Advent Reflections devotion which is available on the diocesan website niagara.anglican.ca, from parishes or from Canon Margaret Murray at megmurray50@gmail.com.

Prayers from the BAS. Copyright © 2004 by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. All rights reserved. Reproduced under license from ABC Publishing, Anglican Book Centre, a ministry of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, from Anglican Liturgical Licensing. Further copying is prohibited.



Introduction:

Our Diocesan Vision is borne out of our deepest hopes... that through our mission and ministry, we might passionately follow Christ and faithfully reflect Christ's light and love—within our world—in our own time.

Think of these Advent Reflections as permission to turn aside for awhile from the bustling busy-ness of this season... choosing to come together in conversation with one another or as individuals... to ponder quietly the deepest hopes reflected in our shared Diocesan Vision.

There is a time for goal setting, a time for indicators, a time for action plans. This is not that time!

May your Advent season be enlightened through our Vision; and may our Vision be enlightened through your Advent experience and conversation.

Each devotion follows this pattern:

- 1) Opening prayer
- 2) Hearing the Word: Read the passages three times.
- 3) Pondering in our hearts: After the readings, use silence or quiet music to let the Word speak in your heart. Insights can be recorded in journals.
- 4) Sharing insights: If in a group, share your thoughts; if alone, reflect further or journal.
- 5) En-visioning: These questions may help you to reflect on Advent themes in light of the Vision or to reflect on Vision themes in the light of Advent.
- 6) Signs and stories: Recall stories which bear witness to our hopes and values, and reflect on Christ's light and love in our own time and place.
- 7) Closing Prayer

WEEK ONE: Expectation

Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

Opening Prayer: God of timeless grace, you fill us with joyful expectation. Make us ready for the message that prepares the way, that with uprightness of heart and holy joy we may eagerly await the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Hearing the Word: Read Luke 21:25-28 and Psalm 25:1-9

Pondering in our hearts and Sharing insights: See instructions above.

En-visioning:

- Staying awake and alert is a mark of discipleship for followers of Christ, a spiritual discipline well-suited to the Advent season. It reminds us to pay special attention to the movement of God's Spirit in our world and the presence of God's Realm here on earth.
- What evidence alerts us to the hope expressed in Advent that God comes to us in the life of Jesus?
- What are some signs that the mission of Christ is alive?
- In Advent, our worship can be a living experience in which we mirror God's movement, choosing to come into our midst and into our lives. How can worship reflect our faith that God always reaches out to us in our everyday lives?

Signs and Stories: See instructions above.

Closing Prayer:

Give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. God of love and power, your word stirs within us the expectation of the coming of your Son. Sustain us with your promises. God, for whom we wait, you feed us with the bread of eternal life. *Amen.* (B.A.S.)

WEEK TWO: Preparing a way

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. All flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Opening Prayer: Use prayer from Week One.

Hearing the Word: Read Luke 3:2-3 and Isaiah 40:3-5

Pondering in our hearts: See instructions above.

Sharing insights: See instructions above.

En-visioning:

- This week's passages invite us to en-vision our world as God sees it.
 - How can we live out our Diocesan Vision so that we are preparing the way so that people can behold God's coming among us?
 - Can we be visionary, removing the hurdles and levelling the 'potholes' so that our congregations and ministries are more accessible and inviting for those who are seeking life and meaning?
 - How can we be innovative as we learn to reach out to people beyond our doors – meeting people where they are in their daily lives of joys and sorrow?
- During Advent, we prepare for Christmas in a myriad of ways in our parishes and our homes. List the many ways you prepare for Christmas; then, list the ways you prepare for Christ.

Signs and Stories: See instructions above.

Closing prayer:

Turn our hearts towards you. Prepare for the dwelling of the Holy One in our midst. Prepare in our hearts a home. *Amen.* (B.A.S.)

WEEK THREE: Gift and Call from God: REJOICE

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted.

Opening Prayer: Use prayer from Week One.

Hearing the Word: Read Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Philippians 4:4-7.

Pondering in our hearts and Sharing insights: See instructions above.

En-visioning:

- Advent is a time for spiritual renewal and yet there is so little time for prayer.
 - How can we discipline ourselves to listen for God's voice during Advent?
 - Does God's call come to us in Sunday worship? In scripture? In personal prayer?
- Familiar words... "the peace of God which passes all understanding;"
 - Praying for peace in heart and mind can help us move beyond our anxiety.
 - Is it possible that the experience of deep peace in heart and mind might actually enable our passion? Share your experiences.
- This week we pray "remove those things which hinder our love of God."
- We live in a culture caught with seasonal Christmas quests – preparing to buy, make and add new things. Can we quiet ourselves to see what things we need to let go of?
- Our Vision's call to generosity and abundance must mean more than seeing mountains of gifts under a Christmas tree! How can we choose to live with integrity?

Signs and Stories: See instructions above.

Closing Prayer:

Remove those things which hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder. Fill us with unending joy and prepare us for the birth of our Saviour. *Amen.* (B.A.S.)

WEEK FOUR: Joy and Hope

Mary: I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to God's word.
Elizabeth: The child in my womb leaped for joy!

Opening Prayer: Use prayer from Week One.

Hearing the Word: Read Luke 1:28, 35, 38-55.

Pondering in our hearts: See instructions above.

Sharing insights: See instructions above.

En-visioning:

- Mary's song of joy is not only for her own blessing, but also for the hope, which her Son will bring to her people. With gratitude for our blessings, how can we give hope and comfort to others who are hungry, homeless and without hope?
- The embrace between Mary and Elizabeth expresses their expectation and joy not just for their own family but for God's people. In our expectation of joy for family and friends in this season, how can we widen our embrace – bringing joy to those who are alone or discouraged?
- Mary responded to God's call for leadership: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord." She willingly accepted the role of bringing to birth the one who will bring justice and hope. Mary's song expresses a prophetic call to justice for her people who have suffered oppression and poverty. How can we advocate for justice in these times of economic uncertainty, civil unrest, brutality and oppression in our world?

Signs and Stories: See instructions above.

Closing Prayer:

Fill us with your grace that, in all things, we may embrace your will and rejoice in your salvation. *Amen.* (B.A.S.)