



St. Andrew's Newsletter

484 Water Street, Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 1M5

(905) 895-5512 www.standrewsnewmarket.org



Neal's Natter

Dear friends,

"Imagine a Christmas service where the worshippers come in their holiday finery to find a sanctuary empty of all the glittering decorations, silent of holiday carols. What if this year you cancelled the church decoration committee and the worship committee and called off the extra choir rehearsals and the church school pageant?"

What if on Christmas Eve people came and sat in the dim pews, and someone stood up and said, "Something happened here while we were all out at the malls, while we were baking cookies and fretting about whether we bought our brother-in-law the right gift: "Christ was born. God is here."¹

These words of Loretta Ross-Gotta challenge us as Christians not to rush into Christmas too quickly in case we miss the reason for it all. That's what this season of Advent is all about. The word Advent comes from a Latin word meaning "coming" or "arrival" and it is a time of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, and of longing that is observed for the four weeks before Christmas Day. It symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power (Mark 13:24-37).

As Christians we don't need to be reminded that "Jesus is the reason for the season" but we do need to be reminded to take time to reflect on what it means to declare that, "The Word became a human being and full of grace and truth, lived among us" (John 1:18). May you take time to reflect and to worship this Advent season.

Laura and I, and all the staff at St. Andrew's, wish you a very blessed Christmas with every good wish for the New Year.

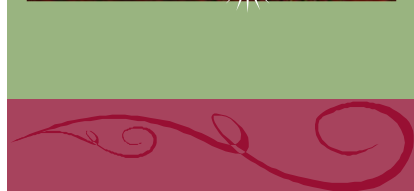
Neal



¹ Loretta Ross-Gotta. Watch for the Light. December 6. Orbis Books, 2008



December 2011



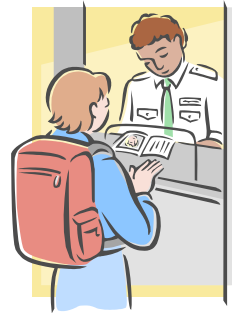
A Journey to Bethlehem

This is the Season of Advent, the time we get ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas, the time we are all on the way to Bethlehem. But who will show us the way?



Through the Season of Advent, the students and leaders in the Children and Worship programme are reminded that they are on a journey to Bethlehem. Each week they wonder who will show them the way. They meet prophets, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds as they travel and hear the stories of faith. It is a journey filled with wondering and mystery.

This year, the students and leaders in Children and Worship, along with the other Church School classes, began their Advent journey by actually travelling to Bethlehem to be counted in the Census. (The city was conveniently relocated in the Church Hall for the morning.) Everyone gathered at the Travel Agency and had their passports checked by the Canada Customs Agent. Then the journey began.



At the city gates, names were added to the Census sheets and travellers had the opportunity to explore Bethlehem. There was an Artisan's stall which offered



opportunities to work with clay, to weave, and to decorate stars. Flat bread with cinnamon was sampled at the Bakery. There was a Spice Merchant and cards could be sent at the Desert Express. The Cloth Merchant offered the latest 1st century fashions to try on for size. The journey ended, for the moment, with a few quiet moments in the stable, with a story about two other people who went to be counted in Bethlehem.

This is the Season of Advent, the time we get ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas, the time we are all on the way to Bethlehem. Why not ask some of the young people about their journey to Bethlehem, as we travel there again together.

Laura





Celebrating the Journey at Home

Throughout the Season of Advent you could use a Nativity Scene to explore and reflect on the journey to Bethlehem. Place the stable somewhere in the centre of your home, perhaps close to where the Christmas tree will be placed. The empty manger, animals and an Inn Keeper can be placed near the stable. The shepherds and sheep are on a “hillside” in another room, or another place in the room. Mary and Joseph are in “Nazareth”. The three kings are in the easternmost place of the home. Baby Jesus is hidden.

Over the next few weeks the figures move. Mary and Joseph begin their journey to Bethlehem. The figures can move a little each day, or each week. On Christmas Eve, Jesus and the angels appear while the shepherds rush from the hillside to Bethlehem. On Christmas Day the shepherds may stay by the manger or return to the hillside. Then the three kings begin their journey from the east, following the star. A star and the kings may move a little each day until they arrive on Epiphany (January 6), bearing gifts for the child.

The movement of the figures creates an opportunity to immerse yourself in the Christmas story making you a participant in the journey. As the figures and you travel to Bethlehem, take some time to wonder about the people who made the journey for the first time. Take some time to wonder about the mystery of the story. Take some time to wonder what the birth of Jesus meant then and what it means to us today.



Christmas at St. Andrew's



Dec. 11 7:00pm

Christmas Candlelight Service presented by the Choir of St. Andrew's. No tickets required. Free will offering.

Dec. 18 10:00am (one service)

Sunday School Christmas Pageant during worship.

Dec. 21 7:00pm

Longest Night Service. For those who find Christmas difficult.

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm For families with young children

7:00pm Family Christmas Service

9:00pm Lessons, Carols and Communion

Dec. 25 Christmas Day Service

10:00am (one service) “The Story and Music of Christmas”



Fearless Friends

As the year closes we recall all the time the Fearless Friends has spent together. Time spent sharing and learning, teaching one another about new and exciting things, all to be part of a group that respects one another and enjoys each other's company. And yes, sometimes it does take shaving cream and pickle juice. Through many ups and downs the group has grown and become strong. I am proud to be part of this group.



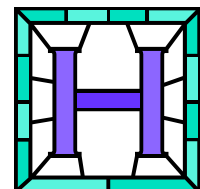
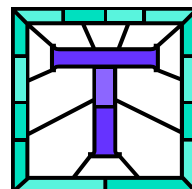
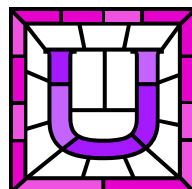
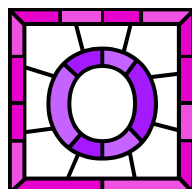
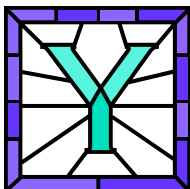
Now we look to the future and we see shining stars and twinkling lights. We are all thankful for the generosity the congregation has shown towards our fundraising efforts, our personal growth, and our support for one another. Through Acts of Random Kindness we delivered treats to many, at the Santa Claus Parade we raised funds for our Church Library and during our most recent Lock In we rallied together to welcome new members and rekindle strong friendships. Our hearts shine and eyes twinkle, just like the Nativity lights at Fairy Lake.

With the New Year approaching we will be together for games nights, retreats and personal spiritual growth. Isn't it funny how that pickle juice keeps coming up though? When you see our Fearless Friends in the Sanctuary or in the Fellowship Hall please say "hi". We are a close group because we watch how close the congregation is. Our friends and family all support us and we are thankful for everything you do.

Merry Christmas

Lisa Schmauder

Jr/Sr Youth Coordinator





Youth 4 Youth

Youth4Youth is a strong group of youth who are very busy with friends, in school, work and with church. What makes them special is their dedication. For many of them it is incredible to think about how they will get everything done in a week. For many they struggle. But, every couple of weeks they gather together for bagels and hot chocolate in the Youth Room downstairs and discuss topics from friends to computers, the Holocaust to Advent, cappuccino to cream cheese, all the while trying to take their mind off their busy lives. It is hard to do, but this group is strong and they know it is important to decompress together.

REGISTER ONLINE AT:
WWW.SYNERGYEVENT.CA



"SPARK"
SYNERGY REGIONAL YOUTH EVENT
FEBRUARY 24-26, 2012 • CRIEFF HILLS
AN EVENT FOR YOUTH 14 -19 \$70
A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE SYNODS OF CNOB & SWO,
CRIEFF HILLS COMMUNITY & CANADIAN MINISTRIES/THE VINE
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

As we move through the next 6 months we are gearing up for Canada Youth 2012, a Youth Conference held every 3 years at Brock University. This event is designed to support youth ages 15 to 25 in their faith journey. We currently have fundraising going on to help with the cost of the trip and for the 4 who are hoping to go you will see them out and about more after Christmas.

While the New Year marches in we will also have some other retreat opportunities for the group. Whether it is in the winter snow or in the warm halls of Crieff Conference Centre there is a chance to get away and have some fun.

If you are interested or want more information on any of the retreats for Canada Youth 2012, please contact Lisa at any time.

Best of luck to our Youth4Youth in the next month with exams.



Special Breakfast Invitation

Our Men's Fellowship is hosting a very special continental breakfast on Saturday January 14th at 8.30am. Tickets are \$10.00 each and are available from Alan Kennedy (Tel: 905-898-2438). Only 100 tickets are available and it is recommended you purchase yours immediately. This breakfast is open to everyone in the congregation and the community (male and female).

Our special speaker will be hockey legend Ron Ellis, a member of the last Stanley Cup winning Maple Leafs and a member of the 1972 Canada Cup Team. Ron is presently director of Public Affairs at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. Ron has waged a battle with clinical depression since 1986 and would later go public with his story by writing a book with Kevin Shea titled *Over The Boards: The Ron Ellis Story*, published in 2002. Ron is a member of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Nottawa, where our minister Rev. Dr. Neal Mathers served before coming to St. Andrew's. The proceeds of the breakfast will go to the Ron Ellis Foundation.



Enduring Gifts Update



The Enduring Gifts Ministry Team is excited to be in a position to fund new seed projects in 2012 - thanks to the generous donations of a number of congregants (both living and passed), and our Enduring Gifts Policy which allows for up to 5% spend levels each year of Total Gifts received. We will be asking groups and ministry teams within St. Andrew's to think about projects that they may like to request funding for in 2012. The Application process will open in January, and run until March 15th, 2012.

More information will be communicated in January in the Sunday bulletins. Thank you for keeping the Enduring Gifts Ministry in your prayers.

Trevor Van Nest, Chair, Enduring Gifts Ministry



Study Leave



Neal will be on his annual study leave from January 25th to February 14th. He will be attending the Symposium of Christian Worship at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan along with 1400 ministers, church musicians and worship leaders from over 40 countries. The theme of the 2012 Worship Symposium is *“The Psalms: When Life is Prayer”*.

Following the Symposium he will be reading, writing and reflecting on worship renewal and visiting a number of congregations who are involved in worship renewal. The Session of St. Andrew’s and the Presbytery of Oak Ridges has approved this study leave.

2012 Important Dates in February

Sunday February 19th

Annual Meeting, following worship. One service at 10.00am.

Leaders please note: Deadline for annual reports is January 15th, 2012.

Wednesday February 22nd

Our Wednesday evening mid -week Lenten services begin at 7.30pm.

Sunday February 26th

Anniversary Sunday. Guest speaker, Kenneth Kim, Director of Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Who are you following?

The following was posted by a friend on Twitter recently. It’s worth reposting here!

*“God has no cell phone, but I talk to him.
He has no Facebook, but he is still my friend.
He does not have Twitter, but I still follow him.”*

Just proves God is bigger than our technology!





St. Andrew's Calendar



SEASON	DATE	TIME	EVENT
	Sat Dec 3	8:30am	Men's Breakfast
Advent 2	Sun Dec 4	9:00 & 11:00am	Mitten Tree Sunday
	Fri Dec 9	4:00-7:30pm	Children's Christmas Celebration
Advent 3	Sun Dec 11	9:00 & 11:00am	Sunday Worship
	Sun Dec 11	7:00pm	St. Andrew's Choir's Christmas Candlelight Service
	Sat Dec 17		Pageant Rehearsal Angel Choir 9-12:00, Full 10-12:00pm
Advent 4	Sun Dec 18	10:00am	One Worship Service , 4th Sunday of Advent, The Church School Christmas Story
	Wed Dec 21	7:00pm	"Longest Night" Service -for those who find Christmas difficult
Christmas Eve	Sat Dec 24	5:00pm	"Road to Bethlehem" for families with young children
		7:00pm	Family Christmas Service
		9:00pm	Lessons, Carols & Communion
Christmas Day	Sun Dec 25	10:00am	One Worship Service , <i>Merry Christmas! "The Story and Music of Christmas"</i>
	Fri Dec 30	9:00-12:00pm	Offering Donations Deadline to qualify for 2011 Tax Receipts
Christmas 1	Sun Jan 1	10:00am	One Worship Service , <i>Happy New Year! 2012</i>
Epiphany	Sun Jan 8	9:00 & 11:00am	2 Services Resume, Baptism of the Lord Sunday
	Sat Jan 14	8:30am	Men's Fellowship Guest Speaker Ron Ellis
	Fri Jan 13	7:30 - 8:30pm	Fearless Friends Resumes
Epiphany 2	Sun Jan 15		Deadline for the Annual Report
Epiphany 3	Sun Jan 22	9:00 & 11:00am	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan 22-29
Epiphany 4	Sun Jan 29	9:00 & 11:00am	Sunday Worship
	Fri/Sat Feb 3&4		Parent & Child Spirituality Retreat
Epiphany 5	Sun Feb 5	9:00 & 11:00am	PWD&D Sunday
Epiphany 6	Sun Feb 19	10:00am	One Worship Service , 178th Annual Meeting Transfiguration Sunday
	Mon Feb 20		Family Day Holiday
	Wed Feb 22	7:30pm	Ash Wednesday, Mid-week Lenten Services Begin
Lent 1	Sun Feb 26	9:00 & 11:00am	178th Anniversary Sunday
	Wed Feb 29	7:30pm	Mid-week Lenten Service
	Fri Mar 2		World Day of Prayer
Lent 2	Sun Mar 4	9:00 & 11:00am	Communion 2
	Wed Mar 7	7:30pm	Mid-week Lenten Service
Lent 3	Sun Mar 11	9:00 & 11:00am	3rd Sunday in Lent