



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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December 2016



Neal's Natter

It is the time of year when Facebook and Twitter light up with people making their annual appeals to "*Put Christ back into Christmas.*" It's a great slogan. Some will even pin buttons with the same theme onto their coats. Perhaps it is simply the way they resist political correctness and the pressure to wish everyone "*Happy Holidays*". Or it may be a reaction against the incessant commercialism that creeps into our lives with Christmas (oops I mean "happy holiday") merchandise being displayed right after Canadian Thanksgiving. Whatever the reason, I do not doubt that those who want to keep Christ in Christmas are sincere about that. I do wonder sometimes whether they are as serious about keeping Jesus in their lives on the other days of the year, but that's just the sceptic in me.

But back to keeping Christ in Christmas. The assumption clearly is that Christ has been taken out of Christmas. But taken out by whom? Our politicians who pursue political correctness like

the zealots of old? The merchants who will do anything to turn a profit? School boards who want to be inclusive of everyone? Or the general populace who have, by and large, abandoned the Christian faith in any meaningful way? Who took Christ out of Christmas and where did they put Him? On the shelf with the elf? Gift wrapped under the tree? Or is it "out of sight, out of mind"?

But let's cut to the chase. The problem I have with "*Put Christ back into Christmas*" is that he has never left. He has never left Christmas, or any other day of the year. He can't be driven away by the winds of political correctness. He can be ignored, and forgotten about, but he is always and forever Emmanuel (which means "God WITH us"). He has promised, "I am WITH you always." Christians believe this. We have no need to put Christ back in Christmas for he is ever present with us, reigning in our hearts. Have a wonderful Advent and Christmas season.



Laura's Letter

"Mitten Tree Sunday", as it has come to be known at St. Andrew's, began many years ago now, with mittens and hats and scarves being placed neatly on the Christmas tree in the Sanctuary. These "decorations" were taken down and given to people in our community and at an inner city mission to help keep them warm through the long cold winter days and nights.

Now, the tree decorating has taken on a joyfully exuberance with the children, young people and even a few adults, throwing the gifts of mittens high onto the tree. Even the choir seems to get decorated.

"Mitten Tree Sunday" has been celebrated on the second Sunday in Advent long enough that it is waited for by children and planned for by adults knitting or purchasing the items to share. It has become a tradition.

Traditions are meant to share beliefs from one generation to another. It may not seem it on the surface, but the Mitten Tree does relate our beliefs when you reflect on what is truly happening in the midst of the chaos and fun.

It's a tradition that speaks of who we are as a congregation, as a community of faith. We generously and joyfully offer gifts. We seek to reach out, caring for people in need because we have been called by Jesus to love our neighbour.

Advent is a season filled with traditions; ones that we celebrate together at Church and ones that are shared at home with family and/or friends. What are your traditions?

Each year, through the season of Advent, Tori Smit and her daughter read through a treasured Christmas book filled with allegory and the Christmas Story.

In "Today's Parent" magazine, one family shared about their annual family dinner and caroling with candles. Another family wrote about their "Jerusalem dinner". Each year, they make simple foods that might have been eaten in Biblical times -fried salmon in olive oil, hummus, cheese, crackers, grapes etc. They eat by candle-light and read the nativity story from the Bible.

At my house, we read the Christmas story by the fire and mark the journey through the season with an advent calendar which has a star that is moved towards the Holy Family. There are Nativity sets (one, or two, or three) set out, as well.

What traditions do you hold dear?

Do you have traditions that happen simply, quietly? Do you have traditions that are "louder" and "bigger"? How are they invested with meaning and share beliefs that you hold dear? How and when did they begin? Are there new traditions that you would like to begin? Advent is certainly a wonderful time to reflect on our traditions; what we do and why we do it.

Whatever your special traditions through the season, I hope that they enrich your journey to Bethlehem!

Merry

Christmas

Ushering Teams

We warmly welcome everyone to worship on Sunday mornings. Our 6 Ushering Teams are responsible for this. Teams serve on a six week rotation. We will be hosting a one hour training session for our ushers on Jan. 15th following worship (lunch will be provided). If you are interested in being involved in this ministry please speak to Cory Philip or the church office.

A Big Gift from Presbytery

We are delighted to announce that The Presbytery of Oak Ridges has given St. Andrew's \$6,000 towards the costs of our Youth in Mission trip to Ghana in Africa May 2017.

Six of our young people are participating, along with the Rev. Laura Duggan whose costs are being paid by The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women

The Fall of 2016 was the 50th Anniversary of the ordination of the first woman to ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In this anniversary year we are thankful to God for the ministry of the Rev. Laura Duggan at St. Andrew's!



Hymn Festival

Members of our choir participated in the second "Let My People Sing" Hymn Festival on Sunday October 23rd, directed by our Music Director Edward Luka. This ecumenical choir of 45 voices represented 10 local choirs. An afternoon presentation was held at Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church in Aurora with around 200 in attendance, and at St. Andrew's for an evening presentation with around 150 present. Our thanks to Edward and the choir for all their hard work.

Synod Mission Consultant Visits



Our Consultant Rev. Dr. John-Peter Smit recently met with our Session and 2016 NCD participants to analyze our survey results.

This was an encouraging time for all of us as the survey revealed many strong characteristics as well as a few things on which we still need to work.

Basement & Office Renovations

In May we began the process of renovating the basement area under the old sanctuary. This has included creating 2 meeting rooms with the removal and rebuilding of some walls, opening up the kitchen area, renovating two bathrooms, and creating much needed room for storage. The plan also includes new flooring for the meeting rooms, a small fridge and microwave. The removal of the solid door leading into this space also opens up the area. Thanks to Board Chair Matt Buist for his work coordinating this project, and to Matt, Dave Hoath and Fraser Heron for their hours of painting. The renovated area will be "on line" early in the New Year.

Our Church Office was recently renovated through new paint and flooring. People have commented on the new look. Thanks to Barry & Gord and our Youth for their help with the move!



Visioning Day

The Vision Committee of Session is planning a "Visioning Day Retreat" on Saturday January 14th from 9am to noon. This day will include members of Session, Board of Managers, our Church School Teachers and those who took part in our 2016 Natural Church Development Survey. The second part of the process will include everyone in the congregation.

Our Christmas Gift to You!

Come join the Sunday School on December 11 as they tell the Christmas Story. Why do we exchange gifts at Christmas? We will find out what Grandpa says is the reason. The children will use poetry and music to tell the story of Mary, Joseph & the baby Jesus. Join us on our journey to Bethlehem. Our journey begins at 10am. We look forward to seeing everyone there.



Church Facility Manager

Our church facility is a very busy place, even in the summer. Our special thanks to Bob Virtue our volunteer Facilities Manager, and one of our elders, for all the rental booking and scheduling he does. Those leaders and members who wish to book our facility are reminded that all dates need to be booked in with Bob. Thanks!

2017 Church Budget

The members of the Board of Managers are responsible for the management of the property and finances of St. Andrew's. The Board is in the final stages of preparing the 2017 budget to present to the Annual Meeting on March 5th. Once again, the budget will be in Narrative form to enable a better understanding of its different elements.

Adult/Child Spirituality Retreat

**For adults
(parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles)
of all ages
and children ages 5-12**

**January 20 & 21
At Jackson's Point Retreat Centre**

Cost: \$60 for adult and child

**This includes
overnight accommodation,
breakfast & lunch**

**Registration is limited
to 15 parent/child groups
Please register soon!**



St. Andrew's Creative Retreat

Scrapbooking & Card Making
for Everyone!

Friday, February 10: 6pm - 10pm

Saturday, February: 9am - 4pm

Save the Date & RSVP today!

Call the Church office at (905) 895-5512
or email info@standrewsnewmarket.org

**Benefiting the "Be the Change" Youth In
Mission Trip to Ghana**

St. Andrew's and the 2017 Worship Symposium

In January 2017, seven of our worship leaders (choir members, junior choir leader, musicians, IT team members, Wednesday EPIC worship leaders), along with Rev. Dr. Mathers, will be attending the 2017 "Calvin Symposium of Christian Worship" in Grand Rapids, MI. This international event draws together 1400-1600 worship leaders from 40 countries and from almost every province and state. This year our delegates are Dave and Lynn Hoath, Karen Shepherd, Debbie Mathers, Marsha Pilgrim, Margaret Shepherd & Ruth Bennett. The Presbytery of Oak Ridges has agreed to cover 1/3rd of the cost, with St. Andrew's covering 1/3rd as part of its Worship budget, and participants 1/3rd.

What Does Christmas Look Like At St. Andrew's?

- ☆ A Christmas tree set at the front of the sanctuary with mittens, scarves and hats hanging on it, soon to be distributed to several agencies to help keep people warm this winter. Mitten Tree Sunday this year is December 6th.
- ☆ Dozens and dozens of Poinsettias plants purchased from the Women's Fellowship and provided by Bradford Greenhouses to raise funds for mission purposes.
- ☆ Our Christmas Bazaar (held on November 14th), where the funds raised will support the many ministries of St. Andrew's.
- ☆ The annual tradition of our youth providing hot chocolate and hot dogs during the Newmarket Santa Claus Parade to engage the community & raise funds for youth ministry.
- ☆ Boxes filled with deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, lip balm, tissues, foot powder, combs and hairbrushes, socks and underwear to help the homeless through the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Evangel Hall Mission in Toronto.
- ☆ Our annual Children's Christmas Celebration with crafts, games, movies and pizza (and an opportunity for parents to go gift shopping or out for dinner).
- ☆ An ornament filled Christmas tree in the church foyer with an invitation to take an ornament and purchase the item on it (e.g. gift cards, toys, groceries) to fill our annual Christmas hampers to brighten the lives of those who need this support at Christmas.
- ☆ Shoeboxes lovingly packed with "treats" sent to our University & College students to remind them how much we care for them.
- ☆ Our Church School Children's Christmas Pageant (Sunday December 13th) where the children remind us of the real reason for the season.
- ☆ Our Senior Choir's Christmas service will be joyfully presented during the 10:00am worship service on Sunday December 18th.
- ☆ Welcoming the community to our three wonderful Christmas Eve services at 5:00pm, 7:00pm and 9:00pm.
- ☆ Our Boarding Home Ministry Team hosting a Christmas Party for the residents plus visits to Botsford House on Christmas Day.



Why do we do all this? Because we strive at St. Andrew's to be, as our Vision Statement says, *"a caring congregation seeking to share, show and speak about the love and joy of God."* Thanks to everyone who supports our mission as a congregation day by day & season by season.



What a Bazaar!

Over \$5000 raised for the Current Account! Over 50 members of the congregation working throughout the morning greeting, selling, and having fun! What a tradition that began many years ago under the faithful watch of our Women's Association. It may have happened on a Saturday morning in November, but there were countless hours spent by those who organized the day, those who collected and stored

articles, and those who made the many edible and non-edible goods that were sold. We continue to be blessed with so many willing volunteers who provided this wonderful outreach to the community. The Session & Board of St. Andrew's extends their heartfelt gratitude to all who made this event such a success!

**BE THE
CHANGE**

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS!**

**THANK YOU
FOR ALL YOUR
SUPPORT THIS
YEAR TO HELP
US GET TO
GHANA IN 2017!**



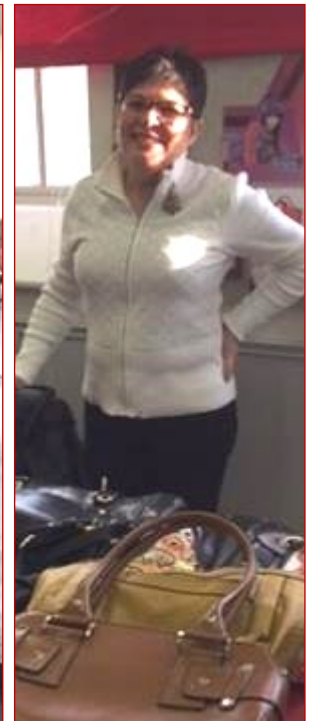
***"Let My People Sing"
Hymn Festival***



***Thank You for the
Student Care Packages***



St. Andrew's Bazaar



***Youth Leaf Clean up Day!
Amazing!***

From St. Andrew's Session

Merry
Christmas

~~Bill Hop~~

Karen Shepherd

Matt Quist

Ruth Bennett

Bob Vitek

Bill Hop

George Smith

Peter Layman

Glenday Finlay

Deane Hamilton

Sue Plink

Neil Young

Duggan



Bob van Dolen

~~Bill Hop~~

Dana Burk

Deane Hamilton

Caryn Clementson

John Hop



Join Us As
We Celebrate
The Coming of Jesus!

Everyone Welcome!

December 24: Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm Young Children & Families

7:00pm Family Christmas Candlelight Service

9:00pm Lessons, Carols & Communion

December 25: Merry Christmas

10:00am Christmas Day Service

St. Andrew's 2016/2017 Calendar

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Sun Nov 27	10:00am	1 st Sunday of Advent Celebration, Communion, Nativity Tour
Sun Dec 4	10:00am	Mitten Tree Sunday, 2 nd Sunday in Advent
Sat Dec 10	9, 10 & 11am	Pageant Rehearsal: 9am Choir, 10am Actors & Narrators, 11am Animals
Sun Dec 11	10:00am	Church School Christmas Pageant, 3 rd Sunday in Advent
Fri Dec 16	5:00pm-8:00pm	Children's Christmas Celebration, Ages 4+, Fun & Pizza
Sun Dec 18	10:00am	4 th Sunday in Advent
Sat Dec 24 Christmas Eve	5:00pm	Christmas Service for Families with Young Children
	7:00pm	Family Christmas Candlelight Service
	9:00pm	Lessons, Carols & Communion
Sun Dec 25	10:00am	Christmas Day Worship Service. <i>Merry Christmas from St. Andrew's!</i>
Sun Jan 1	10:00am	Epiphany Sunday Worship Service. <i>Happy New Year 2017!</i>
Sun Jan 8	10:00am	1 st Sunday after the Epiphany, Baptism of the Lord
Tues Jan 10	7:30pm	Joint Board/Session Budget Meeting
Sat Jan 14	9:00am -Noon	Visioning Day Retreat
Sun Jan 15	10:00am	2 nd Sunday after the Epiphany
Mon Jan 16		Annual Reports are due into the Office -Thanks!
Wed Jan 18	7:30pm	Wednesday Evening Bible Study Begins
Jan 20 & 21		Adult/Child Spirituality Retreat at Jackson's Point
Sun Jan 22	10:00am	3 rd Sunday after the Epiphany
Sun Jan 29	10:00am	4 th Sunday after the Epiphany
Sun Feb 5	10:00am	5 th Sunday after the Epiphany, PWS&D Sunday
Feb 10&11		Scrapbooking Event
Sun Feb 12	10:00am	6 th Sunday after the Epiphany
Sun Feb 19	10:00am	Heritage Sunday
Mon Feb 20		Family Day Holiday
Sun Feb 26	10:00am	Transfiguration Sunday, St. Andrew's 183 rd Church Anniversary
Wed March 1	7:15pm	Ash Wednesday Lenten Service
Sun March 5	10:00am	1 st Sunday in Lent, Communion, Annual General Meeting following Worship
Wed Mar 8	7:15pm	EPIC Lent Midweek Services Begin
Sun Mar 12	10:00am	2 nd Sunday in Lent, Daylight Savings Time Begins
Sun Mar 19	10:00am	3 rd Sunday in Lent
Sun Mar 26	10:00am	4 th Sunday in Lent
Sun Apr 2	10:00am	5 th Sunday in Lent
Sun Apr 9	10:00am	Palm Sunday
Thurs Apr 13	7:30pm	Maundy Thursday
Fri Apr 14	10:00am	Good Friday
Sun Apr 16	10:00am	Easter Sunday (Sunrise Service at 7am)
July 10-14	9:00am-Noon	Vacation Bible School "Hero Central" -Save The Date!