

Advent & Christmas Newsletter 2009

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Advent and Christmas are all about Joyful Hope

Dear parishioners,

As we prepare for the Seasons of Advent and Christmas, we are very much aware of the fragility of our health and how sudden illness can affect not only individuals, but entire communities. As I write this note, Nova Scotia is in the midst of an outbreak of the H1N1 Virus; several among us now have the flu. St. John's will continue to offer ministry, pastoral support and Sunday Worship for our parishioners as we work through these challenging times. Let us keep one another in prayer and continue to exercise good hygiene in our dealings with one another. Current information regarding H1N1 can be found on our parish website, www.stjohnslunenburg.org.

Advent is a Season of joyful expectation and preparation for Christmas. Throughout this newsletter, you will see numerous opportunities to gather for worship, music, concerts, pageants, events and activities for children, youth and families. This Advent, St. John's is experiencing the renewal of our Sunday School due to a growing number of children as well as increased involvement on the part of parents and parishioners. We also are seeing the beginnings of a Youth Ministry in the parish, among the teenagers who were recently confirmed, along with other youth and their friends in the community.

A few years ago, we worked on developing a Vision for Ministry in the parish. Among other things, we called our parish to a renewed focus on our parish families - the children, youth and young parents. It should give us all great hope and joy this Advent and Christmas that we are seeing these things blossoming before us. Let us continue to pray for these ministries and offer them our full support and encouragement.

At this time, I join with my wife, Holly, in extending to you and your family a blessed Advent and a joyful healthy Christmas. God bless you all!

Michael+



Music At St. John's

A note from Barbara

As we enter the Advent and Christmas Season I hope you will be enriched by the music we offer at St. John's. All our choirs have been actively involved in preparation for this special time in the church year.

Chris Norman will be our first guest at the *Music and Meditation Series* on Wednesday, December 2 at noon. He will be followed by Pamela Rogers on Dec. 9, the Ernst Family Singers on Dec. 16 and Judith Burdett on Dec. 23. The first concert of the *Symphony on the Shore Series* is a Maritime Pops concert featuring Halifax's MIR in 'A Soldier's Carol.' We look forward to this event on Saturday, November 28 at 7:30 pm and the performance will be followed by a reception in the church hall. This series is presented by the St. Cecilia Concert Society and tickets are available from Ruth in the church hall.

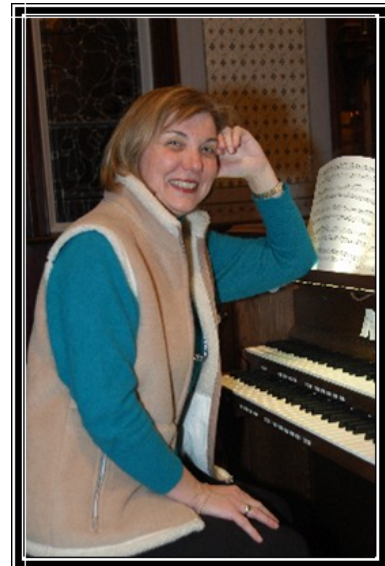
On Monday, December 7, our Chancel Choir will participate in the *RCCO Annual Carol Service* at All Saints Cathedral in Halifax. It's a great opportunity to meet other choristers and a wonderful experience to sing and be part of a larger group. We will welcome Paul Halley and the Chapel Choir of King's College for a *King's Christmas* on Friday, December 11 at 7:30 pm. The performance will be repeated at All Saints on December 13 and will be taped by CBC for broadcast on Christmas Day (Radio 1 and 2). Both concerts are presented through Musique Royale.

On December 20 I hope you will note two very special activities. The first is our *Advent Service of Lessons and Carols* at 10:30 am with the Chancel Choir. We continue in the afternoon at 2 pm with *Bowls of Cheer* - seasonal storytelling and Christmas music with the Blue Engine String Quartet and actress Shelley Thompson. This will be followed by a short carol sing. Complimentary tickets will be available for members of the congregation who wish to attend. Details will be announced in Sunday bulletins.

St. John's Ringers will participate in both Christmas Eve services. The Family Service with the Christmas Pageant at 4 pm will include a time for carol singing prior to the service. We anticipate having a brass quartet as guests during the evening service. Peter's chiming is special throughout the year and even more so at Christmas time.

I invite you also to mark January 24 on your calendars when St. John's Anglican will team up for a special concert with St. John's Lutheran from Mahone Bay. The concert will take place here at our church.


Best wishes to all of you, **Barbara**



Financial Support & Rector's Discretionary Fund

Your continued financial support and generosity makes the life and ministry of St. John's possible. Please use the enclosed Advent envelope. A donation to the Rector's Discretionary Fund offers emergency support to those in need. In addition, St. John's has several memorial funds that you might consider this Christmas.

Thank you.

Advent Services & Events	Christmas Schedule 2009
<p>Every Wednesday at 10:00am Holy Eucharist (BCP)</p>	<p>December 24th - Christmas Eve (Thursday) 4:00pm - Christmas Family Eucharist with Children's Pageant & St. John's Ringers <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> 10:00pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Sung Eucharist (BAS) with Choir, Brass Ensemble.</p>
<p>MUSICAL MEDITATIONS each Wednesday in Advent (December 2, 9, 16 & 23) Noontime Musical Meditations with Barbara Butler and guests</p>	<p>December 25th - Christmas Day (Friday) 10:00am - Holy Eucharist (BCP) - with music</p>
<p>Advent 1: November 29th 'Wait upon the Lord with Hope' 8:30am - Holy Eucharist (BCP) 10:30am - Family Service with Sunday School</p>	<p>December 27th - First Sunday after Christmas 8:30am - Holy Eucharist (BCP) <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> 11:am - COMBINED SERVICE AT ST. JOHN'S With our Lutheran brothers and sisters from Zion Lutheran Church. PLEASE NOTE THE TIME OF THIS SERVICE: 11:00AM.</p>
<p>Advent 2: December 6th 'Wait upon the Lord with Peace' 8:30am - Holy Eucharist (BCP) 10:30am - Holy Eucharist & Sunday School</p>	<p>Sunday School Christmas Pageant - 2009</p>
<p>A KING'S CHRISTMAS: December 11th 7:30pm in Church A special Christmas Concert with the Kings</p>	<p>"Live from Bethlehem" at the Christmas Eve Service 4:00pm Thursday December 24</p> 
<p>Advent 3: December 13th 'Wait upon the Lord with Joy' 8:30am - Holy Eucharist (BCP) 10:30am - Holy Eucharist (BAS) & Sunday School</p>	
<p>Advent 4: December 20th 'Wait upon the Lord with Love' 8:30am - Holy Eucharist (BCP) 10:30am - Advent Lessons and Carols</p>	
<p>BOWLS OF CHEER: December 20th at 2pm. Carol sing, Music and Story telling with Blue Engine String Quartet and actress, Shelley Thompson.</p>	

Eddi's Service AD 687

The House Of Christmas

**EDDI, priest of St. Wilfrid
In his chapel at Manhood End,
Ordered a midnight service
For such as cared to attend.**

**But the Saxons were keeping Christmas,
And the night was stormy as well.
Nobody came to service,
Though Eddi rang the bell.**

**'Wicked weather for walking,'
Said Eddi of Manhood End.
'But I must go on with the service
For such as care to attend.**

**The altar-lamps were lighted, –
An old marsh-donkey came,
Bold as a guest invited,
And stared at the guttering flame.**

**The storm beat on at the windows,
The water splashed on the floor,
And a wet, yoke-weary bullock
Pushed in through the open door.**

**'How do I know what is greatest,
How do I know what is least?
That is My Father's business,'
Said Eddi, Wilfrid's priest.**

**'But – three are gathered together –
Listen to me and attend.
I bring good news, my brethren!'
Said Eddi of Manhood End.**

**And he told the Ox of a Manger
And a Stall in Bethlehem,
And he spoke to the Ass of a Rider,
That rode to Jerusalem.**

**They steamed and dripped in the chancel,
They listened and never stirred,
While, just as though they were Bishops,
Eddi preached them The Word,**

**Till the gale blew off on the marshes
And the windows showed the day,
And the Ox and the Ass together
Wheeled and clattered away.**

**And when the Saxons mocked him,
Said Eddi of Manhood End,
'I dare not shut His chapel
On such as care to attend.'**

by Rudyard Kipling

The crèche is used to tell the story of Christmas. While the Bible gives us the information of what happened, the story has much more. This poem written by G.K. Chesterton might be regarded as a verbal crèche.

**There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.
The stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.**

**For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay their heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honour and high surprise,
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.**

**A Child in a stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,
But our hearts we lost - how long ago!
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky's dome.**

**This world is wild as an old wives' tale,
And strange the plain things are,
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.**

**To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.**

by G.K. Chesterton

To Applaud Or Not

Wouldn't it be wonderful if congregations would applaud when ministers and musicians want them to and not applaud if they are not supposed to! The reality is that people have different connections to music and therefore have different responses.

In some churches, applause is welcome and in some it is not. Some worshippers applaud spontaneously. Some applaud "politely". Some join in because others have started the applause. Some really want to applaud but don't. Some don't ever applaud in church.

Applause is not fair. Applause is not heard for an awesome sermon yet children's groups, whether they are singing or ringing, almost always receive applause – a sign of our encouragement. Singing and Handbell choirs can receive applause, even when they haven't been particularly good.

We must remember that participation in worship is not a performance. If choirs focus on praising God through music, on giving their music as a gift to the Glory of God, and sharing in worship, then our applause reaction is simply an extension of the musicians' offering of praise. In Psalm 47:1, we read: "O clap your hands, all peoples; shout to God with the voice of joy".

If the music is fast and exciting, applause may be spontaneous. If the listeners are asked to clap in time to the rhythm (or perhaps can't help but clap), they may naturally break into applause at the end of the piece!

On the other hand, "Be still and know that I am God" is written in Psalm 46. Sometimes the natural reaction to music is to be reverently silent. Often our music occurs at a prayerful time in the service, e.g. during communion, or right after the welcoming prayer, and the musicians hope that they have helped people feel the presence of God. Our choirs and their directors try to prepare the music well – technically, musically, and with feeling. This is likely the best way to touch people's hearts and souls - the right reaction will then simply happen.

(Adapted from Handbells, etc. website)

by Grace Swan

Editor's Notes

"**Attention Youth**" is a banner heading on the Diocesan web site. It draws attention to a website www.justgeneration.ca that is dedicated to Christian youth between the ages of 16 & 30 who want to get active in the struggle for just development. From the site you can access a weekly pod cast "*The Looking Glass*"; 30 minutes of faith-filled justice talk and new tunes. It engages with artists, thinkers, theologians, musicians, and local and global activists concerning issues of development, justice, peace, the environment, pop culture and Christian spirituality.

I was particularly interested to see a part of the website refers to a **U2charist** (with music by the U2) in support of the **Millennium Development Goals** and to Make Poverty History - initiatives which The Anglican Church of Canada, PWRDF and *justgeneration.ca* support. Perhaps some of our new youth group would be interested in checking out this site and submitting their impressions of the site and the music for one of our newsletters.

Once more I remind you, the parishioners, that this newsletter is **your newsletter** and it can only be that if you send us your stories or reports of events past, present and future, so how about giving it a try?

I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a Blessed New Year. Brian Kenefick

Confirmation 2009

At a recent Regional Confirmation, St. John's was pleased to present 10 youth and an adult for confirmation.

They are seen here in this photo, together with Bishop Ron Cutler, Father Michael, and our Parish Lay Readers who helped prepare and sponsor our candidates.



Front Row from Left to Right: Kristen Hiltz, Shelby Williams, Abigail (Abbey) Payne, Marla Russell, Jean Clarke, Grace Clarke & Brooklyn Green. Second Row L to R: Sharon Green, Holly Mitchell, Kelly Chapman, Sarah Mack, Father Michael, Brittany Gerhardt & Alyssa Gerhardt. Behind are some of St. John's Lay Readers, the Archdeacon, the Rector of St. James Mahone Bay & Bishop Ron.

Congratulations to all! You make us so proud.

St. John's Lay Readers



From left: Velvet Eliuk, Charlene and Roger Demone, Holly Mitchell, Sheila Morris, Susan MacMillan, Barbara Eisenhauer, Sharon Green and Penny Pratt and Father Michael.

Our parish is blessed to have six Lay Readers and three Lay Readers in Training under the leadership of Roger Demone.

They not only assist with Sunday Worship, but also help our Rector in a wide variety of ministries, including preparation for Confirmation, Life in the Eucharist, Services in hospitals and nursing homes, and our parish bible studies.

Thank you to our Lay Readers who are seen here in a photo taken on the Evening of Confirmation with our Rector, Michael.

From The Ashes A New Hanging Cloth

"After the devastating fire in 2001, one of my responsibilities was the textiles - no slight task for someone who has had a life-long love relationship with fabrics. I couldn't bear to throw them out. Sadie Hunt and I spent many hours trying to remove huge burns (imagine!) from choir robes that would forever smell of smoke. Eventually we gave up and, over a period of about a year, I began the painful task of discarding damaged robes, vestments and hangings.

Some of the salvaged pieces were too beautiful and had too many memories for me to part with them, so I packed them away with the intention of making a hanging from them when my restoration work was done.

This was much harder than I had expected and for an absolutely un-thought of reason. Each year I would take out my box of bits with the intention of beginning work on them and each year I would pack them away again because they were such a painful reminder of the experience we had all suffered.

Meanwhile the design was taking shape in my mind as I saw around me the many good things that had come out of the tragedy. Finally this spring when I unpacked my box, I realized I could do it!

The inscription on the back reads: *Psalm 126:5 - "They that sow in tears shall reap joy."* Most of these fabrics were originally parts of vestments and hangings that survived the fire in St. John's Anglican Church, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, on November 1, 2001.

I hope that you will look at it, recognize some part of it and be reminded of the wonderful blessing we have received and all that we have accomplished as a result of a terrible day in our history."

Grace Swan



A Christmas Essay

Ah, Christmas!

It starts stirring in the suddenly decorated stores in the Malls and the small stores in the smaller cities. The moment Thanksgiving is over, everything is black and orange for Halloween, and before you get used to that, silver and gold, red and green start appearing. And music - Christmas jingles and funny songs - long before you are ready. Often they are loud and intrusive - this is not what is wanted - not yet.

Things are already happening in the churches - excited planning for the bazaars and lunches - and more pleasantly the smells of Christmas baking, cranberry sauces being prepared in large batches in the suddenly vibrant kitchens, and the happy chatter of people working together for a very special cause.

The stirrings in the Church choir rooms - a certain excitement hard to put your finger on - more of a flutter of anticipation - and lacking the crassness of the commercial, very business-like beat already in the stores.

The evening arrives when you get into your practice seats and find a very different kind of music set out for use. The Christmas Carol books! No matter how many years you have seen this it always feels like meeting an old and dear friend, suddenly there to make you happy, and making you feel that you must share this feeling with your friends.

Is there anyone who doesn't have a favourite carol, that you greet happily as you would any dear friend? There are easy ones, and "tricky" ones with medieval words, very old ones and very new. The "friends" are a pleasure, lovingly remembered, and the newer ones a challenge. Large church choirs work on oratorios, a real labour of love. Handel is greeted as an old and very demanding friend. One year two of the married choir members were expecting an addition to their family close to Christmas. Came the night they weren't there when practice started, causing great excitement among their friends. Suddenly, the father burst into the room singing "Unto us a son is born" - what a birth announcement!

Sometimes funny things happen when you go to the church hall to put on a pre-Christmas program of more secular songs. One choir with whom I was associated had new gowns for this special event. We stood in the wings until we were announced, then marched in, past some highly decorated trees. When we arrived on stage, we found we were newly decorated too - our freshly tinselled silk gowns were irresistibly festive!

Sometimes the choir performs at the children's pageant. This is something to be looked forward to - no one loves Christmas like a child, and their joy is contagious. There are times when one fears for the baby Jesus, especially when He is someone's baby brother being enthusiastically carried like a live doll.

The pre-Christmas events, no matter how well done, are always overshadowed by the Christmas Eve carol service. I have never managed to survive it without tears of joy streaming down my face. Especially now; surely no church has ever been so wonderfully right for Christmas Eve as St. John's.

Merry Christmas! Enjoy!

Submitted by Evelyn Gent

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