



Niagara Anglican

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Christmas yet again

JERRY SALLOUM
RETIRED VICAR

Christmas is coming! With no opportunity to catch our breath after Halloween, Christmas sights and sounds suddenly emerge in stores, on radio and on TV. They are virtually ubiquitous.

Responses to Christmas vary. Some of us hate the season, dread its coming and choose to endure or ignore it entirely. For about two months, advertisers target us to purchase things we often don't need or can't afford. We shop till we drop, spend till we're broke and, in the season's latter days, proceed to eat till we bust. By contrast, others among us love Christmas.

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Happy New Year

PETER A. WALL
DEAN, RECTOR, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

As this issue of the *Niagara Anglican* reaches you, we will have just begun a new year—the Christian year 2011! The first Sunday in Advent always begins the new year for us and launches us into the drama, the beauty, the wonder of the stories which we will relate in the year to come—the stories of our faith and of the life and teachings of Jesus.

The advent of a new year provides us with opportunities to look back and reflect and to look forward and dream!

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What are we hoping for?

RICK JONES
ARCHDEACON, RECTOR, ST. PAUL'S WESTDALE

Advent is a time of expectancy and hope, but hope for what exactly? Is it a hope for new life in the world God loved and Christ died for or a hope for things eternal outside of our difficult global, sociological, political and environmental reality?

It doesn't take a keen observer of Western culture to see that what seems to interest us most are activities that take us out of the reality of our everyday lives: sexuality, sports, travel, food, entertainment and, of course, religion. As the theologian Douglas John Hall has written, "The forms of the Christian religion that are most popular today (to the point of displacing traditional Christianity) are those that offer the most effective techniques for escape from history.

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A church that brings good news to the neighbourhoods



ANDY KALBFLEISCH
MISSION STRATEGY COMMITTEE

By now you have probably heard that for the first time in three years the Diocesan budget was passed at the first sitting of Synod. And now the journey begins! The 136th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara began on Friday evening with worship and Bishop Michael's Charge. The Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37) was read twice during worship to emphasize what we are called to do. In his Charge, Bishop Michael invited us to look at things differently as we explore our faith journey. Too often we get so

caught up in the preparations and planning details of the journey that we hope to take, that we actually never make the first step. Bishop Michael encouraged us to, well, stop thinking about it, stop planning it and just summon the courage to take the first step. And that is exactly what we did at this Synod. We proclaimed loud and clear that indeed the status quo is no longer an option if we are to journey with Jesus in new and different ways. That proclamation will indeed bring us closer to answering the questions "Who is my neighbour?" and "What can—not we as a collective Diocesan family, but me as an individual and parish family—do to serve that neighbour in new and different ways that we never before imagined?"

During the day there were a number of important presentations

■ Members of the Financial Advis-

ory Committee led Synod through the 2009 audited financial statements and presented the 2011 budget.

■ Archdeacon Michael Thompson spoke about the new Annual Appeal and how the funds raised by each parish, net of expenses, will be shared equally with one third going to the participating parishes, one third to the Diocese and one third to the National Church. Funds distributed to the Diocese and local parishes can be used for servant and justice ministries.

■ The Communications Committee made a brief presentation showing some preliminary designs for updating the Diocesan website.

■ Jim Newman explained that Bishop Michael has proclaimed 2011 the year of "A Generous Culture of Stewardship" across the Diocese of Niagara. Jim and his team are available to parishes to help with all aspects of parish

stewardship from preparing a narrative budget to facilitating conversations about planned giving.

■ An important change in payroll management was adopted. Effective January 1, 2012 payroll for all employees (clergy and lay who are paid through the diocesan payroll system) will be by pre-authorized payment to the diocesan payroll service.

■ Lay delegates to General Synod, led by Carol Summers, reported on their experiences in Halifax. Their talk was complemented with a comprehensive slide presentation.

We are moving from a church that is just a provider of religious goods and services, to a church that proclaims and lives the Good News in our neighbourhoods; Christ at home, Christ at school, Christ in the workplace, Christ everywhere!

Every church mission shaped!

Permanent diaconate moratorium lifted

RICHARD BEAUDOIN
DEACON, ST. MARK'S ORANGEVILLE

The past while has seen a moratorium on the acceptance of new candidates to the permanent diaconate. During this time new guidelines and standards have been set and approved by Bishop Michael Bird. The moratorium is now lifted. There were reasons for these changes.

Firstly, we in the Diocese of Niagara wish to be more in line with the standards set by other Canadian

dioceses. This gives us credibility on a national level, as well as ensuring that we comply with Bishop Michael's vision of Excellence in Ministry.

Secondly, the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada is working with the National Church and the House of Bishops towards a national evaluation process. This will ensure that our National Church moves to the future with the best interests of all its members at heart. To this end the Board of the Association has drawn

up guidelines for consideration and whilst acknowledging that training will vary from diocese to diocese, it is hoped that we may compile national competency standards.

If you wish to explore this vocational ministry, please visit the Vocations page of the Diocese of Niagara website (www.niagara.anglican.ca/vocations). Please be aware that a Permanent Deacon is supported by a local parish church within the diocese and may only move towards training after certain parish prerequisites have

been completed. This information is on the website.

The new guidelines are challenging, but we hope that those who feel called to this vital ministry will pursue their calling, knowing that God walks with them on the journey.

For more information please contact the Director of Deacons, The Reverend Deacon Richard Beaudoin or the Deputy Director of Deacons, The Reverend Deacon Anne Crawford.

Volunteers are important people



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
CANON, DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL
MINISTRIES

My Mother's brother, the late Reverend Stanley W. Gentle, was a Presbyterian minister. He was ordained in the post-war 'boom' of the 1950s, a time when churches were quickly expanding. I recall visiting some of his congregations as a child, and going to rapidly expanding Sunday school on those visits. Usually, the Church Halls were crowded and noisy, and there were many volunteer Sunday school teachers with these classes (usually these volunteers were women, and in my memory, they all wore flowery hats).

At the same time, my family attended Saint Stephen's on the Mount in Hamilton. In the early 1960s, there were some 300 Church school students enrolled in that congregation. I

recall a 'Junior' Sunday school in the basement, which had its own Sunday school superintendent in the person of Win Garland. When one reached the age of nine or ten, one 'graduated' upstairs, where Cliff Smith was the superintendent, and where there were approximately eight or nine separate classes. I recall my time at Saint Stephen's for several reasons. One of my teachers was the parish's theological student, a young man named Ralph Spence, who later went on to other claims to fame. And it was at St. Stephen's that I became a Sunday school teacher. Out of that my own vocation to ministry began to emerge.

My recollection is that at the age of sixteen or so, all I did was to signify to Mr. Smith that I was interested in assisting in teaching Church school, and "proof", it happened. I had, after all, grown up in the congregation. I was well known to the community. But in those days, there was little by way of orientation to the 'job' of teaching Sunday school. I recall Saturday nights with ancient volumes of a curriculum of the GBRE Press, which I

blended with what was known in the 1960s as "The new curriculum of the Anglican Church of Canada". Those resources, plus the presence of the Spirit got me through those early days as a Sunday school teacher.

In the present day, we work at supporting our volunteers and the ministries which they fulfill differently now than we did back in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Diocese of Niagara has a Volunteer Management and Screening program, and currently, we are at the beginning of a new reporting cycle. We recognize that we have a 'duty of care' with our volunteers and as a church organization with vulnerable people in our midst. We attempt to fulfill our 'duty of care' in three ways:

- By setting clear expectations for parishes regarding the implementation of this program.
- Ensuring that parishes are trained and supported regarding volunteer management and screening.
- By providing regular and diligent follow-up with parishes that will include reporting measure such as

these, as well as the intermittent audits of parish records.

Each parish should establish a position of Parish Volunteer Coordinator. Experience has taught us that it is best for this position not to be fulfilled by parish clergy.

In this program, each volunteer position in the parish should have a job description and an evaluation of risk (high, medium or low). Subsequent to the Risk Assessment, appropriate screening procedures and boundaries are set, for the benefit of both the volunteers and those with whom they minister. As well, we work at providing follow-up, training and support for our volunteers. And of course, the key to any successful volunteer program is to recognize volunteers and celebrating their ministries.

When this program was initiated almost ten years ago, there was some initial resistance to it. Some congregations argued that 'they knew' all of the people who volunteered with the church schools, youth groups, with the elderly or in the handling of money. They maintained that there was 'no

need' for many kind of job descriptions or screening programs. But you know, no congregation is static. Even one person who is 'new' as a volunteer in the past three years changes the dynamic of how and by whom jobs are done.

Organizations, such as Scouts, Guides, and sports teams regularly have similar programs for the screening and management of volunteers.

In God's name, should we do any less?

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Canon Marni Nancekivell is the Director of Transitional Ministries, Chair of the Bishop's Committee for a Safe Church, and is the staff support for Volunteer Management and Screening in the Diocese of Niagara. She works with Laurie Adamson and Sheila Buddell, Volunteer Management and Screening in Faith Parish Coordinators who job share this volunteer position.

Christmas yet again

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We love the nostalgia associated with its traditions, all its sentimental and magical flavours. We love the trees, the tinsel, the toys, the songs and the lights. We cherish the warmth and the togetherness that through the years has become a part of the Christmas celebration. And we enjoy exulting in "the old old Story, yet again".

Recently, I asked a few parishioners their impressions of Christmas. One elderly woman confessed that Christmas has suddenly become for her a time of painful loneliness. Her eyes filled with tears as she reflected on this as the first Christmas in 58 years without her beloved husband. A second person sees Christmas as a time of disappointment. He wonders why Christmas never seems to deliver in accordance with his expectations of it, and why a season saturated with so much good cheer often leaves one profoundly dissatisfied. A third person described Christmas as a time for children, not for adults. He admitted that while he loves making merry and celebrating, the wonder filling children no longer fills him. For him, Christmas parties are the best part, even when one may have little understanding of what or whom we are celebrating.

But regardless of our own personal impressions of Christmas, whether it be a season of delightful celebration, or a time of dread, or of great expectations, whether it brings wonder, or disappointment or exhaustion, whether we can't wait for it to come or whether we can't wait for it to end, the season called Christmas possesses an unmistakable and mysterious attractiveness that has kept it, regardless of reason, on our cal-

endars for 2000 years. It stirs a longing within us for something more, something beyond turkeys, trees and tinsel, something possessing deep mystery. Hints of this strange appeal of Christmas is echoed in the lyrics by pop singer Bryan Adams: "There's something about Christmas time, something about Christmas time, that makes us wish it was Christmas every day". And so, in our exhaustion, we ask, "IS there something we are missing? IS there something beyond the glitter, another Story perhaps, often spoken about in quiet whispers, a Story that is infinitely more satisfying than one involving Santa and his reindeer? We are confident that the answer to the question is "Yes!" We are confident that below all that is superfluous and extraneous wrappings is an incomparable treasure.

The wrappings are not the gift. So often, however, the wrappings are mistaken for the Gift. A Christmas containing all the wrappings, all the symbols, all the images, but now somehow separated from the only thing for which we truly long, is like a beautifully wrapped gift box that is repeatedly presented to us empty. The traditions of Christmas, with its Santa, its trees, its feasting and its celebrations, its gifts and its extravagances, were all intended to offer us hints of what we are to truly celebrate, to prepare us for the true reason for the season. They were never intended to BE the essence of the Season, just as bunnies and eggs were never meant to be what Easter celebrations are all about. So buried, in fact, is the true reason for the season, that the party no longer requires the "reason" in order to continue partying. More and more, phrases such as "Seasons greet-

ings" and "Happy Holidays" are used as substitute salutations for the traditional phrase, "Merry Christmas".

And so we ask, if Christmas is more than its traditional wrappings, if the wrappings are merely testimony to a special Gift within, without which our interest and our wonder can never be sustained, then just what is that Gift? What is that "something about Christmas time" that could ever make us wish it was Christmas every day? The answer is something that human minds could never imagine or human hands could never manufacture.

Peer into the world on a single day 2000 years ago and you find a small town called Bethlehem. The name "Bethlehem" means "house of bread" in Hebrew and "house of meat" in Arabic. Peer into a stable in that small town of Bethlehem and you find a tired young man and young girl sitting beside a feeding trough called a manger. Peer not only straw, but also a baby, an ordinary baby struggling with its first breaths. Ask the baby's name and you discover this baby is not ordinary at all. His name is "Jesus", which means "Saviour". His name is "Christ" which means "anointed One". His name is "Immanuel" which means "God with us"! This is the Gift. This is the most precious of all gifts beside which all other gifts of Christmas pale in significance. This is the Gift that inspired much of the world's best art and music and literature. This is that Perfect Gift hidden under layers of Christmas clutter we were all busting our butts to find. Remove the clutter and you discover a Person: Jesus Christ, the incomparable One; God at eye level; God in miniature; the exact replica of the Invis-

ible God made visible, God entering into the joys and sorrows of our lives, pitching his tent alongside his children and getting his hands dirty. The focus of Christmas is not a visit by Santa, but rather a visit by the very One who made us. But just as Christmas is much more than Santa, it is much more than a cuddly baby in a manger. Our focus is not on the coming of a baby as much as on what came with that baby. The Bible states that light for people walking in darkness, came with that baby. Hope for our futures came with that baby. Eternal salvation came with that baby. Peace came with that baby.

My problem with Christmas was never that I expected too much of it. Rather, my problem was that I expected too little of it. While winning a lottery ticket or a free trip to the Caribbean would thrill us all, somehow the world has blinded us to the fact that we were all made for so much more. And every so often, some hint of that "something more" emerges from the shadows and causes us to turn our heads and wonder. What if the perfect Christmas gift cannot be found in Zellers, or in Burkes, or in any store for that matter? God's gift of Jesus Christ is the one and only Perfect Gift. It is a Perfect Gift because it is perfectly free, freely given by God and freely to be received by each of us. It is a Perfect Gift because it is perfectly good. There is nothing harmful about it. It is a Perfect Gift because it is perfectly satisfying. It was meant to satisfy, not only our wants, but also more importantly our needs and longings for love and acceptance, for joy and peace, for intimacy and adventure. It is a Perfect Gift because it is perfectly lasting. It can never break. Nor can it ever be stolen. Its infinite worth never

fades. Its capacity to generate wonder within us can never diminish.

I grew up loving sports. I particularly loved hockey and would follow the heroes of the game with great interest. Like others, I was mysteriously attracted to the athletes who were the best, those who set the standard for excellence. I was the True Fan. I watched the game, watched all the replays during the game, and then watched the game highlights on late night sports. Then I reviewed it all again next day in the Globe. With time, the talents of my heroes declined and were eclipsed by even greater heroes who emerged as stars. Then suddenly, in the early 80s, the Great One came along. He was better than the best. The Great One smashed the standard for hockey greatness as he surpassed one NHL record after another. Soon most of my interest and hockey talk focused on celebrating the exploits of the Great One.

For Christians, Christmas is the time of celebrating the Greatest Great One. Jesus Christ the Incomparable One has smashed for all time the standard of Greatness. Our search for the ultimate hero ends with the Perfect Gift of Christmas. Jesus, not Caesar, deserved the title "Augustus" (great one). At Christmas, we replay the story yet again when the Greatest Great One entered the world scene. God so loved the world, God so loved you and me, that he gave us His incomparable Gift. Discover Him and you have the Perfect Gift. Discover Him and you will be enabled to place all Christmas celebrations in their proper context. Miss Him and you have at Christmas the box with all its wrappings but without its glorious contents. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift (2 Cor 9: 15 NIV).

Oh, Come All Ye Faithful



MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST. GEORGE'S GUELPH

Christmas is nostalgic; a time we love to sing Christmas Carols by candlelight. The second verse of one of my favorites, *Ades te Fideles*, goes: "God of God, Light of Light, Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb; Very God, Begotten not created. Oh, come let us adore Him..." But, what are we singing? When we think of this verse in broad daylight, with no Christmasy nostalgia, do we really mean what we sing?

In midsummer I've thought about it. We often visit our nephew and his family who live in Madison, WI, on the shore of Lake Mendota. There I enjoy getting up to watch the sun rise at the opposite end of the lake. On a calm day, with not even a ripple, as the sun rises over the lake, one sees first one, then two suns; one hovering over the glassy water, the other its reflection on the water; both equally blindingly bright.

On one such morning I was studying the first chapter of Hebrews on my laptop, and read verse 3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person..." I thought that if God were the sun, the object, then Jesus, 'the brightness of his glory,' was its reflection, the image on the water. Both appear equally bright, so one could think they were identical. In actual fact the intensity of light emitted by the image is infinitesimally less than that emitted by the object, but it was indiscernible. It does get less as the sun rises higher over the lake. This suggested to me that Jesus Christ was somewhat less than God, but indistinguishable from Him.

This idea was reinforced when I looked up the word translated by 'express image' from the Greek 'charaktar'. Strong's Concordance has several meanings for these two words:

- The instrument used for engraving or carving.

- The mark stamped upon that instrument or wrought out on it.

- A mark or figure burned in (Leviticus 13:28) or stamped on, an impression.

- The exact expression (the image) of any person or thing, marked likeness, precise reproduction in every respect, (i.e. facsimile).

It's the word from which our words character and caricature are derived. Jesus certainly had the character of God; his relationship with God was so close that his contemporaries called him the Son of God; but, without being irreverent, he was only a caricature of God. The author of the letter to the Hebrews chose his words most carefully to distinguish between God and Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 3:16 says that Jesus is a manifestation of God, or *Epiphany*, to use a theological term, but he was no more than a manifestation. In fact He's the closest manifestation of God that we'll ever know. No one else, or no thing else, will ever compare with Him. He's the best caricature of God that anyone can ever draw. The study of Jesus is a lifelong study, because the more we learn of Him, the more we realize that there's a lot more to learn; both about Him and about God, and the more we learn, the more we'll become like Him.

But Christmas is not the end of the story. What happened when He died the agonizing death on the cross, and three days later rose again? Verse 3 again says when he had "purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." *Purge* is an odd translation of *poieo*, meaning *faire* in French, *to make or to do*. Strong gives the following meanings, with the number of times they're used in the Authorized Version: *do* 357, *make* 113, *bring forth* 14, *commit* 9, *cause* 9, *work* 8, *show* 5, *bear* 4, *keep* 4, *fulfil* 3, *deal* 2, *perform* 2, but nowhere mentions *purge*. Be that as it may, Hebrews goes on to say that Jesus was not only a sacrificial offering, similar to the atoning sacrifices of the Old Testament, but he was also the high priest, not of the Aaronic priest-

hood, but of Melchisadek, a shadowy figure in Genesis, to whom even Abraham gave an offering. In this context Jesus' death and his sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high (metaphorically speaking) did purge our sins.

But whose sins did he purge? 1 John 2:2 says that Jesus was the propitiation, harking back to the Old Testament sacrifices, for our sins, "but not for ours only, but those of the whole world." Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:19 says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The word *kosmos*, world, has many meanings, among which Strong lists: "the arrangement of the stars, as the ornament of the heavens, the world, the universe, the earth, the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human family, the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ, world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly, the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc, which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ, the Gentiles as contrasted to the Jews, and of believers only, as in John 3:16-17 and 2 Corinthians 5:19." How can he include 'believers only' in this list? Not without some twisted logic. I take 2 Corinthians 5:19 to mean that all those hostile to the cause of Christ, us ungodly multitude, are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. This is really good news for all of us; for we're all an ungodly mob; alienated from God. If it were for 'believers only' salvation would be for only the few. Is that really good news?

Only because we do declare that God through Jesus Christ has indeed reconciled to himself this whole universe, and every one of us in it, can we enjoy our carol singing as we proclaim the Good News in Jesus Christ. But is this to mean He is *God of God* or *Light of light*? Was God really born of Mary? Before we speak to anyone else about Jesus, I think we ourselves need to do some rethinking.

Happy New Year

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In the Cathedral we have just finished an important anniversary year in which we have stretched ourselves, learned many things about our community and the people we serve, celebrated many wonderful events, and welcomed many, many people from around our Diocese and beyond. It has been a great year and we in the Cathedral community want to thank everyone who has been a part of it.

The beginning of a new year is also a time to take stock—to offer thanks for blessings received and to re-commit ourselves to the tasks which lie ahead.

I celebrated my twelfth anniversary as Dean of the Diocese and Rector of the Cathedral in November—where did all that time go? Twelve years—I am sure that I don't look any older (sic) because I sure don't feel any older. Indeed, I feel energized and stimulated and blessed in the work that I do. I feel particularly blessed to be part of the Niagara family—this is a dynamic, exciting, challenging, tremendously gifted and talented Diocese, and it has been my enormous pleasure to work closely with two wonderful Bishops, with a very dedicated and talented diocesan staff, and in a place which welcomes the Diocese every day of every year. I also know, even though sometimes the forest and the trees get confused, just how privileged we are in this Diocese, both because of what we have and also because of what we *can* do.

I also believe that it is important to remind ourselves that we are all a part of this Diocese—indeed, the basic unit of our church is not the parish, but the Diocese. There is great wisdom in the practice which we keep in the Canadian church of defining *membership* as being part of a Diocese—so we are all members of the church, and we choose to worship in and be particularly associated with a particular parish or community. So we do not have such a thing in the Canadian church as a *letter of transfer of membership*. Sometimes we get so caught up in our own parishes that we forget that we are part of something much

greater and much broader. Some look on the support which we give to each other through our Diocesan Mission and Ministry budget as a *tax*, which unfairly punishes parishes. Surely we can overcome that kind of narrow parochialism. It is because we share resources and obligations that we are fortunate enough to be part of an Episcopal and diocesan structure. Skills and expertise, both in the Synod office and in parishes, are shared one with another. The provision of regional Archdeacons, regional Deans, and regional structures for mission and ministry, diocesan committees and groups which exercise stewardship over many different programmes and resources, even the existence of a Cathedral church and Cathedral Place—all of these are in place because we share in the ministry of the church throughout our Diocese.

Now just like in all families, we have our occasional moments—we don't always agree on the way forward; we need sometimes to talk things out thoroughly and candidly and, thanks be to God, we have both structures and the determination to do just that. But let's be clear—and I say this as someone who walks the sometimes broad road of being both a parish incumbent and a Diocesan official—this is not an 'us and them' or 'right or wrong' relationship—it is one in which we work together in love, humility and peace to build the realm of God and to participate in God; mission here and now. I know how prepared we are and how well equipped we are to do both of those things.

In our Diocesan vision, which is giving us all such life and motivation, we identify Leadership and Generous Stewardship as two of the planks of that vision. Together we demonstrate that excellence of leadership which we have in our midst, and we also generously give of ourselves—our whole selves—to be part of this exciting and bountiful diocese.

May the Christian Year 2011 be one of generosity, honesty, integrity and strength for our much loved Church.

The silver ladle | Love it and give it



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

It has never pleased me much to be assaulted with Christmas carols in the streets and shops, ever earlier, or with newspaper and television commercials urging me to buy, buy, buy. Perhaps even worse: the haunting risk of giving something not really wanted to someone. I recall the touching cartoon in the New Yorker of the little girl at a writing desk: "Dear Auntie:

Thank you for the 'pin cushion'; I have always wanted a 'pin cushion', but not very much." It happened to Adele, once, though not quite so pitying. She was on her own, at last, in a big city, sharing a flat with two other girls—not one of whom could cook. Housekeeping on a slim budget was about as desperate as it was going to get; a few dishcloths, in pretty wrapping, would have been warmly received from Aunt Mary. But when Christmas arrived, there it was, a silver ladle—very lovely, but about as useful as, well, a silver ladle. Adele had always wanted a silver ladle, but not very much.

Needless to say, the silver ladle came to be Adele's symbol of family; more than an ornament, occasionally an

impressive party thing, always a possession of honour and value within its own being. And when the time came, Adele parted with it happily, its own reward, to a new owner. Bless Aunt Mary.

And now: God rest ye merry, there is a solution to our own problems of Christmas giving, or some of us. Consider this: Be like Aunt Mary: Give something beautiful, something you have enjoyed and cherished for a long time, to someone you know who loves it, has never dreamed of owning it, or one like it. And give it—now, for Christmas. Tell yourself that you already have enough, even too much, stuff; your life is cluttered, your dwelling place is no longer chic. Just look at the ads for interiors: simple is elegant; less is more...

And if this approach to gift-giving saves you money this Christmas, give what you save to your church—or to the Bishop's Company, where you know it will do some good, personally and discreetly.

And another thing: How do you feel about those annual Christmas family reports, single-spaced, typed, duplicated, sent to an increasing number of names—cousins, second cousins once removed, in-laws, outlaws, ex-spouses, someone you met at someone's barbecue last summer... often with enclosed superfluous pictures. Do you read them right away? I don't. But in these days of increasing technology replacing personal interaction, who knows where it will all lead? In the meantime, when something is addressed to me in hand-

writing, that's what I open first. It is never from the bank.

Does anybody remember the bitter-sweet two-person play *Love Letters*, at the Cathedral a year or so ago? The protagonist unwittingly contributes to the suicide of Melissa, his lifelong lover, by means of his letter, an annual account of family trivia.

Psychiatrists report that they are always busiest during the season of Advent and Christmas—a sad reflection on what our faith is all about. To each of us, our own solution. To me, it is music—not the music of marketing and selling, but the music of grace and imagination and empathy. Music can express what words cannot. Thanks be to God.

PARISH NEWS



Christmas carol sung at Cenotaph

HOLLIS HISCOCK
INTERIM RECTOR, ST JOHN'S ROCKWOOD

People of St. John's Church, Rockwood gathered around the town's War Memorial on Sunday, November 7 and sang "Silent Night, Holy Night". An array of wreaths provided a symbolic appropriate background. The wreaths

were laid at the area Remembrance Day ceremony held on Saturday.

It is part of a Canada wide happening in the Anglican Church of Canada, where all parishes are asked to videotape the singing of 'Silent Night', which will be made into a documentary, to be shared online.

On Christmas Eve 1914, during the

First World War, soldiers on both sides of the conflict called a truce, laid down their weapons and met in 'no man's land'. They exchanged greetings and gifts and sang the one Christmas carol known by all—"Silent Night, Holy Night".

The organ in St. Nicholas Church in the Austrian Alps was silent in

1818; some say mice had chewed through the bellows, so the prospect of music at the Christmas worship was indeed bleak. Joseph Mohr, the assistant priest, accepted the challenge and wrote the lyrics to 'Silent Night'. He asked his friend, Franz Gruber, to set his words to music. Later at the Christmas Midnight Mass, the people sang

'Silent Night, Holy Night', accompanied by a guitar, for the first time.

It has been translated into more than a 140 languages.

People participating in singing "Silent Night, Holy Night" in Rockwood donated a 'toonie' to support the work of the Military Chaplains in the Canadian Forces.

Outreach of a small parish



RUSSELL G. KELK
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, HAMILTON

St. Alban the Martyr is a small Undermount parish located in the north-east part of Hamilton. The area around us consists of homes and neighborhoods that are aging slowly along with those who live in them. Other homes house vibrant younger couples with small children. We hold regular euchre games on Monday nights for seniors and host an AA group that meets on Friday nights. On Victoria Day Weekend we work with our neighboring churches to hold a Party in the Park that is directly opposite our own church, for those who live around us. We have games, face painting, music, a prayer booth, crafts, displays and give away hot dogs, soft

drinks and water for all those attending the event. Some years we have had almost a thousand people during the time we are there. With this same group of churches, we hold an annual carol service just before Christmas. During Advent, we fill up to 50 shoe boxes for children, with personal hygiene items and small toys which are then wrapped and taken to St. Matthew's House.

At Christmas we get the name of a family from St. Matthew's House and purchase gifts for all the family members. A Jesse Tree is also placed in the Narthex, and parishioners take a tag from it and buy a gift for either a girl or a boy from toddler age to early teens. These gifts are taken to the St. Matthew's warehouse where they are distributed to those in need at Christ-

mas. The St. James Chapel located in the Rosslyn Retirement home is part of our outreach. They hold a Eucharist ever Wednesday morning from September to the end of June and bi-monthly during the summer. One major outreach is the ongoing support of St. Matthew's House with weekly donations of food that are brought in by our church school children, our parishioners and those who attend the St. James Chapel. As a special event on Thanksgiving, donations of food given by those attending both the St. James Chapel and St. Alban's, along with gifts of money to be used to purchase even more food were placed in the sanctuary and blessed. This food was then taken in two vehicles to St. Matthew's House. Over one thousand pounds of food was donated.

Sources of generous giving



JIM NEWMAN
STEWARDSHIP CONSULTANT

A recent conversation reminded me of a workshop presentation by Dr. Kenon Callahan, a noted Presbyterian minister, author, and church conference leader. He pointed out that there are six sources of generous giving, not just one or two.

Callahan is a strong proponent of narrative budgets and makes it perfectly clear that parish budgets are about investments, not costs. And he agrees that people give to people, not rising costs or gaps. It's good advice to consider at this time in the church year when year end shortfalls and 2011 budgets loom large. Here are the sources:

1. Spontaneous

A parish should have three to five spontaneous giving opportunities each year. Impulse giving appeals to people who give to causes such as tsunami relief and they will give to your worthy cause or they will give somewhere else. Consider including choral scholarships, vacation bible school or youth camp, the Primate's Fund and so on. Know what you are

going to do, but don't publicize it months ahead.

2. Major Community Sundays

Callahan includes Easter and Christmas in this category where attendance is high and giving is high. He suggests adding one or possibly two more each year e.g. Blessing of Animals, Pentecost, up to a total of 6 or more.

3. Special Planned Events

Parishes can have two to four of these a year, each with a well planned and publicized cause or theme.

4. Major Project

Callahan recommends one every 3 to 4 years. These might involve mission, capital improvements, debt reduction, or something completely new.

5. Annual Giving

Regular Envelope and Pre-Authorized Giving fall under this category.

6. Planned Gifts

Every parish needs to have a list of five to eight major enduring projects, each with balance, integrity, and broad-based appeal. For instance, have a \$5,000 project, a \$10,000 project, a \$50,000 project and so on.

Callahan says that many people will give to a major project that is a combination of mission, staffing, new facilities, capita improvements, and debt retirement.

Our whole life is an Advent

Our whole life is an Advent, a time of waiting for the ultimate, for the time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, when all people will be brothers and sisters.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, *THE COMING OF JESUS INTO OUR MIDST*

CHRISTOPHER GRABIEC
EDITOR

Advent is such a powerful time, both liturgically and insofar as it affects the very existence of so many human beings. The season of Advent which in itself announces the coming of our God and brings with it some kind of innate hope is welcomed by most folks who are Christian and often by those who may be distanced from the Christian community.

In its most distorted sense Advent is perceived as a four week preparation for the Birth of Christ—or perhaps we should say the “birth-day of Christ”. This observance of Advent has very little to do with the immanent presence or Birth of Christ among us. It looks back in history and believes that in some way this birth was a definitive act which is once and for all, and we celebrate its anniversary.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in an Advent Sermon points out that Advent is something which must in essence permeate the fabric of our lives daily. The season only serves to remind us (annually) of what must be going on in our lives all the time.

The real question is—what does Advent mean to any of us in this day and age. Setting aside the nostalgia, perhaps we need to look at our world and our response to that world. When we look at the world with our widest angle lenses, what we have seen



in the past months is a world that is increasingly divided—East from West and in particular Islam from Christianity. Dr. Michael Burslem writes regularly in our paper with the mission of trying help heal the division. But whether we look to the Middle East or to Ground Zero, we see increasing hostility and an unwillingness to walk together with differing views. We are so intent in our belief that the Muslim world is bent on terror and they are so intent in their belief that we have always and continue to be nothing more than a society that is intent on draining them of their resources in order to satiate our greed. It seems that we simply walk farther and farther apart.

If we narrow our focus and listen to the guidance of people like The Rev. Sue Ann Ward, Colleen Sym, Canon Wendy Roy and others, we cannot

help but see an increasing amount of poverty in our own society and a large portion of society that walks around with blinders. These blinders are not new! Listen to what Ambrose said in the 4th Century:

“The large rooms of which you are so proud are in fact your shame. They are big enough to hold crowds—and also big enough to shut out the voice of the poor... There is your sister or brother, naked, crying! And you stand confused over the choice of an attractive floor covering.”

The words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer continue to ring—waiting for the ultimate time when all people will be brothers and sisters.

So where does this leave us today. Well Thomas Merton (the great mystic of the last century) wrote: “The Advent mystery is the beginning of the end of all in us that is not yet Christ.”

That’s where we are left. Advent is a time of hope—but not some kind of hope that is without roots and without substance. It’s hope for a better world. Hope for everything that Christ called this world to be. Advent is only a rehearsal of the rest of our life. It’s not about counting the days until Jesus is born. Jesus was born (and not on the Dec 25th), live, preached, ministered, challenged, died and rose from the dead—that’s history. The important thing today is that the Risen One and The Spirit of God are surrounding us and urging us to bring an end all in us that is not yet Christ!

The other day a young man approached me in the parking lot of a local mall in Dundas. He asked for some money so he could buy food. I turned him down! In my own self-righteous way I judged that he was too young to be doing this. I judged

that he should go find a job. I judged that he should go get some help or get back to school—or whatever. I drove away, then felt ashamed. Turning back I combed the entire parking lot, looking for him to give him some money. Perhaps he would use it for cigarettes or beer—but I had decided my judging was inappropriate. I could not find him. I will never find him. I lost my opportunity to bring an end of all that is not yet Christ.

It’s a wonderful time...a time of goodness... a time when we search for peace. But let’s not be superficial. We have a vision as a church—a profound vision which calls us to build the reign of God by following Christ passionately, pursuing excellence and by practising justice. It’s just four weeks of rehearsal time. Let’s not miss the opportunity that may never have again.

What are we hoping for?

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I fear too often it is the temptation of the Christian Steward to neglect our high vocation.

Whether they do this through ‘spiritualistic’ flights of fantasy or by the continuous reassurance that there are no real crises in the affairs of the world makes little difference.”

The temptation of Christian life today is to see hope as something beyond our difficult and complex everyday existence. Or as Dr. Hall puts it, in a clever turn of phrase, “It is almost a rule of history that religion becomes ever more otherworldly dur-

ing times of worldly crisis. When history becomes incendiary, people look for fire escapes.” This explains the religion clubs we find in our churches: people looking for peace and stability in prayer and fellowship on Sunday morning and not in the peace that comes from engaging the world throughout the week with the passion of a Christian Steward.

I use this stewardship word very intentionally because as followers of Jesus, the Christ, we are to model our lives after his. As Paul describes it, “the present and the future... all belong to you, and you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God” (1 Cor 3:22-23). Even Christ is God’s steward, doing God’s will and not his own, and we are bound up in this mutuality of vocation. Stewardship is not just an attribute of the Christian

life, it is our mystical vocation derived from Christ’s vocation. We are called to follow his example.

What then of the hope of Advent? Could it be to share in God’s great love of this world, for which Christ went to the Cross or the giving of time, talent and resources to change this world as God’s work? Unfortunately the legacy of uncritical Christian liberalism that believed too much in the goodness of humanity and the progress of society has been a profound disillusionment and a stagnation of effort in bringing about the Reign of God.

Does God care less now about human history or the world and all its creatures? Is this still not our Christian stewardship mission? We face this mission knowing that to follow Christ in confronting unjust and evil systems, corporate evil and greed, ecological

irresponsibility and political dishonesty may indeed mean facing the Cross. Before we give up on the world in which we live, with religious escapism, we may want to enter into Advent expectation and hope that includes the Reign of God in this world.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote to his friend Bethge two days before he was hanged about the meaning of Redemption and the importance of never giving up on this world. “Redemption now...” (in the escapist view) he wrote, “...means redemption from cares, distress, fears, and longings, from sin and death, in a better world beyond the grave.” But is this really the essential character of the proclamation of Christ in the Gospels and by Paul? The Christian hope of resurrection sends a man back to his life on earth in a wholly

new way... The Christian, unlike the devotees of the redemption myths, has no escape route from history. He knows that this world must not be prematurely written off.” We might have forgiven him if his focus was more other worldly at this point in his life, but he had the courage to face his Cross sharing in the love of God for this world and all it could be.

I fear too often it is the temptation of the Christian Steward to neglect our high vocation. It just seems too difficult, the complexity of the problems and the cynicism of the times overwhelm us. But the expectation of Advent is that we are not alone in this work. “We belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.” We can never give up on the world God made.

Let the Children Sing!



CHRISTYN PERKONS
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, DIOCESAN
RESOURCE CENTRE

Finding music to supplement children's ministry can be a challenge for worship leaders and those responsible for Sunday morning programming. The newest addition to the Congregational Support Library is sure to please kids and music leaders alike! These songs have been kid-tested over the years at the Lincoln/Brock Children's Festival by songwriter Dorothy Brown and her Children's Festival music team, and many are requested year after year by eager young singers. Here's how Dorothy, Music Coordinator at Church of the Transfiguration in St. Catharines, describes her songbook, *You're It! (Tagged by God's Love) Songs in the Spirit of Fun*:

"Fresh from God's hands, children view the world with wonder. Creation sparkles as they splash in the puddles or romp in the sunshine. The moon blows good night kisses, and crossing guards are just angels in disguise. Capturing the delight of childhood, many of the songs in this collection feature short refrains making them accessible to non-readers and those of us with short memories. Come trek through the desert with Joseph, or take a dip with Jonah. Discover that God's love is Tasty. You might just be tagged by that love, because YOU'RE IT!"

Other music resources available for parishes from the resource library

250 Songs for Children's Praise and Worship (complete with lyrics CD and permission to copy), *The Sunday*

Sessions and *The Good Book* from Linnea Good, *Joyful Noise: Songs of Faith and Fun for Children*, and *More Voices* from the United Church of Canada which lists many songs crafted for younger singers.

For those who don't read music, we have two songbooks which feature new songs set to the tunes of childhood favourites: *Piggyback Songs in Praise of God* and *Piggyback Songs in Praise of Jesus*.

Seasons of the Spirit Songbook Vol. 1 and *The Group Songbook* (for youth) come with CDs for those who need accompaniment or need to hear the song to learn it. If you prefer listening to tapes, the songbook *Songs: An Eclectic Lyric Collection of More Than 999 Songs for Most Situations* is available to borrow along with tape recordings of all the songs.

Music adds so much to our church programming. It's a great teaching tool; works well to calm a group or rev things up; young people can be coached to pay attention to the leader at the sound of a refrain, songs can provide pastoral care for kids who are hurting... and the list goes on. If you're not musical, invite someone in the congregation to help out by playing the accompaniment or even leading music. If all else fails, use technology to provide children's music in your Sunday morning activities or other church family gatherings.

A library rich with resources, including Dorothy's new songbook, is available for your parish's use; music ministry for children is the tip of the iceberg.

Books, DVDs, CDs touching all aspects of congregational support and development can be accessed by calling Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 x460.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ The Reverend Marcus Germaine has submitted his resignation from Church of the Nativity, Hamilton, and will retire from full time ministry effective January 6, 2011.

■ The Reverend Canon Gerald Shantz and the Reverend Ted Crabtree issued a bishop's permission to perform the office of Honorary Assistants at St. John's Church, Port Dalhousie, effective November 1.

■ Congratulations to the Reverend Rob Hurkmans and Sally Hurkmans, of Port Colborne, on the birth of their

fourth daughter, Georgia Lynne, born October 18.

■ Our prayers and sympathy to family, friends and parishioners at St. John's Church, Winona, upon the death of Midge Bartzak, ON, on October 10. Midge was People's Warden at St. John's, and was awarded the Order of Niagara in 2006.

■ The Reverend Sheila VanZandwyk has submitted her resignation as Assistant Curate at St. Simon's, Oakville, and has accepted the position to be Rector of St. Michael's Church,

Hamilton, effective November 1.

■ The Reverend Lynda Kealey issued a bishop's permission to perform the office of Honorary Assistant at St. Christopher's, Burlington, effective October 1.

■ Congratulations to Bishop Ralph and Carol Spence on the birth of their first grandchild: Eleanor Clara Garside made her debut a little early (on November 10) to proud parents Sarah Spence and Christopher Garside, in Toronto. All is well and we welcome Eleanor to the world.

CHRISTMAS TREE SALE



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Saturdays	9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Sundays	11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship

4:30 p.m. "The Wonder"
Family-Friendly Communion Service
8:00 p.m. Candlelight Choral Eucharist

The Niagara Anglican

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The Diocese lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, and is defined roughly by the Niagara Escarpment from the Niagara River in the east to the Dundas Valley in the West and north to Shelburne, Mt. Forest and Orangeville.

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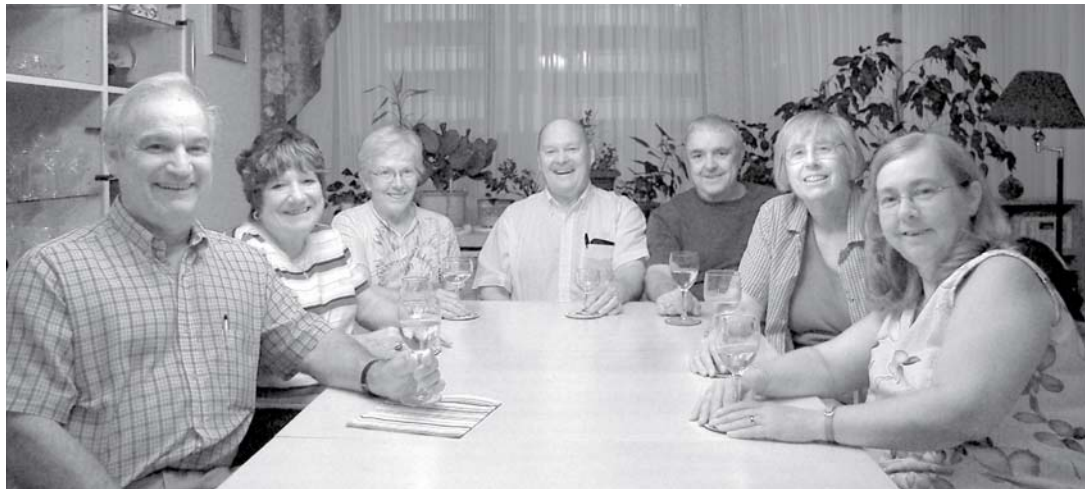
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Anticipation and hope | A parochial committee's journey



SUE CRAWFORD
ST. MICHAEL'S HAMILTON

Advent draws near and with it anticipation, a time of expectancy, and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ. It is also the beginning of our Western liturgical year and at the parish of St. Michael a new chapter in the life of our church. Along with the usual excitement of Advent we look forward to the arrival of our new rector. You might say that we have been 'celebrating' advent for nearly two years. These two years have been a mission of faith, discov-

ery, and joy. The Parochial Committee, through the initial guidance of Robert Morrow, journeyed together in a quest to seek out a new spiritual leader for our Parish.

Following an Appreciative Inquiry Session lead by Rick Jones, the committee took the results and built a composite picture of what the parish wanted in their new Rector. There were times when the parish council thought that the process was taking too long. What were we doing? A work of art takes time. The Parochial Committee had the time and the drive to ensure that the Parish would not be disappointed in the final choice.

Armed with a good selection of applicants provided by Bishop Michael and the tools from our sessions with Bob, we began the search. St. Michael's has a reputation for

being unique as the composition of our Parochial Committee proved. Time was taken in reading material to assist us in posing suitable questions: questions that would elicit the answers that would lead to making an informed decision. The committee became proficient in setting up the interviews and recording the answers of the applicants. In the end, using all the talent on the committee, the interview results were collated then discussed. The penultimate meeting was perhaps the most difficult. After assembling and following a check list that had been established, one single person did not emerge. How could a decision be made? A three week hiatus was suggested (some members were going away). So a decision to step back, take advantage of the break, think and pray for guid-

ance was planned. Throughout the whole process we had been guided by prayer and scripture at the beginning and end of every session. When we returned to the table it took very little time for us to make the final decision. We thank God for His guidance and now we look forward with anticipation to the ministry of the Reverend Sheila Van Zandwyk. We are sure that the blue of Advent also heralds only blue skies above for our Parish.

One last note: our interim minister, Canon Paddy Doran in one homily during his interim ministry asked us to think of him as John the Baptist – preparing the way for the one who comes after. We can certainly attest to those words. The Parish is extremely grateful for Paddy's guidance during these two years and for bringing us with so much anticipation to Advent 2010.

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Phone: 905.627.1424

Website: www.stjamesdundas.ca

ST. JAMES' HOUSE TOUR



Summer Camp Special Appeal follow-up

Hopefully you read the Canterbury Hills Special Camp Appeal insert in last month's issue. If not, you can find that material by going to the Canterbury Hills website (www.canterburyhills.ca) and clicking on "Special Camp Appeal".

The need is still very real and very urgent! While many folks have responded by becoming Sustaining Sponsors, we have not reached the level of response that will let us make the decision to operate the Summer

Camp in 2011. Your response could make that difference.

If you considered donating in November, or are in a position to do so now, could you please go to the website today and respond. It truly would be a shame if this important ministry that touches the lives of so many hundreds of children and young people each summer was to be put in jeopardy.

Thank you in advance for your support!

PARISH NEWS

Monthly Dinner

St. James, St. Catharines
Turkey with dressing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, green beans and pumpkin pie with whipped cream. Reservations required for this popular dinner.
Cost: \$8.00 per person
December 1, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Christmas Potluck Dinner Party

St. Columba, St. Catharines
All ladies of the parish are invited to attend our Christmas Potluck Dinner Party. A special musical concert led by our talented Director of Music, Tatiana Korotkova, will follow the meal, with an opportunity to sing some of your favourite Christmas Carols. Kindly remember to bring your own dishes and cutlery and your favourite potluck dish. If you need transportation, please call the office to arrange a ride.
December 2, 6:00 PM

Christmas Bazaar

St. George's, Homer, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Mixed gift baskets, various crafts, varied jams, meat pies, bake table, deli, books, candy sale, children's items and lunch.
Cost: \$8 per person
December 4, 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Holiday House Tour

St. James, Dundas
Tour six Dundas homes and come back to St. James for refreshments. Browse our baked goods and Dickens Lane to shop for Christmas gifts, and spend time in our art gallery too!
Cost: \$20.00 per person
December 4, 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Night Before Christmas

Holy Trinity, Fonthill
Trelbaires Ladies Show Choir presents its annual Christmas concert in the Church on Saturday December 4 at 7:30 PM. Contact the office for tickets by calling 905-892-6011.
Cost: \$8.00 per person
December 4, 7:30 PM

Holy Communion and Cuthbert's K.I.D.S.

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Interactive Communion preparation or enrichment for Children (with parents joining the sessions) in grades one and older. 3 weeks on Saturday mornings for an hour.
Cost: Donation
December 4, 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Breakfast with Santa

St. John's, Ancaster
Delicious breakfast and an opportunity for each child to visit with Santa and receive a special stocking gift
Cost: Adults \$12, Children \$5.00
December 4, 9:00 AM

St. Nicks Shopping Day 2010

St. Paul's, Fort Erie
St. Nicks Shopping provides an opportunity for children to make their Christmas purchases in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Assisted by 'Elves' each of the children's gifts is given special attention, wrapping and tagging. This all day event is greatly anticipated by all. Mark your calendars.
December 4

Christmas Bake and Book Sale

The Church of the Ascension, Hamilton
Find some delicious treats at Ascen-

tion's Christmas Bake and Book Sale. Just call the office at 905-527-3505.
December 4

A Christmas Carol

Grace, Waterdown
A special reading of Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Special Refreshments will be served.
Cost: Donation
December 8, 7:30 PM

Outreach Bake Sale

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Homemade baked goods in time for the Christmas season. All proceeds to Kerr Street Ministries and Sleeping Children around the World.
December 11, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Christmas Party

Holy Trinity (Chippawa), Niagara Falls
Pot Luck Supper. A great time to be had by all. Bring your friends and family.
December 12, 5:00 PM

Parish Family Christmas Potluck

St. Alban the Martyr, Hamilton
We invite you to join us for our Christmas celebration as a parish family. Together, in fellowship, we share a meal, play some games and sing our favourite Christmas Carols. Please join us in celebrating the Birth of our Lord Jesus.
December 19, 5:00 PM

Advent and Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Candle lit Choral Evensong with beautiful readings, hymns, carols and anthems celebrating the season.
December 19, 7:00 PM



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