

The Catch the Spirit News

A Newsletter of St. Mark's by-the-Lake Church

CHRISTMAS EDITION 2008

CHURCH SCHOOL Information

ALL CLASSES WILL NOW BE TAKING PLACE IN
THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL
until construction is finished.

Please use the main entrance off of St. Mark's Rd. The
Grade 2-6 class will be located in the basement- library
room of the school. The Toddler Room and JK/SK/1
classes will remain where they are.

*Please label coats with your child's name.



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St. Mark's Taking Shape

Fausto Volpatti and crew have been moving with great haste, and progress is being made with our expansion and renewal. To date, the hall is nearing completion and work is soon set to begin on the church.

The Hall has been renovated to include a larger kitchen and improved storage space in the hall for our table and chairs etc. The new insulated walls with in-floor heating and proper windows will reduce our energy cost and make us much friendly to the environment. The bathrooms are also much improved with women's and men's bathroom



now with multiple fittings and a handicap bathroom on the lower level. There is also a new reception area and main office on the ground floor that will make a nice and friendly space to receive those who visit the church.

The upper level of our church hall now has three great rooms that will be multi-use. They will provide great space for Church School on Sunday mornings as well as space for meetings and study groups throughout the week. One of our rooms is equipped for toddlers with a toddler washroom as a feature in the room. There is also a handicap



bathroom on the upper level. The upper rooms are also complemented by large storage areas for Sunday School supplies and conference supplies. There is attic storage, where needed, for those less used items to be kept.



Pictured Left to Right are: The Rev'd Kevin George, Contractor - Fausto Volpatti, The Rt. Rev'd Robert Bennett, Engineer Bill Label, and Dr. Norm Becker Chief Engineer

All of these additions have made for a very usable and attractive space. A few weeks ago Bishop Bennett toured our facility and was impressed with the amount of space that has been added and with the usability of it.



Bishop Bob was quick to add that he looks forward to scheduling a visit in 2009 to have a dedication of our new and improved St. Mark's by-the-Lake Church.

From the Rector's Pen



At St. Mark's by-the-Lake we are about to celebrate the birth of Jesus

Christ. We have been journeying together through the advent season praying for patience on the journey. In just over a week we will come together to sing those timeless hymns that remind us that we have passed from darkness into light. My favourite for this time of year is a Canadian Carol written by John de Brebeuf a Jesuit missionary to the Huron. He wrote this hymn as a native representation of the nativity story. It was actually written in Wyandot, the native language of the Huron. It was translated in the 1920's and imagery familiar to that period is used to describe the nativity. I think that it appeals to me because it approaches the birth story with a fresh perspective, a different feel and it honours the people for whom it was written. (You can see the words to this great hymn printed at the end of this article).

We all need some fresh perspective from time to time. I hope and pray that this Christmas will give us all a new look at how the Light is born into our homes, our hearts, and our lives. Jesus is born into the most unexpected circumstances. Whether you sing Silent Night, or the Huron Carol, the story is still about surprise and wonder. Jesus could be born in a manger, in a lodge of broken bark, or for that matter in a ghetto, in a funeral home, in our hearts, in our homes or streets, and in our realities. God has the capacity to dispel the darkness and arrive when least expected and where least expected.

I pray that we have minds and hearts open to the presence of God this Christmas season. Long gone should be the narrow-mindedness that came to represent the Christian people for so long. We have been gifted with a Saviour whose very arrival was designed to remove that which separates and divides. I was reading some quotes about Christmas a few days ago and I came across this gem from the 25th of December issue of the New York Times in 1937.

“We hear the beating of wings over Bethlehem and a light that is not of the sun or of the stars shines in the midnight sky. Let the beauty of the story take away all narrowness, all thought of formal creeds. Let it be remembered as a story that has happened again and again, to men [people] of many different races, that has been expressed through many religions, that has been called by many different names. Time and space and language lay no limitations upon human brotherhood [sisterhood].”

I have printed this and kept it with me. The beauty of this story should serve for us as a reminder that this story has happened over and over again and it has happened to people from every language, race and nation. The story has been told in many languages and has been told in many creeds. God (Light) has defeated darkness and dwells among us. We need to embrace the idea that God dwells among us – Emmanuel! We need to be prepared for the reality that God may be in those place where we least expect to find Light. The story itself is testimony to that. Just ask St. John de Brebeuf;

*'Twas in the moon of wintertime
When all the birds had fled
That mighty Gitche Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead
Before their light the stars grew dim
And wond'ring hunters heard the hymn:*

*Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born!
In excelsis gloria!*

*Within a lodge of broken bark,
The tender Babe was found*

*A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapped His beauty round
And as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high:*

*Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born!
In excelsis gloria!*

*O children of the forest free,
O songs of Manitou
The Holy Child of earth and heav'n
Is born today for you
Come kneel before the radiant Boy
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy:*

*Jesus, your King, is born;
Jesus is born!
In excelsis gloria!*

Thank You!

This past year has been difficult for Catherinanne and me in many ways. We were forced to deal with a lot of loss and a lot of grief. As I write this, grief is still very much a fresh part of our reality as we have been back for less than a week from having a funeral for our great niece Becky, aged seven.

As many of you know Becky was predeceased by her twin sister Andrea in January. For us, 2008 is ending the way it began. While it has been painful, there have been so many acts of kindness and love that have given us resolve to keep moving forward knowing that we are loved and embraced by God. This parish is very much a reflection of that love.

Thank you all so very much for all that you have done for us. Your cards, emails, flowers, and notes of condolence were so very much appreciated. Most of all thank you for being so patient with us and so understanding. You are great servants of Christ.

May you all have a Holy and Blessed Christmas and in the New Year may you always be cognizant of God's love in your lives.

Kevin and Catherinanne

A Message from the Wardens

As we enter the season of Advent the Wardens would like to wish each member of our Parish family all the Joy and Love and Peace that the season promises us. We pause to reflect on the past year and all of the wonderful people who have given of themselves to assist with the many ministries which occur here on a week to week basis.



We would like to recognize our Choir and Musical Director Andrea Morosin who put all their talent into everything they do. Thanks also to Amanda Dibbs for leading the 8 o'clock music. We thank Valerie Newell for keeping the office running smoothly through all of the activity and construction. We appreciate the great efforts of Mark Charlton who works tirelessly to maintain our books and finances. This is a large commitment of time and skill.

Thanks also to Jane Cornett who displays her love for our Children and Youth in everything she does. We are very fortunate to have her amongst us. In addition to these key staff positions we thank all those in



general who work so hard to let our light shine in the community, through Chancel, Readers, Servers, Greeters, Lay Administrators, Coffee hour hosts, meat pie makers, bakers, gardeners, handymen and women, worship committee, outreach for Justice members, Parish Leadership team members, Church school teachers, event organizers, and many more.

We also wish to thank Dr Norm Becker, and Fausto Volpatti for their contributions to ensuring our addition and renovations are done properly, and ensuring we get the best value possible. Work has progressed at a very quick pace and is looking great. 2009 will be very exciting as we get to utilize the new space to its full potential.



We are so fortunate to have Geoff Dibbs serve as our Honorary Assistant. Geoff is a dedicated Priest whose service to the people of this parish during the several months he and Margaret spend in Tecumseh is invaluable. Geoff has such a vast level of knowledge and experience, and he is present to us in so many ways beyond just Sunday Mornings.



Most importantly we are so very grateful for the talent, love and dedication displayed by Kevin on a daily basis. Having him and Catherinanne among us has been key to all of the growth and success we are enjoying. Kevin approaches everything he does with a level of care and commitment which is unrivalled by any ordained person we know. 2008 has been difficult for Kevin and Catherinanne. There have been several health issues with Kevin's family back



home in Newfoundland which are difficult to navigate through when he is so far away. We as a parish continue to pray for and support Kevin and his family in any way we can.

It is customary to provide an envelope annually where you can offer a gift to the Rector. As these are gifts, they are not receipted, and if you wish to write a cheque please make it payable to Kevin George directly. The Wardens appreciate the generosity of all the gifts Kevin offers us each day, and we encourage you all to make use of the enclosed envelope to offer your thanks to him as well.

May the anticipation of the Christ Child fill us all with the Peace of the Christmas season.

Scott Shields
and The
Wardens



A Message from the Treasurer



Financial Matters -

As the walls go up for 'Raising the Roof', we continue to receive donations and pledges. I'd like to 'firm up' the foundation of some original pledges and redraw the payment forecasts. There will be a full report at Vestry.

As I reported earlier in the last newsletter, our operating givings continue to fall short of plan. The result is a larger than planned deficit which must be funded from some of the capital contributions. Please review your annual intended givings as we approach the year end.

Lastly, a simple reminder that donations must be received by Wednesday, December 31st for us to issue a 2008 tax receipt.

Enjoy the Advent season, Christmas celebrations and New Year's festivities.

Regards,

Mark Charlton
Treasurer



REMEMBER ED SMITH?



Ed Smith is an award winning author and columnist from Newfoundland. Just over a year ago he visited our parish and spoke about his life and in particular his award-winning book, *From the Ashes of my Dreams*. Ed continues to think of St. Mark's and is in touch with the rector on a regular basis. What follows is an article that appears in THE TELEGRAM in St. John's this weekend and is reproduced here with permission from Ed himself. It gives us pause to think about what Christmas is and how we might be encouraged to take some time for what is really important. (By the way, I think my Father often told stories of this place called Older Slamanovia – I am sure of it)

Christmas In Older Slamanovia

It's an interesting study. To understand the Christmas traditions in this far-off place we need to know a little about the country and the people.

Older Slamanovia is by all measures a very poor country. The average income is probably not more than \$6-\$8000 a year. Many survive on a great deal less, depending on hunting and fishing to provide much of their food for the winter, as well as most of their income.

Most families have vegetable plots where they grow staples such as potatoes, cabbage and turnip. Fish, wild game and migratory birds, and even some vegetables are preserved through salting for consumption during the long winter months.

The very poor such as widows and many seniors are cared for by their families. It's not unusual for grandparents and even great grandparents to live with their children and grandchildren until their deaths. Seniors are held in great respect by the rest of the family, which usually depends on them to pass on traditional life skills to the younger.

It's difficult for us to comprehend in this day and age and in this part of the world, but there is no television in Older Slamanovia. Communication with the outside world is mostly through battery radio, there being no electricity in most of the smaller communities which make up 90% of the population.

Newspapers when they come at all are several days and even weeks old. People move back and forth between those small villages by boat in summer and horse and slide during winter. Hospital services may be hours away over rough seas or days by horse. People are used to putting up strangers overnight, usually refusing to take any money from anyone except commercial travelers.

Young men usually follow their fathers into the fishery. Young women are expected to marry young and raise a family. Fewer than half the children who begin secondary schools finish or 'matriculate' and fewer than half of those go on to any kind of post secondary education. Of those who do, most become teachers or clergy and do not return.

Formal education is generally limited to one room, all grade schools. Religion is an important part of the culture with most people attending worship services in largely one denominational communities. The clergyman (there are no clergywomen in the established churches) is often called upon to be the law officer, the welfare officer, the magistrate, the lawyer and the chair of the school board.

People make their own entertainment in this small country. Holidays of any kind are an excuse for a supper and dance. Chief among these is the Christmas season.

School is closed for at least two weeks. A Christmas concert in the school hall heralds the beginning of the holidays. Every student including the older boys and girls takes part in the concert which usually involves much slapstick comedy. The older people enjoy these performances greatly.

The concert ends with a visit from the old gentleman himself and the town drunk. Sometimes the two are one and the same, which adds to the general merriment. No one minds unless Fadder Navidad, as the Older Slamanovians call him, gets a little too touchy-feelly with the married women.

Young girls are on their own. Sometimes Sandy Clause, as he is better known among the younger set, has to chase them all over the hall to give them their present from the tree. Everyone gets a present from Sandy. Usually it's an exercise book and a pencil. Some of the luckier children get pencil boxes. One or two will get a small toy. The smaller students get a coloring book. It's a great start for Christmas. Sandy Clause comes again on Christmas Eve. That's where the large gifts are given. Girls could get the doll of their choice from the mail order catalogue. A well behaved young boy could be the recipient of a new coaster but this is rare because coasters are expensive in this country. One coaster will normally do a child, or even two generations of children, all their sliding lives.

Life in Older Slamanovia is very different from life here in Newfoundland and Labrador. Here children receive so many toys and gifts that they get overwhelmed and don't know what to do. Many of them wind up playing with the simpler stuff, like the boxes things came in.

Parents can't seem to fathom this. But it's easy to understand. Children like the simpler things so that their own imaginations can take over and they can do what they want themselves. Adults likewise have too much in our Christmas season. We spend hundreds and even thousands on each other buying gifts none of us need, trying to say something that a few well-chosen words would probably say better. For some reason, we find it easier to say 'I love you' with expensive gifts rather than in simple words.

Not the Older Slamanovians.. They know that gifts are only symbols of our caring, not the whole package. The monetary value of the symbol is irrelevant, especially if, like them, we can't afford it.

We are lifetimes and light years removed from those wonderful people. We can no more relate to their values and lifestyles than if they didn't exist at all. And that's sad.

The day may be coming and soon when we'll have more in common with them than we like to think. Perhaps then we'll have no choice but to examine how we are living and to what purpose.

Christmas is a time for giving, no question about it. But I believe the real message of Christmas is to remind us of what real giving is. A giving that has nothing to do with dollars and cents but with the giving of ourselves, to and for each other.

May the peace and the blessing of the Christ Child be yours.

Outreach for Justice Committee.

We offer our sincere thanks for the many gifts and other items brought in for "Seniors from Santa". The response was overwhelming. More than 30 residents at Brouillette or Extend-a-Care will be remembered because of your kindness. This is yet another example, of how very loving and caring our church can be.

CHURCH PEWS FOR SALE

Would you like to own one of the existing pews at St. Mark's by-the-Lake?

We are pleased that we were able to secure pews for the church, when renovated, from the Alzheimer's Society who purchased the former St. Anne's Church – Walkerville as their new facility. As we needed more pews for the added space, we were fortunate to be able to assist the Alzheimer's Society while at the same time acquiring the seating needed for our church at a fraction of the cost of purchasing new pews.

Once the work begins in the church we will need to remove the existing pews and we would like to make them available to our parishioners for purchase before we offer them to the wider community. Each pew will sell for \$250.

Call the church office to reserve a seat!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT ST. MARK'S BY-THE-LAKE

December 21 Advent 4

8 am. Holy Eucharist
10:30 am. Holy Eucharist
[Focus on Obedience]

In anticipation
of Christmas Eve we hear
of the sacrifice and obedience
of Mary & Joseph.

December 21 Lessons and Carols

Special Service –
*Lessons and Carols and
Christmas Tree Lighting*
7:30 pm.

*Followed By
Hot Chocolate &
Lots of Fun.*

December 24 Christmas Eve

7:30 pm. - Choral Eucharist
[Family Program]

This child friendly liturgy is always
an exciting celebration of
Emmanuel—God with Us

10:30 pm. Choral Eucharist
[“Midnight Mass”]

This liturgy usually concludes at
close to midnight
and is highlighted
with a candlelight singing
of Silent Night

December 25

Christmas Day

10:00 am. Holy Eucharist

[The Best Gift Ever]

At one time few people came out for the
Christmas Day Mass.

In the last few years it has become
a favourite of many people.

Plan on joining us on the
Birthday of Light!

“The First 50 get a Prize”