



Catch the Spirit News

Winter 2019

St. Mark's by the Lake Christmas Happenings

Festival of Lessons and Carols-December 15

(7:30 pm service with bible readings and Christmas Carols)

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve December 24 at 4 pm & 9 pm

Christmas Day December 25 at 10:30 am



RECTOR'S LETTER

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I find myself in an unusual situation as I write this letter. I find myself over halfway through Advent, over halfway to Christmas and I am oddly ill-prepared. Normally, by this point I have some sort of thought or direction about what I will be preaching on Christmas Eve. Normally, I have the majority of Christmas gifts purchased and I might even have some wrapped. Normally, I would have been listening to Christmas music and would be beginning to really enjoy the season of Advent and the preparations for Christmas. This year, though, I find that the first two weeks have slipped by and none of what I normally would have done is done. Now, it is not that I have been sitting in a Lazy Boy, eating bon-bons, and binge watching Netflix. I've been busy with visiting parishioners in hospital and other institutions, I've been attending meetings, ordinations, and funerals, and I've been doing the work necessary to get ready for our Sunday worship and other church activities. I have been busy with what is, honestly really important stuff. In the first two weeks of Advent I have not found the time to listen to the call of John the Baptist and to really prepare the way of the Lord in my life.

Believe it or not, that is not far off from the experience of the first Christmas. Two thousand years ago people were really busy dealing with the Romans, living by the law and observing all of its tenets, and doing what needed to be done to put food on the table and keep a roof over their families' heads. People in the first century were really busy with what is, honestly, really important stuff. The only people that knew anything was going on, that God was coming into the world in the flesh, were Mary and Joseph and Mary's cousin Elizabeth and that's only because they had left some space in life for God to tell them. Nobody else was preparing the way, and because of that there was no fanfare, no excitement, and no fireworks when Jesus was born. Only a few shepherds who happened to have some spare time on their hands in the middle of the night heard that something was going on from the angel choir and wandered over to Bethlehem to see what was up. Basically, this incredible thing, the coming of God into the world and into human life, slipped past everyone without notice.

That is still a risk in the 21st century. The coming of God into the world and into human life can easily slip right past us while we're doing what is, honestly, really important stuff. Fortunately, this is not a new or novel problem. The roots of this problem are ancient and so, over two thousand years, the church in her wisdom has developed ways to help us back on track, to help us prepare the way of the Lord, to help us take notice of this incredible thing that is happening with God coming into the world and into our lives. Beginning on the 17th of December, the church invites us into seven days of disciplined devotional preparation, a time of daily prayer. In this time the church gives us a way to focus our prayers on the coming of Christ. The hymn *O Come, O Come Emanuel*, is a compilation of the seven "O Antiphons". One of the "O Antiphons" is used each day in daily prayers through the last seven days of Advent, allowing us to focus and prepare the way of Lord by calling Christ to enter our lives bringing us the blessings and joys of the kingdom of God. To help us with this a small pamphlet will be shared on Sunday with a very short devotional that you can use each day as you prepare to celebrate Christmas. Please join me through the last few days of Advent in preparing the way of the Lord in our lives through prayer and devotion. Please join me in making room for something that is honestly, really important, calling Christ to enter our lives. Please join with me in really getting ready for Christmas and not just being busy. I wish you and your loved ones every Christmas blessing.

Yours in Christ,

Robert Lemon +

The Rev'd Canon Robert Lemon



Building

During the recent annual inspection of the Church premises we were alerted by building workers at the Montessori school they thought our bell tower was leaning. We had it inspected but it is not an issue but designed that way. It did, however, bring to our attention a long crack in the mortar to the left of the Church entrance. On further inspection no major damage is indicated. The mortar will be redone as soon as weather permits but will necessitate a contractor with a lift device due to Ontario health & safety requirements. An amount has been included in the 2020 Draft budget to cover.

Carolynne Mastellotto

On Jan. 5th, after the 1030am service, let's enjoy an Epiphany Lunch together! We will celebrate with the Kings! Feel free to bring in cookies, desserts, veggies or snacks. A hot meal will be provided.



*Wishing you a joy-filled Christmas
and
Many blessings in 2020*



OUTREACH JUSTICE TEAM

Outreach team is collecting gifts for New Song Church Christmas party which is held annually for children in their neighbourhood. They never know how many children to expect but it all works out. The party is December 18,

Jeannine St. Louis will be delivering on December 16 so all gifts need to be at the Church by the 15th.

The team is also collecting for seniors in Retirement homes who may otherwise not receive gifts. Alyce Sandie is spearheading this. She receives names from the homes with what the person may need or want and as usual more parishioners sign up than there are recipients.

It's always a joy to support these two events.

Carolynne Mastellotto

DEANERY HOSTED HOLIDAY BOWLING PARTY ALL WELCOME!

FAMILY HOLIDAY BOWLING PARTY

SUNDAY JAN. 5TH
2:00PM
ROSE BOWL LANES,
2482 DOUGALL AVE.

HELP SUPPORT THE CAMPUS FOOD BANK BY BRINGING A DONATION of:
Canned Fruit or Veggies/Pasta
Sauce/Peanut Butter/Hot Cereal

Pizza, pop, shoes and bowling

RSVP to Cynthia by December 22nd
With names, ages and parish at
cynthiaconnell2@gmail.com or text
519 981 9603

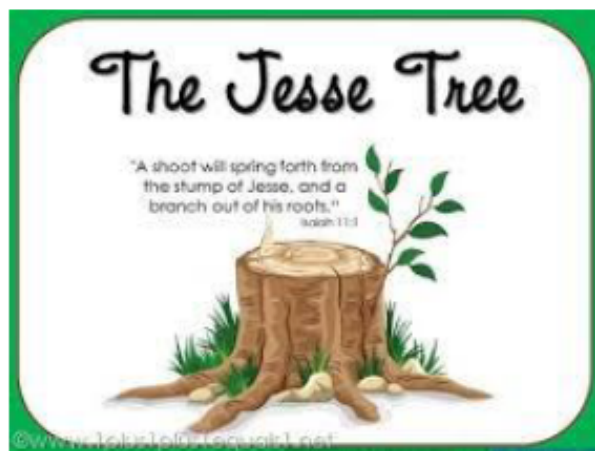
St. Mark's By the Lake families,

As we enter the season of Advent, the children will be learning many stories of the spiritual family tree of Jesus in the tradition of the **Jesse Tree**, retelling many of the Bible stories that lead to Christ's birth.

The symbol of the Jesse Tree comes from Isaiah 11: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of it's roots". Jesse was the father of King David. When King Saul turned away from God, God rejected him as king and sent the prophet Samuel to the farm of Jesse near Bethlehem in search of a new king from among Jesse's eight sons. David, the youngest and a shepherd boy, was chosen. David became a great king and it was in his line, the Jesse line, that Jesus Christ was born a thousand years later in fulfillment of the prophecies.

For the season of Advent, we would like to give each family the opportunity to participate in making a **care box** to be given to someone in our community. The children will be bringing home a handout called 'Gifts for the King'. There are several different care boxes to choose from. As a family, if you would like to participate, simply choose a care box for the Advent season to prepare and then bring it back to church by Epiphany (Jan. 5th). Please attach a label (provided for you) to the top of the box. We will distribute them after Christmas to local shelters, schools, programs and food banks. Thanks for helping to brighten someone's day by bringing some joy to their lives!

As you journey together through the season of Advent leading to the birth of Jesus Christ, may your family reflect on the many of the journeys of our forefathers, who led the way for the birth of our Saviour! May this season be one of Peace, Joy, Love and Hope for a world where we can use our gifts and talents to care for one another. Thank you for the joy you bring to others!



GIFTS FOR THE KING

List of suggested gifts

food box:

canned tuna or other meat
can of beef stew
macaroni and cheese mix
cookies (everybody needs a treat once in a while)
granola bars
canned soup
canned fruit or vegetables

lunch box:

crackers
granola bar
bottle of water
prepared pudding
napkin, spoon
prepared tuna or chicken snack package
cookies
napkin

personal needs box:

bar of soap
hand sanitizer
deodorant
shampoo
conditioner
hand or body lotion (unscented)
soft socks
portable tissue packet

care box:

bandages
anti-bacterial ointment
portable tissue packet
teabags
cough drops
a prayer shawl or knit scarf
optional: a nice mug

school box:

pencils
crayons
markers
small rounded scissors
tape
water-based glue
plain white paper
lined paper (wide-ruled)
ruler

GIFTS FOR THE KING BOX LABELS

LUNCH BOX

FOOD BOX

CARE BOX

SCHOOL BOX

PERSONAL NEEDS BOX

WARDENS LETTER

As we prepare for the Christmas season the wardens would like to thank the many members of the congregation who have helped out in making this year of events a big success.

A special thanks is to be given to the many volunteers for the hours of work that they do to keep our church in motion.

Greeters, readers, welcome desk workers, counters – all quietly doing God's work and helping us to be a friendly, welcoming church.

The Chancel Guild preparing for every service, especially at Christmas, Easter and other occasions throughout the year.

The choir and music programme continue to bless us in a beautiful way providing music and anthems.

The Sunday school and nursery.

Pastoral care continues their visiting to shut-ins who are unable to attend services.

There are many parishioners involved in the ministries above. The Wardens thank you for all your work and commitment to the church.

There are two envelopes for giving this Christmas season. One is for the Christmas offering and the other is for a gift for the Rector. Any amount given this time of year is greatly appreciated.

We will take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours in faith.

The Wardens



Amanda Dibbs
Rector's Warden



Carolynne Mastellotto
People's Warden



Christian Paulton
Deputy Rector's Warden



Fraser Mennell
Deputy People's Warden





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