



The Servant

St. Paul's Anglican Church - Celebrating 132 Years: 1885– 2017
12 Pine Street, Brockville, Ontario

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Christmas 2017

Rector's Message

And Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. – Luke 2:7

As we wait for the Christ Child to be born we join with Christians all over the world. We are waiting for the Son of God. We are waiting the Prince of Peace. Will there be a place for Him? Can we make a place for Him? Can we live, finally, the Peace He came to proclaim?

When Jesus was born to Mary, the world was not that much different than it is today. It was a world of indifference, violence, and injustice. God wants something better for us. God wants this for us so much that God sent his Son to show us another way. If you make a place for Jesus in your life, He will lead you to Peace.

When we look over the characters of our Christmas pageants, many of us, if we are honest, relate to the innkeeper. We are busy. There is no time. There is no room. There is no peace. We are so busy with Christmas that we have no time for Christ. I encourage you, this season, to take some extra time for prayer. Join us on Sunday mornings and come out for contemplative worship on Tuesday nights. Every Wednesday at noon we hold a Healing Eucharist. Also, find some time to pray each day on your own. Jesus is always waiting to be born in you. God is always with you.

Whatever you encounter this Christmas, be it joy or sadness, sickness or health, success or disappointment, know that God is always with you. This is the good news of Christmas. Christ our Saviour is born! Let there be peace on earth! Let there be peace within us!

My prayer for you is this: May you know the Peace of Christ this Christmas. May you open your heart to God's love. May that love so fill you that it overflows to everyone around you. May the God who wants to fill your heart be known in your home and in your life.

Have a blessed Christmas. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours in Christ,

Lynn+



Rev. Lynn Dillabough
Submitted photo

Warden's Message

Happy New Year; Happy Birthday; and Happy New Year

This may seem an unusual statement to begin this message; however, it represents three separate celebrations, or events, that affect the congregation and the life of the church here at St. Paul's.

The beginning of Advent is the beginning of the new year cycle for the church. During this time, we prepare for the coming of Christ and we celebrate with great expectation and desire for a happy event and one that we all look forward to. We will once again participate in the Reverse Advent Calendar activity whereby you are invited to utilize one of the coloured advent boxes to take home and fill on a daily basis with goods (non-perishable) that can be provided to the Food Bank in early January, replenishing their stock of items. Keep in mind that these items do not have to be all food items, but other "essential" items that are required in the normal course of life are also very welcome (e.g. health care items). And, don't worry if there is not a box for you to take home. You are more than welcome – and we are certain the food bank will more than appreciate it – to provide your own boxes complete with goodies. The second activity during this Advent season, in this same vein, is the collection of items for the 'shoeboxes' for local families.

As December 25th arrives, we once again celebrate the significant gift of the birth of Jesus. We welcome you to join with the family of St. Paul's in attending the various services which will be available to everyone on the 4th Sunday in Advent.

The end of the calendar year brings to a close the fiscal year of the parish and the hope that 2018 will bring forward a positive experience and a happy new year to all members of the congregation and their respective relations. At St. Paul's, we will finish out the current year with a financial situation that will truly prove we are a 'not-for-profit' organization; but, we look forward to 2018 bringing a renewed effort to "right the ship" and some exciting things to come, one of which will be the pilot project of expanding the Godly Play program into the community during the weekday. The new year will also present the congregation with an opportunity to meet and discuss, at the annual meeting/vestry, some important decisions that will be required of the congregation. You will hear more detail about these potential actions in the new year – action which may seem incongruous given the financial situation explained elsewhere in this newsletter; however that is one of the areas for discussion. In particular, we are looking at two significant property actions: the renovation of the washrooms to provide for accessibility (or at the very least to upgrade and make safer the current washrooms) and the decommissioning of the pipe organ.

So, to revert back to the beginning: Happy New Year with the beginning of Advent; Happy Birthday and a Merry Christmas; and Happy New Year for 2018. Best wishes, everyone!

Rod Slack – People's Warden

John Francis – Rector's Warden



John Francis, Rector's Warden

Submitted Photo

Children's Ministries

Godly Play: We have had a big change in the way we teach children about God, Jesus and the bible at St. Paul's. Godly Play, a children's liturgy program was introduced in September to an eager group of learners. This children's liturgy is offered most Sunday mornings at the 10:00am service. Exceptions to this schedule occur when Rev. Lynn deems it appropriate for a Sunday service to be intergenerational.

Godly Play invites children to learn using the kinetics of sight, sound and creativity. The former nursery room has been established as a spiritual place for children. In this room the children learn the basics of worship so that when they are old enough to participate in the church services they have a solid understanding of what is happening around them. The children are encouraged to be themselves, to learn how Christians live in the community, and to come closer to God's presence.

The practice behind Godly Play is that children can be given a gift of religious language that will allow them to express their spiritual experiences. The children are treated seriously and with deep respect. In Godly Play we never see them as cute. Godly Play teachers are guides. They present the gospel stories to allow the children to listen and wonder. The children are encouraged to find their own answers by using the materials provided. They learn respect for the space and one another.

If you would like more information about the Godly Play liturgy see Pat Alexander or contact her via: 613-556-2202 or palexander1130@gmail.com. If this method of teaching children appeals to you, we would be delighted to have you volunteer!

Messy Church: Messy Church continues to attract a core group of families. This engaging approach to family worship is popular with the attendees. Rev. Lynn leads the bible story and worship with help from volunteers. The children also participate in a related craft and oftentimes a game as well. We meet on the last Saturday of the month at 11:00am followed by lunch lovingly prepared by members of the ACW.

Our 4:00 pm service on Christmas Eve takes the place of December's Messy Church. This is a family focused service with the Nativity story told through child and youth actors. It involves lots of singing and movement and is ideal for young ones. If your child would like to volunteer for a part, please see Rev. Lynn or Pat Alexander. Participants need to be able to attend 1 rehearsal.

Submitted by Patricia Alexander



Anglican Church Women at St. Paul's

The ACW fall season began with a delicious pot luck supper on September 21st with 33 members, family and friends attending. Rev. Lynn concluded the evening with entertaining games and puzzles.

Guest speaker at the October 12th meeting was Malcolm Robinson, Executive Director of Bethany Kids in Kenya. He gave a most interesting slide presentation and talk on the excellent surgical and rehabilitative care they are providing to bring healing and hope to children with disabilities in Africa.

On October 19th, eight members attended the Regional Meeting at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Cardinal. Doreen and Wayne Thornhill of St. James, Maitland recounted experiences of their mission trips to Santiago, Cuba. Now, following the aftermath of Hurricane Irma; they will make a third trip in November to deliver much needed supplies and work in any way possible to assist with relief efforts. They are joined in their endeavour by help from St. James, St. Paul's in Cardinal and St. John's in Prescott. The offertory of \$241.05 was dedicated to the Thornhill's Cuban mission.

Saturday, October 21, 2017 was the A.C.W. Harvest Luncheon and Bazaar in the church hall. With ninety people served; it proved to be a resounding success with delicious homemade soup, sandwiches and pie. The ACW appreciates the many hours of preparation and dedication, as well as the generous donations of crafts, baking and attic treasures that went into its success.

For 2018, the ACW is planning a Secret Pal program. Those who wish to participate will submit their name with relevant information which will be drawn to learn their personal secret pal. The only obligation is to send their pal greeting cards anonymously for their birthdays and special occasions throughout the year. We expect this to be a fun, spirit building and caring way to spread kindness and to honour each other.

The Blessing Shoeboxes program is being coordinated by Patricia Birtch-Guirandou and Rev. Lynn. The boxes will be distributed before Christmas to needy parishioners of the church as well as those of whom the congregation recognizes as adults in need in the community.

For our outreach, it was unanimously voted that we donate monies to the Food Bank, Interval House, St. Paul's Youth Group and Loaves and Fishes.

At the November meeting, we were instructed by Shirley Jones who lead the group in constructing ribbon Christmas angels.

The Christmas party will be on Thursday, December 14th at 11:30 A.M. with dinner catered by Moira Taylor. There will be a gift exchange and a much awaited visit from Santa.

Submitted by Shirley Jones



The Blessing Box

Facebook was buzzing recently after a small outdoor pantry was installed on a residential street in Brockville. “Tonight I contributed to a “blessing Box” down by my house, what a beautiful idea!” reads one message. “What a wonderful idea and something to create such a sense of community,” says another. “It’s such a beautiful set-up,” says a third. The project masterminds are members of St. Paul’s Social Justice Committee, who saw it as a way to supplement the Food Bank and to fight food insecurity locally.

Constructed and installed by John Flegg in October, the Blessing Box has been stocked continuously by anonymous donations. Patrons of the Box have made use of the canned soups and some of the toiletries. Unlike the Food Bank, this small food depot is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without the need to register.

To judge by the comments in the social network, the model may be copied elsewhere in Brockville. Says one post: “I would love to try to get each of my friends to set one up in their areas! I wish I was handy to make the cabinets, cause I’d have one set up at my place in a heart beat!”

Submitted by Virginia Glover



Photo Credit: John Flegg

Milestones and Memories at St. Paul’s

Since the last edition of The Servant, the following members of St. Paul’s have been welcomed by the Lord:

Robert Phillips

Wendy Hutt

Two brand new members have joined the St. Paul’s Church family:

Cecelia Tzaferis

Noah Chevrier



A Discussion about St. Paul's Financial Situation

It has been a long-standing lament in most traditional churches that “all they talk about is money.” This is the situation regardless of how often the discussion of money occurs; although mostly only a couple of times per year. In our case; however, we probably haven't talked about it enough.

We are all aware St. Paul's Anglican Church, Brockville, is part of a charitable organization: a charity in what it is; and, a charity in what it does. Being a charity, also implies that it is a non-profit organization; and, for 2017, we can say that our church clearly fulfills that definition.

In February, the congregation, at the annual vestry meeting, approved a budget that came with a substantial deficit – a deficit that we hoped would not only be understood as necessary based on the projected revenues, but would also be a catalyst to increase the revenues to meet the budget and enable to us to properly complete and continue to operate and undertake the programs that make us what we are in the sense of fulfilling our role as a Christian church in this community. Unfortunately, this has not occurred.

A few weeks ago, an announcement was made to the congregation that summarized the current financial situation, but wasn't too expressive due to the constraint of time. Thus, I am taking this opportunity to expand on that notice, and to give a little more background while asking for the help and guidance of the congregation, particularly as we approach the upcoming annual vestry meeting. We need to do something.

The in-church announcement commenced with a hypothetical example to relate it to the personal and individual level. The bottom line was how difficult it is to operate a household when the money isn't there to cover expenses. This situation is exactly what is facing this Parish, at this time.

For those who attend services on a regular basis, there doesn't appear to be any issue. The church has been refinished inside and a new roof has been installed. There is talk of new initiatives; there seems to be lots going on (just look in the events bulletin); the services go ahead as normal (no one goes without a wafer or wine at the Eucharist); the music is varied and valuable (and will sound even better once the sound system is properly updated); the lights work; the kitchen is well stocked; and, everything appears to be moving along without a hitch. Unfortunately, the *appearance* is just that: **appearance**.

Behind the façade, the church is like any other institution, including our homes: an ongoing financial struggle. In real terms, the budget approved by the congregation required an average weekly income of \$3,687; but to the end of October the average weekly givings amounted to only \$3,055. In other words, to meet our operational needs, we spend, on average, \$632 a week more than we take in. This is 20% more than we take in each week. It doesn't take much to understand that over the course of year this amounts to more than a \$32,000 hole in our finances.

A Discussion about St. Paul's Financial Situation cont...

The dilemma, and this goes back to the earlier statement regarding appearances, is that while we look good, that is because we also have a separate category of funds that are unrelated and dedicated to the capital nature of the facility and not available for the operation of it. While it's good to have friends eager to donate to upgrading the facility, it is up to us to maintain the facility so we can continue to carry out our good works as the parish intends.

So, going back to the beginning: here we are; how do we move forward, because we certainly know this current rate of deficit operation is not sustainable?

Simple economics tells us that in a deficit position there are only two options: increase revenues or decrease expenses. If life were only that simple!

Throughout this year we have been diligent in watching our budget in relation to our expenses, keeping in mind the vast majority of our expenses are of a non-discretionary nature (if we want to continue to operate as we do and follow our mandate as an independent, viable operation). In most of the expense categories we have operated, and continue to operate, within the budget commitments; and, in fact, some costs have actually decreased from last year.

If the majority of expenses are not controllable, and they are not (almost 80% of our expenses are necessary or non-discretionary, i.e. salaries, facility upkeep and operation, utility requirements, diocesan requirements, service contracts), then we have very little we can do to go about decreasing expenses. The answer, therefore, is the need to increase the revenues, which have decreased from previous years.

There is a story told – in essence a theory applied in “olden days” – that if everybody tithed (that is giving 10% of income to the church), then 10% of the money received would pay for the ministry; 10% would pay for the facility; and the remaining 80% would cover all of the programs of that church. In the real world in which we live, the days of tithing at 10% seem like a myth. In fact, the days of “tithing” at all seem to have gone the way of the dodo for most. Facing reality, we know that not everyone is in a position or has the capacity, on an individual basis, to significantly impact the situation with an increase in offerings. In fact, our reality is, consistent with most organizations/institutions, that currently 10% of the people provide 60% of the revenue; 70% provide 20% of the revenue and the middle 20% of the givers make up the remainder.

In attempting to figure out why the revenues are down, there are six potential causes. It is doubtful that any one of these causes is the culprit: more than likely it is a combination of all six.

Firstly, we are faced, as are all organizations – and many communities as well – with the current demographics. Our population is, although I hate to use this term, getting older, and also passing on. People who used to strongly support the church financially either no longer can or have de-



A Discussion about St. Paul's Financial Situation cont...

ceased. With the changing culture and economic realities facing younger families, the financial contributions do not make up for those losses, if they even attend or contribute at all.

Secondly, people are just not knowledgeable about the financial situation facing the church, because we don't talk about it enough or provide the necessary information. This is a fault of those of us in church leadership positions and we will be do our best going forward to rectify this situation – not to scare people, but to inform them. As mentioned earlier, things aren't always as they appear.

Thirdly, there may be some among us who adhere to the "time/talent/treasure" concept of God's gifts and rely mostly on the "time/talent" aspects and hope that others look after the "treasure" part. At the risk of offending some people, but to make the point, attitudes such as "I bake pies and make sandwiches for church events and that's my contribution" or "I sing in the choir and that's my contribution," are valid comments and valuable contributions, but don't pay the bills.

Fourthly, and this goes back somewhat to the "tithing" aspect of church offerings, there are so many other organizations in existence that people feel a strong dedication to support specific charities for personal reasons, that a form of "tithing" does exist – just not directly to the church. I'm sure we can all give examples of the many charities we support outside of the church, and if we were to total up these amounts throughout the year we may come very close to a significant "tithe" amount. We should be happy that we do support those many worthwhile organizations and should continue to give that support. At the same time, we also have to remember our base charity and do what we can to help there as well.

Fifthly, when was the last time the amount of regular offering was amended, or only placed as an offering for the Sundays in attendance at church? For example, routine says to take \$X from the wallet each week and it becomes exactly that: routine. Others who use the PAG and never have to look in their wallet or purse each week, may not think to amend their offering from time-to-time. Inflation impacts us all in our regular lives and it also impacts on those activities we support, we just don't always see or react to the impact. Others may only provide an offering when they attend on Sundays (like buying a ticket to an event) and forget the church goes on the weeks they are not present. All of these actions impact on the total amount of funding received each week.

Sixthly, and somewhat relating the point five above, regular offerings get split into two parts when special fundraising is requested. For example, when funds were being raised for the new roof, regular offerings remained the same but were split into two parts: capital and operating. After the direct fundraising is concluded, the operating portion continued, but the total did not go back to the initial offering level.

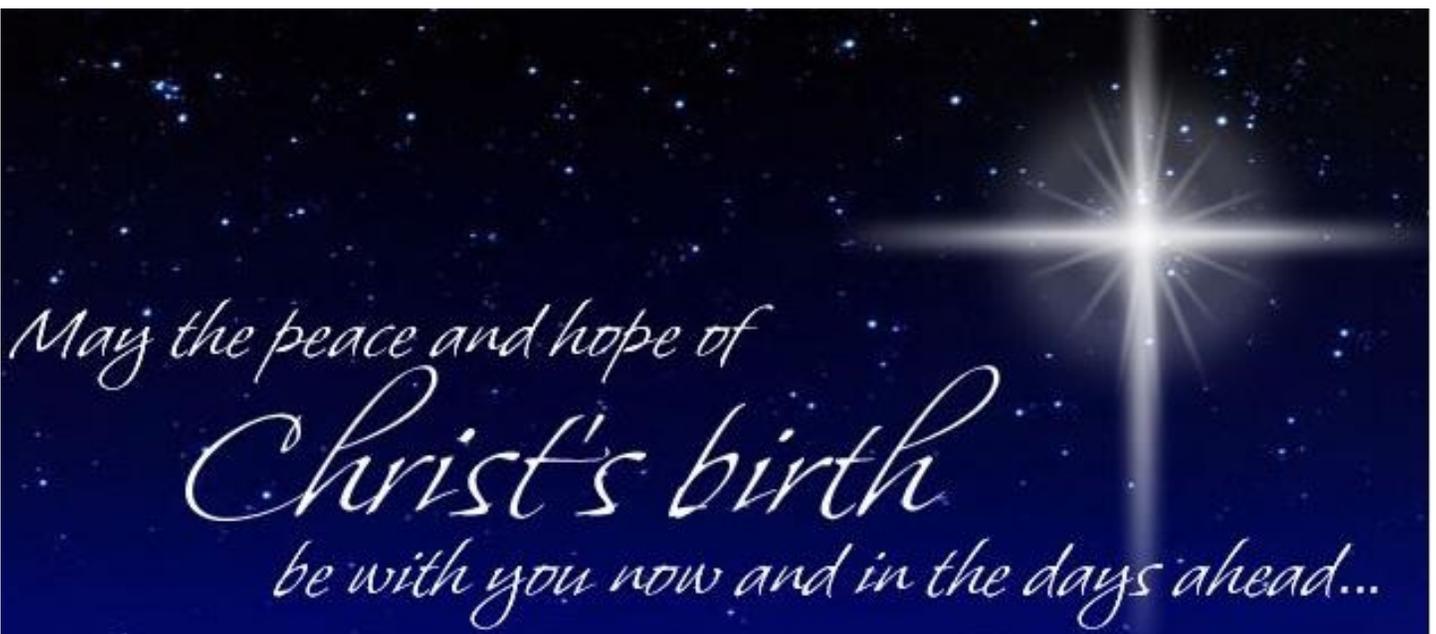
So, what happens now?

A Discussion about St. Paul's Financial Situation cont...

If you have read this message this far and are still continuing to read it, then you probably know two things: when you look around and see the beautiful facility in which we worship on a regular basis you see everything that is positive; and, when you look at the financial statements you see a record of a significant amount of investment. This might lead you to believe the message being delivered in this article appears to be like "Chicken Little" remonstrating about disaster. It is not the intention this message be a scare-tactic, although some might read it that way. It is to present the reality. The reality is, that the "investment" represents only a small amount of "reserve" which gets rapidly eaten up at the rate we are compiling a deficit; while the remainder of that "investment" is funds that are legally dedicated to specific capital activities and cannot be used for operational initiatives.

No one wants to go back to 1943 when the church was faced with this type of situation and the church was closed down, with everything conducted from the church hall. In fact, no one wants to go back at all. It was mentioned earlier that we have a mandate to continue as an independent, viable church. While not a written, cast-in-stone "mandate", it's more a desire to remain the historical and traditional St. Paul's Anglican Church – an independent member and supporter of the Diocese of Ontario and the Anglican Church of Canada, who fulfills a valuable need for this community and the people in it. Please help to keep it so.

John Francis, Chair, Finance Committee



ACW Pot Luck Celebration



Clarke
Three Generations
Debra, Kalie and
Nancy Clarke

Two Families who attended the ACW Potluck Dinner in September were represented by three generations.
Photos Credit: Marie Blair

Birtch
Three Generations
Patricia and Olivia
Birtch-Guirandou and
Carole Birtch



ACW Bazaar and St. Paul's Paints Photos



Bea Slack and Gillian Shaw

Photo Credit: Marie Blair

St. Paul's Paints

Natalie Edwards gave instruction and guidance to a group one evening as they undertook painting.

Photo Credit:
Monica Edwards



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