

From Steve's Desk

As we come to the season of Advent this year the Middle East is once again in a state of tension. We are focused on the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. With others around the world, we long to see peace in the region and between its people.

And yet this is also a time when Christians look back to that ancient land and to the event that changed history, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The coming of God into his creation, entering in, in the only form that could contain him - as a human being. The witness of John's gospel was that:

"The Word became flesh and lived among us. We gazed upon his glory, glory like that of the father's only son, full of grace and truth."

As a result, even within the vastness of our universe, each person, made in the image of the creator, is unique and of great worth.

But the coming of the Son of God also proclaimed that God had finally acted to fulfill his promises. In the town of David a Saviour had been born – the long promised Messiah, the Christ. And his birth was the sign that peace between God and his rebellious creation was now possible. As the heavenly host proclaimed for all time:

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace upon earth among those in his favour".

In Advent we are also reminded that we look forward to a second event, when Jesus will return to bring fulfillment of God's promises. To us this may seem as unreal as the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah must have seemed to those inhabitants of Galilee going about their daily lives. But the reality that God remains in control and will perfect his new creation finally with justice and peace and with the coming of his kingdom, is what makes sense of our world and our present experiences and gives us true hope.

So the Christian message rings out during this season, speaking of the significance of every person in God's sight, of His desire that we know peace with Him and with each other, and giving hope to each one of us and to our world. This is a Season for proclamation and for true hope.

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God was in the manger. Let us pray for His peace in our hearts and in His world.

As Chris and I say goodbye at the end of December we are grateful that God brought us to St. George. It has been a privilege to have been a part of God's ministry here. We leave with many memories of special times, but most of all with the warmth of friendships that have grown as we have shared in the many challenges over the past 4 years.

You will remain in our prayers during this time of transition as you select your new incumbent and move ahead to fulfill God's purposes for you at Yonge and Churchill.

Our greetings at this special time of Advent and Christmas.

God's blessings.

Steve

Parish Selection Committee News:

Good news for everyone. The Parish Selection Committee (PSC) is now in full operation, having had a long awaited meeting with Rev. Simon Li (Bishop's representative) and our Diocese appointed facilitator Susan Graham-Walker.

We are currently hard at work going through the mass of visioning material that we have all had a part in preparing over the past few years for our re-development project in order to see what can be used to help in preparation of a Parish Profile. Susan has also supplied us with a number of guidelines and samples of recent profiles done for other parishes to aid in our planning. The committee will be reaching out to all in the parish in the early new year to obtain the needed parish input as well. It is our plan currently to facilitate this input in the form of a survey which will be supplied both in paper format for those without computer access as well as making use of a service which will house it electronically and formulate an analysis for us to allow even those not personally in attendance at the time we hand out the questions to take part. The analysis possible from this service also will aid us in determining the outcome.

Remember, we all have a part to play in this important step in our future development here, and we will be informing everyone of our progress along the way.

Prayer Group

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God, our Saviour, who wants everyone to saved and to understand the truth."

1Timothy 2:1-4 New Ling Translation.

This is the purpose of the prayer group: to intercede for the needs of others. Would you like to pray for others in a small group setting? You are invited to speak with any member of the prayer group: Lori Grauds, Steve Shaw, Janet Kirk, Chris Shaw, Muriel Thompson or Margie Lyttle.

News from the Church School:



On the first Saturday of November several of our church school teachers attending a Teacher's Conference held at St. John's York Mills. The day included a key note speaker and many interesting workshops plus a time of fellowship, prayer and worship. I believe each of us took away material that will be helpful for use in our parish children's ministry.

We all enjoyed a wonderful workshop about Bible Storytelling and hope in future months to invite this extremely creative storyteller Cheryl Thornton to our church for all our children to enjoy.

Kathy, Geoff and Stella attended an interesting workshop on MESSY CHURCH that added to their own creativity.

I attended a workshop on meditative prayer for children that was quite moving and another looking at Trends for Children's Ministry in parishes today.

The second of these two workshops took a look at current issues shaping life for children and their families and just what this means for ministry leaders and for parishes. This was an eye opener and we at St. George are very blessed with the committed families we have. The trend suggests that parishes can expect families with children to attend once in three

weeks and also that those families will disappear by confirmation time. So where is the hope in all this? Well indeed hope is present. Take a look at our own situation. We have not had children disappear for the most part here at St. George - so well done families and let us keep bucking the trend. Perhaps we can set a new trend that will be a model for parishes in the future.

Kathy attended a workshop led by the Rev. Judy Rois, Executive Director of the Anglican Foundation of Canada. Judy has created a new Youth membership and has produced a Book called the Happy Adventures of Hope Bear. This book may now be found in our church library. Judy is highlighting the needs of children in our own country particularly in Northern Canada and recommends that kids help kids and so hopes that children will collect toonies that can then be forwarded to the Foundation as part of the "Kids Helping Kids Trust Fund" earmarked for a variety of needs and initiatives. I hope we can get involved in this program during the season of Lent. Please check out the book in the library. Note that you can purchase a beautiful bear named "Hope". Funds from this purchase will also go to helping children and youth.

We are fast approaching our Advent Season and our Advent Event. We look forward to seeing everyone at this special evening of fellowship, food, creative and worship time together. This will mark the beginning of our Advent Season of preparation for the birth of Jesus. Those new to the parish will be our special welcomed guests for this evening.

Our Christmas Nativity takes place on Sunday morning, December 23rd with rehearsals for those taking part on December 15th at 10:00 a. m. and December 16th during church school time. We look forward to this very special day.

Please also mark all the other important dates during December including the Advent Carol Service preceded by Christmas Carols in our Parish Hall on December 16th.

Another very important evening will be our farewell party for the Rev. Steve Shaw and his wife Chris on Saturday, December 15th at 7:00 p.m.

Please make note of a special Family Service at 7:00 p. m. Christmas Eve.

Missional Church Workshop

On the last Saturday of October Doug Heyes and Janet Kirk attended a workshop at Trinity College looking at "Alternative Worship" and in particular what works and what needs work.

Both of us found this workshop helpful because there was an honest conversation about the process and good feedback from parishes that have set up Alternative Worship and how it is or has worked in their setting.

The facilitators stressed the importance of discernment and prayer about what works in society today to attract the "D" church, new to faith and those simply returning to church. Congregations need to look at their situation, their volunteers & staff and recognize the importance of the being mindful of the time commitments. Once that is sorted out the next step is planning and reviewing those plans, engaging people who enjoy playing guitar and other musical instruments and be prepared to be flexible. All presenters stressed that such services should not be incorporated into existing worship. Existing services are important and not all new people choose alternative worship.

Choosing times that work for the individual congregations is also key. Some choose late in the day on Sunday, others choose a Saturday evening time. One congregation has a gathering of people simply to jam with music and after an hour incorporate this into a service in a "Bistro" setting. That congregation calls this worship "Fam/Jam". Another congregation chooses late afternoon Sunday with a much more structured plan. Being able to think outside the box is very important. In each case this worship speaks to a percentage of their congregations but both congregations constantly monitor and re-evaluate. No experimental liturgy is used without Diocesan permission.

We were warned that perceived change always brings an element of stress and can be painful for those choosing only traditional styles of worship. Be prepared for criticism and use that criticism as a tool in discernment because constructive criticism is always helpful.

Another key piece of advice is knowing when to take a pause. Are your volunteers tired? Is it time to re-evaluate? It is okay if what you have planned does not work! This is all part of the learning and growing together in faith.

We left this day empowered by the facilitators and encouraged to looking ahead to the future exciting "Alternative Worship styles St. George on Yonge" will discover through discernment and prayer.



DATES TO NOTE ON YOUR CALENDAR

SERVICES

Weekday services will end on Wednesday, December 5, and resume on Tuesday, January 8. Sunday services will continue as usual each week.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16th

Advent III

5:00 p.m. – Carolling with Refreshments

7:00 p.m. – Advent Carol and Lessons

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23rd

10:30 a. m. – Eucharist with Christmas Nativity & Carols

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24th

7:00 p.m. – Family Christmas Eve Celebration

10:30 p.m. – Eucharist

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25th

Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. – Family Eucharist

KEY EVENTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st

4:00 p.m. – Newcomers Gathering

5:00 p.m. – Advent Event

Our whole parish family is invited to celebrate the beginning of Advent



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15TH

7:00 p.m. – Farewell event for the Rev. Steve Shaw and his wife Chris

Annual Vestry Meeting

Our Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 24, 2013 following the 10:30 a.m. service.

To ensure that the report package is circulated in advance of the meeting, please send reports to the office **as soon as possible.** Reports must be in **by Sunday, February 3, but please send sooner if possible** so that preparation on the package can begin before February 3. Please send reports to **office@stgeorgestoronto.ca** or drop off at the office. Thank you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Church Office will be Closed Saturday, December 22 to Tuesday, January 1 inclusive.

In an emergency, please call the church and, when prompted, dial "1" to be forwarded to a member of the pastoral staff. You will be able to reach the pastoral staff any time – day or night!

The Altar Guild will Decorate our Church for the Christmas season. If you wish to contribute for the purchase of poinsettias, please complete the "Altar Flower Request Form" (which is available from the Ushers) and place on the offertory plate in an envelope with a donation **by Sunday, December 16.** Thank you.

Diocesan Prayer Conference

This Conference, which takes place every two years under the auspices of the Diocese, was held at St. John, York Mills, on Saturday, October 20. The programme, which ran from 9 am to 3pm, combined 3 main addresses, and opportunities for small group discussion and worship. Max Wynter, Stephen Powell, and Chris Shaw attended from St. George.

The title this year was *"Lord, teach us to pray": Living the prayer that Jesus taught*. When I first saw the title, I was a bit disappointed, thinking we've heard a lot about the Lord's prayer and it is so familiar, what else is there to say! How wrong can you be!!

The Reverend Dr. Michael Knowles who currently teaches at McMaster Divinity College, led us through the prayer with wonderful insights into how this prayer reflected the relationship between Jesus and the Father, and also was an expression of Jesus own ministry.

A few notes from the introduction:

Father – prayer is not about us getting everything right – it's not about performance – it all depends on the one to whom we pray. Jesus invites us into a relationship with God in a way that he defines - "our Father". Our prayer is formed by his knowledge of God. God gives to us because he loves us – not because we love him. Our prayer is predicated on the nature of the one to whom we pray.

Our – means we are never praying alone, but with all those who are calling on this name – the name of the one Jesus calls 'Father'. And when we come to pray, Jesus is already praying, interceding for us.

Calling on God – the whole of Jesus ministry was an exercise in obedience. Jesus described himself as one who is unable to do anything without God. Prayer is learning about not doing everything. It is an exercise in childlikeness. Prayer is more about listening than speaking.

It was a day of excellent teaching and insights into both the mystery of prayer and the simplicity of prayer.

Summary notes of his talks, with biblical references, provided by Dr. Knowles have been photocopied and are available from Craig Gustafson in the office. A study of these would be very rewarding.

If you would like to borrow the CDs of Dr. Knowles talks, they are also available on loan from Craig in the office.

Submitted by
Chris Shaw

Diocesan Outreach Networking Conference October 2012

Provided annually the outreach conference is designed not just for outreach teams but for all Anglicans. The aim is to help us learn more about the many needs of people and how to go beyond charity in meeting those needs.

This year's conference focused especially on justice and inclusion for all.

The keynote speaker was Terry MacCullam CEO of Loft Community Services (Leap of Faith Together). LOFT began in the 1950's as an Anglican outreach ministry with 2 houses for young men and women with mental health and addiction issues. To-day it is one of the largest providers of assisted housing in the province with more than 1,000 units.

Mr. MacCullam urged us "Don't silo as individual parishes. Collaborate".

For sometime at St. George's we have been trying to work in community with other churches and hope to do more of this.

Murray MacAdam (Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy consultant) said "Frankly, outreach and advocacy can be a tough slog" and "this conference gives people working on these issues a shot in the arm. It helps us remember that justice is at the core of our faith."

There were 14 workshops provided covering a wide variety of issues. We were able to make two choices, one morning and one afternoon. There were two separate workshops for young people. (They returned to the large group bubbling with energy and enthusiasm)

In the closing Eucharist Bishop George Elliott, presider, raised up in prayer many of the ministries discussed during the day and told us "We are challenged to look at how God is working in the world and how to engage in it." He said "I hope we are able to witness to Jesus in work and in need and never lose the habit of looking for Jesus in the lives of others and in our world."

My personal wish is that many more from St. George's could have been there to become energized and enthused.

Why are we involved and devoted to outreach work?

Because : Jesus said Love one another as I have loved you
John 15:12.13

And Those who give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty and clothing to those who need It, who welcome the stranger, care for the sick and visit those in prison do so as if to HIM.
Matt 24:31-45

In our hearts we know HIS love, so our hearts reach out to guide us to help others.

Muriel Thompson

ESL / Alpha course

About a year ago, the congregation of St. George's moved into their new building on Yonge Street. When we opened our front doors, there was a steady stream of visitors asking whether we were planning to re-start our ESL programs. With the certain knowledge that an ESL program would meet the needs of many in our community, it became clear to a group of our volunteers that this was a priority.

In the spring, Muriel Thompson and Chris Shaw started an informal ESL Conversation group with some interested students. Due to popular demand, this group continued throughout the summer with Craig Robertson coming on board as a teacher. One day, a new member of our congregation, an ESL teacher herself, approached the Outreach Team about getting involved. Thanks to Menik Senanayake and her friend Ian, we have been able to offer both beginner and intermediate ESL classes twice weekly this fall. With as many as 25-30 people attending some weeks, we have enjoyed seeing our beautiful new building put to good use. Parishioners Pearl Ang, Maureen Savage, and Sylvia Seucharan have provided a warm welcome and hospitality to the students on behalf of the congregation.

A further development has been the introduction of the Alpha Course in an ESL friendly format. Many in the congregation have been involved in the Alpha Course in the past, and know that it provides a great opportunity to learn about what Christians believe, in a relaxed format with the opportunity to ask questions and share your thoughts with others. The Alpha Course has been adapted for various groups, including youth, seniors, people in the workplace, and people for whom English is a second language. Over 10 weeks this fall, our Alpha Team has welcomed a diverse group of people for lively discussions about the Christian faith. We have laughed, talked, eaten meals together, and come to know much more about our shared world. Thanks go out to Chris Shaw, Peter Grauds, Michele Santoo, Jackie Coxworthy, and all those who contributed to the success of the program by providing meals for our guests.

As we make plans for the new year, please let us know if you're interested in becoming part of these programs. There are many ways to participate, and many ways to help in welcoming our neighbours to our country and our church.

Submitted by Pam Prideaux

Services

Sunday	8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist (BCP)
	10:30 a.m.	Choral Eucharist (BAS)
Tuesday	8:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer (BAS)
Wednesday	12:15 p.m.	Holy Eucharist (BAS)

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Parish Library News



The library is up and running and open on Sundays for everyone. Check out the variety of books available to be borrowed.

The next edition of the newsletter will be coming out on Sunday, February 10, 2013

Deadline is Sunday, January 27, 2013 at 4:56 p.m.

Email articles to the editor: Kathy Baillie at family.baillie@sympatico.ca



REMEMBER, EVERYONE IS WELCOME AT ST. GEORGE ON YONGE CHURCH

**“To nurture our relationships with God in Christ,
with one another, and with our community.”**

**We're on the Web! See us at:
www.StGeorgesToronto.ca**

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