

# Christmas

## NEWSLETTER



### From the Rector's Desk

A couple of weeks back, I provided a glimpse of what I think church could and maybe even should be. It can't be the same old every week. We need to take risks, colour outside the lines, do things that might just jolt people into consideration of what faith is about. So, would you like to hear about the time I went too far down this road? Or did I?

I have pushed the envelope from time to time in every parish I have been. Specifically, I have always wanted to remind people that Christmas isn't about trees, presents and far too much food. Christmas is about the birth and mission of Jesus Christ.

Some might remember the Christmas here that I reworked an old story called the Christmas Guest to remind folks that Christmas is not all about good vibrations and stories that are clean and polished. In short, a man expected to meet Jesus on Christmas Eve. While he waited, three guests came to him, seemingly distracting him from getting ready for Jesus. But each time he helped the one in need. When Jesus didn't come, he was saddened, until Christ appeared and said that in fact He had visited three times and been welcomed every time.

Many years before that, I chose a path to disrupt the "perfect Christmas." It brought more criticism and complaint than anything I'd done before or since. Yet, I still think it was a good idea, but I maybe could have smoothed the edges a bit.

Country music is famous for story songs. Who hasn't been touched by Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colours". Brad Paisley's "When I Get Where I'm going"

or Alan Jackson's "Remember When". The music frames a story that evokes emotion and response.

John Michael-Montgomery recorded perhaps the grittiest real life story song ever. It maybe over reaches in the emotional connect part, but it is a story that happens in some sense, every day in our country and elsewhere.

The plot of the story is about a little girl who lives with an alcoholic dad and a drug addicted mom. Despite her love for her parents, she gets little in return. Until the night in a rage the father takes the life of the mother and then kills himself. Yep, it's hard to listen to and the video is even harder to watch.

But the little girl is spirited away to a new family, who for the first time, introduces her to love, prayer, Sunday School, and Jesus. As she sees a depiction of Jesus for the first time, she blurts out that this was the man who comforted her as she hid behind the couch the night her parents died. The first time I heard the song I cried, because I knew that this story could be real.

So as the ever risk-taking pastor who believes that Christmas is only Christmas when you look at the celebration from all angles, I put this song into the Christmas Eve service. Granted, I should have done a much better job of letting people know what was coming. However, as I told them in the Homily that followed, if we can't understand this need in our world, if we can't find it in our hearts to reach out to those in the most desperate of needs at Christmas, then we miss a big part of why Christ came to a barn as a helpless baby to challenge us all.

It's not enough to be in church and enjoy the lights and sounds and laughter and kneel quietly before God, unless we understand the call to love and

# Westminster Chimes

## December 2022

support all of God's people: a lost and lonely little girl, an old man who just wanted to see Jesus, the homeless people who will be on our streets Christmas Eve night as they are every night.

I love the colour and the joy and the sugar-rushed little ones on Christmas Eve. I love to sing the oh so familiar carols and think about the lovely birth of Jesus. Oh, wasn't he born in a barn? Weren't there stinky animals close by? Didn't some power-hungry despot immediately try to kill him?

I've talked all my life about story. I remember well listening to the golden era radio stories of Paul Harvey – titled "The Rest of The Story". He found unknown facts and heart-warming and heart-breaking details no one knew about well-known characters. I believe that Paul Harvey would want us to tell ALL of the story of Jesus, not just the parts that fit into a happy Christmas Eve. More importantly, I think God wants us to tell the entire

story. Jesus came for everyone and calls us all into love for one another.

I've tried many things at Christmas and Easter in hopes that people will see the broader picture of just what this world really is and how much God wishes we loved people as much as God does. Sometimes they worked, sometimes perhaps they failed.

But I believe that every time – even the story of the Little Girl – it came from a place of wanting people to see the big picture of faith. There's nothing wrong with stories of love and family and celebration at Christmas. But we are called to live the rest of the story. The one that isn't always pretty. To quote a somewhat famous Canadian who used to be on television – That's not news, but that too is reality!!!

Love,  
Keith



## Christmas Poetry Corner

Submitted by Karen Henkel

### *The Work of Christmas*

When the song of angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace amongst us,  
To make music in the heart.

This is the work of Christmas.

*By Howard Thurman*

**Howard Thurman (1899-1981)**, author, theologian, philosopher, educator, and civil rights leader. In 1944, he helped found the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples, one of the first racially integrated churches. He played an active role in many social justice movements. As a theologian and advocate of radical nonviolence, he was a mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others in the Civil Rights Movements.

### *From "The Mood of Christmas..."*

I will light candles this Christmas.

Candles of joy, despite all sadness,  
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,  
Candles of courage where fear is ever present,  
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.

Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,  
Candles of love to inspire all my living,  
Candles that will burn all the year long.

By Howard Thurman



# Christmas Movie Night

COME ENJOY A...

**CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH US!**

- WHO** All youth (bring your friends!)
- WHEN** Friday, December 16th at 7:00
- WHERE** St. James Westminster Church, 115 Askin St.
- WHAT** Christmas movie, hot chocolate, snacks



In November, St. James parishioners started supporting the work of Project Hope London by making sandwiches and cookies once a week for their ministry to people experiencing homelessness.

## First Coming

Submitted by Gerry Adam

He did not wait till the world was ready,  
till men and nations were at peace.  
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.  
He came when the need was deep and great.  
He dined with sinners in all their grime,  
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.  
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.  
To a world like ours, of anguished shame  
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,  
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.  
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh  
the Maker of the stars was born.

By Madeline L'Engle



## Toonies for Turkeys

St. James is once again collecting loose change (and bank notes) to go toward the Christmas hampers distributed by Church of the Epiphany. Please drop your donations in the designated offering plate in the church.

If you wish to write a cheque, please make the cheque out to St. James Westminster Church with a Memo "Church of the Epiphany". Thank you!

We also continue to collect food donations for the Epiphany Food Bank. You are always welcome to leave food donations in the shopping cart in the Vestry (between the Church and Hall).

## *St. James People: Donna and Bill Hefferton*



The smiles in this picture fit their story: two people from Newfoundland who found each other at a young age, 54 years ago, and have kept each other young ever since.

Donna & Bill Hefferton met over a smile, you could say.

Donna had just graduated from High School in St. John's Newfoundland and was invited by her dentist, Dr. Charlie Daly, to come work in his office. One day a rather "brash" hockey player from the Memorial University team rushed in and asked Donna if she could get the Doc to cap his bridge "quick" (he'd had one of many maskless, helmet-less hockey injuries typical of the times) since he had a party to go to. That beautiful teenager with the long hair and wonderful smile arranged the emergency, but was a little put off by the fellow's brash manner. He told her she was cute, and would be a great girlfriend for his baby brother, Harold. Gradually, he changed his mind.

Many further visits to Dr. Daly followed, and that fellow's manner became more and more gentlemanly and attentive until one day Donna agreed to go to a dance with him. Bill was in a university fraternity and introduced Donna to a world of fun – balls, dances, costume parties, fraternity sing-alongs, and even, notoriously, a ride in an open-top sports car that belonged to his sister, Bernice, a nurse.

He'd had a duplicate key made, took the car from her parking spot at the hospital, drove it 100 yards over to the Nurses' Residence where Donna was living, and spirited her away for the afternoon. Meanwhile, Bernice had reported her missing car to the police. Bill coolly returned it to her parking spot, waved to her where she stood in a window and walked off, happy with his afternoon date.

Dr. Daly the dentist turned out to be one of those big-hearted people who prove "pivotal" in another person's life: he wrote the recommendation that won Donna a place in Nurses' College, and set her on a path of meaningful and fulfilling work and service that best suited her nature. While Bill was born into a family rooted in the St. John's business community, and the third of four children, Donna was third in a family of nine children

that moved frequently as her dad, a pipe-fitter, followed construction jobs that took them to Toronto, Sarnia, London, Amherstburg, and back to Newfoundland. The family moved back to St. John's briefly, then moved on again, this time to Windsor, but by then Donna had her acceptance to Nursing School, so stayed, with her very old Aunt Phyllis as her main family connection.

She and Bill married and Donna finished her training, gave birth to daughter Shelley, then son Mark, and began her long and interesting career, in Intensive Coronary Care, Operating Room, and Emergency. She also did fascinating work as a Nurse researcher with a group of Irish Nephrologists working on genetic renal disease. The team's work was presented at international conferences and published in prestigious medical journals, including *The Lancet*, *Nature*, and the *American Journal of Medicine*.

Meanwhile, Bill had become a Phys. Ed. teacher at St. Clare High School for girls in Carbonear, where he, the priest, and the caretaker were the only men among 700 girls, and female teachers, many of whom were nuns. Schools in Newfoundland were denominational at the time, so he was a marooned Anglican in a sea of Roman Catholics. No problem; after two years, he landed a job at St. Joseph's School in St. John's, at the bottom of Signal Hill. His St. Clare principal, a nun, told the St. John's principal not to worry about Bill's being an Anglican, "He's a good teacher!" Bill stayed there for 27 years, leaving when St. Joseph's closed.

With one more year to go before early retirement, he was told to name his top three preferred schools for his final placement so he listed them: Vanier Elementary, Vanier Elementary, Vanier Elementary, known as a "perfect school." Persistent Bill got his choice, and finished his career as a Grade Four teacher, his first time working in a classroom instead of a gym; it was a job he found he loved. He plans to see two of his former students when the Ennis Sisters perform at the Aeolian Hall on December 5; he taught both Karen and Theresa.

Donna was invited to work with Dr. Proton Rahman, a physician-researcher at a newly formed Genetic Research Company in St. John's. When the company's overseas funding ended, Dr. Rahman referred Donna to a research group in London, Ontario.

Ready for a change, Donna made the move from Newfoundland in December 2003, eager to be nearer her siblings and mother in Windsor. Bill, who had retired early, drove up six weeks later, after renting their St. John's house, but took a wrong turn off the 401 and wound up at the bridge to the US in Niagara Falls. A very brief bit of sight-seeing and then he

made his way to Park Towers, where Donna had found an apartment for them. She had not found the new work very satisfying, so eventually moved to Cardiology at UH and never looked back; she worked with a great team of nurses and made lasting friends there.

The Heffertons also became friends with another couple, Kate Beale and Norm Kelly, whom they'd met at Park Towers and who enthusiastically 'talked up' St. James. When Bill and Donna bought the little white house across from the church on Askin Street (now the home of Welwyn Katz and Greg Yarrow), they decided on July 1, 2005, their move-in day, to take a stroll around the church grounds.

Tom James, the verger at the time, saw them and invited them to come in and look at the Church. The beauty and the peace they found there felt like home. They went to a service the next day, signed the guest book, and very soon got a visit from Rev. Ken Anderson; they bonded with him over a glass of wine and shared stories.

Soon enough, Donna and Bill became dedicated volunteers as greeters (who, back then, carried the communion cups to the altar, and passed and presented the offering plate). Bill also worked for the next seven years on the Victoria School Children's Breakfast. When Carolyn Fryer invited him to do so, she convinced him to say "Yes" by saying "Ken recommended you." So, he was back to working with children again, and loving it. Bill eventually became the Assistant Peoples' Warden, then Peoples' Warden, then Assistant Rector's Warden and then Rector's Warden, working alongside Robin Shearer, with whom he had a wonderful working relationship.

Meanwhile, Donna helped Tracy Grit with Fundraising events and became a dedicated member of the Community Breakfast Teams. When she retired from Nursing, she found she needed to be busy, working with people, and making a difference.

She graciously and kindly stepped up to help the new Parish Life Coordinator (yours truly) organize "Guess Who's Coming to Lunch" and to offer the many sessions, with Steve Mayne, Darren Meister, Dionne Aldcroft, and yours truly, of St. James's Christians Against Poverty (CAP) course.

She soon took on the Volunteer role of Chair of the Outreach Committee, hosting yearly January workshops on Poverty in London, Food Insecurity, Homelessness, Truth and Reconciliation, and Diversity. She helped the committee pick up boxes and boxes of surplus Jockey underwear to deliver at Christmas-time to London not-for-profit help centres and schools.

With her leadership, the Committee put on dinners

and dances (like the 2018 Cajun 'blast') to help pay for the Community Breakfast. She also helped raise funds for the Anglican Diocese Primate's Run for Water as well as funds to equip an Out-of-the-Cold centre with cots for people without homes.

Most recently, she has been assisting Indwell's work in furnishing the Embassy Commons apartments and making sandwiches and desserts for London's Project Hope. Donna says her work in Outreach has given her both an opportunity for personal growth and a great sense of the kindness and generosity of St. James' people.

Donna and Bill also find time for family and old friends, spending their summers in Newfoundland, where Bill has family and a group of friends who have been together since they met in Grade One.

They also spend time with their son, Mark, who is now working in London, and travel regularly to Texas to see their daughter Shelley (a nurse), her husband (also a nurse), and Bill and Donna's two beloved grandchildren, Ryder and Magnolia.

Before Covid, they had also travelled to China on a tour, and were simply astounded by the scale of the cities, the incredible newness of all the buildings, the feats of engineering. However, they were most delighted by one particular park where old people gathered to do Tai Chi, dance, sing traditional songs, and form long lines in which each person gave the person ahead a back massage, something Bill and Donna, with their love of people and of laughter, joined in to experience.

These two love life, simple as that, and remain resilient supports for each other in sickness and in health, for themselves and their extended families. They spent Covid taking long walks, sharing books with friends and neighbours, staying in touch with family, and, as Donna put it, "making sure we stayed out of hospital," knowing what a terrible burden health care staff were (and still are) shouldering.

Bill from time to time worked on writing more stories. He'd already produced two books, *Time is of the Lessons*, about teaching, and a children's book, *Charlie the Confident Crow* and is gathering ideas for a collection inspired by his 5'6" Dad, called *Sawed Off and Hammered Down: Short Tales*.

But don't wait for the book; sit down with the Heffertons and you'll be sure to find yourself in what Newfoundlanders call a "kitchen party" with wonderful tales and lots of laughter.

*Peggy Roffey, Parishioner*

## From the desk of your Family Ministry Team

We hope all St. James families are enjoying this season of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus. We know this season might be very busy for our young people with school concerts, holidays, and other special activities. During the Advent season, our goal is that your time at church can be a quiet time in the midst of this eventful time of year. We will share stories, chat, pray, and play in the children's space of the Parish Hall.

Here's some more details from our curriculum, Seasons of the Spirit:

The prophet Isaiah leads us into the Season of Advent, offering visions of a world of peace and harmony, and a child leading the way forward. We will sing a song of joy and justice with Mary, hear the promise of a child from Joseph's point of view, and take courage from Joseph's example of faithful living in troubled times.

Every week children will be invited to decorate a dove to add to our Advent wreath. They can also explore the Christmas story with several nativity scenes, moving the figures (didn't we all do that as young children?). Touching and moving the figures help young children understand the story of Jesus' birth.



We will fully explore the Christmas story at the 4pm Christmas Eve story. Come for a relaxed, family friendly service. Children are welcome to join us at the chancel steps, or watch on the screen, as we share the Gospel and a story book.

Sunday School will resume in the new year in the Season after the Epiphany. From Seasons of the Spirit:

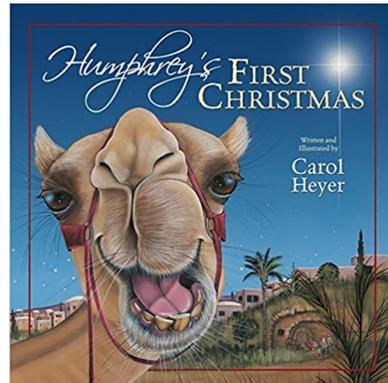
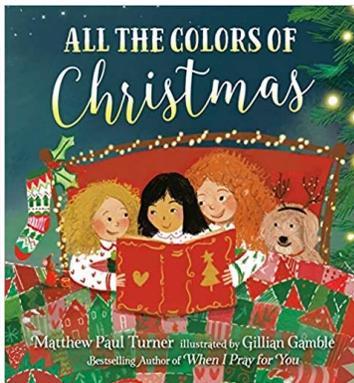
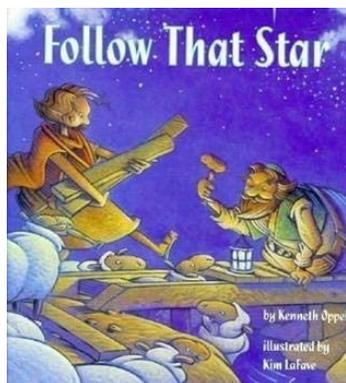
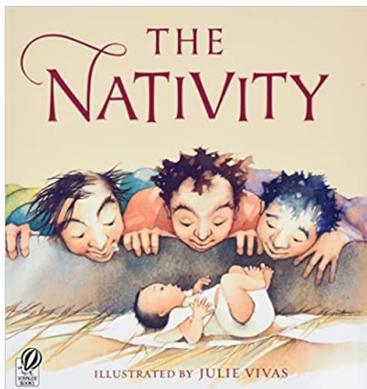
The Season after the Epiphany begins and ends in mystical encounters and words of affirmation: "You are my beloved." The call of Isaiah and the call of disciples have us reflect on our own call, decision points, and clarifying light. We spend three weeks savouring a collection of Jesus' sayings presented as the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes bend our understanding of the world around us and turn our world view upside down as we glimpse a re-imagined realm; we are reminded that we are salt and light in a world in need, and taken into the heart of the law and the gospel.

We always enjoy spending time with our young people at St. James. They are in our prayers and yours too.

Merry Christmas!  
Laura Manias, Judy Jones & Gerry Adam  
Contact us!  
laurajmanias@gmail.com 519-630-2363

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## Recommended Christmas Stories



# REJOICE!

The wilderness and dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus. It shall bloom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. (Isaiah 35:1-2a)

The third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday (Latin for "rejoice") In the midst of waiting and longing we celebrate the soon-coming of Jesus, in a stable in Bethlehem ... and in the time to come.



During our Sunday School gatherings, we are hearing Isaiah's amazing words about weapons being pounded into farm tools, a peaceable kingdom where all creatures live in harmony ... where "a little child will lead them" - where "nothing will be hurt or destroyed on God's holy mountain."

So, in the week to come, when we hear about the desert blooming, let's imagine what it would feel like to be surprised by growth when and where we least expect it!

Let's make a space in our homes where we can help a paperwhite bulb bloom...in the winter! As we watch and wait for leafy shoots and flowers, let's wonder, wait, and pray, not only for the coming of Jesus, but everything that will happen after, for the flowering of a just, peaceful, and loving world.

If properly cared for the bulb should bloom in about 4 weeks. Maybe its scent will remind us of the gifts of the Wise Ones, the tall green stalks, our growth in God's love, ...maybe the little flowers, stars in the dark night sky.

**Sunday December 11, 2022, right after the 8:30 or 10:30 am service, in the Parish Hall**  
**\*Take a small kit home or assemble it right at church**

If you would like to participate at church or take a bulb kit home, please let us know by dinnertime, Monday December 5, 2022, by emailing [gerryadam@diohuron.org](mailto:gerryadam@diohuron.org)

All ages welcome! There is no charge but please consider a donation of toonies that we can contribute to Toonies for Turkeys!

*\*Supply of bulbs will be limited, so one per person for the time being, please.  
 Photo shows bulb in glass jar (provided) – plate and pinecones are suggestions.  
 Picture of bulb blooming for your information.*

## A note from Camp Huron

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

*With thanks to everyone who makes camp such a wondrous place, from staff and volunteers, to donors and churches, to campers and families! May your Christmas be filled with joy and wonder, and blessings, blessings and more blessings than there are stars in the velvet dark sky!*

# Autumn 2022 at St. James



## Tuesday Bible Study

“Melodies and Messages, a Lay Bible Study” -Tuesdays, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, Westminster Lounge

This study works its way through the Gospel of John by delving into one chapter each week and reflecting on the words of Hymns that draw on each week's chapter. We welcome newcomers! If interested, email Peggy Roffey, [proffey@uwo.ca](mailto:proffey@uwo.ca)



## Remembrance Day 2022

Photo by Libi Clifford

## Fundscrip Cards for Christmas

Just a reminder that our church participates in the Fundscrip fundraising program. Although we generally have some gift cards available on a weekly basis if there are specific cards you would like to preorder for Christmas, we can do that for you.

The deadline for ordering is **December 12th**. See our recent email for a list of all the cards that we can order. Let us know if you have any questions. You can email me a list of the cards you want. My email address is: [judyshendavid@msn.com](mailto:judyshendavid@msn.com)

Thanks for your support!!!!

*Judy Jones*

## Special December Dates

### Brassroots Christmas at Westminster Friday, December 9, 7:30pm

Featuring Sonja Gustafson with the St. James Westminster Choir

### Bishop's Visit - Sunday, December 11

### Christmas Lessons & Carols December 18th at 10:30am

A special service with candle lighting, symbolizing the journey from Advent to Christmas, from darkness to light.

### Christmas Eve

4pm—Family Service

7pm—Jazz Mass

10pm—Communion Service

**Christmas Day Service—10am**

## Indwell Thank You

A BIG thank you to all at St. James who participated in this year's Indwell Challenge. As you may have heard, we were able to fundraise enough to DOUBLE the apartments we hoped to furnish. The challenge was initially put forth to raise money for two apartments (\$5000) but when we realized that we quickly raised more than that, the Challenge was extended and the St. James family came through! We have now raised approximately \$13,000 — enough to fully furnish 5 apartments. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

## Christmas Flower Donations

If you would like to remember or give thanks for a loved one by donating toward the **Christmas flowers in the Church**, please contact the church office at [office@stjameswest.ca](mailto:office@stjameswest.ca) or 519-432-1915 by **Sunday, December 18th**.

Please let us know who the donation is being made by and in whose memory or honour the donation is being made. Cheques or cash should be made out to “St. James Westminster” with “Altar Guild - Christmas Flowers” in the memo.

