

Passings & Blessings

We recently lost Rita Purcell. We uplift her soul to our Lord. May the Lord bless her and keep her forever in his love.

We welcome back Sterling Bennett, seen at recent services. Our prayers go out for his continued recovery.

Happenings

Happenings around the parish.

- **Parish Council Meetings** – Dec. 22nd and Jan. 21st.
- **Coffee Hour** – Wednesdays, 11 a.m. Parish Hall.
- **Keenagers** – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, every month at 10 to 11 a.m. – Civitan Hall.
- **Pray K7A** – Dec. 28 @ 7:00 p.m. Location St. Johns Anglican Church
- **Community Games Night** – January 9th, Food @ 5:30, Games start 6:30.

If you have any events you would like to have posted here you can drop us a line at: stjohns.smithsfalls@gmail.com "Events" in the title.



This Issue

Advent – Part 2 and Music Delivered [P.1](#)

Synod & Advent Walking [P.2](#)

Winter Gear Giveaway and Readings [P.3](#)

Sounds & Upcoming Events [P.4](#)

Advent: Adventure In Discovery

In this edition, we conclude our two-part adventure of discovery around Advent. Last month we focused in on the first week in Advent and its theme Hope. We pick it up from there as we explore the rest of our season of renewal. Our next candle is: **Peace**.

Known as the Bethlehem Candle, it symbolizes the peace brought by Jesus' birth and prepares for his arrival. It reminds us of the Holy Family's experience in Bethlehem. It reminds us that Christ is the "King of Kings." We await the coming of a new king from Bethlehem.

When you consider the hustle and bustle of Christmas, peace may not be the first thing that comes to mind. But it's important to pause and consider this gift of peace that God gives us in His Son Jesus. In fact, He wants to give us peace at all times in every way (2 Thessalonians 3:16)—that's a big promise! So, take a breath, invite God's peace into your home and heart. Lay your burdens at His feet and trust that He's fighting battles on your behalf.

For reflection:

- ❖ What helps you embrace God's peace?
([continue on Pg. 3 – Advent Adventure](#))

Seasonal Music Series Continues

In December St. John's was treated to not one but two seasonal music events. The first event was the second in our series of Fall concerts. The second event was our annual Lessons and Carols service.

First Event: Fall Concerts – Part Two

On Saturday, December 6th, St. John's welcomed guests to our concert and organ fundraiser which featured fabulous music in the Celtic tradition. "Masters in the Hall – Celtic Music for Christmastime" was a well-attended evening of stirring, Celtic pieces performed by artists Kyle Burghout and Susan Toman of the Celtic Trio.

A third group member, Justin Theriault, unfortunately was absent due to illness.

Regardless, attendees were treated to magical fiddle and harp performances by true masters.

An intermission at the midway point of the evening occurred. Refreshments, including festive cupcakes and mulled cider were served to appreciative guests. Folks also availed themselves of the opportunity to

([continue on Pg. 2 – Seasonal Music](#))

Synod Summary

The 145th Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa opened with a Eucharist on the evening of October 23, 2025, at Christ Church Cathedral.

The Rev. Dr. Christopher Brittain quoted from Archbishop Shane Parker's charge opening the 2024 Synod. *"We must always remember that God is already at work in the world, and our task is to participate in God's work by listening in a new way to the Holy Spirit."*

First order of business was a report from the General Synod. Diocesan members reported that following the synod they were shocked by Bishop Shane Parker's name being included in the nominees, by his subsequent election; and were awed two days later at his very moving installation as Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Episcopal Election to determine Bishop Shane's successor will take place on February 28, 2026. Information on the electoral process can be found [at this link](#).

An update on the Triennial Cycle and current priorities came next in the form of an overview of the progress on the Shape of Parish Ministry Consultations. This update will be summarized in a subsequent issue of St. Johns Today.

Updates were provided for diocesan finances, community ministries and the All My Relations Episcopal Panel. Reports were given on recent contextual ministries within the dioceses. St. John's own Games Night was a featured presentation.

Finally three reflections were offered for consideration. For info on these and other details of the proceedings see: [Synod Link](#)

(B. Ferguson, L. Arkell)

Advent Lessons & Carols:

Michael Fenn,

& Wendy Earl

Dec. 14th at 7 p.m.

Photo - L. Porter



Seasonal Music

[\(continued from page 1 – Music Series\)](#)

meet with the musicians and to purchase CDs during the break.

This concert marked another opportunity to welcome the broader community into our parish. From this and a financial perspective, it was a successful venture.

Proceeds from this and the earlier, Stephen Palmer event totaled \$1500 which will be applied to our recent organ purchase. St. John's thanks patrons and all who contributed to the success of this show.

For more info on the Castle Trio see: www.justinkylesusan.ca.

Second Event: Lessons and Carols

On the evening of Sunday, December 16th, St. John's hosted the annual Advent Lessons and Carols service. Centered around, six scripture readings that tell the story of Christ's coming, from Genesis to John, were nine musical renditions that filled the church with sound and hearts with joy.

The event was a joint offering of praise from Trinity United Church and St. John's Anglican Church. From Trinity United was the church choir directed by Michael Fenn. From St. John's was the church choir directed by Wendy Earl. Also, from St. John's Beginnings lead by Trish Warren.

It was well attended in person and live streamed on Facebook.

(K. Bryan, D. Willis)

Advent Walkabout

The busy Autumn calendar here at St. John's rolled right through the season. Music in October and December. The Bazaar in October and the Winter Gear Giveaway in December. We joined our community in praise and in outreach. But we were not done.

November 30th was an ecumenical day of prayer and worship across the town. It started with an Advent Prayer Walk before dinner. After dinner was filled with the monthly ecumenical prayers of Pray K7A.

The Advent Walk circled the downtown parishes, St. Francis, Trinity United, First Baptist, Westminster Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, and St. John's, where the walkers finished with a cup of hot cider. (D. Willis)



Photo - D. Willis

Braving the elements and freshly fallen snow to pray-in Advent



Photo – D. Willis

(from page 1 – Advent Adventure)

- ❖ How can you slow down and delight in God's peace this Christmas?

Next is the pink candle: **Joy.**

Referred to as the Shepherd's Candle, it represents the joy of the shepherds at the news of Jesus' birth and is often the color pink. As we remember to rejoice in Christ's birth, like the shepherds on the first Christmas Eve, it is on the third Sunday of Advent, that we turn from repentance towards the celebration of Christ's imminent birth.

We all know what happiness feels like, a smile, a rush of warm-fuzzies, the feeling you get after

opening a gift. Jesus delights in the moments of happiness in our lives, but He also offers us something that goes beyond momentary happiness—lasting joy. Our Savior's arrival offered a gift of great joy to the world—eternal love and life with Him. He is Immanuel, God with us.

"Do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy...a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" – Luke 2:10-11

Last, but certainly not least is: **Love.**

Sometimes called the Angel's Candle, it represents God's love announced by the angels and represents a time of prayer. Sometimes it is a white candle

For purity, peace, and justice brought to the world by Christ. The white candle reminds us that Christ is sinless and pure.

God's unending and limitless love is a gift that holds the power to transform our hearts and lives. When we sit and reflect on how deeply He loves us, it enables us to freely love others, walk with confidence, and face the unknowns in our future.

Questions for reflection:

- ❖ When do you feel most loved by God?
- ❖ How might you reflect God's love to others this season?
- ❖ Can you find one way to reflect on God's love this Christmas?

(C. Kerfoot)

Winter Gear Give-Away

Conceived during the Fall Bazaar, the idea of a "coat giveaway" was born this year, 2025 for St. Johns. The brainchild of Debbie Lewis, she wanted to do something that would be helpful to the people in our community. Initially, it was thought the gear would be distributed for donations. But then the better decision was made to go that extra step and just give them away.

The concept was approved, plans and posters were made, and the work was underway. The gear for distribution was initially solicited by word-of-mouth, looking for gently-used coats, hats, scarves, mittens and gloves.

As the momentum grew, folks chimed in with cash donations too. This cash was put to good use with local merchants who willingly offered their wares, often at a further discount in support of the charity.

The event was a resounding success!!! Over sixty families were helped out and equipped for the coming cold winter season. All remaining cash donations went to the Food Bank. A big thankyou to all who pitched in and made it all happen. (D. Lewis, D. Willis)

Theres A Song in the Air

A Christmas Devotional.

Author: Deborah A. Goshorn-Stenger

Deb has an innovative writing style that weaves her original "Pray-it-Through" style Devotional meditations around the Word of God in such a way that helps you draw into the presence of God. Her unique telling of Jesus' birth will be more than the unfolding of the manger scene.

Nine Carol titles serve as Sections and feature topical related Bible Studies, bringing the Luke 2 account to life!

Find it on [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) or [Indigo.ca](https://www.indigo.ca)

(D. Willis)



Sights and Sounds

As reported last month, St. John's is going through an evolution of sound. This continues but has now grown to an evolution of sight and sound.

The choral evolution continues, as witnessed by the Advent Lessons & Carols service held in December with our choir, Beginnings, and the choir from Trinity United.

The musical instruments also continue to progress, with the new organ on order and expected early in the new year. We have also recently accepted the offer of an updated piano to add to this ensemble. It too will arrive early in the new year.

The sound system is approaching completion. Our thanks to the hanging and painting crews who have made the new speaker system blend in with the church building. Also the wireless mics are once again operational. We are in a good state as we proceed through Advent into Christmas.

On the sight side, we are seeing the benefits of the diocesan grant for Games Night. The new audio/visual projector, screen, streaming boxes, and games systems have brought our ability to make presentations, offer entertainment, and embrace content from over the web into our contemporary world. Opportunities abound for Family Movie Nights or for spiritual development aided by content from around the globe. Stay tuned! (D. Willis)

Upcoming Events

- **Parish Council Meetings.**

Next council meeting is Monday, December 22nd at 6:30 p.m. for a festive celebration. In January, the meeting will be on Wednesday, January 21st at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

- **New – Mid-Week Coffee Hour!**

A relaxing hour of sips and fellowship. Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in the Parish Hall. This is a weekly event.

- **Keenagers.**

Hosted by the First Baptist Church, this is a fellowship time of prayer, scripture reading, music and guest speakers for individuals 55+. At The Smiths Falls Civitan Club Hall. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 10 a.m.-11am. All are welcome. Anyone needing a ride may contact Eric Wills 613-283-7007.

- **Pray K7A.**

On the last Sunday of each month, the local Christian community gathers together for shared fellowship and prayers. It will be held on December 28th starting at 7 p.m. at St. Johns Anglican Church – in the Parish Hall - 2 George St. S., Smiths Falls.

- **Games Night.**

Games nights happen regularly each month, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The next games night is on Friday, January 9th, starting with food at 5:30 and games at 6:30 p.m..

- **Upcoming Events – Winter Wonderland Potluck.**

Winter Potluck dinner. Jan/Feb 2026. This one is with a twist. All dishes brought to the dinner must be from: **Feeding the Flock.**

Times of Worship:

Sundays:

- 8 a.m. spoken eucharist.
- 10 a.m. sung eucharist.

Wednesdays:

- 10:30 a.m. spoken eucharist.

Christmas Eve:

- 7 p.m. family eucharist.
- 11 p.m. midnight eucharist.

Christmas Day:

- 10 a.m., spoken eucharist.

Parish Office:

- 9 a.m. to noon, weekdays; excepting Thursday. On Thursdays, 1 to 3 p.m. (613)283-1261