

The People's Pulpit

Advent 2017



St Thomas sets its heart toward being a Christian Home which welcomes, encourages and seeks to inspire people.

St. Thomas Anglican Church

The Reverend Jane McCaig

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A Christmas Message from Reverend Jane

Where has the year gone? Did it seem that this year went faster than last year? Personally, it feels as if each year goes by time zips along like a flash. We are in a new year in the church's liturgical calendar, and for those who wish to follow along in the Gospel, this year's readings will come from Mark.

This time of year, (and even before this time), stores are decked out for Christmas. Happy tunes are being piped into malls encouraging people to get in the "spirit." That is, the spirit of consumerism. We've had Black Friday, which encompassed more than Friday; and Cyber Monday which is still going on as I pen this note on Tuesday. Whether you are at Bayshore or Tangers, at home by television or the computer the message is to get into the Christmas spirit and buy, buy, buy.

For most folks there is cheeriness and celebration as they prepare for Christmas: planning family get togethers, pulling out the tried and true Christmas baking recipes, decorating trees and bringing out the ornaments that have been in the family for years. These are comforting reminders of Christmases past. But, there are also some people for whom, this year, the idea of celebration and the thought of singing *Joy to the World*, is gone. Whether through death of a loved one, sickness, divorce, addiction, loss of a job, the sense of joy that is equated with Christmas is absent. For them and for all of us I offer this prayer written by Jennifer Rothschild:

Come into my world Jesus. My world is broken and You come in anyway. You call Yourself the Bread of Life not just because you feed my soul, but because like bread, You made Yourself broken. You made yourself breakable so I could know You and find wholeness in You. Come into my brokenness this Christmas, Jesus I welcome You.

Come into my world Jesus. My world is chaos and you come in anyway. You enter in as The Prince of Peace—my Prince of Peace. You lift the sceptre of Your sovereignty over my trouble Sea of Galilee and speak, "Peace be still," and my ocean of chaos settles. Come into my chaos this Christmas Jesus. I welcome You.

Come into my world, Jesus. My world is dark and you come in anyway. You say You are the Light of the world—the Light of my world. Without You I can't see my value, my purpose, my treasures. You shine through the shadows of my fear and illuminate hope when midnight presses in. Come into my darkness this Christmas, Jesus. I welcome You.

You call Yourself Prince of Peace...I call You my peace.
You call Yourself Light of the World...I call You my light.
You call Yourself Bread of Life, I call you my bread—my life.
You call Yourself Christ, I call you Christmas.

I welcome you Bread of Life, Prince of Peace, Light of the World. I welcome You Christ.

I welcome You into my world this Christmas.

May you find God's peace and hope in the celebration of the birth of our Lord.

Blessings,

Jane+

FROM THE EDITOR

It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you...yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand.

--Mother Teresa

Well, this is the first edition as the editor. Thank you to all of you who offered your thanks, encouragement and positive thoughts before you even saw this edition. I have to tell you, with less than week to the deadline I had received only two articles and I did have some pangs of anxiety. However within a very few days emails started arriving and as you can see, we have a very full newsletter.

For the last couple of weeks I have heard people complain that Christmas decorations were in the store in early November. Commercialism is getting started earlier and earlier every year. I don't decorate my house until the weekend of the first Sunday in Advent, but I had started my shopping in October. And the radio stations started playing Christmas songs on the 1st of November, not the 1st of December. It seems to really irk some people. So what about the stores starting so early?

Advent is the time to prepare for the coming Christ. Not just the baby but also for the return of Jesus. I have included a short article from the Faith and Worship website to remind us of the significance of Advent. Also you will find a description of the significance of the Advent Wreath and Candles.

Liz Hall has submitted an article about Advent/Christmas describing two different perspectives. And as I write this I am mindful of those who are alone and who may be lonesome or depressed at Christmas time.

So what about the commercialism? What does it have to do with Christmas? I heard a song by Sabrina Carpenter about keeping Christmas the Whole Year Round. And if you agree with Mother Teresa, Christmas happens every time you are kind to someone, and Christmas can happen all year round. And Jesus tells us to love one another. So instead

of being irritated about the early commercialism, think of it as a reminder to be kind to someone each day – not just on Christmas Day.

Blessings to all.
Sue

Christmas in the Modern World

Submitted by Liz Hall

For many years, I have been all too aware that for many people I work with at The Royal Ottawa Hospital, Christmas is a horrible time of year. I have heard the heart-breaking recollections of unpleasant family occasions from my clients. I have never been able to bring myself to buy a gift for a Christmas Angel tree after hearing one client sob her way through the experience of receiving only gifts with “girl, 10” on them, and not even having her name on the tag. I have heard countless clients speak of the many small ways they have been aware of spoiling the day for their loved ones by excessive use of alcohol or other drugs. So many people move towards Christmas with this image of how lovely it “should” be as a time of family closeness, only to recognize the ways in which they are estranged from those they love. So in my work world Christmas is a very low key reality because overt displays bring up so much pain for many.

This year, my office is on the second floor of the Carlingwood Mall, where The Royal has all its Community Mental Health services. What a shock, as I walked to buy my midmorning coffee in the mall, the Monday after Remembrance Day. Face to face with the commercialization of Christmas, on a weekday at work. And so the pressure mounts to buy just the right thing for everyone, and to spend, spend, spend! Already the calendar is filling up with Christmas events. On one hand, it is wonderful to get together with so many people. On the other hand, it wears down my energy and makes me pine for the introverted pleasure of curling up to read a book.

Neither of these images is really what Christmas is all about. I hope that in all the wading through both these modern realities we all find time to reflect on the true Christmas message of God’s love for us.

The Meaning of Advent

Advent (from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming") is considered to be the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve (Dec 24). If Christmas Eve is a Sunday, it is counted as the fourth Sunday of Advent, with Christmas Eve proper beginning at sundown.

The season is for most Christians one of anticipation and hope (if one looks beyond the commercialization!), although at its beginnings the emphasis was much more on penitence, fasting and sin. For most Christians it is not just a celebration of a moment in time when a baby was born, but also looks beyond to a time when the Bible tells us that Jesus will come again, not as a weak and vulnerable baby but in power and with authority. The traditional Scripture readings for this time emphasize both the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and our accountability for faithfulness at His coming, judgment on sin and the hope of eternal life.

Advent is also a spiritual journey that Christians take, through the truths of Scripture that point to the birth of Messiah, to a reaffirmation that he has come, is present in the world today and will come again in glory. It mirrors the journey of faith that Christians make after that moment of realization and acceptance of who Jesus is, in that we take that first step of faith in commitment, continue hopefully to walk the road of faith and increasing understanding, and look forward to our destination, which is to be in his presence forever!

Read more at: http://www.faithandworship.com/Advent_themes_and_resources.htm#ixzz4zPH3feaR

The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath, or Advent crown, is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent in the liturgical calendar of the Western church. It is traditionally a Lutheran practice, although it has spread to many other Christian denominations.

It is usually a horizontal evergreen wreath with four candles, three purple and one pink. The Candles symbolize hope, love, joy (pink) and peace. Beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, the lighting of a candle can be accompanied by a Bible reading, devotional time and prayers. An additional candle is lit during each subsequent week until, by the last Sunday before Christmas, all four candles are lit. Many Advent wreaths include a fifth, Christ candle which is lit at Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. (Wikipedia)



Advent Wreath

1st CANDLE – (purple) **THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE** – We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. (Romans 15:12-13)

2nd CANDLE – (purple) **THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION** – God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to “get ready”. Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD! (Luke 3:4-6)

3rd CANDLE – (pink) **THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY** – The angels sang a message of JOY! (Luke 2:7-15)

4th CANDLE – (purple) **THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE** – The angels announced the good news of a Savior. God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us! (John 3:16-17)

5th CANDLE – (white) **“CHRIST CANDLE”** – The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth! (John 1:29)

Underdogs and Outsiders: An Advent Study at St Thomas.

The Bible is full of surprises. At every turn from the beginning of the Old Testament to the end of the New, we find God working in unexpected, even strange ways to bring about God’s purposes. This study explores the stories of 5 women and how they played a pivotal role in bringing about God’s purposes. [The study will be held in the Council Room beginning Tuesday, Nov. 28th at 7:00 p.m. Please bring a Bible along for the study.](#)

FLOWERS AND WORSHIP

By Barbara Bottriell



The delicacy and colour of fresh flowers have long been part of our worship at St. Thomas. Decorating with flowers is also part of a long tradition of the church in general, originating before the Reformation, and continuing even during the most puritan times.

All the elements belonging to the altar are there because they are ordained as being essential to our worship service. Flowers however, are a choice, and because of that, they represent something we do because we want to, a tribute of love and devotion to our faith. To paraphrase one priest's statement: "Flowers remind us to look from Nature to Nature's God."

The flowers in our church are looked after by members of the Altar Guild. They either order or purchase them, place them near the altar for church services, water them when necessary and ensure they are kept in good condition. Most flowers are used for several weeks. Doreen Bell was our Flower Coordinator for many years, and now Hilary Shouldice is following in her footsteps.

It does of course cost money to purchase flowers when none are available from people's gardens, and this is where you come in. St. Thomas does have a Flower Fund and any parishioner can contribute something to it.

In the narthex you will find a small brown basket on the table under the bulletin board which has pink envelopes in it marked "Altar Flowers". If you would like to contribute to the purchase of flowers for regular use at St. Thomas, please make use of one of these envelopes. Either place it on the collection plate or take it to the office. Your contributions can be made at any time of year. If flowers on the altar are important to you, please help out by making a contribution to the Flower Fund.

Note: Flowers desired for memorials to specified individuals on specific dates (other than for Christmas, Easter, or Thanksgiving), are a separate item and can be arranged by calling Altar Guild President Arlene Simonovich at 613 836-2753.

God 's Garden



So far this year we have had a lot of fun. We have made two banners inviting other families to join us, made ears to listen to Jesus, gathered grapes and made lanterns to get ready for Jesus to come, learned use our gifts to help others and much more.

November 26th we celebrated Christ the King Sunday and remembered that we are to care and share this beautiful creation and all we have with all of God's Family.

Matthew 25:40 tells us; "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family: You Did It To Me."

On December 2 and 9, we will focus on the Nativity Story and all the interesting backgrounds of the main characters so we can put together a short but meaningful pageant coming up soon.

We invite all children to come and learn about the real meaning of Christmas and how it all started. There will be a part for all ages in this year's pageant on **December 17**. Watch for more information in our weekly email and Sunday bulletin's. Rehearsals will take place during our time in God's Garden each Sunday.

If you have been thinking of helping out in our God's Garden Church School, now is a good time to come and give us a hand on Sundays for this year's Pageant, for Family Faith time at 10:00 or for God's Garden at 10:30. (or all of them!?!)

Hope to see you soon
God bless you and yours
Merilee Clarke
613-831-7704

The Angel Tree at St Thomas



As we get nearer to celebrating the Christmas Season and God's Gift of his Son to us, the Christmas Angels will soon be starting to shop for their gifts and acts of kindness. The Angel Tree in support of the Stittsville Food Bank will go up at the back of the church in early December. As in previous years we ask for your support by taking an angel or angels off the tree and purchasing a gift card for each angel; paper clip the card to the angel and return it to the box near the tree. Gift cards have typically been \$20.00 and up but all donations are gratefully received. There are suggestions of stores listed on the back of the Angels.

The gift cards will be distributed to families supported by the food bank with their Christmas Hampers. Each Family can then shop for their own children knowing their interests and needs.

Thank you for your support in this local outreach program and Christmas blessings to all.

Helen Greatrex

Exciting Happenings in Our Parish Family

On Nov. 16, 2017, Allison Chapman graduated from Queen's University with a Doctor of Philosophy of the Faculty of Education. Her thesis was on the Assessment for Learning Explored in Grade 9 Applied Mathematics Classrooms.

Allison will be starting a new job next month as Manager of the Pan Canadian Assessment Program at CMEC (Council of Ministers in Education, Canada).

On Nov. 23, 2017, Greg Chapman graduated from the Canadian Forces School of Communication and Electronics in Vimy Barracks, CFB Kingston, Ontario. He is now part of the Communications @ Electronics Engineering (Air) Officers Team now working in Ottawa.

Our family is filled with joy.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Psalm 126:3 NIV
Hallelujah!

Submitted by Cal & Susan Chapman and Families

“The thrill of hope . . .



. . . the weary world
rejoices.”

O Holy Night by John Sullivan Dwight

Join families, friends and neighbours
this
Season to Celebrate the true meaning
of Christmas.

Please join us at St. Thomas

Hot Chocolate! Parade of Lights
Saturday, December 2nd 6:00 p.m.

1st Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 3^{rd*}



Stairwell Carolers
Friday, December 8th 7:30 p.m.

Open Table
Saturday, December 9th 5:00 p.m.

2nd Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 10^{th*}

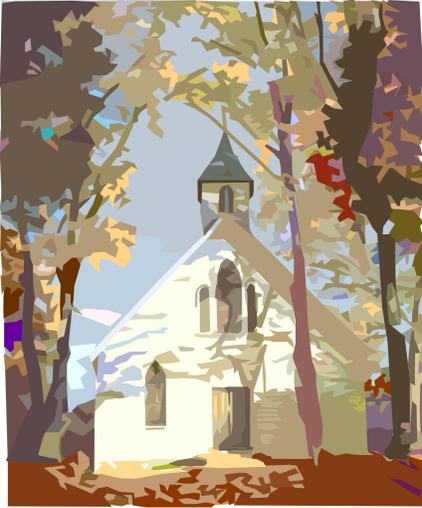
3rd Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 17^{th*}

4th Sunday of Advent
Christmas Eve Morning
Sunday, December 24th 9:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Holy Communion
Children's Service
Sunday, December 24th 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Holy Communion
Sunday, December 24th 8:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Holy Communion
Monday, December 25th 10:00 a.m.



AN UNINTENDED PILGRIMAGE

by William Passmore

This summer my wife, Mary, and I went to England to welcome our 6th grandchild and to provide support for our daughter and her husband. The visit also provided the opportunity for a family vacation with them at the ocean, visiting family and old friends, visiting old haunts, attending both a family wedding and a golden wedding and travelling to Paris, France on Eurostar. So the last thing on my mind or in my plans was a pilgrimage of any kind

The first feeling that there would something more than all the special activities already planned was when we visited the parish church at Hazelbury Plucknett in deepest rural Somerset in the south-west of England. Filling in time before my great niece's wedding, we toured the local Anglican Church. Surprisingly it had spectacular modern stained glass and the back pews had been removed to create an informal meeting area. On reading the parish history we learned about a local early English monk called Wulfric who lived there in the 12th century. Soon people came to him for guidance and blessing. During the reigns of kings Henry I and Stephen, Wulfric exercised a powerful influence, not only in his own neighbourhood, but also at court. Henry I was informed, correctly, that he would shortly die, while King Stephen was chastised for the evils of his government. Wulfric is said to have received the gifts of prophecy and healing and was involved in many miraculous happenings. He became known as a healer of body, mind and spirit for all those who sought him out.

According to Abbot John of Forde Abbey, Wulfric lived alone in these simple quarters for 29 years, devoting much of his time to reading the Bible and praying. In keeping with the ideals of medieval spirituality, he adopted stern ascetic practices: he deprived himself of sleep, ate a frugal meatless diet, spent hours reciting the psalms sitting in a bath of cold water, and wore a hair shirt and heavy chain-mail tunic. He was one of the most influential anchorite priests of medieval England, he died in his cell on 20 February 1154. Was his story going to influence our time?

On further exploring the village we discovered a very well advertised "Bible Christian Centre which offered a Café Church. In conversation with our B&B hosts we discovered that this was well attended and always lively. People came from the surrounding villages to attend. Intrigued, we decided to go.

As we entered, we were warmly welcomed, invited to get a cup of coffee and a snack and then asked to sit at a table with others to whom we were introduced. The service

continued with hymns, praise songs, 3 short sermon vignettes interspersed with opportunities for discussion and posing questions. It was an interesting and inspiring way to worship and learn together with all ages and stages attending.

Our next worship experience was St Mary's, Putney in London where our daughter Charlotte worships. The service was similar to St Thomas except that they have significantly different liturgies for each church season. Originally founded in the 13th century the church was rebuilt in 1836. In 1982 the pews were removed and one end of the church was converted into a sound reduced and glassed in area for parents with young children. The main entrance was moved so that you enter the church through a delightful church run coffee shop called Putney Pantry.

Our next experience was spiritually more challenging. We were on vacation in North Cornwall and wanted to attend the local 12th century church, St Genny's. In spite of it being the middle of summer when vacationers rush to this part of the UK, they had elected to have a joint service at an inland church. There are 8 other churches in the large rural parish. While understanding the need for parishes

to get together, it seemed wrong to do so during the peak vacation season when they could reach out to visitors. As I have been attending that church through the years when on vacation, I felt emboldened to challenge the lay leaders on this issue.

The following weekend Mary and I visited the 19th century church in Dorset where we were married. The church had removed pews from the back of the church to create a kitchen and meeting area. This church is part of a rural parish containing 12 churches. We were further astonished and saddened when we realized how thin the Church of England has become in rural and small town England.

So it was with great surprise when we crossed the county border into Devon to worship at the village church which I attended in the 1960s and early 1970s. My memories of this 14th century church were that of a very traditional BCP church populated mainly by retired folk from the armed services and from government. Part of a 2 point parish the church was well filled (even in summer). The 10.00am service was an Anglican Café service. Before the service we were welcomed and offered coffee. There was a simple liturgy, worship songs, a sermon and a presentation from a series "Fruitfulness on the Frontline" (an 8 session course for disciples who want to make a difference). After the presentation we broke into small discussion groups. After the service I was puzzled as to how my traditional old church had experienced such a wonderful transformation. There were several answers:

- 1) 2 previous rectors previously- had encouraged a strong focus on reaching youth and young adults.

- 2) The pews were replaced by chairs with a refreshment area in the back of the church. This allows for greater flexibility in the worship format and a more flexible use of the building.
- 3) Strong links were created with the adjacent village elementary school. The school uses the church for assemblies. The church uses the school for Sunday school.
- 4) Very strong emphasis on prayer with a prayer wall chart in the church encouraging members to pray for clergy and lay leadership and all the church activities.
- 5) A great variety of social, spiritual and outreach activities- all this in a village of 1700 inhabitants!

Our final church experience was in Paris, France. We were there for a weekend and on the Saturday we were sightseeing including a visit to Notre Dame Cathedral. We were impressed that not only was it an amazing building to visit, but they offered confession in their chapels in several languages. They were giving us as tourists the opportunity of receiving their ministry. The next day we wanted to worship in a “normal” local church. After looking on the internet we could not find a church in the area where we planned to be, so we decided to worship in Notre Dame. As we were walking through Isle St Louis towards Isle de la Cite, we heard lovely singing. Wow, a church! Mass had just started at the Catholic church of St Louis en L’Ile. It was a beautiful French language service with much lay leadership in the liturgy. Their guest speaker was a bishop from the Democratic Republic of the Congo where our daughter Charlotte had been with MSF a year earlier! This resonated with us and was God’s special gift to us.

The clear message to us was that if you are looking for God’s people, the Holy Spirit will lead you to them.

So what were the learnings of this unintended pilgrimage?

- 1) Prayer (intentional, regular and specific) for our local church (St Thomas’) must be priority#1
- 2) We need to ensure that we are reaching out and encouraging the younger generations.
- 3) Significant and possibly radical change to our liturgy must be explored if we are to meet the needs of the emerging generations.
- 4) All but one of the churches we visited has made moderate or radical changes to the worship space to make worship more flexible and experiential. The biggest risk is doing nothing.
- 5) If you are in a different place and are looking for God’s people, the Holy Spirit will direct you to them.

A CHOIRED AFTERNOON

Sunday, October 29th at the “A Choired Afternoon”, choirs offered a musical spectacular at St Thomas in support of the Food Bank.



The following choirs participated:

All Saints' Anglican Church
Westboro
St Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
Stittsville
St Thomas Anglican Church,
Stittsville
Goulbourn Jubilee Singers
Ottawa Harmony Singers and
Rare Blend Vocal Ensemble

Rev Jane and Bonnie McNally present a cheque for \$1400 to Jo-Anne Ilkiw of the Stittsville Food Bank. Looking on are Brianne Healy (centre) and Mason Farrar (left). The money along with 3 large bins of food was raised at the concert.



Stittsville Food Bank:

Items in somewhat short supply throughout the year are:

Canned chili, Canned stews, Mayonnaise, Large Juices (e.g. apple juice cans), Coffee Tea and Hot Chocolate, Canned Potatoes, Cheez Whiz, Condiments (ketchup, mustard, relish), School Snacks, Fruit and pudding cups, paper products (toilet, kleenex), Habitant Soup

Also note that we are preparing Christmas hampers and items that show up on the Christmas table would be helpful.



St Thomas Anglican presents The Stairwell Carrollers

**Friday December 8th 2017
Concert @ 7:30 Doors open 7:00
1619 Stittsville Main
Tickets \$15 Children under 12 free
Small reception to follow the concert**

THE GREAT TRIVIA CHALLENGE!!

[Mark Saturday, March 3, 2018 on your calendar.](#)

The Great Trivia Challenge' will be held at The Glen, Stittsville to raise funds for SchoolBox. Teams of 4, 6 or 8 are accepted. Or register on your own and we'll find a team for you. Competition for the prizes will be fierce and great fun will be had by all!!! Cost for the evening is \$10 per person. For more info, contact Bonnie McNally

Deliveries to our local Missions.....December 2017

This has been a very successful collection time since September. Many articles have been donated..... adult clothes, shoes, children's /babies clothes & toys, diapers & feeding needs, egg cartons, jewellery, toiletries, bedding, sleeping bags, cutlery, dishes, clean (**labels off**) pill bottles, **liquid** washing soap, paper goods, ladies needs, make up samples.

We've delivered good food donations from dinners or activities at St Thomas, donations that are always gratefully received. Even the attendees at the Missions say "thank you" to us. We've had a wonderful array of articles to take to Youville for the **girls' store**, where they can buy things for themselves or gifts for their children or families with their Youville \$\$ that they earn while working around the building. McDonald's "coffee stamp" cards are much appreciated.

We will continue collecting & delivering all the things you bring to the church. We ask again, that all goods be **freshly washed**. Thank you.

Very sincerely,

Lorna & Gary Graham

Any questions? Please call us 613 963 9661

ALPHA 2018



Do you have questions about the Christian Faith but you're not quite sure where to look for answers?

Do you feel that you'd simply like to brush up on the basics?

Would you enjoy the opportunity to discuss Christianity in a relaxed atmosphere where any question or comment is welcome and accepted.

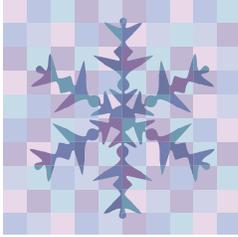
ALPHA may be exactly what you're looking for!!!

ALPHA takes place over 10 weekly sessions. Each evening begins with dinner, followed by a video addressing topics such as 'Who is Jesus?', 'Why did He die?', 'How can I be sure of my faith?', 'Does Jesus heal today?'

The evening concludes with group discussion about what has just been presented in the video.

Prior to the first session an introductory dinner and presentation provides the opportunity to 'check out' ALPHA before committing to the course. There is no charge for ALPHA although a \$5 donation towards the cost of the meal each evening is appreciated.

For more information please contact Pat or Bonnie McNally



SNOWFLAKE BAZAAR AND LUNCHEON, 2017

On Saturday, November 18th the weather outside was frightful but it the spirits inside St Thomas were delightful. Our 2017 bazaar and luncheon was, once again, a tremendous success.

A huge thank you to everyone who worked so hard from the men who setup and the gals who decorated on Thursday, to those who provided the baking and soup, the crafts and Christmas articles, the books and home decor, and the jewelry, the folk who did all the chasing around for the Silent Auction, those who arranged and staffed the tables, the luncheon ticket sellers, the kitchen 'angels' and the luncheon servers, the 'floats', the folk who looked after the advertising and the finances, everyone who made 'take-down' such a quick and smooth process, and all those who attended and brought friends. It takes a village to raise a child and it certainly takes a parish to provide a successful bazaar and luncheon. Once all monies are in and expenses paid we will have raised \$5700 to assist in the life and ministry at St Thomas.

With so many people from the wider community attending, we felt again this year that it was an ideal opportunity to showcase some of the events and ministries we offer here at St Thomas. As people passed through the Sunday School room, information boards displayed pictures of some of the events and activities of the past year as well as info on EFM, God's Garden and our up-coming Alpha.

Once again, thank you so very much to everyone!!!

Bonnie McNally & Judy Dallaway
Bazaar 2017 co-chairs

18 THINGS TO PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH

At our prayer workshop in the Fall, we looked at the issue of praying for our church. We started to review these and to customise for ourselves at St Thomas. I have been using these, praying for 3 topics (Monday-Saturday) and have found it helpful. There is definitely more opportunity to make them our own. I invite you to use them, modify them and send me your suggestions.

1. That we would have unity amid diversity—loving those with whom we have nothing in common but the gospel.
2. That a culture of disciplining would form in which making disciples is viewed as an ordinary part of the Christian life.
3. That faithful *seasoned Christians* would use Scripture to train members to do the work of ministry.
4. That a hunger for studying the gospel would form among members so that they can guide and guard one another in it.
5. That transparent, meaningful relationships would become normal and *we would be open to sharing faith experiences. ie Loosen up spiritually*
6. The preaching of God's Word—that it would be biblically careful and Holy Spirit imbued.
7. That elders would remain above reproach, kept from temptation, complacency, idols, and worldliness.
8. That the church's songs would teach members to biblically confess, lament, and praise.
9. That the church's prayers would be infused with biblical ambitions, honesty, and humility.
10. That adult members *would make friends youth and encourage them to take part.*
11. That the church's primary teachers & *leaders* grow in dedication to God's Word.
12. That it would grow in being distinct from the world in love and holiness, as it engages outsiders.
13. That members would share the gospel this week.
14. That members would be prepared for *opposition & apathy*, remembering to love *and to be resilient.*
15. That hopes for political change would be outstretched by the hope of heaven.
16. That giving would be faithful, as well as joyful, consistent, and sacrificial.
17. That more members would use their careers to take the *love of Christ* to places it's never been.
18. That members would be *joyful, constructive and positive* in their workplaces this week.

Can you think of something we didn't include? Then pray it and share it! This is hardly the "official list" of the 18 most important things to pray. They're simply a start.

The point is for all of us to start praying more intentionally for our church, and to encourage others to do the same. William Passmore

REPORT FROM ATTRACT OTHERS WORK GROUP

One of the focus areas from the Visioning day in 2016 was to focus on "Attracting Others" We met through May, June and then concluded in October. Below is a summary of what we did.

We reviewed "WHAT CONSTITUTES ATTRACTION?"

- Attending church regularly
- Becoming regular donors
- Volunteering with the church
- Calling St. Thomas their 'home' church

PROPOSED ACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

1) UPDATE PARISH PAMPHLET:

- The pamphlet should be located at both entrances to the Church, in the Hall and in the pews.
- The pamphlet needs to let others know what we stand for; what are our accomplishments – what message do we want to send.

2) GREETERS COURSE (coming soon)

The previous greeters course was reviewed and it is recommended that we recruit greeters and train them using the course.

A gift for Newcomers would be purchased and given to Newcomers/Visitors when they come. It would include mug, pamphlet, bulletin, welcome note from Rector.

Re-energise Nametags. Nametags should be worn by everyone in the congregation so it is easier to remember names and so new people can get to know others and the rest of us can be reminded of names.

3) USE RENTAL SIGNS TO ADVERTISE MAJOR EVENTS

The Communications group has agreed to consider using the current sign recently vacated by Merilee we go. This faces the traffic and could significantly add to our

visibility. We also investigated larger temporary signs similar to that used by Greco for major events.

4) CONSIDER DOING ANOTHER ALPHA COURSE

The Community Bible Church have approached us about doing a combined course with them. This would be a great opportunity to reach out to others and bring them to faith. It would also support our visioning initiative to do more with other churches.

5) PROMOTE THE 8.30am SERVICE MORE(presented verbally at congregational meeting)

Attendance is sustaining.

No competition from other churches at 8.30am!!

Family (sport etc) and work schedules compete with church attendance

Some families prefer a quiet service

Worship first, then the rest of the day is yours!!

Is this our church's competitive advantage?

6) EXPAND COMMUNICATIONS

Further investigation is needed for our website/Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/QR codes
Continue promoting the Church in the Stittsville News.

Continue with the float in the Christmas Parade. (plan to re-start in 2018)

Consider creating invitation postcards/doorhangers to be delivered by parishioners on their streets and neighbourhoods. These would be used for Advent/Christmas or other Church seasons or events. (in progress as I write!)

7) FAMILY CAMPING TRIPS

Explore possibilities in the Spring

8) HOLD AN OPEN HOUSE; To hold an Open House at the church, to have more awareness about the programs St. Thomas contributes to. This should be combined as an expansion to Parish events, eg bazaar, spring sale, music concerts. Also to be considered is an informal Christmas carol sing song with goodies.(done at Bazaar)

I would like to thank the members of the Attract Others work group; Pat McNally, David Dallaway, Susan Boutilier, Tara MacDougall, David Hazen, Susan Dow.

William Passmore

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Prayer for Advent

In this Advent of expectation
draw us together in unity,
that our praise and worship
might echo in these walls
and also through our lives.

In this Advent of expectation
draw us together in mission,
that the hope within
might be the song we sing,
and the melody of our lives.

In this Advent of expectation
draw us together in service,
that the path we follow
might lead us from a stable
to a glimpse of eternity.

Read more at: http://www.faithandworship.com/prayers_Advent.htm#ixzz4zPGXrRLF

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