



St. Mark's Anglican Church est. 1792
Niagara-on-the Lake, ON
Hear the Good News!
Hear the Good News!

E-News to the St. Mark's Pews
91st Edition December 24, 2021

FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

All of sudden, Christmas plans have had to be changed. We've had to really re-think how to celebrate Christmas, who to invite, and how to be safe. We've had to adjust our liturgies in order to sensibly and meaningfully celebrate Christmas online. The only word to describe this late minute planning and pivoting—to say nothing of the state of the world—is bedlam.

The dictionary tells us that “bedlam” is a place, scene, or state of uproar and confusion. But the word is actually a corruption of Bethlehem. It was the nickname of the Bethlehem Royal Hospital, which was founded over six hundred years ago and was the first of what used to be called lunatic asylums. It was meant to be a refuge for those with severe mental illness, but it soon became a real-life horror story. The conditions in the hospital were infamous, with patients essentially left to their own devices.

I tell you this to remind you that the distance between Bethlehem and Bedlam isn't all that great. The peace of the season so easily devolves into a frenzied whirlwind of activity, just as the gift of new life brought by the infant king is overlooked in favour of the gift of electronic gadgetry brought by Santa.

Tonight and tomorrow, you and I will settle down for at least a moment and celebrate Christmas and we hopefully will find a moment in which to rest and be calm. We may experience at least a little of the peace which passes understanding. We may even stop our petty family squabbling and do something for them without expecting anything in return.

We may do all of these things, but we will eventually be lured away from Bethlehem; we will turn aside from the glorious, redemptive message of Christmas; we will let the cares and business of the world overtake us once

again. And when we do this, we enter Bedlam with its scenes of confusion and chaos which are partly of our own making.

But even worse than this, on the day after Christmas, or the day after that, we will wake up to face a world in Bedlam, serious Bedlam, a world in which the Christmas message of peace and goodwill is as remote as the moon—or the wise men's star. And then we will have to reckon with the fact that Bedlam is, in fact, most people's ongoing and enduring reality.

However, it is in the recognition of this stark truth that we discover the true message of Christmas. The Bethlehem of the Christmas cards and our sentimental piety, the Bethlehem of deep and dreamless streets—beloved and comforting though it may be—is not where we discover the true meaning of Christmas. Not at all. We discover the true meaning of Christmas in, of all places, Bedlam.

And not Bedlam simply in the sense of the chaotic hurly-burley of our present mania. Remember that Christ came to dwell amid the filth and confusion and coldness of human life. He came to a confused people who were living in troubled times. He came at exactly the wrong time and in the worst of circumstances. These facts have long been a sore point for people like you and me. This is why we look for him in the Bethlehem of what passes for the spirit of Christmas, and hope that he will be in one of the beautifully wrapped presents so artfully placed beneath the tree.

But he is not found in that Bethlehem or in those presents, which is probably why we seem to become more and more frantic at this time of the year. Where he is found is in the unexpected events which upset life's appletart but which nonetheless contain within them the seeds of redemption. He is found in those places of our world where no sensible person would dare to be found, places which are, therefore, where he is most needed.

The truth of all of this has the power to stop us in our tracks. But it need not. For if the distance between Bethlehem and Bedlam isn't all that great, then neither can the distance between Bedlam and Bethlehem be. In fact, it's only as far as the distance between mind and heart. Tonight and tomorrow we're asked once again to make that journey so that his manger throne may be set on your heart and mine. So that his kingdom may come on earth as it in heaven. So that we can hear the angelic songs of peace and goodwill rising clear as a bell over the din and strife of this crazy world.

Grace and peace,
Leighton

FROM THE WARDENS

Merry Christmas to all of our friends at St. Mark's and beyond! We wish you a happy and restful holiday. As always, stay safe and keep well.

Called to Life – Compelled to Love

Your Wardens

PARISH UPDATES

Parish Administrator

The Rector and Wardens are delighted to announce that Candace Bennett Walker is our new parish administrator. We are delighted to welcome her to our team. She brings a wealth of experience to the job and we are fortunate indeed to have her looking after things in the office. Welcome, Candace!

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve – Recorded Service at 5:00 p.m. on Facebook and YouTube
Christmas Day – Recorded Service at 10:30 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube
Sunday, December 26 – Recorded Service at 10:30 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/St-Marks-Anglican-Church-Niagara-on-the-Lake-235477056649804/>

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozjc_vpYqH4

The Order of Services are attached and can also be accessed through our website:

<https://stmarksnotl.org/worship-ministry/order-of-service-bulletin>

Christmas Greenery

We thank Jennifer Smith for the festive greenery and window boxes and Marsha Howe for the beautiful Christmas flower arrangements. We are deeply grateful for their dedication in making St. Mark's beautiful for the season.

Christmas Memorial Flowers

The list of those donating in memory of loved ones towards the Christmas Flowers is included in this E-News.

Church Bells

A reminder to all that the Church Bells play carols on Sunday's at 12:05 pm. Enjoy!

Church Office Hours

Candace will be in the office Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 pm. This information is also noted on our website on the Contact Us page: <https://stmarksnotl.org/contact-us>

Church Envelopes

Church envelopes are now ready for pick up in the Church Office.

Year-end Donations

In order to be eligible for a 2021 tax receipt, donations must be received by 2 pm on Friday, December 31. If you are able to participate in our "13th Month" campaign and help us close our operating deficit, we would be most grateful.

Bible Study via Zoom

Starting on January 3, 2022, we will be using Amy-Jill Levine's book "Short Stories of Jesus" as we examine the parables. The book is widely available, including as an e-book. You can join the Bible Study through the Zoom invite sent out from Father Leighton.

Wednesday, Morning Prayer Services – 9:30 a.m.

The weekly Morning Prayer Zoom service will resume on Wednesday, January 5, 2022.

Keeping in Touch On-line

Our 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning services are available on Facebook.

Please use this URL to watch:

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Marks-Anglican-Church-Niagara-on-the-Lake-235477056649804/>

The Order of Service is attached and can also be accessed through our website:

<https://stmarksnotl.org/worship-ministry/order-of-service-bulletin>

Use this Link to find this and recent copies of our E-News:

<https://stmarksnotl.org/news/news>

St. Mark's website is kept up-to-date on what is happening in the Parish. Here is the Link to the Calendar: <https://stmarksnotl.org/events>

FROZEN CHERRY PIES & CANNED GOODS

The following items are available to purchase from the Church office.

- Cherry Pies \$20 each – Frozen with easy-to-bake instructions
- Pea Soup – Frozen – 1 Litre - \$15
- Cherry Juice – 1 Litre - \$15
- Cherry Juice – ½ Litre - \$8
- Pickled Beets – Medium - \$8
- Cherry Jam – Small - \$5
- Cranberry Sauce – Medium - \$8
- Cranberry Sauce – Small - \$5
- Stewed Tomatoes – 1 Litre - \$15

Message from the Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum

Dear Members and Friends,

Earlier this year we received generous funding from both the Niagara Region and the Niagara Community Foundation for a special project called NOTL Short Docs. We have already shared with you "Black History - A Hidden History". The second and third mini documentaries are now ready for viewing! We hope you enjoy!.



"Fruit & Farming in Niagara: A History of Dirt & Diesel"

[WATCH IT NOW](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CngskHxJHIs>

"All Along the Waterfront: A History of the Waterfront Industries"

[WATCH IT NOW](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKNdrjv3Wcw>

If you missed "**Black History - A Hidden History**", check it out below. It is a candid look at how Black History is represented in Ontario today.

[WATCH IT NOW](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obVdj6PtWtA>

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS 2021



**The flowers and decorations in the church
are given to the glory of God and
in loving memory of:**

Murray and Betsy Lister from their daughter Lynne Heaman

Betty Magnacca from Allan Magnacca and family

George and Joy Ferris from Ashley Hayes

Patrick and Elsie Hayes from Ashley Hayes

Loved ones of Charles Scrivener

Clive Jago from Faith Jago

Jack and Florence Bennett from their daughter Candace Walker

Alan Bennett from his sister Candace Walker

Loved ones of Dorothy and Beverley Lees

Peter Wylie from Eve Wylie

Helen Davies and Teresa Haines from M. Louise Davies

Kelly M. James from Janet James

Mary Coltart and John Coltart, Annie Hennessey and Ernie Hennessey

from Rosamund and David Hennessey

Peter Baker from Jean Baker

***We thank Marsha Howe for
decorating the Church so beautifully for Christmas.***

