

## The Anglican Regional Ministry of Saugeen Shores, Tara and Chatsworth

### Reverend Carrie writes ...

Dear friends,

*In the warm embrace of Hope, Peace is found. In the warm embrace of Peace, Love is found. In the warm embrace of Love, Joy is found. In the warm embrace of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy, Christ's Light and Life shines radiantly.*

Our Advent journey is coming to an end with the arrival of Christmas next week. The candles have been lit, our churches have been decorated, our homes prepared, and we wait with expectant breath to sing out, "Joy to the World, the Lord has come!"

Joy is the candle we will light this Sunday. Joy was the response of the child in Elizabeth's womb, and joy is,....well what is Joy?

In its simplicity, joy is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. In its complexity, joy is a journey. It is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness that is dependant on who Jesus is rather than on who we are or what is happening in the world around us. Joy comes from the Holy Spirit, abiding in God's presence and from hope in God's word. Joy is a gift just waiting to burst forth like our Amaryllis plants. Joy takes time, and acceptance, desire, and endurance, because to know true joy, is to know true sorrow.

In a *Liturgy of Thanksgiving*, from the book *Every Moment*

*Holy, Volume II*, I read these words and they bubbled and quickened within me, in this last week of Advent amidst ongoing pandemic concerns.

*"For a long season, O Lord, I considered as an impossibility what I now know as unshakable truth: That after loss, pain, tragedy, tears, sorrow, doubts, defeat, and disarray, I will hold a more costly and precious joy than any I have held before; and this not in denial of my loss, but manifest in the very wreckage of it. And so I know this unexpected joy is no glib and passing fancy. It is rather the diamond-hard treasure unearthed and recognized only when lesser hopes have collapsed. It is the*

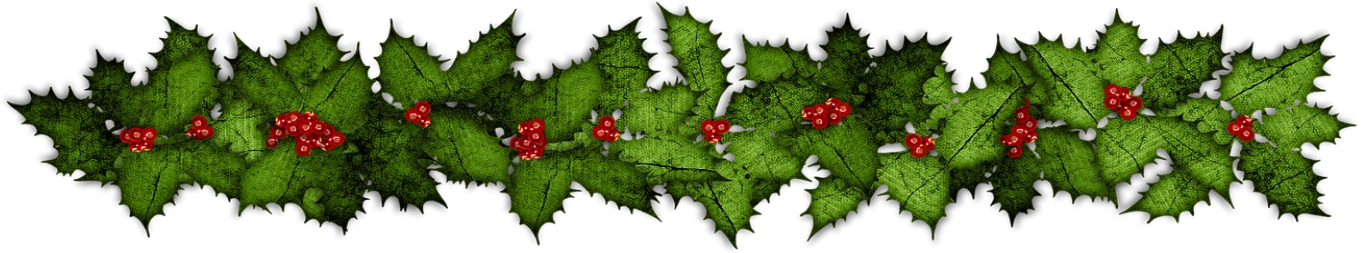
*knowledge of your unwavering faithfulness, O Christ, now experienced and owned. It is the bright beacon of your promises blooming in the night like signal fires upon mountain peaks. I came to the end of my own hope, O God, and found that your hope held me still."*

May the warm embrace of God's eternal and infinite love surround you this season, and may your voice ring out this coming Christmas Eve as Christians around the world sing, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing!"

God bless,

*Carriet*





## Silent Night -The History of an Enduring Carol:

It was in 1818 when “Silent Night” was first heard by the Austrian villagers attending Christmas Eve mass in St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, near Salzburg. This simple melody, with its words of comfort, telling the story of a calm and bright silent night, and the wonder of a tender and mild newborn child, the Messiah, became a beloved hymn of peace throughout the world.

History tells us that a young priest, Joseph Mohr went for a walk in 1816 before he wrote the carol, and inspiration came to him

as he looked out over a very quiet, winter-laden and peaceful town. Peace was new to the area, since twelve years of Napoleonic War, just ended, had destroyed the country’s political and social structure. Mohr wanted to provide hope, through his writing, that there was still a God who cared for his people.

First sung in German, “Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht” was performed that night by Father Mohr, who played the guitar and sang along with Franz Xaver Gruber, the choir director, who had written the melody earlier that day, to provide alternative music, because flooding had damaged the church organ.

An organ builder and repair man working at the church took a copy of the song to his village, where it was picked up and spread by two families of travelling folk singers, who performed around northern Europe. In 1834, it was performed for the King of Prussia, and in 1839 the carol was debuted outside Trinity Church in New York City. The musical work evolved, and was translated into over 140

languages with many different arrangements. It was sung in churches, in town squares, even on the battlefield during World War 1, when, during a temporary truce on Christmas Eve, soldiers on both sides of the battle sang Silent Night together in French, German and English.

Silent Night was declared a treasured item of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2011. It has been recorded by many vocalists, with the version by Bing Crosby in 1935 being one of the most famous.

Silent Night has touched people around the world in their spiritual search for peace.

*(Details from Susan Lewis (WRTI), Wikipedia, Sarah Eyerly (Florida State University)*



Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.

Round yon Virgin Mother and child,

Holy infant so tender and mild.

Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight!

Glories stream from heaven afar,

Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!

Christ, the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light.

Radiant beams from thy holy face,

With the dawn of redeeming grace.

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.



## Book Review: *May I have this dance? An Invitation to Faithful Prayer Throughout the Year*

The following thoughts are posed by the author of this book, Joyce Rupp:

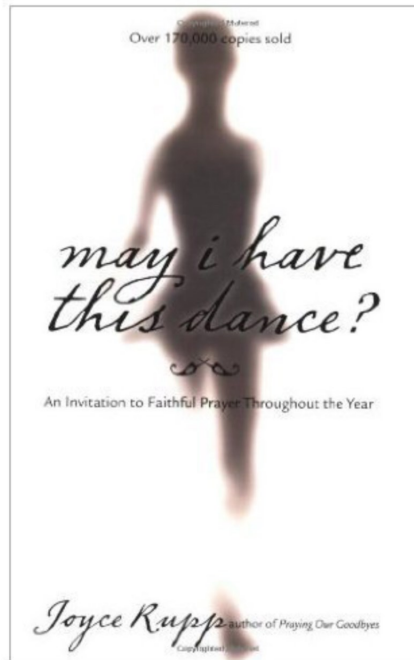
"I always struggle with being too busy. I promise God and myself that I will be more faithful to contemplation and then I find myself zooming through my days, caught up in activity that engulfs my spirit. I get weary, worn out, and I come crawling back to God, crying out, "refresh me, restore me!"

When I pause and allow room for prayer and solitude, my spirit experiences a coming together much like the dry bones in Ezekiel's valley that come together into life. God constantly visits my valley of dry bones and invites me to dance. God faithfully asks me if I want to live with greater quality of life and deeper enthusiasm. When I am faithful to my inner journey, my life comes together in a sense of wholeness and aliveness. This book is an invitation to be more faithful to prayer, to be more constant to the dance of life that God so desires for us. It is a call to put our busyness aside for a while in order to rekindle our relationship with the Holy One and to gain a clearer vision of what is really valuable in our lives.

Prayer keeps our hope active and restores life to the dead bones of our dreams. Regaining our energy and vitality may very well happen when we seek time apart with God for the sake of the relationship. Prayer is a time to dance with our Divine Partner, to let the Beloved One take the lead, and to enjoy the true delight and source of life that God is for us. This book invites you to take time for the inner dance. As you hear God's invitation to dance, you might experience some of the varied feelings of anyone asked to dance: hesitancy, self consciousness, fear of do-

ing it wrong, concerned about looking good, or great joy of being asked because you have long wanted to dance with this partner. We all know people who say, "Oh, I can't dance." We also know people who love to dance, who can't wait for the music to begin. I think that deep within, everyone wants to have the freedom and the joy of dancing with a wonderful partner. We may feel inadequate or unable to dance well, but the opportunity for a vibrant inner life waits for us if we are willing to risk a dance floor of prayer.

We must let go of thinking that we must have something to show for our time spent dancing with God. Just choosing to be with God is valuable. We must simply trust this Wise Companion with our lives, trust that God will lead us into greater harmony and integrity. Prayer is not about "feeling good". Rather, it is about learning the dance of the Holy One, which is the dance of truth and wholeness."



The themes for the chapters of this book are connected with our daily lives and with the natural seasons of the year. For example January's theme is "The Road of Life", because a new year is an opportunity to pause on our road of life, looking back to see where we have been, notice how far we have come, and refresh our dreams and hopes as we set out once more on the journey. There are 12 monthly themes to explore throughout the year.

### **Please join us!**

Doug Goar invites you to join him once a month throughout 2022, to explore the themes that this book offers, and engage together in discussion, prayer, and guided meditation. We will begin on the fourth Monday of January, January 24 from 1-2 pm in Bevan Hall. We can decide at the first meeting if another time and day are better suited to the group. Please contact Doug if you would like more information, or to join the group. (519-270-1647) and order a copy of the book.





## Drawing Near

*Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.* —Luke 21.28

## A Blessing to Begin Advent

It is difficult to see it from here, I know, but trust me when I say this blessing is inscribed on the horizon. Is written on that far point you can hardly see. Is etched into a landscape whose contours you cannot know from here. All you know is that it calls you, draws you, pulls you toward what you have perceived only in pieces, in fragments that came to you in dreaming or in prayer. I cannot account for how, as you draw near, the blessing embedded in the horizon begins to blossom upon the soles of your feet, shimmers in your two hands. It is one of the mysteries of the road, how the blessing you have travelled toward, waited for, ached for,

suddenly appears as if it had been with you, all this time, as if it simply needed to know how far you were willing to walk to find the lines that were traced upon you before the day that you were born.

By Jan Richardson

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

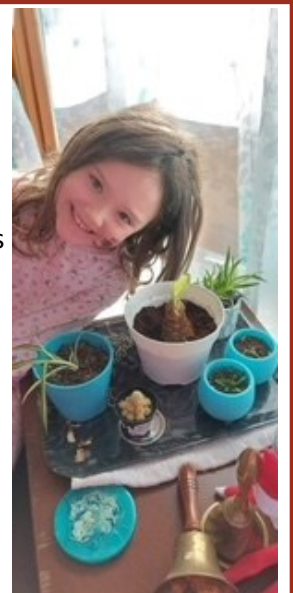
1. When we stop and look for signs, and I will use the example of springtime bulbs, or buds on the trees, what emotion catches us?
2. When we think of what might have shocked or stunned us so much that it rocked our faith, what emotion catches us?
3. How does this blessing, and the message that Jesus is trying to share in this reading offer HOPE today?
4. Did something else pop up for you in this reading?

## Children's Focus for Advent

Just before Advent, on the weekend of The Reign of Christ, a delivery of Amaryllis bulbs went out the children in the parish. Our Children's Focus for the season of Advent was planting, nurturing and watching our bulbs grow. Advent means "arrival" or "coming." It is a season of expectation and hope. It is a time when believers across the world spend the weeks before Christmas preparing for that day of beauty and light when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is a time of preparation, a time to intentionally set time aside for prayer, and watchfulness. Each week the children would add a hand-drawn candle to the pots containing their bulbs, candles of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. Weekly prayers accompanied the

delivery of bulbs, and with each new candle added, a new prayer spoken.

November 28 **Advent I ~ HOPE ~** Lord Jesus, planted in our heart is our HOPE in you. Help us to always remember that HOPE, and give voice to that HOPE as we begin and end each day. Amen



## Children's Advent Focus: continued:

December 5: **Advent II ~PEACE~**

Lord Jesus, planted in our heart is the PEACE only you can bring. Help us to always rest in that PEACE, knowing you are with us as we begin and end each day. Always and forever. Amen

December 12: **Advent III ~LOVE~**

Lord Jesus, planted in our heart is the LOVE you have for us. Help us to always remember that LOVE and share that LOVE, as we begin and end each day. Amen

December 19: **Advent IV ~JOY~**

Lord Jesus, planted in our heart is the JOY of your great gift. You came to be with us as a baby and offered us an eternal life with you. Help us to always remember the JOY of this gift as we begin and end each day. Amen.



## A New Year's Prayer

Response: *God, surprise us again.*

When we miss the beauty and joy of earth's goodness ...

When we grow too accustomed to life's busyness ...

When the goodness of others gets lost in the rush ...

When our frailty outruns our strength ...

When the hope in our heart fades away ...

When the call to serve others loses its flavour ...

When we search for the way home to you ...

When loneliness pursues us ...

When it seems darkness will never give way to the light ...

When the ache of the world wears our compassion thin ...

When troubles of others seem more than we can carry ...

When even you seem far away from us ...

Response: *Walk closely with us, God.*

As we strive to live our lives well ...

As we enjoy treasures we've found in the field of faith ...

As we continue to surrender ourselves to you ...

As we journey into the unknown territory of a new year ...

As we hurt in the process of loving our enemies ...

As we learn to accept our weaknesses and our strengths ...

As we open our hearts to the messages you send to us ...

As we stay faithful to our relationship with you ...

As we give ourselves to the poor and the powerless ...

As we keep searching for the truth ...

As we try to live in the heart of the scriptures ...

As we accept your constant love for us ...

By

*Joyce Rupp,*

*May I Have This*

*Dance*







## A Word about Stewardship

When we hear the word “Stewardship”, does our mind automatically think about money? It shouldn’t. It’s not all about money. Stewardship is a way of living - an intentional decision about how we live in response to God’s call. Bishop Philip Poole (Diocese of Toronto) is quoted as saying, “Stewardship is everything I do after I say ‘I Believe’”.

Being a Christian is not just about what we believe – it is a way of life! It is about gratitude! God has abundantly blessed us. Our response to this generosity is to care for God’s creation. This includes caring for ourselves, other people, and the world. Every action and decision, no matter how mundane, comes from the starting place of recognizing this sacred responsibility. We are God’s stewards and therefore we live with loving and generous intention. As Christians, we do this by patterning our life after Jesus Christ. We need to reflect on several areas of our life including our time, our talent, our finances. However, Time, Talent and Treasure are the means to our mission, not the end in itself.

We must remember:

*“We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. - Romans 12:68*

Ultimately, we are being asked: “how do we want to live our lives?”. A helpful spiritual practice is to periodically take time to reflect on our abundant blessings and intentionally share a portion of what we have been given. The act of setting aside a portion of our time, talent and treasure in response to God’s generosity and for the good of others and creation cultivate a deeper, stronger faith. Characteristics of a good steward are: caring, compassionate, committed, just, thoughtful, generous, and ... intentional! We must live with intention and be who God is calling us to be! When our deepest joys meet the world’s needs, we will find our God-given purpose!



Take a moment to ponder these questions. When the word “giving” is read, think of Time, Talent and Treasure.

What does it mean to you to be a Christian?

What does Stewardship mean to you?

Why do you give?

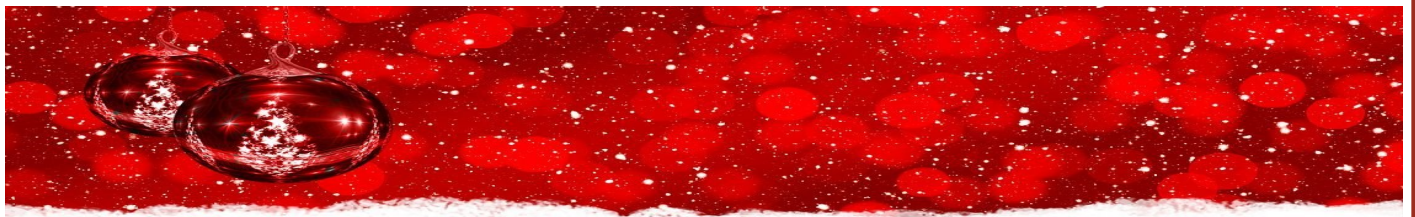
Who taught you about stewardship and supporting the work of God?

Is giving to the church important to you?

Is supporting the mission and ministry of the church important?

What emotions do you feel in giving?

*You call us, Lord, to be a people set apart,  
To feel with thoughtful mind and think with tender heart.  
Thus chosen, now, O Lord, we ask  
for faith in your unfailing grace to make us equal to the  
task.*



## Advent and Christmas Service Schedule for the Regional Ministry:

### In-Person Services:

Sunday, December 19 at 10:00 AM—St. Paul's, Southampton, and Christ Church, Tara

Wednesday, December 22 at 4:00 PM—St. John's, Port Elgin

### Friday, December 24 — Christmas Eve:

5:00 PM—St. John's, Port Elgin

7:00 PM—St. Paul's, Southampton

7:30 PM—Christ Church, Tara

*If you are planning to join us at church for worship in either of our two Shoreline churches, please contact us by emailing our secretary Ann at [anglicansecretary@bmts.com](mailto:anglicansecretary@bmts.com), or calling 519-797-2984*

Sunday, December 26 at 10:00 AM—St. John's, Port Elgin

Sunday, January 2 at 10:00 AM—St. Paul's, Southampton (Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols)

*Please note: We will continue to broadcast one service each Sunday for those worshipping with us at home.*

### Vestry Meetings:

Sunday, January 16 at 11:30 AM —Christ Church, Tara (via Zoom)

Sunday, January 23 at 11:30 AM—St. John's, Port Elgin (via Zoom)

Sunday, January 30 at 11:30 AM—St. Paul's, Southampton (via Zoom)

Please watch for the date of the Mapping Exercise, presented by the Primates World Relief and Development Fund Committee. It will take place in February.

## **2022 Church Calendars Are Available Now!**

Have you got your 2022 church calendar yet? If not, call Ann at 519-797-2984, or Thelma. Cost is \$10, to assist with the ministry of the Chancel Guild.





## ***From the Priest Assistant's Pew***

You mean Advent is nearly over? You mean Christmas is around the corner? Huh?

Where has the time gone? I know that I enjoy being busy doing things that make me happy and keep me engaged in the community, my friends and family but it seems, like the weather we've been having recently, I am flying around in a wind that won't quit.

Advent is a time of preparation, of anticipation, of hope, of love, of joy and of peace. There are a couple of types of peace, one that comes to mind is one that we celebrate and remember on November 11<sup>th</sup>. The picture is from the Legion service at the Southampton Cenotaph (photo credit: Catherine Tolton) where, despite wind, cold and COVID we were able to remember and be grateful for the peace we have.

The other kind of peace is the kind we feel in our hearts. The peace that transcends all other kind of chaos that might be going on in our lives. The kind of peace



that smooths the crooked pathways. The peace that we should all have at least for a little while. But where do we find that right now?

As we prepare for the coming Christmas Eve and all that it means to us in the Christian Church we remember that it was a humbling time. There was chaos all around, there was worry, there was "what should we do now"? (Sounds kind of like right now doesn't it?) But for one brief period in time all that was put aside, away from view except for one beautiful, perfect human, sent by God, nurtured by an innocent woman to be for us an example of perfection.

May we take the days that we have before Christmas Eve to reflect on what is important in our lives, who is important in our lives and why we are important to each other. This continues to be a tumultuous time in our history, there is no denying that, but for one brief moment take time to face the wind that may blow around (physically, emotionally or spiritually) and feel the peace that Jesus, our Saviour, brought to us and continues to bring us each and every day.

Blessings to you, your family and friends this Christmas time. Be well.

*Rev. Annie*



**St. Paul's Anglican Church**, 248 High Street, Southampton, ON, N0H 2L0 519-797-2984

**St. John's Anglican Church**, 516 Mill Street, Box 1059, Port Elgin, ON, N0H 2C0 519-832-5757

**Christ Church**, 56 Bruce Road 17, Tara, ON, N0H 2N0

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