

The Anglican Regional Ministry of Saugeen Shores, Tara and Chatsworth

Canon Carrie writes ...

Dear siblings in Christ,

That time of year has come again, when we find ourselves in the season of Advent, often known as the season of waiting. We all know what it is like to wait, but truth be told, not all waiting is the same. Waiting for a train or a bus entails a passive kind of ho-hum waiting ... waiting for a diagnosis may evoke anxiety and worry ... waiting for a holiday is often happy and exciting ... waiting to see children or grandchildren may be infused with longing and expectation.

Advent waiting is also expectant. It's not a 'sit-back-and-wait' kind of waiting. It is filled with an anticipation of something beautiful ahead, of wondering, of listening, of anticipated discovery, and sometimes of uncertainty.

Although we may know what Christmas services we will attend, and what company we will keep at Christmas, we do not know how Jesus will come to us this Christmas.

Prepare to be surprised! Prepare to see God, in perhaps a new way, in surprising places, in surprising people. Wait in expectation to be surprised!

But, we will only notice Christ's revelation to us if we make space for it to happen. There was no room for the pregnant Mary or Joseph during that first night, because the inns were too full. The stable where Jesus was born may have been ever so humble, but it still had the necessary space for the family to find shelter. In the frenzy of activities and engagements, to-do lists and endless chores, I wonder whether we have that

space this Advent? I wonder what we have to do, or stop doing, in order to make that space available?

Advent waiting is also hopeful, and oh, how we need hope in the world today! It can seem very dark at times, not only with the shortening days but also with the wars and suffering that is the reality for so many! In John's Gospel we are told: *"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* What does that sentence mean to you, in your life and in your context? Mary and Joseph might not have fully understood the significance of their baby about to be born, but with hindsight, we do. We know the hope that Jesus brings, the hope and light which his life, death and resurrection revealed. We have read the stories and heard the testimonies of the faithful who have gone before us. We can draw upon our own experiences of Christ's light shining in our lives and join our voices to those who have gone before us and offer hope to those who will come after us. These connections add to our hope ... the hope which the incarnation brings.



We hold onto all of this as we journey through Advent. And I hope and pray that it will be a fulfilling time for you, a time of expectation, space, and hope. It is the time of looking for our Emmanuel, 'God-with-us', the promise of which will be fulfilled. And so, we wait. We wait. But thankfully we do not wait alone. We wait with one another. We wait together as Advent people and people of faith.

God bless,
Canon Carrie



Bishop's Friends:

Over 100 folks gathered at St. Paul's on October 5th for our Bishop's Friends North, "Come to the Table" event to raise funds for the Bishop's Discretionary Fund. Many people from across the Deanery contributed their

time and talents to prepare a prime rib dinner, with

chicken and vegetarian options – peeling, cooking, setting tables, served by the clergy, under the direction of our talented chef, The Reverend Gilles Hache. Following a lively musical programme, Bishop Todd addressed the group. Folks were very generous in their donations and through the silent auction, raising over \$10 000!



Some Christmas Memories:

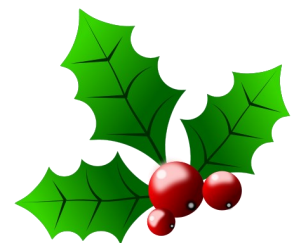
When our girls were in their 'twens and teens' Christmas morning was more fun if they had a game to help them find their gifts. Santa Claus would leave the first clue to a treasure hunt under the Christmas tree. I recall that one of the first tasks on the treasure hunt was to sing "Joy to the World". Upon successfully singing, the next clue would appear.

As a child growing up in rural Ontario, Christmas was not the crazy circus that it has become. We had school Christmas plays; my first in Grade 1 in a one room school. There were four Grade 1 children and four Grade 2 children. We were Santa's reindeer. I was 'Vixen'. We made our own antlers from construction paper and wore them proudly as we recited our lines. Our whole school may have had twenty kids and the Christmas pageant was a highlight of my first year at school. It was the last Christmas pageant at that building as the new 'big school' opened in January.

Church Christmas pageants brought the age-old story to life. The girls were the angels and the boys were the shepherds. Sometimes there was even a real baby! There was lots of singing. After the pageant performance we all went to the church basement for treats and Santa Claus. Everyone was given a gift from Santa which was usually an orange and hard candy. The red striped candies were a favourite. Families from the community were together enjoying the evening and the season.

A Christmas tradition that has been gifted to me by my mother-in-law is the 'Christmas journal'. Each year when the tree is put away, I write a note in our journal that was initiated on our first Christmas in 1979. It is a summary of our family, the celebrations, the vacations, the entrances and exits. It takes all day to put away the tree mostly because I have to read all the journal entries and write the highlights for the current year. The memories that are revived sometimes cause me to shed a tear but it is a warm feeling to bring back those memories. It is our family's journal of love.

Sheree Lake



St. Paul's, Chatsworth Distributes Funds:

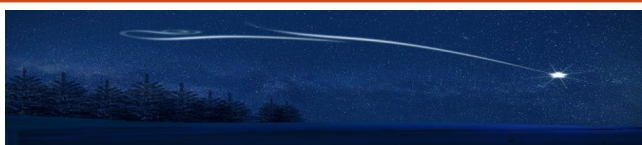
St. Paul's, Chatsworth was deconsecrated in 2022 and sold. Wanting to ensure that ministry continued in the Chatsworth community from the long history of St. Paul's, a Vestry decision ensured that the proceeds from the sale would be invested with the Diocese, and the interest would be distributed annually. Heather Stirling, the Warden from St. Paul's, Chatsworth in its final days of ministry, distributed the funds for 2023 recently to various local organizations..

The **Chatsworth Community Outreach (top photo)**: Carl Seeley, Heather Stirling, April King and George Kidd.

The **Chatsworth Agricultural Society**: (middle photo): Pat Thompson, Ronda Brainard, Joanne Anderson, Heather Stirling.

Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council: (Lower photo): Heather Stirling, Ziyaad Khan (secretary), Michelle Ireton (admin), Archdeacon Graham Bland (chair), Jan Temple-Jones (program lead), Scott Saunders (treasurer)

The Grey Bruce Spiritual Care Council ensures spiritual care providers are available to patients in the hospitals in Grey and Bruce Counties as well as Chapman House Residential Hospice. The Council relies on the generosity of individual and organization donations to pay the Spiritual Care Providers to be accessible to people of need, regardless of race or religion, while focusing on the spiritual needs



St. Paul's ACW, all decked out in new aprons!



Happy 104th Birthday Nellie!

On December 2nd, immediate family, relatives and close friends helped Nellie (Helen) Perry celebrate her 104th birthday with a party at the home of her son Paul and daughter-in-law Bernie, in Ariss, Ontario. Nellie wishes the congregation at St Paul's a happy holiday season!

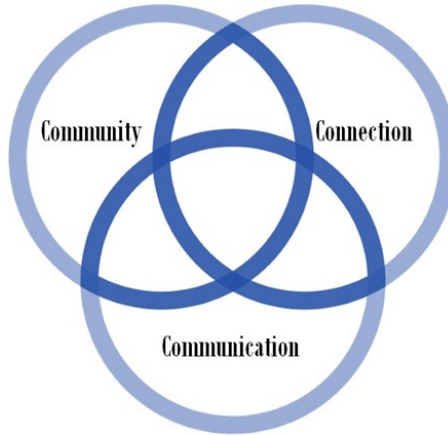


Doctor of Ministry Update

We tell stories because we're made in the image of God, who chose stories as the way to share God's great love for us. And we tell stories because there is no better way to convey deep truth, deep pain, and deep love. But even though we know the power of story, we often struggle to tell our own faith stories to each other. In sharing our stories, we share the blessing of telling and hearing about God's faithfulness in our everyday lives.

This truth hit home for me in my pondering and reading as I started my program this Fall. My focus of study is on community, connection, and communication. To my way of thinking, communication builds connections, and connections build community. We are who we are through the influence of our past, the reality of our present and our expectations of our future. Community, connection and communication come together around the Trinity, and highlight our interconnectedness.

Stories have been used to hand down learning and knowledge for thousands of years. A good story engages our curiosity, emotions, and imagination. Stories are part of our daily lives, in the anecdotes we tell our friends, the books we read and the films we watch. Stories are also recognized as an important way of connecting with one another. Stories are the way we understand and make sense of the world we find ourselves in, and stories have a transformative power to allow us to see the world in a



different way than we do if we just encounter it on our own. Stories are an entry point to understanding a different experience of the world, and our place in it.

This aspect of storytelling – presenting a different perspective of the world – is important when it comes to connecting with each other. It gives us an opportunity to learn from another person's experience and it can shape, strengthen, or challenge our opinions and values. When a story catches our attention and engages us, we are more likely to absorb the message and meaning within it than if the same message was presented simply in facts and figures.

One of the questions I am wrestling with is whether we have professionalized storytelling so much, that it has been tied exclusively to the pulpit, offered only by those who hold the appropriate degree or training. Have we lost the ability to tell our story of how God is present in our lives, connecting it to our shared story as told through the Bible, and reaching out expectantly to how it connects to the stories yet to be told? Have we given all authority over to the few when it is the responsibility of the whole church to be storytellers?

Over the next few years, my hope is that we will engage in the study of different methods of storytelling, grounding the practice deeply in theological foundations, and increasing our capacity to share our stories of the Good News.

Canon Carrie

2024 Church Calendars Are Available

Have you purchased your 2024 church calendar yet? If not, call Ann at the church office (519-797-2984), or Thelma or Scott. The cost is \$10, with proceeds assisting the ministry of the Chancel Guilds.

If you wish to place flowers in the church for the Christmas season, contact Scott or Thelma.



Coffee hour at St. John's is extra special when Carol "the cook" is in charge!





The History of The Huron Carol:

From Christmas Carols: From Medieval to Modern Day, by Elle Andra—Warner, and Wikipedia

Many of us know the words and lyrics to our favourite Christmas carols, but what about the history behind them? A favourite carol, with origins not far from where we live, is The Huron Carol, also known as “Twas in the Moon of Wintertime”. A Jesuit missionary from Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, Jean de Brebeauf, wrote the first Canadian Christmas Carol in 1642. Written in the indigenous language of the Huron / Wendat people living near modern-day Midland, Ontario, it was originally titled “Jesus Ahatonhia” (“Jesus, He Is Born”) and set to the melody of a French folk song. The well-known English lyrics were written in 1926 by Canadian journalist, historian and songwriter Jesse Edgar Middleton. The English version of the hymn uses imagery familiar in the early 20th century, in place of the traditional nativity story. The “Huron Carol” is about Jesus, born in a lodge made of broken bark; wrapped in a robe of rabbit skin; hunters replacing the shepherds; and, the Magi being chiefs, bearing gifts of fox and beaver pelts. In 1977, the carol was honoured in a series of Canadian postage stamps, and in 2005, the song was inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. (Copyright for the song entered public domain in 2011).



“Well I’m all grown up now, And still need help somehow. I’m not a child but my heart still can dream”.

My dream for the world:



Less politics and more collaboration towards a positive goal.
Action for humanity.
Less greed
End nasty Social Media
Hugs for all who grieve
An ear for every broken heart or broken mind





Let the Star of Morning Rise: by Ted Loder

(from Guerrillas of Grace—Prayers for the Battle)

Lord God,
 In the deepest night
 there rises the star of morning,
 of birth,
 the herald of a new day you are making,
 a day of great joy dawning
 in yet faint shafts
 of light and love.

I hear whispers of peace in the stillness,
 fresh breezes of promise
 stirring,
 winter sparrows
 chirping of life,
 a baby's cry
 of need
 and hope -
 Christmas!

In the dark I see the light
 and find in it comfort,
 confidence,
 cause for celebration,
 for the darkness cannot overcome it;
 and I rejoice to nourish it
 in myself,
 in other people,
 in the world
 for the sake of him
 in whom it was born
 and shines forever,
 even Jesus the Christ.



Did You Know?

There are so many ways to get involved within our church community. Give them a try!

- Men's Breakfast ACW Choir Reader Lay Leader
- Greeter Sidesperson Chancel
- Lay Administrant Decorating
- Yoga Yarn Lovers
- Bible Study Coffee Hour
- Book studies / Groups
- Tech opportunities Food Bank at Christ Church
- Carpet Bowling Gardening Newsletter Server at dinners



Busy Days at Christ Church, Tara:



Christ Church Festival of Crafts—October 2023

A banner year for the Christ Church Tara Guild as they sewed, canned, baked, stirred, chopped, and lovingly packaged up so many treats that the 2 day Festival of Crafts at the Tara Community Centre in October raised over \$5,600.00! What is always lovely to see is the number of people that look for specific items that have been the mainstay of Christ Church's offering, specifically the oven door towels and the jarred pickles that are on offer each year. 2023 had a spectacular number of people from the community and far beyond enjoying the offerings. A true community effort that goes back to the community with funds raised going to local, regional, national and global initiatives that the Guild chooses each year to support.

Tara Coffee Hour and Mini Craft sale—December 2023

On Saturday, December 2, Christ Church, Tara, held their Coffee Hour and Mini Craft Sale. This year a few local artisans were invited to join us as well. A great time was had and we made over \$800 to help with our growing expenses. Thanks to everyone who helped bake and create for the sale, everyone who came and bought something, and to everyone who shared in the wonderful day with us! Only the ladies in the picture know exactly what they are laughing at!



Christmas Hampers:

Christ Church, Tara, is pleased to provide space for Tara/Allenford Community Outreach to collect donations and put together their amazing Christmas hampers. This year they expect to provide hampers to over 30 households! This shows the incredible food donations that were collected in just one hour from the Tara Santa Claus Parade! Our community always shows up for those in need around us! *"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Hebrews 13:16*

Christ Church Council:

From left to right: Kathleen Cannon, Marilyn Bloomfield, Shirley Hunt, Anne Crocker, Barb Kelly, Jane Dobie, Heather Stirling, Cannon Carrie, Gary Stirling, Rev. Annie



From the Priest Assistant's Pew:

It's rain/snowing out. It's December. It's dark. The days are short. Ugh....

There is so much to lament these days but then there is a bright light, a light that can fill a whole room. That always surprises me. How can one flame, one little flame, illumine a dark space, filling each corner with a glow? Perhaps a glow of hope.

As we enter into the season of Advent, it is the season of light. We have candles that focus our attention, not on the darkness of our structures that we may be in, but the darkness that's also in our hearts. Each little candle has a big job to do—not only lighten the atmosphere around us, but also the one that dwells deep inside of us and sometimes can overtake us.

Each year we "celebrate" the arrival of a figure of our secular world with joy, lights, music, fun, laughter and wonder. If you were part of or have seen pictures of Southampton's Santa Parade I would like to draw your attention to a few things. One - the look on some of the children's faces. That is pure wonder and joy. Second - the lights. Even the animals that participated

had lights on! Third - the joining of a community that, on a snowy, damp night, came together to cheer, laugh, enjoy and support each other.

In the season of Advent we do the exact same thing, but it's not just one night! It's a whole series of days and nights. The celebration, the anticipation, just keeps building, the light gets stronger, the love gets deeper and we feel joy, hope, love and grace like we've never felt before.

All from that one flame in the first candle.

This year, as Advent grows in our hearts, as we watch each candle successively kindle its flame in us, how do we share what we have gained in seeing, feeling and holding that light in our hearts?

May your Advent be blessed. May you see the joy of the coming Christ, not only in your heart but the hearts of others. Share the light you have received with honour and glory and love and it will take you places you least expect!

Shalom,

Rev. Annie



Advent 4 / Christmas / Vestry Schedule for the Regional Ministry:

Sunday, December 24—Advent 4: Lessons and Carols

This will be a joint Regional Ministry service held at St. Paul's at 10:00 AM, followed by brunch.

Sunday, December 24—Christmas Eve

5 PM Holy Eucharist Service at St. John's

7 PM Holy Eucharist Service at Christ Church

8 PM Candlelight Holy Eucharist Service at St. Paul's

Sunday, December 31— First Sunday after Christmas

Holy Eucharist Service—9:00 AM at St. Paul's 10:00 AM at Christ Church 11:00 AM at St. John's

Annual Vestry Meeting Dates: January 21 at St. Paul's January 28 at Christ Church February 4 at St. John's

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

To contact The Rev. Canon Carrie Irwin (Rector): Cell Phone: 519-377-3664; Email: revcarrieirwin@gmail.com

To contact The Rev. Ann Veyvara-Divinski (Priest Assistant): Cell Phone: 519-375-1816; Email: aveyvara@hotmail.com