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## *From the Rector...*

Dear Ascension friends,

The colour blue will welcome you when you arrive at church during the Advent season which begins on November 27th and ends on Christmas Eve. Look out for the beautiful hangings on the wall and in front of the altar, pulpit and lectern. Blue is the colour of hope and expectation; the colour of longing. We wait for the advent of the One who came to be with us – Emmanuel.

The season of Advent calls us to do something that might be difficult in today's frenetic world. Anne Thurston in her book, "A Time of Waiting: Images and Insights" says that Advent pulls us 'against the grain of commerce and offers time as a dimension of depth and stillness rather than the clock and calendar.' (Thurston, pg.24)

Advent calls us to slow down in a world that affirms busyness.

It calls us to be patient in a world and a time that demands immediate answers.

It calls us to wait in a world that never pauses for breath.

It calls us to be silent in a noisy world.

It calls us to sit in the darkness as we wait for the Light to dawn.

Stillness. Patience. Silence. Darkness. Waiting.

These are not easy for things for us to be or do when everything around us is sending a different message.

But what if we did choose to use the Advent season to step away from the hustle and bustle of the pre-Christmas season and chose to live into one of those words each week? What if we took a period of time every day and sat quietly and prayed, medi-

tated, contemplated a passage from the Scriptures? What if we stayed with that difficult person and demonstrated the kind of patience that allows a new relationship to blossom and reconciliation to take place? What if we brought the thing we are most afraid of – the darkness that holds us in its grip, before the throne of God and asked for light to shine on it?

I'll bet that if we could practice stillness, patience, silence and waiting in darkness and allow them to penetrate our being this Advent, that the grace of God grace will find us and fill our lives with Advent HOPE and turn it into Christmas JOY.

I pray that this will also be a time of looking ahead with hope and expectation to the New Year and all that God has in store for you at the Ascension. 2017 will be a year of change with my departure from the parish after sixteen years of being your rector. Because I know you well, I have confidence that you will work together to make the interim period a time that reflects our mission and commitment to Christ and what it means to be the Church in this time. As Christians we believe that God is already at work in ways that we cannot even imagine, and so we can look forward to something new and exciting. Know that you are in my prayers as you enter this new time in the life of the parish.

I give thanks for the leadership of the wardens, honorary clergy, and board members who are already hard at work putting plans into place to ensure a smooth transition in February. You can read all about those plans in this copy of the Ascension Witness.

### **Ain't that Good News"**

A whisper of grace landed in my ear,  
"You're going to have a baby boy, Mary! Now  
ain't that good news?" But my mind captured  
every question overwhelming me, and only  
one found its way free. "How? Can this be?"

"Mary, don't you know? Nothing is  
impossible for God! Nothing!"

And that's the only reminder I needed.

Somewhere inside of me something was  
breathing life into my faith and calling me to  
speak. These words came from the gut of my  
soul where joy and pain, laughter and tears,  
life and death are born. They came from a  
place where God's Spirit dwells. And that  
soul smiled as these words journeyed from  
my mouth. "I am the Lord's. Let it be."

(Ciona D. Rouse)

The reflection above, by Ciona Rouse, spoke to me on so many levels. The Angel's words to Mary, "Don't you know, nothing is impossible with God! Nothing!" were the only reminder Mary needed to say "Yes" to God. Not knowing or understanding everything that lay ahead for her, she was still able to believe that God could see the big picture and that it would all work out.

May Mary's faith and trust in God give us faith to look out beyond the laughter and tears, the joy and the pain, the death and the life to that place where the Spirit of God dwells. As we journey into the New Year may we, with Mary smile and say, "I am the Lord's, let it be."

Blessings to you and those you love this holy season.

*Anne*

**An Advent finger rhyme for families with little children.**

Advent is a time to wait,  
(hold hand up as you say "wait")  
Not quite time to celebrate,  
(shake head and wag finger from side to side)  
Count the candles 1 by 1,  
(put 4 fingers up, one at a time)  
Until Advent time is done.  
(wave hands, palms down)  
Day by day we work and play,  
(stack fist on top of fist, back and forth)  
To prepare for Christmas day!  
(put arms on shoulders and hug yourself)

Rev. Anne, Fr. Bob, Rev. Jeff and Rev. Rhonda – the wardens and board members wish you all a very Happy Christmas and blessings of good health and happiness in 2017!

Christmas hampers will be filled and brought to those in need during the week of December 19th. Please bring your non-perishable food items or monetary gifts to the Church on Sunday December 4th or Sunday December 11th. If you are unsure of what to bring, please speak to Anne Trimmer, or call her at 705. 566.8127



2016-11-24 - Parents Michael & Lexi Asunmaa with their son Owen at his Baptism

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## *From the Wardens...*

We have been busy this month beginning the process of transition. We hope to maintain good contact and communication with everyone through this time. We appreciate the many questions expressed by individuals and encourage you to keep asking and sharing any concerns or curiosities. I will endeavour to summarize some of the areas that people are asking about:

### **The Concurrence Committee:**

This committee will be formed following the departure of Rev. Anne. It is made up of 4-6 parishioners. They are elected by parishioners at a Special Vestry. The task of the Concurrence Committee is to create a "parish profile," which is a detailed document of who we are as the parish of the Ascension and a view of where we want to journey as a community of faith.

Often, a parish takes on much of the personality, identity and attributes of its priest. Once Anne leaves, the pause before looking for another priest will allow us to see who the parish of the Ascension is, and what the parish feels called to be. In this regard, at our last Board meeting, the general recommendation is that the contemplative period of Lent, which shortly follows Anne's departure, will provide space and opportunities for such meaningful reflections and conversations.

An appropriate time for the special vestry to elect the concurrence committee would be approximately in May. The committee completes its profile which is a task that tends to take 3 to 4 months. The profile is given to the Bishop who then makes a recommendation of a candidate or candidates to be interviewed. This is a strictly confidential process. The concurrence committee gives its recommendation back to the Bishop, and the Bishop appoints the new incumbent.

We are encouraging any parishioner who feel called to be on the concurrence committee to let the wardens know. We will compile a list of interested individuals and hope to present this at our Annual vestry in January.

### **Finances**

We recognize that there is heightened anxiety that comes with change and that fear can appear in concern for the parish's financial health. Thank you so much for the generous donations of this past year. Finances tend to be an uncomfortable issue to discuss but one that is a reality for all of us. As Brent wrote in last month's warden report, we are asking parishioners to consider an Offering in Thanksgiving to the parish as a way to express personal gratitude. Also, as you consider your financial contribution in the year to come, you may find your present situation allows you to make a modest increase to your regular contributions. Again, we appreciate your giving, support and consideration.

### **Annual Vestry**

We have our regular yearly vestry meeting on January 22. Please consider attending. For those who need to submit an annual report, the deadline is January 5.

## **Pastoral Care and Worship**

We are already preparing a roster for our services from February through to June. I am amazed to see that it is almost filled!!! Our honorary assistants and worship leaders are signing up and we will likely maintain Eucharist on Sunday services, and Morning Prayer on Wednesdays and alternate Fridays and alternate Sunday Evening Prayer. Thank you so much worship leaders!

We are blessed to have a pastoral team and we are hoping to build this roster. Please contact me if you are interested in this special ministry. Also, please speak to us of your spiritual care needs so that you are not missed or neglected. Every parishioner is important to us and we don't want anyone to be left out. If you or someone near you has pastoral needs, please let a warden know. We are blessed with pastoral leaders who can take time to listen and pray with you.

## **Our Farewell**

Jennifer Ames is organizing transportation to Anne's consecration on February 11 in Sault Ste Marie. We are chartering a bus at the cost of \$45/person. The bus will leave at noon on Friday February 10 from the Ascension with an additional pick up in the south end. The bus will head back to Sudbury after the reception on Saturday. If you are interested in traveling on the bus, please contact Jen. For accommodation, please contact the Days Inn directly. 25 rooms have been set aside at the price of \$85.

Jen is also leading a small committee to organize our celebratory events. Please mark your calendar for January 29 when there will be a reception for Anne (details to be announced).

Also, the Ascension will be giving Anne a gift: a beautiful mitre which Anne has selected. Collection arrangements will be announced.

There has been concern expressed about the expense of the vestments that the Bishop will need. The Diocese has a special purse so that Anne does not incur the expenses. Parishes and individuals across the Diocese will be donating to this.

## **Property update**

The Whole Nine Yards has been awarded the tender to care for our snow plowing and removal needs. Thank you, Chantal Rozon, for all your work in this process.

Thank you to Ralph and Philip for the stained glass installation and lighting. It is beautiful. Also, thank you to the Iburg family. The stained glass will be rededicated soon.

**Winter habits:** Please ensure that blinds are drawn to 6 inches from the bottom of the window, when you have finished using the fellowship hall or board room. This helps with heating efficiency. Also please make sure all the doors leading to the Church are closed as there is a heating differential in that space from the rest of the building. The board room door needs to be kept closed as well. Thank you.

Thank you to those who grab a shovel to clear our front and side walkway and/or sprinkle salt/salt. Please remember to record the work and time on a Maintenance Form (they hang next to the freezer in the furnace room), to show due diligence on our part.

**Garbage:** The City has recently enforced our designation as a commercial

building and has thus refused to pick up our garbage in its residential pick up. The wardens are sorting out this issue. In the meantime, we ask if a few parishioners each week wouldn't mind taking a bag or blue box to add to their collection. Thank you.

We so appreciate all the love, help, and support that happens in our community. The Ascension is truly a place where we feel Christ's presence in our midst. Christ lives in the smiles, the loving acts, the hugs, and warmth that each of you offer.

Respectfully submitted,

*by Erma Howe (rector's warden)*



2016-11-27 – Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday Lucien Rozon!

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## *In the parish...*

The following document on Memorials at the Church of the Ascension will be brought to the floor of the Annual Vestry meeting on January 22nd 2017 for discussion and approval. With the congregation's approval this document will become the Ascension's policy on Memorial donations and gifts.

### **Church of the Ascension Memorials**

Memorial gifts are often given at the time of a person's death in lieu of flowers. It is a way to say that the person was important, and it gives the family and their friends the opportunity to honour that person's life. Memorial gifts do not always have to come when a person dies. Some may be given on the anniversary of a death, or at other times in the year.

At the Church of the Ascension there are a number of avenues for memorial gifts to be made.

- 1) To the '**Memorial Fund**' (the bank account is held at RBC). Traditionally the funds are used for items for the altar such as holy hardware, banners, altar linen, communion sets, or gowns.
  - 2) Funds can be given to the '**Special Project Fund**' (**RBC Bank account**) which can be used for any special project eg. A special building project or another project which the parish considers worthwhile.
  - 3) In recent years families have also requested that memorial donations be made to the **Rev. Anne Germond Fund** (Rector's discretionary fund used for outreach purposes held at RBC).
  - 4) Memorials may also be made to the **General Operating Fund, the Outreach Fund, or to the Building Fund** (Funds held in CIBC).
- 2) Procedure for Memorial donations.
- a) Families may or may not consult the parish following the death of a loved one in selecting which avenue they wish the memorial funds to be directions. Once the family has decided on the avenue, donations are made through the funeral home or through the weekly offering.
  - b) The offering Counters ensure that the donations are deposited into the correct place (Memorial, Special Project, Rev. Anne Germond, Operating, or Building)
  - c) The Envelope Secretary keeps track of donations given in memory of a particular person and ensures that the parish treasurer is aware of this. The Envelope Secretary ensures that tax receipts are issued to the donors and that the family of the deceased is made aware of the donations so that they can send out thank you cards. A memorial record is kept so that regular reports can be given to the Rector and Memorial Committee members, and an annual report made at the Vestry meeting. **Action - Ascension Memorial Card?**
  - d) The Rector of the parish or a member of the Memorial Committee communicates with the family of the deceased to notify them of the amount that has been given and to begin a dis-

cussion about what is to become of the money.

- e) The leaders of the church should decide the purpose for which gifts may be used, and maintain a list of desired gifts. The leadership should be aware of the various memorial avenues available to families. They should include gifts that are costly as well as gifts of lesser amounts. Each group within the parish should be encouraged to prepare a 'wish list' for their particular group. Eg. The Sunday school might need items for Godly Play, the nursery or the parish youth, and the property committee might have suggestions for upgrades to the building (including regular upkeep) that should be included. Church leaders should also include program gifts such as purchasing a Bible Study program, VBS curriculum. There are also the potential outreach gifts such as donations to the local Mission or scholarships at Barrydowne College. The list should be revised annually and updated whenever a particular gift has been designated.
  - f) The rector or members of the Memorial Committee meet with family members to discuss selection of memorial items. Once the item is chosen it will be purchased. If there is insufficient money for the item in the particular fund the family should be given the opportunity to come up with additional funds to fulfill their gift selection, or asked to choose an item of lesser value.
  - g) If the item requires a plaque, this is ordered by the Memorial Committee in conjunction with the family. Appropriate wording is important.
  - h) A date for the dedication of the item is arranged with family members and they are invited to church to attend the dedication service which happens during regular worship after the Prayers of the People. Following the service of dedication the family of the deceased should be thanked for their gift.
  - i) The Sunday closest to All Saints Day is designated as Memorial Sunday when the names of the deceased are read out in church.
  - j) Parishioners are given the opportunity to make regular memorial or thank offerings through the placing of flowers in the church.
  - k) The Church of the Ascension Memorial Committee and leaders should consider inviting parishioners to consider legacy gifts. Don McLeod suggested the formation of an Endowment Fund.
  - l) The Memorial Committee, in consultation with the rector of the parish and wardens, decides what to do with memorials that are worn or used beyond repair. Memorials that no longer reflect the purpose for which they were intended should be disposed of in a respectful manner. If the item is required it should be added to the list of memorials for replacement.
- 3) Church of the Ascension Memorial Committee members (2016) - The incumbent - The Ven. Anne Germond; Anne Trimmer, Gladys Abigail, Pippa Howard, Cora Felbel. Ralph Mounter is the Envelope Secretary and should be in on Memorial discussions, and so should the treasurer, Cathy Dionne.



**A report from the Church of the Ascension Board to members of the congregation regarding the interim period in our parish.**

***Most loving and gracious God, the giver of every good gift.  
Regard the needs of your Church, particularly the Church of the Ascension during this time of change and transition.  
Bless those who will lead us during the interim period, and keep us faithful to our calling to be united in love and fellowship as we seek to follow you.  
Guide with your heavenly wisdom the minds of those who will be responsible for choosing a rector for this parish.  
Send us a faithful pastor to feed your flock and lead us in the way of holiness;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen***  
**(adapted from the South African Prayer Book)**

At the November board meeting the members in attendance were given a number of questions which they answered in small groups. Each group brought their answers back to the table to share with the rest of the board.

The groups were asked to consider various options for the interim period (after Rev. Anne leaves in February and before a new rector is appointed) as well as to think about strengths of the Ascension and any concerns.

At the outset it was apparent that there is a very positive and hopeful feeling amongst the leadership and in the parish amongst members. The Ascension is a vibrant Christ centred parish and is well known in the community for its mission and ministry and it seeks to be a welcoming and hospitable parish, making room for newcomers and guests. There is a faithfulness amongst parishioners who want to serve Christ in the church and they give freely of their time, talents and treasure to make it so. Over the years we have grown and changed from being a neighbourhood church to one where people drive from across the city to attend. This says a lot about who we are as a parish.

The Ascension's involvement in city wide outreach will continue during the interim period and so will the weekly Wednesday services and Bible Study. The Wardens and Committee chairs will ensure that life in the parish continues - that the sick and lonely and bereaved are visited; that there are opportunities for fellowship and prayer; and that we remain a welcoming and hospitable congregation for those who are seeking a new church family.

Board members reflected back that this time could also be a growth period for the parish as new leaders come forward and are given opportunities to exercise their baptismal calling. The group also spoke of the spiritual well being of the parish during the interim period and that it is necessary to keep hope alive. Clergy come and go and it is up to parishioners to work together during interim periods to ensure the ongoing mission of the parish and to foster an ongoing sense of unity.

This is an exciting time too, as the Ascension considers its future and a future incumbent. In the coming months parishioners will be consulted about the qualities they would like to see in a new priest. While the work of the concurrence committee is a very confidential process and nothing can be disclosed to the congregation about potential candidates, the concurrence committee will be consulting with the parish on various aspects of the process.

There were some concerns that people might leave the parish and withdraw their offering, but it is the leadership's hope that this will not happen because of the work we have done together over the years and the strength of who we are in Christ. Some board members expressed concerns about there being a loss of momentum in the parish once Rev. Anne leaves, but others felt that with the committees being on solid

ground and lead by the laity, that this would not happen. The board members are committed to continuing the regular pattern of weekday worship and study, fellowship and outreach.

Members spoke of the many new parishioners who have joined the parish in recent years from other denominations, from Anglican churches that have closed down, or from seekers who are looking to reignite their faith.

Finally, the board spoke of the necessity of ongoing and excellent communication throughout the interim period. People have offered to assist with this and Glenn Lloyd, the bulletin and Ascension Witness Editor has offered to continue in his role in communications. Board members are committed to guiding the parish through this time and are confident that amidst the concerns expressed that there is also a feeling of hope. Hope and expectations - pretty good Advent words!

In considering the interim period, the board would like to utilize the honorary clergy - Rev. Dr. Bob Derrenbacker, the Rev. Rhonda Hirst and the Rev. Jeff Hooper until the end of the summer of 2017. The honorary clergy have agreed to celebrate the Eucharist and preach on Sundays and when they are not available the lay readers would offer Morning Prayer and they would preach. We recognise that all three of our honouraries have full time ministries and would not necessarily be available for pastoral emergencies (although Rev. Rhonda is a Chaplain at HSN). We are very grateful for the assistance and commitment of the Honorary clergy. There would be a stipend for their ministry during the interim period. At the time of writing, a roster for Sunday mornings has been drawn up until June 2017.

The wardens and members of the board would like everyone to know that they will do their best to support the parish during the interim period. Be assured of our prayers. We move forward trusting in God who is faithful in all things.

Please pray for the parish as we begin a new period in our life together.

*Rev. Anne, Wardens and Board.*



2016-11-27 – Children's time with Rev. Anne.  
The blessing of the Blessing Bags prepared by  
the Godly Play children

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## **Godly Play Training Weekend November 17th – 19th**

*Jennifer Ames recently attended a two day Godly Play training seminar which now makes her a certified Godly Play storyteller. Children's ministry funded this opportunity and Jennifer reported on that time to the other teachers and we thought the parish would like to read it too.*

"I've wanted to send a quick update on the Godly Play training that I went to last week but it hasn't been easy. I wasn't sure how to condense three days of spiritual nourishment, growth and reflection into a short email.

There was 6 of us altogether and I couldn't have spent three days with more lovelier people. Tidying up after the meals had that old familiar feeling. A church kitchen is a church kitchen, no matter where you are and what a great feeling of fellowship it was. Throughout the three days, we grew together and quietly cheered each other on.

Amy Crawford and Andrew Sheldon were our trainers and their love and respect for children as well as for Godly Play, was very evident. Their knowledge was vast and not only confirmed and heightened my love for Godly Play but my belief in what a valuable program it is.

We learned about the fundamentals of Godly Play, creating space, children's spirituality, faith formation and children's community but it was still so much more than that. We worked in small groups working with sacred stories, parables and liturgical lessons. Before the weekend was through we each told a story and received feedback on them. I told the story of the Exile and the Return. A story where God was not just in the Temple in Jerusalem but as Gods people slowly realized that He was in that strange and foreign land too. God was very present in that United Church basement.

I learned new things, understood more of the "why's" of things and it truly did reiterate what a fabulous program that we have all worked so hard to put in place at the Ascension. At our January meeting, I am very excited to share with you some of the things I've learned in a little more detail.

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to attend this wonderful event and an even bigger thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to help make such a special time of worship for the children. This couldn't be done without you."

Faithfully submitted by

*Jennifer Ames – Godly Play storyteller.*

## **Stewardship Corner**

The world asks: "What does a person own?" God asks, "How does a person use what he or she has been given?"

Thank you for your generosity in giving of your time and treasure this year. We give thanks that you make your financial contribution to the church a priority in your lives and that you do it as a thank offering to a loving and generous God. God asks for the 'first fruits' of our harvest, not the leftovers at the end of the month. Your regular offering, given each month or week helps the Ascension to budget for ministry each year.

Over the years the Ascension has been able to support a full time priest and carry out numerous projects at the church all of which have grown our mission and our ministry in New Sudbury and beyond. This has been because of your faithful and generous giving.

*"Our relationship with money serves as a witness to who God is and what God calls us to as faithful Christians. Responding to God's generosity leads us to participate in God's generosity towards others. And that generosity is best practiced in community."* (Shaping a Theology of Money: David P King)

## **Communique to all ARK supporters and Church of the Ascension parishioners**

November 1, 2016

We have been meeting, planning and receiving support from you for more than a year. It is a pleasure to tell you that we now feel optimistic that a Syrian family will arrive in Sudbury in early in 2017. The family we will welcome is headed by a young mother with four young children, two girls and two boys. They are excited about coming to Canada and look forward to the support of the Syrian families who have already been welcomed into Sudbury's caring community..

We are fortunate to have a house and some furniture available for the family. Thanks to generous Sudburians we will soon be asking for support to ready the house. We will also need your help to collect clean and appropriate clothing, foot wear and other personal and housing essentials. Those who expressed interest at our volunteer fair will soon be contacted and work plans put into action.

We are challenged by not knowing the exact arrival time of the family we will welcome. We do know that they have obtained medical clearances, and are in contact with the Canadian Embassy. With the help of a local volunteer translator we have a communication link to the mother and are learning more about her family. We hope to develop a relationship with her through phone calls before she arrives and to ascertain her travel plans as quickly as possible.

A friendly reminder to those of you who wish to make a donation to the resettlement of our Syrian Refugee family: A charitable donation receipt for tax purposes for your 2016 tax return will be issued for cheques received prior to the end of December. Cheques should be made payable to "**Church of the Ascension Refugee Fund**" and given to any of the ARK Refugee Steering Committee members or to the Church office. Receipts will be mailed early in the New Year. Thank you again to all our financial supporters past, present and future for your generosity.

*ARK Committee members: Gwen Bonas, Co-Chair, Jane Cox, Co-Chair, Jen Cawley Caruso, Rev. Anne Germond, Erma Howe, Heather Jeramaz, Carolyn Thain*

## **What is spiritual direction?**

Directors ask questions about the relationship between the seeker and God. Who is God to the seeker? How and when is God made manifest in the seeker's life? How would the seeker describe him- or herself in relation to God? For example, is s/he a servant, a child, a friend, a co-worker, a co-creator, a lover, a neighbor, a spouse, a struggling adult? We know God only through our relationships with one another. How do these relationships affect the seeker's prayer life? life in the world? How does God become a felt presence?

Spiritual direction is not therapy but it can help us understand better who we are, specifically, personally, in a very real way. Though spiritual direction does not normally work with seekers who are in crisis or psychological distress—because that is not the training directors receive—it can increase feelings of trust, peace, and joy in everyday circumstances, for with sustained and careful attention to spiritual growth we can experience ever more deeply that we are following Christ.

Practically, a seeker might meet with a director approximately once a month for an hour. At Ascension, the meetings are free of charge, but elsewhere they may not be. Always, what transpires during the meeting remains confidential. The director maintains an interest in the seeker that is beyond curiosity about details of the seeker's life except as those details pertain closely to his or her relationship with God. Directors are advised not to ask what are called "curious questions" (e.g., where do you shop?). We are also instructed not to share our own stories in a way that might somehow inhibit the seeker from sharing hers or his. Yet a connection develops between director and seeker that is uniquely close and rewarding.

The director may ask about the seeker's prayer life or about manifestations of God's presence in his/her life since the last meeting. What struggles has the seeker experienced in gaining trust in God? Where in her or his life as a Christian has s/he found the greatest peace and joy? My own training in the Ontario Jubilee program ([ontariojubilee.ca](http://ontariojubilee.ca)) advised us as directors simply to "take a long loving look at the real."

Spiritual direction complements the Christian tradition (or whatever the tradition of the director and seeker might be) and is not separate from or at odds with the tradition. Christian seekers have requested the guidance and advice of other seekers throughout the history of the church. Now--apart from seminaries or university courses in theology --formal training programs in Christian spiritual direction exist in North America and elsewhere in the English-speaking world. Those programs typically require group residencies that introduce trainees to such experiences of spiritual practice as journaling, walking labyrinths, and drawing or other creative work, and also reading and writing assignments supervised at a distance, often over a period of two years.

Upon completion of the training program, directors take part in regular peer supervision in which we discuss with one another as directors what in our own lives might interfere with our being—as much as possible—reflections of divine love to the seeker. We are also required, for as long as we practice spiritual direction, to honour and develop our own daily spiritual practices, to read about and reflect on spirituality, to make annual retreats, and to meet with a spiritual director

My own index of spiritual growth is simple--Galatians 5:22-23, the Fruit of the Spirit (NSRV): "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Am I evolving in these? Is the seeker?

*Shannon Hengen*



2016-11-27 – In the forefront Eucharistic assistants Jennifer Cawley Caruso with the help of Audrey Penn from L'Arche Community. Audrey is a regular parishioner, but on occasions she is joined by some of her friends from the L'Arche Community.

From left to right – Pippa Howard, The Venerable Anne Germond, Jennifer & Audrey.

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## A Bit of Applause for Mrs. Claus.

"Twas the night after Christmas and time for a pause;

Collapsed in the corner, sat tired Mrs. Claus.

The stockings were crooked, the house was a mess;

The tree had tipped over, she couldn't care less!

Her muscles were aching, her feet were so sore;

This overworked spouse couldn't take anymore!

With elves she'd wrapped presents for many nights through,

With tape on their fingers, bows, paper and glue.

When she'd lifted her nose, turned her head to the side,

She had smelled something burning - "My cookies! She cried!"

She was chubby and plump, quite a jolly ol' soul,

From testing each goodie and licking each bowl.

At last all was done by the skin of her teeth,

The mistletoe hung with the holly and wreath!

Then Santa had cried as he left on his flight,

"You're the greatest, my dear, Merry Christmas, good night!"

The elves were all sleeping, each tucked into bed;

But visions and fantasies danced in her head.

Come next year, no more baking or trimming the tree;

On the beach with the elves- that is where SHE would be!

When up on the roof there arose such a clatter, it ended her dreaming..."Now, what is the matter?"

Away to the window she flew like a flash;

As she tripped on the clutter, hopped over the trash.

When what to her weary red eyes did appear, but the emptied out sleigh and eight hungry reindeer!

And the little old driver so lively and quick,

was worn out by his travels - could this be St. Nick?

"Will you see to the reindeer, my darling?" he said.

Kissed his, said, "I love you", and took to his bed.

"Now Dasher, now Dancer, now Prancer and Vixen. Here Comet, here Cupid, here Donner and Blitzen."

"Come down off my roof, and be careful, don't fall; you need some warm food and fresh hay in your stall!"

"Well done, deer," she said fondly, though standing there freezing

Her thoughts then returned to her efforts this season.

She had toiled all day long and was covered with soot, and her clothing was stained from her head to her foot.

She spoke not a word, for she felt quite beserk,

As she heaved a big sigh...she had done so much work!

Then she flopped in a chair with no breath left to whistle;

A smile on her face made her finally look blissful!

Mrs. Claus could still smile as she relived those scenes;

For she knew of her part in fulfilling our dreams.

Santa Claus gets the credit though everyone knows,

Mrs. Claus is the one who deserves hallowed prose.

So, let's give a cheer for our own Mrs. Claus;

Her love and her work rate a special applause.

A bit of applause for Mrs. Claus – Hip, hip, hooray!

(Jeannie Schick-Jacobowitz & Susie Schick-Pierce)





## Parish Life

### Name Badges

Thanks to those who have signed up for our 'new' name badges, we have had a great response to this. Our order will be placed in early December, however it is 'never' too late to order yours if you missed our 'sign-up Sundays'! Simply speak with Kath Greenidge at church, or please call her at 705-560-5069 or email her [k.greenidge@sympatico.ca](mailto:k.greenidge@sympatico.ca).

The cost to you is \$7.00. So be sure to give us your name & you can pay later. It is our vision that everyone wears a name badge on a regular basis on Sundays. We are a parish family & it will be wonderful to call each other by name & not refer to someone by where they sit in church, or what service they go to, or by what they look like! Thanks.

### Gifts of Story & Song Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 @ 7:00pm.

This year will be our 5th annual GSS. If you have not ever joined us for this delightful winter wonderful evening of stories & songs, shared talents from within our church community & also from the Greater City of Sudbury community, you should consider coming to be a part of this outreach event. We promise you will not be disappointed.

Cost for a cause! Ticket - \$10.00 & the funds collected will be split between The Elgin Street Mission & Barrydowne College. You haven't a ticket then you haven't a chance either at our door prize! Please contact Kath Greenidge (see above for phone number & email). We do recommend purchasing tickets ahead of time; however we hope to have a few available at the door this year. We will turn no one away!

Our sanctuary is transformed into a 'winter wonderland' to put you in the mood for Christmas. Please do consider coming out for this fun & exciting evening. Following the performance we invite you to stay for tea/coffee/juice & sweet treats in our Fellowship Hall!

### Cookie Drop

Don't forget when you are baking your cookies for Christmas this year to make an extra batch for our senior shut-ins. Every Christmas we pack boxes filled with your home baking & other goodies which are delivered to them.

Please drop off your cookies at the church by Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> but no later than the morning of Wednesday December 14<sup>th</sup> as we will be packing these boxes that morning at 10:30am. God bless you for your donations of cookies & know that you have lovingly put a smile on the faces of our recipients for Christmas this year!

If you are available to lend a hand packing & delivering, simply join us on Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall at 10:30am.

### White Gift Sunday's

On December 4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> please remember to bring your contributions of non-perishable goods to help fill our Christmas food hampers. These can be placed around the altar. Ascension packs 10 to 12 hampers every Christmas & this outreach places food on the table for families who likely would have nothing. Your donations will bring joy to their hearts & homes as well as a beautiful turkey supper at Christmas time.

If you are interested & might like to donate a turkey, please speak with Anne Trimmer. Note:-Monetary donations are also accepted & can be placed in the offertory plate, but be sure to mark 'White Gift Sunday' on the memo line. These funds will allow

us to purchase the perishables. We thank you for your generosity in making others enjoy the joy, peace & love that surrounds us at Christmas.

### **Greeters**

Please remember to sign up on our greeter's rosters (both the 9am & 11am services) for the months of January – March 2017. These are pinned up on the bulletin board just outside the ladies washroom. A simple smile, a hand shake or even a hug at the door, presents a very warm welcoming! Thank you for your ministry in this way. We suggest you be at church half hour prior to the services.

### **Games Afternoon/Night**

#### **Save the Date – Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – 2pm-7pm**

Parish Life, together with our adventurous People's Warden Jen Ames have planned a games afternoon/night for YOU! Just a perfect opportunity for a time of fellowship & fun & a time to get to know each other better.

***This is for all ages!** Notice our start time is 2pm! This is to accommodate you, those that rather not drive at night. Bring the family, friends; bring your own game, or cards; maybe even bring a snack to share! Card tables will be set up in the church as well as tables in the Fellowship Hall.*

Later, (around supper time), we will have a light supper of sandwiches. If you can help in anyway... i.e. make sandwiches; set up or clean up...please speak with Jen Ames or Kath Greenidge.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kath Greenidge*

*Parish Life Chair*



2016-11-24 – Beautiful Christmas arrangement created by Joanie Servent especially for the ACW Snowflake Tea silent auction. Thanks to everyone, especially all our guest & friends who through generous bids on many of our items made this one of our best silent auctions over the years.

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## From the ACW



2016-11-24 - Some of the beautiful quilted mats on the ACW Snowflake Tea craft table. Thanks to all who made crafts for this.

### ACW Christmas Dinner

The ACW would like to invite all women of the Church to our Christmas Dinner at MIC Falconbridge Road on Thursday December 8<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Everyone is asked to bring a \$10.00 gift for the kriskringle. If you are interested, please let Cathy Dionne know by December 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Next Meeting

Our first meeting of the New Year will be Thursday January 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome.

*Cathy Dionne*

### Snowflake Tea

The ACW would like to thank all those who helped in making the Snowflake Tea such a success. From the donations of baking, crafts and silent auction items to those who offered their time working in the kitchen, on the craft and baking tables and serving tea. A special thank you goes out to the men and all who helped with the set-up and clean-up of the Church. It was wonderful to have so many new faces help us to make this such a successful event.



2016-11-24 - Look at just a small section of our ACW Snowflake Tea bake table. Thanks to everyone who baked for this outreach fundraiser.



2016-11-24 - ACW Snowflake Tea craft table ladies.

From left to right - Connie Lee, Betty Cunningham & Betty McLeod

Thanks ladies for your help. Truly another successful outreach fundraiser!

## Youth Group Update

In the past two months the youth group has engaged in many activities keeping them busy!

Every Sunday evening until November 27<sup>th</sup>, the youth continued to take part in the Youth Emmaus Program. The first five weeks of the course covered 'What Christians Believe', followed by a four week term where we discussed 'How Christians Grow'. On our last session, we gave a warm welcome to our Bishop Elect – Rev. Anne Germond as she taught us about Holy Communion and the Eucharist Service. These topics of discussion have us leaving every session knowing something new. We have chosen to take a break during the time of Advent and Christmas, however will resume Sunday evening sessions on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2017. When we resume we are excited to share that we will be talking about 'Living the Christian Life'! Of course we can't just be all work and no play; in October we held a pumpkin carving night and in November we got together to play some board games, enjoy fellowship and eat snacks.

This week we are looking forward to travelling to Manitoulin Island where we will take part in the Journey to Bethlehem which is planned by five different churches of different denominations. We are delighted to have the opportunity to engage in activity with our friends throughout our Deanery!

Lastly, the youth wish everyone from the congregation a very Merry Christmas and a fantastic safe New Year!



**A Common Witness Project of  
the Anglican-Roman Catholic  
Dialogue of Canada**

### Did You Ever Wonder?

The "Common Witness Project of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada" have published a series of brief videos and PDF transcripts. The Ascension Witness will include one of the transcripts in each of the next few editions. If you would like to download them for yourself or view the videos, there are available at:

<http://didyoueverwonder.ca/en/>

(English)

<http://didyoueverwonder.ca/fr/> (French)

## *In the community...*

PLEASE HELP US FEED CHILDREN

Hi

On behalf of Curtis Belcher from KFM95.5, The Sudbury Foodbank Board and myself, I invite you to help us feed lots of hungry children in Greater Sudbury this Christmas season.

Please be our guest on live radio, Thursday December 15 th, anytime between 4-7 pm, at the Geoffrey Loughheed Food Bank Warehouse, corner of Lorne and Webwood, as we **"Light Up The Spirit of Giving"**.

Our goal is to feed 10,000 children who access our Sudbury Food banks by encouraging people to purchase one or more of the 5500 light bulbs on the 40 ft Christmas tree outside the Warehouse.

Each bulb is only \$5.00.

In addition, every purchase can be gifted in honour of or in memory of someone special and their name will be scrolled on the electronic sign facing Lorne Street, until Christmas.

Here is how you can help:

1. Encourage you faith community to tune into KFM95.5 on Thursday December 15 from 4-7 pm ( we are having a "live-by-request Carol sing")
2. Encourage people to come and visit the Warehouse, see the facility, and enjoy a free hotdog and home made popcorn
3. Please come yourself and say hi to our radio audience on air.

Just imagine what the faith community in Sudbury could do to alleviate hunger in 10,000 children who visit our Foodbanks if we all invested \$5.00 in a light bulb!

Let's Light Up the Spirit if Giving as a community of faith this Christmas.

Why not make an announcement this weekend!

Please include this opportunity in your Church Bulletin, via email, your Facebook site, your Website

On behalf of KFM and the board of the Sudbury Food Bank

Thanks for filling a hungry belly!

*Jeremy Mahood*

705 673 6110

[jmahood@allnationschurch.ca](mailto:jmahood@allnationschurch.ca)

# Why is the world the way it is?

David Neelands

WHEN WE ARE VERY young, we learn that things happen for causes—one kind of event seems to follow from another kind, and we can make what we want to happen and what we like to happen over and over again. People around us can make good things happen for us. And we can prevent what we do not like from happening.

Very early in our life we also discover that things are not as we want them to be. We are confronted by disappointing and unwanted events. We react angrily to these frustrating experiences and try to change them or get others to change them. Later, we see that many of the things that frustrate us are beyond our control. We begin to understand that some of these things are as they should be, while others could be otherwise, and are not as they should be.

In some way, Christians assert that everything that is comes from God, who has created the world, and is still creating, and all that God has created is good. As the Bible has it, “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good.” And yet our experience that some things are not as they ought to be hauntingly remains for us. Was God shortsighted when he saw that the world was good?

God has created a host of natural objects—minerals, plants and animals—that behave in predictable ways. By means of these natural things everything that happens comes to pass. Human beings can understand these natural objects and have the ability to develop science and to understand good ways to behave.

For the most part, human beings can understand and learn to predict the movements of natural objects. Sometimes they bring sudden and surprising consequences. The power of the force of gravity and the flow of the tides, for instance, are generally good. Yet the force of an earthquake, or a flood, or lightning or disease causes bad things to happen. When we understand these powers, we may be able to predict these catastrophes and minimize the bad consequences.

Human beings are created with the desire to be happy and to have friends. With a generous measure of freedom, we can consider and choose our actions in the light of our goals and desires. Sometimes these actions conflict with the good ways that the human race has identified. This conflict may be the result of unwise decisions, or selfish ones, or even evil ones, and the consequences, though not inevitable, come to pass. For instance, ill-considered or selfish actions may in the longer term have undesired consequences that destroy or mutilate nature. Actions based on selfish and wicked goals may bring wars or reduce some human beings to a state of degradation and deprivation, rather than friendship.

In all that happens, whether good or bad, we believe that God in Christ is with us and the same God that is creating this wonderful world is present with those who suffer and is bringing good out of evil. And God invites human beings to be part of that transformation.

*David Neelands* is an Anglican priest and Dean of Divinity at Trinity College in Toronto.

## Questions for discussion

1. Have you experienced the created world as good and benign or as evil and malevolent?
2. What evidence do you see that the world is not as it should be?
3. Do you know of ways in which you can contribute to and participate in the transformation of evil into good?

**The next issue of The Ascension Witness will be in February 2017. Items for the February Edition of The Ascension Witness are due in by the 29th January. Please forward them to Glenn Lloyd at [argeedblu@gmail.com](mailto:argeedblu@gmail.com)**

### *Agnus Day*



### **Your privacy**

Every week the church bulletin and news and announcements is posted on the Church of the Ascension's website. Sometimes these items include names of individuals within the parish. If you prefer not to have your name on the website, or photos of yourself posted, please let Rev. Anne know so that she ensures your privacy.

The church website address is [www.churchoftheascensionsudbury.ca](http://www.churchoftheascensionsudbury.ca)

### **Address changes**

If you have moved recently, if there are any changes to your address or phone number, or if you have changed your email address, please let the Parish Assistant Joan Servent know so that we can keep our database up to date. Joan can be reached at [ascension@vianet.ca](mailto:ascension@vianet.ca) and is in the office on Wednesdays.



**Family Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person 1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person 2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address Family As** \_\_\_\_\_

(John & Mary Smith, Mr. & Mrs J. Smith, The Smiths)

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ (Please include all 10 digits)

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_