

November 28, 2007

SJWT



Dear Friends,

Thanks to all volunteers and especially to Joan Devitt for leading a wonderful organizing committee - the Holly Tea was a great success!

Worship with us this Sunday, December 2, Advent 1: 8:30 Early Eucharist; 9:15 to 10:15 Making our advent wreaths; 10:30 Holy Eucharist; Sermon: Evelyn Butler; Celebrant: Bob Shantz; Musician: David Jones. Sunday School and Nursery during the 10:30 service; refreshments following.

"A Christmas Carol"

Tickets are still available for this CBC production of a Christmas Carol and the doors open at 7:15 pm for those who wish to buy tickets. We will also be selling tickets from 9 am to noon on the morning of the event.

This CBC-sponsored event on Saturday Dec. 1 featuring: Mayor David Miller, Bob Rae, Arlene Perly Rae, TVO Host Steve Paikin, Soulpepper Artistic Director Albert Schultz, Archbishop Terence Finlay, Actress Anita La Selva and Soprano Mary Lou Fallis.

Volunteers are still very welcome! Please call Sally at 416-767-9533 if you can help.



Madeleine James during baptism last Sunday



Announcements & Events

Great Upcoming Music

Sundays at 10:30 sharp - December 2: David Jones, organ and piano; December 9: Barry Short, organ; December 16: Jaroslav Czerwinec, accordion.

Midweek Worship Services

Thursday November 29, 10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, with scripture discussion followed by home baked refreshments; Tuesday, December 4, 7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, with Anglican Rosary and silent meditation.

Advent Wreath making

This Sunday December 2, we will make wreaths for home celebration in the parish hall from 9:15 to 10:15am, between the two services. Be sure and sign-up at the action desk so that sufficient materials may be ordered. The cost is \$10 for renewables: greens, candles, ribbons. Please remember to bring your wreath form, centre piece and tray. The costs is \$16 for a new advent wreath form, centre piece and all the other materials. Please bring your money with you on this day if you are participating.

Leadership Team Meetings

Next meeting: Monday December 10, 7:30 p.m. All meetings at the church.

Christmas Carolling in Bloor West Village

Several of you requested to bring back Carolling in the Village, an event in which about 20 people participated last year.

The Bloor West Village Business Improvement Association has been kind enough to sponsor this event for us with a donation to our church.

So please come out in droves and bring your best singing voice! Please dress up in festive Christmas clothing - colourful in the spirit of the season, Christmas hats, Reindeer horns, Angel wings, anything colourful and Christmas-like will do.

We will meet at 7PM on Friday December 14th at the library on Bloor West and we will continue until we're tired. No doubt some of us will go to a pub afterwards to warm up!

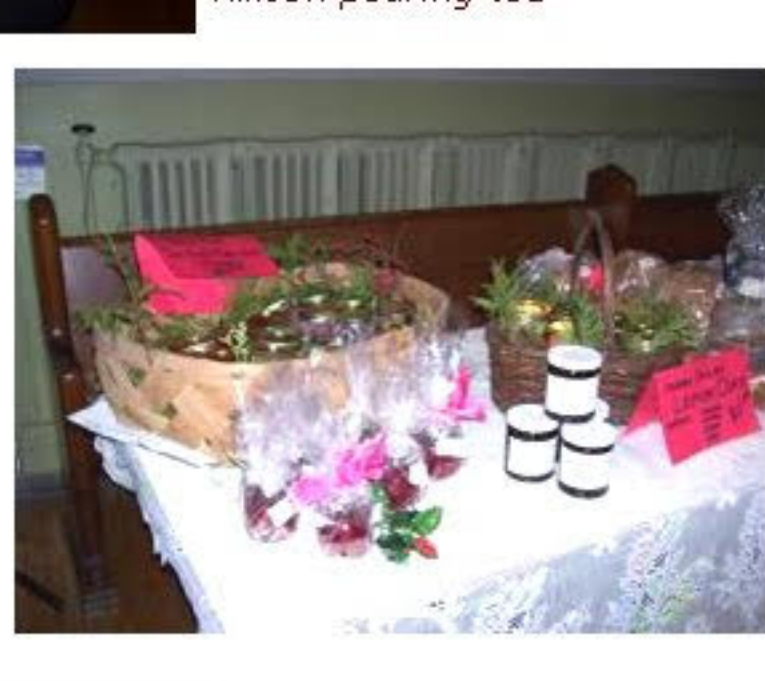
Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling Tom Gehrels at (416)656-9111 or by e-mail at mariengehrels@yahoo.com



Some Holly Tea photos...



Allison pouring tea



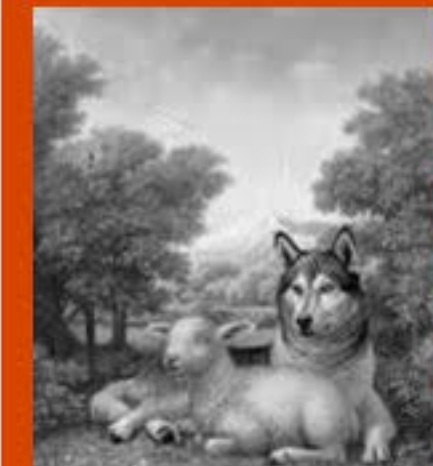
Jams by Lynelle Gehrels and Sue Ferguson



Indra sells plants

Thanks:

Photographs: Thanks to Tom Gehrels for his pictures from worship at St. John's last Sunday and thanks to Lynda Ward for her photos from the Holly Tea. And many thanks to all volunteers for the Holly Tea!



When?

When I was a child, almost forty years ago, every Sunday morning I was reluctantly exposed to the radio ministry of Pastor Perry F. Rockwood's "The People's Gospel Hour". My father for whatever peculiar reasons, liked to listen to him, and he had control over the kitchen radio. Pastor Rockwood would enumerate sign after sign that end times were at hand. The Antichrist would soon play his sinister hand, creating a world dictatorship in which every citizen would be assigned a number and branded with the Mark of the Beast. Wave after wave of destruction would follow culminating in the Battle of Armageddon. Jesus would then return, the resurrection of the dead would take place and Satan, his minions and all the wicked, unsaved folk would be thrown into the Lake of Fire. OOH, he would oo, THE TIME IS CLOSE AT HAND, FRIENDS! Pastor Rockwood terrified me, even though I think I was a good little Christian boy for the most part.

Last week's Old Testament readings present the positive side of that story - the psalmist and Isaiah both celebrate a great victory achieved by the Lord, establishing a reign of peace and prosperity - a new heaven and a new earth, where all nations live in harmony, lions are vegetarian and wolves are harmless. The Lord is coming as a righteous judge - rejoice! When did the authors think this victory was going to happen? Would they have thought in terms of millennia?

Jesus in Luke seems to suggest that the end is possibly as close at hand as Pastor Rockwood believed, and many terrible things would still have to be endured before that time. If that's what the early Christians truly believed, two thousand years ago, they were wrong. Except about the suffering.

I think that we would do well to read past and future time references in the Bible symbolically. The story about Eden isn't really about what our remote ancestors did once upon a time. We are perpetually being kicked out of Eden, because of what we continue to do. When prophets and visionaries talk about things that have not yet happened, they are talking about the possibilities inherent in the present moment. Insofar as we choose to remain selfish - defensive, competitive, and quarrelsome egos - the possibilities spiral down into the kinds of horrors that Pastor Rockwood took an almost obscene, grim pleasure in describing. But insofar as we are rooted in the love of God, and have faith enough to put ourselves aside, the possibilities blossom into the serene beauty and mystical wonder of the new Jerusalem described by Isaiah and John of Patmos. Jesus is coming, Jesus is always coming, Jesus is with us now, always, even unto the end of the world. Maranatha, friends!, as Pastor Rockwood would say...

Give us the vision to see your coming, and breathe into us the wisdom and the strength to build anew Jerusalem in all our green and pleasant lands. Amen.

Brian MacIntyre

For meditation and reflection in the coming week, consider the scriptures for next Sunday, December 2, 2007: Isaiah 2:1-5, Psalm 122, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44.

P.S. I hope you find it helpful to get an update like this from St. John's Church, West Toronto. If you would like something listed in the announcements, or if you know someone who would appreciate receiving this, please contact me. If you would prefer not to receive news from St. John's in this way, please also let me know.

Best wishes, Gary+

Check our website. www.sjwt.ca

And remember this!

We are not a Building!

We are an accessible, accepting, diverse community. We are young and old, able-bodied, and disabled, employed and unemployed. We are married, single, divorced, straight and gay. We are from all over the world, yet we could live next door. You will find open minds and open hearts at St. John's.

The mission of St. John's Church is to build a community of caring believers committed to Christ, to work for justice and service to all in need. We gather to praise God, and to give and receive support to meet the challenge of our daily ministries. We call on all who will to come and join us.

