

St. John's Journal

St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto
288 Humberside Ave. (at High Park Ave.)
www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish/stjohns/
(416) 763-2393

Advent 2001



As the Advent Season approaches, we think about the arrival of Jesus and the beginning of Christianity. How fitting that in November we remember the beginning of our own parish of St. John's. Happy 120 Everyone!

Incumbent's Greeting

It is my pleasure to write to you in what is now my third month at St. John's. It has been a very intense and exciting time. I admit to initially feeling a little lost in the whirlwind of all that goes on here at St. John's. I was told that I kept people pretty busy at the Church of the Ascension, Port Perry, so I hope that means we are well matched for travelling together. Thank you to so many of you who have given me opportunities to get to know you. I now know that you put on great events around food as a church - and I have discovered that in your homes gathering around a meal is to touch the sacred.

I am enjoying the St. John's neighbourhood: jogging the park, coffee at the Alternative Grounds, the occasional breakfast at the Sunset Grill. I have had to make some adjustments: Walking the dog on a leash and carrying a plastic bag (this move has been harder on Maya than on me!); driving around the city takes longer than I expected; and would you believe that, in Port Perry, it is not uncommon to stop at a roadside stand and ask if the corn was picked in the last 12 hours!

I am now completely unpacked and settled in the Roncesvalles Village, and delighted that it is only a 15 minute bike ride through the park to work. I am also unpacked in my office at the church, and very grateful to those who helped with the renovation. I really wanted my office space to be comfortable for work, visiting and small meetings, and I am happy to say that, so far, it works wonderfully. There is an intimacy to the worship space, maybe it is the layout, and maybe it is you, who are very comfortable with being laid back. Thank you for the welcome.

As I said, it has also been intense. I moved my home, my job, and my life - and joined your life, which is a whirlwind in itself. I don't know if you give yourself

Incumbent's Greeting (continued from page 1)

permission to take a little break once in a while. I just had one. With thanks to Bruce Alton (I have never had an honorary assistant before - a surprise blessing, as I am sure you already realize), I was able to go away on retreat over the November 11th weekend. I thought of it as a time for my insides to catch up with my outsides. I wrote in my journal, prayed with the community at Madonna House, went for walks...and I put together a photo album. What a great way to celebrate where I have been, and to thank God for that part of my journey - what a gift. And to close the book and put it away and open myself to a new chapter.

It is also natural in the quiet to mull over what I have learned of St. John's so far. Let me try this one on you. You are laid back. You are inclusive. You have a great mission statement - and the people who visited for the induction sure appreciated it. You have such obvious caring for each other. And still! I can tell that some of you are discouraged. Yes, you have been through some hard things - the merger, the sale of the building, dealing with being small - and I haven't been here to walk these with you. But this is what I wonder: If you are carrying around DISCOURAGEMENT as your story, your script, doesn't it shape how you feel about our future together?

I was telling a friend about starting at St. John's. I guess my enthusiasm was showing. I said all the things that I found exciting. And my friend said (with comparison to other churches no less), "Oh what fun!" I wish you could each have a t-shirt with a St. John's logo, and printed in big, the words "Oh What Fun!" Then people would ask you, and you'd tell them the parts that are fun for you, and it would be infectious.

Would it help you to have this approach if we started something that is future-oriented? I have discovered that this year is St. John's 120th anniversary. And I am very grateful for a report, offered by Cynthia Ledgley to the Publicity Committee, on how to make the 5 year lead up to the 125th anniversary into a BHAG. That's business terminology for a "Big Hairy Audacious Goal". Something to get excited about, to get rallied around, not just as a point of arrival, but the whole trip. Cynthia's report suggests having a focal point, like getting those bells working again. I know I'd love to hear them. And I bet it would generate some excitement in the neighbourhood too. Sure, along the way we would need to do some stewardship. So you know that's coming! And let's not forget that along the way, while we are having fun, some of us are going to fall totally in love with God. The ways Jesus introduces him to us. The ways we start to go deeper in our personal lives. The ways our relationships become more profound. The ways we start to live gratitude for each moment.

Let's write it on a t-shirt, "St. John's - Oh What Fun!" I'm having fun already. Thanks for the great welcome.

The Rev. Gary van der Meer



Ongoing Work Around the Church

You may have had the opportunity to notice that there has been a lot of activity going on at St. John's in the last couple of months. For example, we now have more light in the nave of the church!

Gary's office was cleaned and painted with the help of **Bruce Alton, Evelyn Butler, Bill Dunford** and **Greg Los**. Gary has displayed not only his energy but his talent in tastefully creating a gracious meeting space in his office. If you haven't had an opportunity to see it, ask Gary for a tour.

George Turenne has been an invaluable source of help and support in doing small and not so small odd jobs about the church. A gate has been placed across the stairs to the gallery to address some of the safety concerns of our children and weather stripping has been placed around the playground fire doors downstairs to help reduce the escape of heat. Pews have been mended, kneelers removed, furniture moved to create two new meeting spaces (we are still asking for suggestions to name the spaces), and last, but certainly not least, some work has been done in Lynda's office. The mould problem has been given a short reprieve with new mould resistant drywall

followed by a bright yellow mould resistant paint and a continuous hook-up for the dehumidifier. New shelving units were added to accommodate the accumulation of paper that is necessary to keep on site. Thank you George!

There is still more work to be done and perhaps the biggest change you will see in the next few weeks will be the painting of the church. I pray that we may all learn to live with the colour. Amen.

Lynda Ward

If you would like to comment on the colour selections for the church, or have any questions about ongoing improvements, please contact one of our wardens, listed below.

Wardens:

Anthony Ruta	416-763-2876 Anthony.Ruta@JWT.com
Evelyn Butler	416-604-8692 bdunford@pathcom.com
Iain Newbiggin	416-767-9533 sally.iain@sympatico.ca
Greg Los	416-766-4331 gnlos@home.com

Seeking Input on Sexual Misconduct Policy

Please consider the following draft, which offers specific guidelines to govern and provide safety to all in our St. John's community. The Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy has now been around for a while, but it is very general as it must apply to very diverse parishes. We invite your input, and stress that this material is a **DRAFT**. We hope to incorporate your input into a final writing exercise that will allow us present a final draft for passage at the annual vestry meeting.

Diocese of Toronto Sexual Misconduct Policy: Specific Application for St. John's West Toronto (DRAFT)

1. St. John's Church fully recognizes and implements the Diocese of Toronto Sexual Misconduct Policy. The following provisions interpret and apply the Policy to situations that occur at St. John's.
2. All staff and employees of St. John's Church, and all parishioners of St. John's that engage in ministries that involve leadership or work with people who are vulnerable, must receive training in the Policy and sign an acknowledgement form signifying their agreement to follow the Policy and these applications. Acknowledgement forms will be kept on file at the church, and must be renewed every two years.
3. All groups and organizations that use St. John's Church must have a presentation of the Policy and applications. Organizations or groups that choose to follow their own policy must present a copy of this policy to St. John's and must demonstrate that they equip their members to follow it. Groups not having a written policy will be expected to follow the St. John's Policy and applications.
4. Staff, employees and volunteers may be required to complete a screening application, provide references and complete a criminal background check.
5. All activities for children held on church premises must be in central and visible locations.
6. If only one group is being held (eg. Sunday school, nursery) there must be two leaders present. If more than one group are being held in proximity to each other, a group may have one leader. Doors between groups are to remain open. When only one child is present, the parents of the child may look after the child either in the nursery or in the church.
7. When taking a toddler to the washroom, doors must remain open. If a young child is able to manage his/her own toileting independently and requests that the door be closed, an adult should remain nearby to assist rather than in the washroom with the child.
8. For activities other than nursery or Sunday School, two supervisors (preferably co-ed) are required for activities involving children and youth, including all outings instruction and meetings. For overnight events involving both genders, co-ed supervisors are required.
9. When transporting children or youth to activities, the group should meet at the church and return to the church for dismissal. There must be at least two children in each vehicle.

Draft Sexual Misconduct Policy (continued)

10. Leaders should avoid one-on-one meetings with children or youth in private places, and should exercise caution when finding themselves in this situation. In this situation, a leader should find another adult to join the group, move the meeting to a central and visible location, leave doors open, and inform incumbent or church office of any unusual circumstances immediately.
11. For lay pastoral visiting in private homes, participants should try to visit in pairs, and should document visits with incumbent or church office.
12. Any individual that feels he/she has been sexually harassed, exploited or assaulted, should report the incident to Incumbent or Wardens for formal or informal resolution.
13. Any individual who has information with respect to the abandonment, desertion or need for protection of a child, or infliction of abuse upon a child, must report this information to the appropriate Children's Aid Society.
14. In all cases of concern, it is necessary to inform the Diocesan Canon Pastor, the Rev. Greg Symmes (905-857-2250)

Adult Education at St. John's

This fall, our adult education program included a discussion forum on peace, and our meditation on September 11 and the state of the world. Thank you to all participants, and to our organizers, Marion Karasiuk and Bruce Alton.

We have plans for new initiatives.

We hope to offer, approximately once a month, in the Sunday 9:30 - 10:00 time slot, an overview of the readings of the coming month. This will include basic beginner information like where to find them in the bible, and also some of the history behind them, and some of the issues they raised in their time, and now for us. There will be a handout, which you may wish to follow for study in greater depth. A half hour is short, but we hope good preparation that will help you get more out of being in church on Sunday. The first one will be on **Sunday December 9th**, and will cover the readings of the **Christmas** services. Christmas has so many layers of meaning for us already - let's make sure the readings are not lost



in the layers. Sign your name in the narthex, so we have enough handouts.

In the new year, **Father Bruce** and **Father Gary** will offer a four week series, with a big title, "**Christology.**" Christology is the branch of theology that deals with the role of Christ in our faith. This will be an adult-oriented program, but come expecting subjects like "Why was Jesus on the cross, and how do I explain that to children?" We hope to begin in January, following Epiphany. Sunday worship will follow this theme, and there will be opportunities for small discussion groups afterwards. Watch the narthex, the bulletin, and the website for details.

Rev. Gary van der Meer

FOR THE GARDEN OF DAILY LIVING

Plant Three Rows of PEAS:

1. PEACE of Mind
2. PEACE of Heart
3. PEACE of Soul

Plant Four Rows of SQUASH:

1. SQUASH Gossip
2. SQUASH Indifference
3. SQUASH Grumbling
4. SQUASH Selfishness

Plant Four Rows of LETTUCE:

1. LETTUCE BE FAITHFUL
2. LETTUCE be Kind
3. LETTUCE be Patient
4. LETTUCE Really Love One Another

To Garden With TURNIPS:

1. TURNIP for Meeting
2. TURNIP for Service
3. TURNIP to Help One Another



To Conclude our Garden, We Must Have THYME:

1. THYME for One Another
2. THYME for Family
3. THYME for Friends

Water Freely with Patience and Cultivate with Love.

There is much Fruit in your Garden because You Reap What You Sow.

Submitted by Marilyn Shortt

On Re(building) Loving Relationships

The Natural Church Development survey revealed that St. John's scores low on "loving relationships." This came as a surprise to many, and I have heard it said that this result is evidence of the weakness of the survey methodology, its questions, its non-Anglicanism, or even its failure to accommodate how (after all!) Canadians express their love for others. I admit to giving a bit of credence to all of the above objections but I think that, nevertheless, we should dig a little deeper into our own parish life for some answers and possible solutions.

Here is how the survey summary speaks of the matter:

Loving Relationships

This is a measure of the cohesiveness of a congregation. Good performance is measured here when people of the congregation are involved in each others' lives; when they like being with each other both inside and outside of church events; when people take time to notice what

others are doing in the church and thank them and compliment them; when there is much laughter in the church. Poor performance can indicate the presence of unresolved conflict or trauma in the life of the parish and a need for healing. It can also indicate that the busyness of people's lives coupled with low Gift-oriented Ministry and low Passionate Spirituality has resulted in people drifting apart.

I'd like to come at this subject in a roundabout way. Jack Adam instituted a weekly staff meeting when he arrived on the scene, and it has been a great blessing for those of us who participate. The "Pastoral Team" — Gary van der Meer, Lynda Ward, James Bailey, and myself — meets for about two hours a week to review parish activities and liturgy, to plan for the weeks ahead, and to give each other "feedback." For me, it is a harkening back to some very exciting and dynamic years early in my ministry when I

(Re)building Loving Relationships (continued)

was one of a staff of 6 clergy and 6 lay-leaders in a team-ministry at Holy Trinity, Menlo Park California. We too met weekly, and for a campout overnight quarterly!

It's a rare privilege to hear one's sermon or children's talk critiqued, one's choice of music challenged, one's bulletin analyzed for effectiveness. To be able to do this with effective outcome, one has to be able to "speak the truth, with love." Years later, when I ran communicative skills training workshops for the clergy and lay leaders of the diocese, out at the Aurora conference centre, we spent a lot of energy and time on making this ability to "speak the truth, with love" come alive.



Everyone knows intuitively — or from common sense and experience — the rudiments of constructive feedback. But do we often have the opportunity to practice it? The answer, sadly, is no. The simple truth is that to communicate this way takes time as well as training and maturity and all those other factors that can be managed. At our weekly staff meetings we try to take the time to say what has to be said. And we pray for God's guidance and direction.

What does taking the time and seeking spiritual guidance add? It allows a person to contextualize the constructive criticism, to put the "negative" in the context of the overall appreciation we feel. All of us do (or would like to) offer advice to friends, family, co-workers, parish and other leaders of various kinds, all the time. But we seldom have (or take) the time or opportunity to contextualize the advice. We offer advice to be helpful, because we appreciate what is being done and want to see it done even better, because we care about the community (family, church, work place, etc.). But if all that is heard is the criticism, it cannot be received as constructive.

I sit on a number of committees in the parish, and observe others (and myself!) in action being "constructively critical." Sometimes it works; often it does not because there is no time to say what we like, only what we wish would be changed.

If these observations ring any bells, here are a few suggestions to help move us all forward in communicating help more effectively (and not just at St. John's — try them at home and at work). A warning: they take a little more time (but, hey, if it's worth doing ...).

- If you possibly can, offer advice in private and at a time when there is an opportunity for a real conversation. A telephone conversation is a good second choice; it's not a bad idea to flag the call with a "I'd like to talk to you about 'x'"; when would be a good time to call?"
- Preface your criticism with what you like about the person and their work for the community.
- If you don't have time for that, put it in writing when you do have time.
- Be concrete, give examples, be positive about the options.
- Remember that you're just one person on "the team" and that your views, while valuable, have to be integrated with those of others.
- Don't expect an immediate response to your suggestions, and say so by indicating that you understand that the idea may take some time to implement.
- Offer to help, if you can, in exploring alternative actions. If you can't help, perhaps you can name a person or two who might be able to.
- Ask yourself why you're speaking about the matter. Above all, is it your purpose to enhance the life of the community? If so, see if you can articulate that as you offer the advice. In other words, make the life of the community the end, not your own personal preferences.

(Re)building Loving Relationships (continued)

There are more things to be said about this matter of building and maintaining loving relationships. I hope the above will stimulate some conversations. Call me if you don't have time to speak to me at church. Better still, put it in writing in the next *Journal* for all to read and react.

Bruce Alton

Anglicans and Anointing

Anglicans interested in pastoral care and in becoming licensed lay anointers attended a two-day session at the Scarborough Missions on October 27-28. As a refresher, and in preparation for the renewal of my license, I attended the Saturday sessions. In the morning, the **Rev. Joe Mangina** spoke about the history of anointing, dipping into the Old and New Testaments in a most interesting way. The use of oils for adornment and as a part of various rites and celebrations is as old as the olive tree itself. He talked about how, over the centuries, this sacrament came to be used only for those about to die and how, since Vatican II, it has been brought back into the mainstream of Christian practice and made available to all for healing on every level.

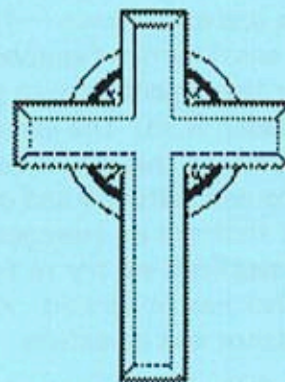
In the afternoon session, we heard about what it means to be licensed to do something: what one is now authorized to do and what one is now not allowed to do. Lots of good stuff about boundaries. It was led by **Father Christian Swayne** and so for me was a wonderful opportunity to review what I had learned with him over the years. There will be further opportunities for anyone at St. John's who is interested in receiving this training I am sure. I would be happy to share what I can about the day. The main thing that I took away with me was the importance and sheer beauty of this sacrament and the amount of interest there is in its reintegration into Anglican worship.

Elizabeth Fairley

Workshop on Yoga and Christianity

On Saturday, October 13, I attended a one-day workshop at St. Stephen's in the Fields Anglican Church on College Street. The workshop was led by **Kevin Flynn**, St. Stephen's incumbent, and Kevin's wife, **Karusia Wroblewski Flynn**, who is a yoga teacher and dancer. The theme of the workshop was Yoga and Christianity.

In the morning, Karusia led 15 workshop participants in a series of stretches and yoga postures in St. Stephen's beautiful worship space. After a vegetarian lunch, Kevin spoke about the origins of yoga and Christianity and the intersection of the two. He provided a wonderful bibliography and although many of the books are not in print, some are available at Robarts Library or through the Toronto Public Library. *Prayer of Heart and Body: Meditation and Yoga as Christian Spiritual Practice*, by Roman Catholic priest and Kripalu yoga teacher, Thomas Ryan, is available at the Anglican Book Centre.



Knitting together yoga and Christianity is something that has interested me for many years. It was wonderful to spend a day with kindred spirits. The last part of the day's program was a 20-minute period of silent meditation on the longer version of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." Although there have been yoga classes at St. Stephen's in the fields for five or six years, this was the first time that Kevin and Karusia had offered this workshop. I think they were pleased with the turnout and the response. I'm glad I went.

Elizabeth Fairley



MAKING A JOYFUL NOISE UNTO THE LORD

It seems that yesterday it was the summer and now we are in the "thick" of our fall program at St. John's. On the musical front, choir rehearsals have returned to their former Tuesday evening timeslot. The choir has participated regularly and on **Tuesday, November 6th** played a role of leadership in welcoming the neighborhood monthly **Prayer Walk** to St. John's Church.

The choir decided to take a two-week respite from rehearsals while I headed off to Paris for a weeklong organ Master Class with the French Organist, **Frédéric Blanc** (I did offer to bring in someone to carry on with rehearsals). What is to be said is that we had an early start to our season with our preparation for **Father Gary's** induction.

We have had the first concert of our **Music at St. John's 2001/2002 season** with the uplifting singing of **Susan Hookong Taylor**. I was personally unable to attend because of a concurrent inaugural concert of a reinstalled (1899) pipe organ in a new United Church in Courtice, Ontario, designed by my firm. Reports of those who did attend were very positive. As this Newsletter goes to press, **mezzo-soprano Linda McGuire** is approaching the chancel area of St. John's to perform a varied program including the world premiere of "Josephine" a new work by the Ontario composer **Timothy Sullivan**. Linda will be performing this work with orchestra in New York City later this month.

Another concert, but not at St. John's, which I would like to plug is one scheduled to take place at the **Church of the Holy Family** (King Street West at Close Avenue, in the Parkdale Avenue) at **8:00 p.m. on November 23, 2001**. The concert is free (the Brothers of

the Oratory object to the sale of tickets for events taking place in their church). The performer is **Parisian organist Raphaël Tambyeff**. I first came to know Raphaël when he used to take the organ class of my "maitre" **André Fleury** at the Schola Cantorum (Paris) when M. Fleury was unavailable. Over the years I have taken a number of summer schools with Raphael. On **December 31st**, he will be retiring from his position at the church of **Notre Dame de Grace de Passy**, and this Canadian concert tour will hopefully be the first of many. His program is to include works by **Louis Marchand, J.S. Bach, César Frank** and **Louis Vierne**. I would appreciate very much the support of those members of St. John's who are able to fit what will be a splendid concert in a new church, on a recently installed organ, into their busy schedules.

As this is our Advent newsletter, we can't forget to be reminded that the Christmas season is soon upon us. For the choir it will be the opportunity to both dig out some traditional favourites, and to learn a new piece of music or two. It is the ideal time for anyone who has wanted to "try the choir on for size" to join up for a season. This can be done without a longer term commitment. If this opportunity is of any interest to you, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

James Bailey
Director of Music/Organist
537-4140 (daytime) or 530-4147 (evenings)

What's Been Happening At St. John's

*Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things...*

Psalm 98

Susan Hookong-Taylor and Friends Put On a Stirring Performance



On Saturday, October 20, Music at St. John's hosted a concert with Christian singer/songwriter **Susan Hookong-Taylor** on vocals and guitar, **Colleen Allen** on saxophone and flute, and **Alejandra Nuñez** on a dazzling array of percussion instruments.

With the exception of one song, all the music and lyrics performed were written and arranged by Susan. The style of music was a mixture of folk-ballad and jazz with beautiful soaring vocals and spiced up with Alejandra's percussion.

An exquisite pleasure to listen to and to watch, this threesome - sometimes joined by additional vocalists on stage - stirred the audience with songs of worship, peace and justice. We wish Susan and her friends well with a new recording project they are working toward: a CD to be called "Behold I Am The Handmaid of the Lord."

Marion Karasiuk

Recent Community Prayer Walk Held at St. John's

On Tuesday, November 6, the monthly community prayer walk was held at St. John's. About forty-five people came out representing eleven neighbourhood churches: St. John's Anglican, St. Martin's in the Fields Anglican, St. Cecilia's Roman Catholic, Runnymede United, Runnymede Baptist, Halleluia Filipino Baptist, Victoria Royce Presbyterian, Downtown Vineyard, Keele Street Christian Church, Toronto West Community Church, and The Sharing Place (Grace Church of the Nazarene). We worshipped together, prayed for St. John's together, walked in pairs around the neighbourhood asking God's blessing for our community, had refreshments together back at the church, and talked together!

Community prayer walks are held every month on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Each month a different church hosts the event - watch the bulletin for upcoming locations.

Marion Karasiuk

Feasts: A Fun Way to Reach Out to the Community

Common stories about St. Francis of Assisi usually include at least one tale of his preaching to the animals and birds. As the story goes, the reason for this behaviour on the part of St. Francis was that he was so filled with fervour for witnessing to the love of God, and zealously in preaching the gospel, that St. Francis determined that if the people did not listen to him then he would preach to God's other creatures like the dogs, and cats, pigeons, sparrows, and doves.

In the keeping of the spirit of this feast day, which this year was **Thursday, October 4**, and in the hopes that we might entice some of the families of the neighbourhood to visit us, **Father Gary** suggested we open our doors and have a short ecumenically-spirited service with two readings and a prayer for the **Blessing of Pets**. Family friendly posters were put up in the immediate neighbourhood and flyers were put in the cubbies of each child in the day care. **Chris Rutty** prepared the refreshments which included apples, cheese and juice. And there were lots of crafts for the children. So you can imagine our surprise when sixteen adults showed up with their cats and dogs, expressing gratitude that St. John's was a place where they could come and get their pets blessed.



It was fitting then, that since we started the month of October remembering St. Francis, that we should end the month remembering all the saints on **All Hallows Eve night** (Halloween). According to sources (and it does vary depending on which source you happen to read), this was the night that the Celts celebrated their New Year's Eve, the Eve of Samhain, They believed that spirits were abroad so they built bonfires to frighten them away, and they danced and feasted around the fires. As well as ghosts and hobgoblins, general mischief was also anticipated. Halloween was first proclaimed to be a Christian festival in the year 837 and in North America, Halloween is a popular time to dress up and visit the local neighbourhood with tricks if treats are not handed out.



Again, St. John's opened its doors to provide a safe environment for the children of the neighbourhood to visit. And between 6 and 8 p.m., they came for their treats, they bobbed for apples, they toured the church and asked Father Gary questions, they treated us to a break dance routine and a joke (What do you call two apples? A pair. Hee,hee - get it?). That joke was courtesy of Groucho and Harpo Marx who came calling. We were also visited by **Kathleen "Fairy Queen" Faggeter** and **Zachary "Tigger the Tiger" Karasiuk**. **John Webster** dropped by to take some pictures. We had sixty visitors that night and a seed was planted.

Feasts (continued)



Lynda gets in the Spirit!

So,, in the spirit of all the saints, we will once again open our doors to the neighbourhood on **Thursday, December 6** from 4 to 8 p.m. This according to **Mabel Anne Waters**, is the time of the parent-teacher interviews at **Humberside Collegiate**. Therefore, I am asking for donations of plain home-baked cookies that can be decorated and taken home. We will also serve warm apple cider, tea and juice. Anyone who could offer a half-hour to greet or show people around the church would be eternally appreciated. Would anyone be willing to help the children decorate their cookies? And who knows, for all this good behaviour, St. Nick just might show up at S. John's and you wouldn't want to miss that, would you? See you there!

Lynda Ward (416-763-2393)

Blessing of the Animals

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.

Cecil Francis Alexander

A service of Blessing of the Animals took place on Thursday, October 4 – St. Francis of Assisi Day – so chosen because of St. Francis' love of animals.

There were 16 people present at the service, conducted by Rev'd Gary van der Meer. The dogs who were present and blessed were Gary's **Maya**, James Bailey's **Roxy**, **Grace**, **Rosie**, and **Sherlock**. Alie Ruddy brought **Sparky**. Two cats present and blessed were **Arnold** and the Websters' **Maggie**.

I mention only the names of the church members because I was too busy memorising the names of the pets to get the names of the people from the community (who found out about the service from our signage and flyers)! They, along with their pets, are listed in the guest book.

The readings and hymns were chosen with the pets in mind:

- All things Bright and Beautiful
- Balaam and the donkey
- The Prayer of St. Francis



Roxy

- God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall
- Nathan to David regarding the poor man and his one little ewe lamb which was like a daughter to him

To the last, I can relate. Maggie was like that to me. Maggie was taken to the vet the following Thursday, and after tests confirmed kidney failure, she was euthanised on Saturday. When I mentioned it to Gary on the following Sunday, he said, 'She was blessed.'

We had seventeen years of being blessed with Maggie.

John Webster

Of Things Past

A Historical Conundrum

In 1981, as St. John's was preparing to celebrate its centennial, it was discovered that there had been a vestry meeting in 1879 - which would make that date the actual founding-of-the-parish date. (Was there one in 1880 also? We weren't told that!) So we decided that what we would celebrate would be 'the opening of the first church for worship'. Nonetheless, the '81 date is the one that people think of when we count the age of the parish, and this year it is 120.

Coming soon, then, is a new quarter-century mark - 125 years of ministry in this area. Shall we celebrate it in 2004 or 2006? Last spring, it was felt that we should start celebrating Anniversary Sunday once again (third Sunday in November) as something of a 'run-up' to the 125th. And so we should - but we should also decide which anniversary we are celebrating.

May Webster

Twenty Years Ago at St. John's

1981 was the year that the parish celebrated its Centennial. It was a year crammed with special events, memories and souvenirs, involving all ages in a wonderful celebration of the past, while looking forward to the future.

A Centennial logo was designed by **Jeff Lee**, a member of the Server's Guild. It consisted of a rising eagle - symbol of St. John - above the number 100 set in a triangle - symbol of the Trinity. This logo was used on all parish correspondence during the year, and was made into lapel pins which were proudly worn by many parishioners. Other souvenirs included a spoon with a tiny replica of the church on the end of the handle, bookmarks, pencils and balloons. A book entitled "The First Century" was published.



Sharon Barnes, Nan Weston and May Webster circa 1981?

Many events were celebrated during the year. The choir, under the direction of organist **Gary Gray**, presented a series of Sunday evening concerts tracing the development of Church Music over the centuries. In June, the Centennial Stone was laid in the wall at the northeast corner of the church building next to the cornerstones of 1889 and 1923. A box behind the stone contains Centennial souvenirs, a parish list, Order of Service and a history of the parish. The stone was unveiled by the Co-Chairs of the Centennial Committee, **Cy and Nan Weston**, and was dedicated by Rt. Rev. **Hugh Stiff**, Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Toronto.

In October, an old-fashioned Harvest Service saw many parishioners in "period

Twenty Years Ago (continued)

costumes" worshipping together using the form of service of 100 years before. The preacher at that service was **Archbishop Lewis Garnsworthy**. The costumes came out again for a nostalgic Bazaar in November.

The culmination of the year's activities was the Centennial Service held in November when many former parishioners returned to join the congregation in celebrating a century of devoted service to the community through ministry and prayer.

Rev. Canon Maurice Poole, St. John's Rector during the Centennial Year, wrote in the Centennial book:

We pay tribute to the pioneers of this Parish and acknowledge the tireless service of countless men and women from the past to those of the present day who are guarding well the heritage that has been entrusted to them.

Nan Weston



Happy Anniversary St. John's

*How blessed is this place, O Lord,
where you are worshipped and adored;
in faith we here an altar raise
to your great glory, God of praise.*

Ernest E. Ryden
"How Blessed Is This Place"
(Hymn 301, *Common Praise*)

Collecting, Reflecting and Celebrating 120 + Years at St. John's

Now 120 years young, St. John's has a rich history in need of reflection, recording and presenting. **Christopher Ruddy**, a professional historian, is leading an effort to document and write an updated St. John's history project. Input and assistance is needed from long time members of this congregation (as well as others) to not only record their recollections and reflections about the history of the church, but also to help organize and coordinate this effort.

A meeting will be called early in the new year to assemble a team to develop a plan to tackle this project effectively. If you are interested, please see or contact Chris at church or at 416-769-7948, [hhrrs@healthheritageresearch.com](mailto:hhrs@healthheritageresearch.com).

What's Coming Soon

Praying with the Whole Body

Between the early and mid-morning services on **Sunday, November 25**, we will have an opportunity to explore embodied prayer. Each of us is embodied spirit. God has given us the precious gift of a body in which to experience the abundance and wonderment of God's creation. And yet we lead busy lives that leave little time to pause and express wonderment. Even five minutes of deep quiet can be a powerful experience. When we are able to bring the body into a state of deep quiet, the mind and the heart follow. Every faith tradition has recognized this, and has a long history of prayer of the body as well as prayer of the heart and the mind.

At St. John's, we are blessed with a beautiful worship space. Visitors attending our concerts comment on its warmth and on the great acoustics. Every week, we gaze at beautiful stained glass depictions of our faith. This physical space will lend itself well to an exploration of prayer of the body - simple stretches, simple reminders to come into stillness, simple postures to experience God's peace.

Please join us at **9:15 a.m.** to start our embodied prayer at **9:30 a.m. on Sunday November 25**. No special clothing or equipment is required. Come as you are. Suitable for adults and teens.

Elizabeth Fairley

White Gift Sunday

White Gift Sunday is an Advent celebration with the spirit of Christmas at heart. Jesus came to live among us and his presence has taught us that rather than be self-absorbed, we are to pay attention to, and even love, "the other". The redefining of neighbour in the Good Samaritan parable helps us move beyond giving gifts to those we love (A Christmas tradition) into giving ourselves to people we may not even know (An Advent tradition). We wrap the gifts in white, the colour of purity, and maybe then indicating our purity of intentions - generosity, helpfulness, and the absence of any sense of superiority over the recipients.

Our gifts are practical: non perishable food, toiletry items, essential clothing items for the winter season. We invite you to bring your gifts for presentation in the offering on **Sunday December 16th**. Remember that the white also makes our gifts anonymous, not a matter of comparison to what other people are giving, but a matter of our ability to give with the spirit of Christmas at heart.

Rev. Gary van der Meer



Tickets Selling Fast for "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" at St. John's

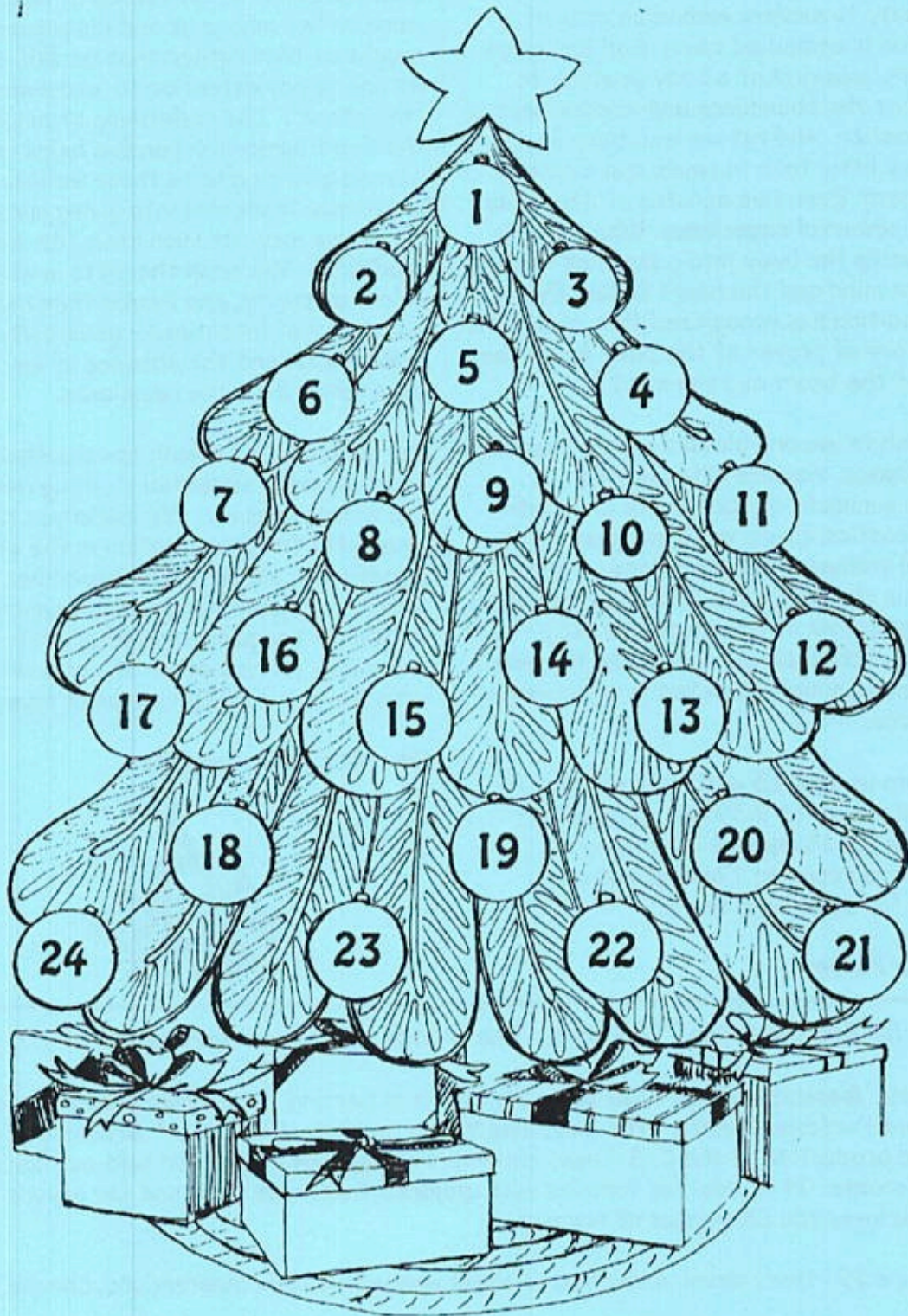
On **Sunday, December 2 at 4:00 p.m.**, St. John's is hosting the touring production of Brookstone Performing Arts, "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe." Brookstone's acclaimed production of the C. S. Lewis children's classic has played for sold-out audiences all around Toronto. It is ideal for families with children from ages 4-11, and for anyone who knows and loves the Chronicles of Narnia!

Tickets are \$9. Don't delay, order your tickets now with VISA, MasterCard, Cheque or Cash.

Call Marion Karasiuk at 416-604-1591.

Experience the Deep Magic.

KIDS' KÖRNER



STARTING ON DECEMBER 1, COLOUR ONE DECORATION EACH DAY UNTIL CHRISTMAS, THEN COLOUR THE TREE AND PRESENTS.

Coming Up This Month

November 18 **Anniversary Sunday**

November 25 **Healing Service**

Embodied Prayer 9:30 - 10:00 a.m.
(Come at 9:15 a.m. to be ready)

Advisory Board Meeting after 10:30 a.m. service
(Sandwich Lunch Provided)



Advent and Christmas Services

All are welcome to celebrate the season with us!



December 2
8:30 and 10:30 a.m.
9:30 to 10:15 a.m.
10:30 a.m.

First Sunday in Advent:

Making Advent Wreaths
Rite of Holy Baptism
Potluck Parish Lunch after 10:30 a.m. service

4:00 p.m.

The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe

A Special Family Production by Brookstone Performing Arts

December 6
6:15 p.m.

St. Nicholas Day (Children's Event)

Decorating cookies and more!

December 9
8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Advent 2

30 hour youth (& adult) fast ends with lentil & rice lunch after
10:30 a.m. service

December 16
8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

White Gift Sunday

December 23
8:30 and 10:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m.

Advent 4

Intergenerational Christmas Pageant
Come decorate the church for the Christmas season after the
10:30 a.m. service

December 24
5:30 p.m.
10:00 p.m.
10:30 p.m.

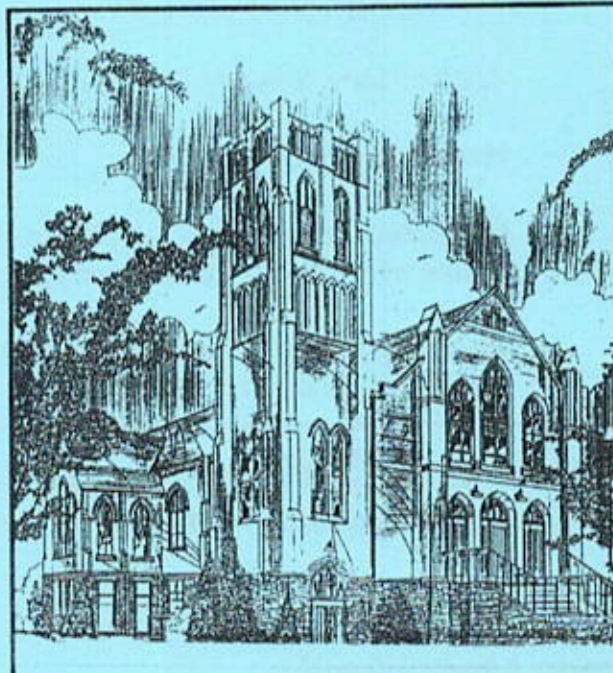
Christmas Eve

Family Christmas Eve Eucharist
Carol Sing Fest
First Eucharist of Christmas

December 25
9:30 a.m.

Christmas Day

Christmas Day Eucharist



A Brief Word from the Editor

Contributors to this newsletter: Rev. Gary van der Meer, Bruce Alton, James Bailey, Lynda Ward, Elizabeth Fairley, Marilyn Shortt, May Webster, John Webster, Marion Karasiuk, Nan Weston, Chris Ruddy Heartfelt Thanks to All!!!

As always, I am thrilled with the help and contributions that I get for this newsletter. Each time I put this together I get a feeling of warmth from the result and a better understanding of our St. John's family. In particular, I am amazed at the diversity of ways that we explore our faith and bring God into the community.

All the best for you and your families during the Advent and Christmas Seasons!

Andrea Ruddy
(416-769-7948, cmrd@sympatico.ca)

Next issue: Early in the New Year



St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto

288 Humberside Ave. (at Quebec Ave.), Toronto, Ontario, M6P 1L5
416-763-2393 www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish/stjohns/

Yahoo group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stjohnstoronto>