

September 15,
2008

SJWT
LMCS



Dear Friends,
This Sunday the music is Jazz! Come worship God with us!

Worship with us this Sunday, September 21: 8:30 Early Eucharist 10:30
Celebrant: The Rev. Gary van der Meer; Sermon: Liz McKendry; Musician: Tim Elliott.

Announcements & Events

Youth Lunch

We welcome our Youth and Almost-Youth to go out for brunch **this Sunday September 21 after the 10:30 service**. We will walk up to the Purple Onion. We ask each participant to be prepared to purchase their own lunch (in the \$10 range). **Contact Brad Christakos, 416-767-9347.**

Redeemer Lutheran welcomes their new Pastor

Redeemer Lutheran invites us to attend the induction of the Rev. Eric Schultz as Pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, **Sunday September 21, 4:00 PM**. We have shared programs with Redeemer over the past several years, and it would be great to have representation from St. John's.

Yard Sale!

We need your stuff, and we need your help! This Sunday we need our help after the 10.30 service to bring everything down from the balcony. **Saturday, September 27 is the day of the yard sale, 08.00 am start.** Try to bring your large items on the Saturday! For more information, contact **Sue Ferguson, 416-769-5267.**

Breakfast for the homeless

We have been invited to be the Church on Duty for the 4th Sunday of each month at St. Stephen's Church, College Street. Each **Sunday we need 4-8 people: An early shift starting at 6:00 AM and a later shift starting at 7:00 AM, both concluding at 9:00 AM.** Tasks: Giving out food, putting out, clearing up and washing dishes, and interacting with the people who come for breakfast. Our St. John's dates: **September 28, October 26, November 23, December 28.**

Great Upcoming Music!

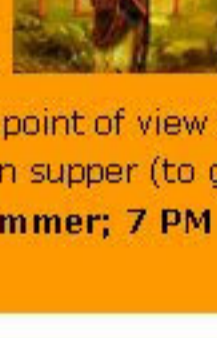
September 21: Tim Elliott, Jazz Eucharist; September 28: Glory Glory Hallelujah, Praise Band.

Next Hike

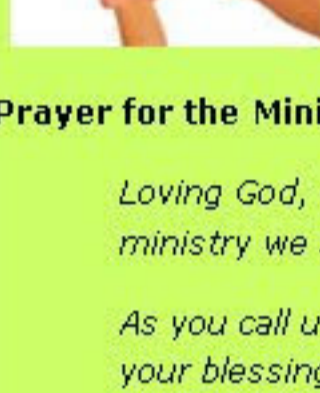
Join us for fall colours on **Saturday, October 5, 9 AM**. Last week's Rouge River hike was rained out, but the Farmers' Almanac promises great weather on the 4th!

Book Study

Our Book Study at St. John's meets monthly to enjoy a meal and talk about a book chosen on a Christian theme. Last month's selection was *Becoming Human*, by Jean Vanier. After a simple French supper, the group explored the book's themes of loneliness and forgiveness in a world of special needs and in our own community and congregation. **Our next book, chosen by this month's participants, is Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent*.** This novel retells the Genesis account of Jacob, his wives and children, from the point of view of the women in the story. Read along and join us for a Middle Eastern supper (to go with the location of the book). **Wednesday October 22. 6 PM Summer; 7 PM Discussion.**



Congregational Meeting



Sunday, September 28, we will hold a congregational meeting after the 10:30 service to discuss our plans for ministry at St. John's, in light of financial and building challenges as outlined in a letter sent to all parishioners at the end of August. The wardens have met with Bishop Poole and provide an update on costs and possibilities at this meeting. We ask everyone in our community to pray as we prepare for this conversation:

Prayer for the Ministry of St. John's Church, September 2008:

Loving God, we give you thanks for the gift of life, and for this journey of ministry we share as St. John's Church, West Toronto.

As you call us to serve you in our neighbourhood and in our world, we ask your blessing in all that we do.

We especially ask for guidance and strength in the coming months as we meet, plan and make decisions about the future of our parish community. Help us to hear each other in our concerns and to support each other in our hopes, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Learning and Growing in Faith



Jamie Christakos

Jamie is reading **God Seekers: Twenty Centuries of Christian Spiritualities** by Richard H. Schmidt as the book he will read as preparation for Confirmation. Jamie says, "It is about people and how they tried to find God." Jamie enjoys history and his book is a survey of people on their spiritual journey over the past 2000 years. Remember him as he reads.

Confirmation Preparation: We are in the process of developing our own Christianity 101. It will be a 5-session program made up of slides, video clips, reading and discussion. The topics: 1. Why Jesus? 2. The Anglican Church, Christianity and World Religions. 3. The Eucharist and the Worship of the Church. 4. Prayer. 5. How are we to live – how is God calling us? These sessions will be offered on Tuesday evenings beginning after Thanksgiving. Everyone is welcome to attend. These sessions are ideal if you are new to church, newly back to church, or if you want an orientation to St. John's and how we approach the faith

...What would you like to learn about as you grow in faith?

The Meaning of Jesus

I recently read *The Meaning of Jesus – Two Visions*, by Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright. It helped me tremendously in getting some perspective on the many facets of our Christian faith. I found myself drawn to Borg's way of thinking, although Wright's writings were helpful in gaining insight into the history of Christian doctrine. When I grew up I was, and to some extent still am, confused by phrases like Jesus - the Son of God, Jesus - the Messiah/Saviour and Jesus having died for our sins. I always interpreted them literally, notions that did not fit in with my science-based worldview.

Apparently, in the days of early Christianity, titles such as Son of God and Saviour of the World, were used for Emperor Augustus. The adoption of these titles by Christianity meant Christians denied the Emperor these titles, showing that their allegiance was of a sacred kind rather than of a worldly kind. That is very different from what I understood it to be when I grew up – a son born from God, from a man who sat somewhere on a throne in heaven. It is but one of the many examples where I lost my way as a result of theology. I couldn't see the trees for the forest and forgot the basic principles of what Jesus stood for.

And I have come up with my own particular understanding of some of the aforementioned titles usually given to Jesus:

1) I see Jesus as the Son of God because I believe Jesus to have had a special connection with God. Jesus lead the life God wanted him to live and as such he was a child of God.

2) I believe Jesus to be the Messiah, not in the traditional Jewish sense of the word (i.e. someone who ushers in a period of peace for the Jewish nation), but in a personal sense. Believing in the teachings of Jesus, and acting on them, brings peace and tranquility to one's hectic life. In that sense I believe Jesus to be my personal Saviour.

3) As for Jesus having died for our sins, I have a hard time that God's justice requires sins be punished. According to this, Jesus' death makes atonement for the sins of all humanity. Rather, I believe God to be a God of Love, not of retribution. This God inspired Jesus to give an example of how one should live one's life. That Jesus was willing to be crucified for his principles shows how far Jesus was willing to go to not have to compromise his principles. As Father Bob once said in a sermon: "Jesus died for his integrity".

4) Finally, I see the crucifixion and resurrection narratives as an allegory; the death of an old life and being reborn into a new one when you start believing in Jesus.

So how does this relate to my daily life? In the last five years I have gone through a resurrection of sorts. I have started to live my life according to the principles Jesus stood for. It has helped me to be more charitable, more humble, more honest, more loving and kinder. Every day I grow in this and every day there are new challenging situations in which I find support and resolution through my faith. It is an exciting journey.

God of love, help me be one of your children. Amen.

Tom Gehrels

For meditation and reflection, consider the scriptures for next Sunday, September 21: Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:37-45; Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16.

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.

