

**A message from the e-news coordinator:**

The previous sent newsletter did not show the summer worship schedule properly. Please scroll down to find the correct summer schedule. Sorry for the inconvenience.

July 9, 2008

SJWT



Dear Friends,

**With the glory of summer upon us: keep your smile in the rain, enjoy the radiance of the sun, and offer peace to those you meet!**

**Worship with us this Sunday, July 13: 9th of Pentecost:** 8:30 Early Eucharist 10:30 Sermon: The Rev. Gary van der Meer. Celebrant: Rev. Gary van der Meer; Musician: Glory Glory Hallelujah, praise band.

**Come to the Beach!**



**July 12:** Bike and Hike Toronto Island – the easy version is come, get us a great spot at the beach and the walkers and bikers will join you at the waterside. 11 AM Bike from the Church; 12 PM Meet at the Ferry Dock (bikers and walkers). Bike organizer: Anthony Ruta. Beachhead organizer: Lynelle Gehrels (for those who want sand and water – the rest of us will join you on the beach after we finish biking/hiking!).

**Announcements & Events**

**Teenager Lunch**

**Attention 12 to 17 year olds at St. John's:** Father Gary and the St. John's Youth Committee would like to invite you to join us for pizza lunch at a local pizza place after the 10:30 service on **July 13th**. Each attendee will be asked to contribute \$5.00 towards the cost of this lunch. **There is a Youth Donation Box at the Action Desk** – we ask for your support to be able to get our youth program started with this event. For further information: Brad Christakos (416-767-9347) or brad.christakos@rogers.com.

**Breakfast for the homeless**

The Leadership Team supports the invitation from St. Stephen's College Street for volunteers from St. John's to come once a month to put on breakfast for the homeless, beginning in September. **We will need 6 volunteers on Sunday 7 to 9:15 am, one Sunday per month.** Think about whether this might be a way you might make a difference in the world. Sign up at the Action Desk.

**Great Upcoming Music!**

July 13: Glory Glory Hallelujah, praise band; July 20 and 27: David Jones, piano and organ.

**Worship with us during the week**

**Thursday, July 10th, 10:30 a.m.** – Morning Prayer (with discussion, home-baked refreshments, and visiting).

**Summer Tuesday Evening Worship**

Every Tuesday 7:30 p.m. in the Garden Chapel **from July 8 to August 28**. Our theme this year is *'Who do you say that I am?'* a reflection by different people on who Jesus is to them. *How I describe my Faith...* Musician: Jaroslav Czerwinec, Accordion. The summer schedule:

Date	Leader	Celebrant
July 15	Lynda	Bob
July 22	Tim	Bob
July 29	Tom	Bob
Aug 5	Gary	Gary
Aug 12	Catherine	Gary
Aug 19	Liz	Liz
Aug 26	Bob	Bob

For Leaders: remember to make sure that you have selected your hymns and reading at least a week in advance and have provided them to May Webster.

**Upcoming Hikes**

**September 6, October 4** – Great details to come!

**Advanced Notice**

We will hold a One-Day Yard Sale on **Saturday, September 27**. Put the date in your calendar. Set your items aside in a box – Start now! Bring the box to the church in August and early September for storage on the balcony. For more information, contact Sue Ferguson, 416-769-5267.



We're sitting on the new bench in honour of Herald Buckle's 90th Birthday. We give thanks for Herald as he settles into his new residence at the O'Neill Centre, located at Christie and Bloor.



**"Putting out a Fleece"**

Let's imagine for a moment that you have before you a task that seems impossible, or at least very difficult. I am sure many of us do not have to work too hard to imagine this. It might even be your present reality. Let's say that you decide to ask God for help. It can't hurt, right? I'll ask God because I need as much help as I can get! But how do I know when God has given me an answer?

In the Old Testament, there is Gideon, who wanted to be really sure of what God wanted him to do. So he made a "deal" with God. "I am going to lay a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, I shall know..." The next morning, it was exactly as Gideon asked, but he still wasn't sure: "...Please, make the trial with the fleece just once more; let it be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew." Again, it happened exactly as Gideon asked. (See Judges Chapter 6) This form of prayer is to this day called "Putting out a Fleece." You ask God to give you a specific sign to confirm that your plan is a good one. There is another famous incidence of this when Abraham sends his servant to arrange a marriage for his son Isaac.

Abraham's expectations are so specific that the task seems impossible. The servant does as he is told, and as he is standing there, he makes a last-minute appeal to enlist God's help: "Let the girl to whom I shall say, 'Please offer your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels' – let her be the one whom you have appointed...by this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master." And it happens exactly as he says. Full of confidence he has God's backing, this fearful servant proceeds to make it happen.

Well, what do you think? Are you ready to put out a fleece yourself? Does it sound hokey and superstitious? When we ask God's guidance in *anything*, is it because it is nice and proper, or because we actually expect an answer! Maybe we think that when we ask God's guidance, somehow, as though by an invisible hand, things will all turn out for the best. What God did or how God did it is either irrelevant or improper to ask. Maybe we really can be more specific. Maybe, like this servant, we will be more confident about doing our part. Maybe it is okay to put out a fleece.

Let's imagine you have come up with number of possible actions and now you need some kind of sign about which one is the best.

Option A: I choose the thing that is safe, brings me some respect from others and even some personal material benefits. The action, which may be harmless or even good in itself, brings out the worst in me: I am acting out of insecurity, selfishness and fear.

Option B: I choose the thing that is about loving and serving. Though it may be difficult or uncomfortable or involve personal sacrifice, and though it may not bring me the approval of others, it brings out the best in me as a Child of God: I am acting out of trust, confidence and deep compassion.

The fleece is an awareness of what kind of person you want to be. You put it out there and now you choose.

**May the Lord who has given you the will to do these things give you the grace and power to perform them. Amen.**

Gary van der Meer

For meditation and reflection, consider the scriptures for next Sunday, July 13, 2008: Genesis 25:19-34; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

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](http://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.

