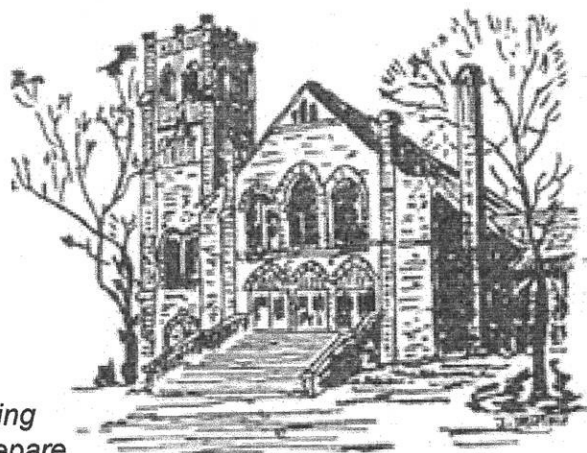


St. John's Journal

St. John's Anglican Church, West Toronto
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Lent 2002



Welcome to a New Year at St. John's! And what an exciting time it is around here as Lent fast approaches and we prepare for Easter. As usual, Lent offers an ideal time to reflect on where we have been and where we are going.

It is also a good time to think about faith and our surrounding community. We encourage you to learn more about our partners in the community and to participate in some of the many activities that we have planned for the upcoming months.

Incumbent's Report

Happy New Year!

This has been my first Christmas season as your incumbent. It was good to see so many of you and a great relief to me to now be able to put so many of your names and faces together.

I am learning more than names and faces, though. A couple of incidents have given me a greater insight into the kind of community you are. The first was the Christmas pageant. You really got into it! You know how to have fun together, and I had fun with you. The great costumes, the abundance of pictures, the over-the-top acting. It's enjoyable to be with people who are having a good time. We did all of this in the context of one of our foundational stories, and while we laughed and carried on, we were neither disrespectful nor irreverent. It was worship.

The second incident happened at the late Christmas Eve service, and we might call it a "glitch." I am aware that it has been your custom at the end of the Eucharist to darken the church and sing Silent Night by the light of tapers. The church was darkened, and after a momentary pause of realization, we proceeded to sing Silent Night in complete darkness, without the candles. In the moment, I found myself wondering, "Whose job was that supposed to be? I am the newcomer who has never experienced this tradition, so I hope it wasn't supposed to be me!" What were you thinking? Maybe some of you were disappointed. Maybe having this custom connects you with Christmas Past. Maybe it is a moment of nostalgia. Or maybe you smiled because we proved to ourselves that we really do know all the words. Or maybe you enjoyed the fact that it was "different" - and it really doesn't have to always be the same to be meaningful. Maybe you even found the darkness to be a new take on Mystery.

