

What lies behind us
and
what lies before us
are tiny matters

ST. JOHN
THE DIVINE
ADVENT 2020

compared to what lies
within us

The **D**iviner

Church of St. John the Divine,
301 Main Street North Bay,
Ontario P1B 1B3



December, 2020

My dear friends,

Farewells and partings are opportunities filled with challenges and yes sadness.

You have been so welcoming, patient and loving since that day I walked into the building. We have grown as the body of Christ – in numbers and in our faith. And we have grown in the fruits of the Spirit: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5: 22-23)*

The Spirit moves in mysterious ways. Over the three years we have had a confirmation class of six new members, twelve baptisms, four weddings, one renewal of vows and numerous funerals. At our funerals we have remembered the “cloud of witnesses” who were part of the fabric of this community.

I have witnessed your generosity and kindness in serving those in need with the Food Shelf, Open Arms, Lesley, Evelyn and Freddie our Guatemalan students, Mary Sherwood’s Madagascar ministry and Bliss Gillmor. And there were the quieter ministries: a family or individual who knocks at the front door, asking for help. Or a parishioner who comes forward and asks how to best walk alongside another individual who is hurting. Or the visitor -though a little unusual in appearance - is ushered into the sanctuary, and for a while she/he breathes and finds some peace in the worship.

I have witnessed your faithfulness, “self-control” and perseverance to stick together as a community with difficult discussion topics. Two topics were: same sex marriages and coffee hour each with its tangle of questions, concerns and consequences. Most evident in these gatherings was the respectful tone of expressing differences of opinions. Difficult topics are opportunities to reflect on how the Spirit is at work within us. I am grateful for the fruits of your reflections.

I have witnessed so much joy, creativity and love in fundraisers! In my first year, it seemed every week we were eating out again in the David Johnson Parish Hall! There were the bazaars that had a different theme twice a year with a flash mob that rivaled any mob in town. The Musical Adventure and the Dinner Auction – yes, it will happen again – created a bond amongst the Anglican churches in the area. Who would have thought the Primate would come to town! This faithful community grew in numbers as well in Spirit.

In this congregation, in this body of Christ, it has been incredible to witness the fruits of the Spirit grow, endure through COVID and flourish.

The strength of this body is its richness in its diversity. The diversity is seen in ages of members, socio-economic status, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

I will miss you all. I am most grateful for all you have taught me. It has been a delight and privilege being your incumbent these past three years.

Gratitude and thanks to everyone.

Your sister in Christ,



Beth+

1. In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth and populated the Earth with broccoli, cauliflower and spinach, green and yellow and red vegetables of all kinds, so Man and Woman would live long and healthy lives.

2. Then using God's great gifts, Satan created Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream and Krispy Creme Donuts. And Satan said, "You want chocolate with that?" And Man said, "Yes!" and Woman said, "and as long as you're at it, add some sprinkles." And they gained 10 pounds. And Satan smiled.

3. And God created the healthful yogurt that Woman might keep the figure that Man found so fair. And Satan brought forth white flour from the wheat, and sugar from the cane and combined them. And Woman went from size 6 to size 14.

4. So God said, "Try my fresh green salad." And Satan presented Thousand-Island Dressing, buttery croutons and garlic toast on the side. And Man and Woman unfastened their belts following the repast.

5. God then said, "I have sent you heart healthy vegetables and olive oil in which to cook them. And Satan brought forth deep fried fish and chicken-fried steak so big it needed its own platter. And Man gained more weight and his cholesterol went through the roof.

6. God then created a light, fluffy white cake, named it "Angel Food Cake" and said, "It is good." Satan then created chocolate cake and named it "Devil's Food."

7. God then brought forth running shoes so that his children might lose those extra pounds. And Satan gave cable TV with a remote control so Man would not have to toil changing the channels. And Man and Woman laughed and cried before the flickering blue light and gained pounds.

8. Then God brought forth the potato, naturally low in fat and brimming with nutrition. And Satan peeled off the healthful skin and sliced the starchy center into chips and deep-fried them. And Man gained pounds.

9. God then gave lean beef so that Man might consume fewer calories and still satisfy his appetite. And Satan created McDonald's and its 99-cent double cheeseburger. Then said, "You want fries with that?" And Man replied, "Yes! And super-size them!" And Satan said, "It is good." And Man went into cardiac arrest.

10. God sighed and created quadruple bypass surgery.

11. Then Satan created the Health Care System.

Amen.

Our children's ministry continues despite the pandemic

At first it was tough for me to accept that everything had to change. We had already made so many plans for PD Days and holiday parties, day camps and Camp Temiskaming, and of course our regular Sunday School. However, it quickly became clear the changes were necessary.

As both precautions and the pandemic persisted, we discussed the possibility of restarting Sunday school in some form, but it didn't seem feasible. All the same, we wanted to remind the children that they were still a part of St John's even if we didn't see them on Sundays. Danielle and Rev Beth had the great idea of sending a letter to each family along with an Advent calendar (the kind filled with Scripture verses, not chocolate) and a copy of Super Friends, the PWRDF kids' activity booklet.

At the same time we were discussing the letter, we discussed the Christmas pageant. Most of the children and youth who are affiliated with St John's look forward to participating in the pageant every year, some even coming out of the woodwork to do so. For this reason, it seemed important to find a way to continue the tradition, especially since we hadn't had opportunities to connect with the kids in person for so long. And where there's a will, there's a way!

So the idea of a physically distanced pageant was born. In order to accommodate all the restrictions and precautions, scenes were written for each social "bubble" who wanted to participate. Practice was mainly done at home with one run-through in the church space with costumes immediately prior to recording. Only parents and participants were in attendance. Since we knew it would be shared with the congregation via the recording, it really felt like a bigger audience was with us. We hope you all have a chance to watch it and share this 2020 take on the Christmas story with those you love.

While we look forward to slowly resuming Sunday school at some point, we give thanks for this opportunity to touch base with each other in person, to reignite the feeling of being connected despite being apart. We also give thanks for our wider St John's family and for your faithful inclusion of the Sunday school children, youth and teachers in the weekly prayers. We hope to see you soon!

Until then, may we all rest in the peace and love of our Creator and our Redeemer, whose blessed story we have the honour to tell.

Submitted By Johanna Kristolaitis

Well, I hope I'm not telling tales out of school, but, there is a memory I would like to share. I've gotta be careful, though, because these personal memories are just that: personal memories. The event however, was somewhat private as well as public, but nonetheless, I can share some stuff with you.

I was part of the Concurrence Committee the last time around when we were looking for a permanent pastor, and after much prayer and discernment, the Committee was convinced God wanted the People of God at St John the Divine to have a particular person to lead us in healing and growth. And so, we met with that person. All went swimmingly until the two sides, the candidate, and the Committee realized that the person God wanted us to have was unable to fulfill the time commitment! Dang.

We were not discouraged. We felt deep in our spiritual hearts the person was the one God wanted us to have, but perhaps not just then. We advised the Bishop and awaited our next move. Bishop in true bishop manner did send us someone, and that someone was what we needed at that time. Healing commenced. Growth returned, and in due time, when that incumbent's term expired, we suddenly, found ourselves presented with a new half-time incumbent! We trusted God, and he came through!

We didn't get Beth that first time, but Bishop Anne discerned that Beth should be at St John's, and indeed sent her to us, a couple years late.

I will not wax on about what a wonderful job she has done because, we can see the results for ourselves, and, I'm sure Beth would say that the work was God's; that she was his servant. And now, she is leaving to resume her chaplaincy role at the hospital. As a parish, we support her in that decision/discerning. As an individual, I support her mission and ministry to the hurt and suffering. Beth certainly relieved a lot of hurt and suffering here in this parish, and beyond.

We say thank you to her, and we trust that God will give us just the right kind of Pastor that we at St John's need ... he has done that so many times already.

Go in peace, Beth, into your Ministry of Chaplaincy. We love you, support you, and will always keep you as our special loving sister

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Respectfully submitted by Stephen Kitzul

On behalf of St. John's ACW - Pam Handley

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Oh my goodness we are having to say good bye again - this time to Rev. Beth. How quickly the time has passed since she first signed on at St. Johns to be our priest. It has been a wonderful three years and we are sorry she is leaving. However Rev. Beth is not leaving North Bay but moving on to spend more time at the hospital as a chaplain, the precious ministry to which she has been called.

During Rev. Beth's time at St. Johns, she has endeared herself to our congregation in so many ways including her well planned services making sure all roles are filled especially that of music now that we have an organ that soars to the rafters and "fills our souls" as Rev. Beth says during this time of pandemic. Teaching us how to help at the Altar. And Rev. Beth's striding down the nave to deliver Communion to those who are unable to make it to the Altar. And we sincerely thank her for her meaningful and attention getting sermons.

Rev. Beth's guidance during PAC meetings has been exceptional tackling the wonky elevator - and we will not even mention the day she got stuck in it for half an hour. Leaks throughout the building, the decision that needed to be made concerning the organ and the list goes on.

Her enthusiasm abounds as she loads up Christian books on the wheelchair to deliver them to the Parish Hall and May Seguin's car to be shipped overseas. The day of her first Tea and Bazaar when she asked "what do you want me to do?" And who can not forget her Bible Studies when week after week the numbers around the tables in the Thorneloe Room grew as word got out about her "lively" Bible Studies.

Unfortunately Rev. Beth's participation in the El Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage - The Way of St. James - was cancelled because of the outbreak of the pandemic back in the spring. However another pilgrimage awaits her and on behalf of St. John's A.C.W. we wish to offer Rev. Beth the following to comfort and strengthen her in her ministry as a chaplain.

PRAYER OF ST. TERESA OF AVILA.

CHRIST - has no body on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which must look out Christ's compassion on the world.
Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good.
Yours are the hands with which He is to bless others now.

ACW PRAYER -

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who did send your blessed Son into the world to become the Saviour of mankind; Grant to us a deep sense of gratitude for Your grace and Mercy towards us; Enable us by your Spirit to reveal Your love in prayer and work and stewardship; so that Your salvation may become known to all peoples, and Your name glorified throughout all the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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(705) 246-2869 (can leave a voice message if no answer) Mary Other

Our choir could not have had a more enthusiastic and supportive shepherd as that which we had with Beth.

Beth was always happy with what we sang, never, in three years complained even when we made an executive decision and changed a hymn that she had selected because we didn't know it!

She built our confidence as a choir and as singers and often blessed us with "WOW! that's awesome." She never failed to thank us each week even if sometimes we felt that we had not done so well.

This acknowledgement needs few words but to say on behalf of your choir....

Thank you Beth, for supporting us ,loving us, encouraging our strengths and always cheering us on with a "you will do great" when we got the jitters.

Your choir dearly loves you and you shall be dearly missed.

God Speed and be with you always.

HOT TOPICS AT PAC: *by Barb Kitzul*

What a year 2020 has been? Our last Diviner was in February. Lots of things to write about, but I will list a few topics discussed from March to August. PAC meetings met almost monthly, except two months off in the summer. About three meetings were held by zoom. In Sept we returned to meeting at the David Johnson Hall. I am pleased to report that all members are free of Covid 19!!!

Topics covered briefly!

1. Loans have been approved for the roof repairs by the church and Bliss Gilmore which are to be done in late fall by Fitzgerald Roofing.
2. Dinner Auction rescheduled to March, 2021.
3. We learned about Prayer Warriors who pray for parishioners daily.
4. Cookie Couriers delivered homemade cookies to shut-ins for Canada Day.
5. Irv Dyck, our financial expert, noted the Food Shelf, Open Arms and Building Fund accounts, are well-supported, despite the church being closed. Many parishioners are doing E-transfers and others are continuing to submit their offerings and we are so thankful.
6. We received news that the church will open for services Sept 13th, if we follow the Covid 19 health protocols. Pac met on August 27, to plan the changes in the church for Sunday Services with no more than 50 parishioner, all wearing masks.

September 9, 2020

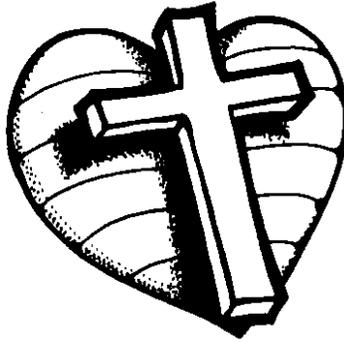
1. The dishwasher has broken down and needs repairs. We need the cost of a replacement or the cost of repairs. A motion was made to have it repaired, not to exceed \$1000.
2. Fitzgerald Roofing promised that the flat roof would be replaced this year!!!
3. The roof at the back of the church has leaked for a number of years. It was agreed that a more permanent repair would be the way to go and the money could come from the building fund. It was moved that PAC fix and replace soffit, fascia, and the eavestroughing in the courtyard and the lakeside and topside of the church steeple and the cost is not to exceed \$2500.
4. At the end of September the church will be about \$3000. in the black!!

November 3, 2020

1. The dishwasher has been repaired and is working. Several generous parishioners paid for the repair of the dishwasher.
2. Flat roof will be replaced in December. We will ask them for a quote on the repair of the back of the church.
3. The average attendance at church is about 40. Worship is good and the musicians and the organ have been excellent. Our new organ can play the bagpipes!! We heard them during the Remembrance Sunday liturgy!!
4. CHRISTMAS plans are in the planning stages.
5. The biggest news this year is that Rev Beth has accepted a fulltime job in Pastoral Care at the Hospital. We shall have her till Dec. 31st.
6. HAPPY NEW YEAR

Mary Sherwood's Children

Mary Sherwood's children in Madagascar need you. Even though Mary, at this time, is unable to continue in her ministry as missionary and agent of Anglican Missions Service Committee, the need for support by prayer and by donation continues. For over 15 years Mary has two centres serving the Antananarivo, the capital Akany Famonjena, is an Akany Tafita, an inner-centre. Both centres Directors, supported by Board drawn mainly from Diocese of Antananarivo.



been key to the operation of needs of children in city of Madagascar. One, orphanage and the other, city school and training have amazing women as a caring staff and a local the Mothers Union of the

Currently 42 children, the youngest two years old, live in the orphanage as a family. They live there for a variety of reasons; some arrive with major medical issues, but all arrive frightened and lonely. The staff accept them as they are and work to integrate each one into the family. In addition to meeting their physical and spiritual needs, we assume responsibility for their education. Some of our children are living outside the orphanage, in order to receive a higher education than we can provide on-site; we were excited when the first young man completed his university degree and received his diploma. A farm, where livestock is raised and vegetables are grown, is associated with the orphanage providing some of the food required. Other provisions must be purchased.

Akany Tafita is a non-residential school located in the inner-city of Antananarivo where a variable number of children are served, with meals and education at an elementary level provided. Training programs, such as life skills, cooking, hairdressing, and baking, are offered to older individuals.

Both of the Akanys are supported by monetary donations to Anglican Missions Service Committee. To maintain our status as a registered charity in Canada and to send money overseas, the Committee requires an agent to be a conduit for money and for information between itself and the Directors in Madagascar. The missionary, as agent, is responsible for ensuring that budgets are set, that monies are sent, and that funds are used where designated, and for reporting back to the Committee on funds expended. Due to the Covid pandemic, no expectation exists that the agent would travel to Madagascar at this time.

Without Mary, the Committee's need for an agent is extremely urgent. We need to be able to continue sending money in support of both Akanys and we need an agent in place to do this. Any and all suggestions to accomplish that goal would be welcomed. In addition, the need to raise funds continues since Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world and its children suffer.

Donations may be made to Anglican Missions Service Committee at P.O. Box #1072, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5N7. The contact for requests for more information or expressions of interest in helping in any capacity is: Anna Hamilton, Chair, Anglican Missions Service Committee

P.O. Box #28, Richards Landing, ON P0R 1J0 (snail mail)

marie1.hamilton@sympatico.ca (email)

(705) 246-2869 (can leave a voice message if no answer)

If the wise men had been women



If the wise men had been women . . .
they would have asked for directions . . .
arrived on time . . .
helped deliver the baby . . .
cleaned the stable . . .
brought practical gifts . . .
made a casserole . . .

but what would they have said as they left?



Epitaph by Merritt Malloy

When I die
Give what's left of me away
To children
And old men that wait to die.
And if you need to cry,
Cry for your brother
Walking the street beside you.
And when you need me,
Put your arms
Around anyone
And give them
What you need to give to me.
I want to leave you something,
Something better
Than worship
Or sounds.
Look for me
In the people I've known
Or loved,
And if you cannot give me away,
At least let me live in your eyes
And not in your mind.
You can love me most
By letting
Hands touch hands,
By letting
Bodies touch bodies,
And by letting go
Of children
That need to be free.
Love doesn't die,
People do.
So, when all that's left of me
Is love,
Give me away.