



The Winged Ox

The magazine of the Parish Church of St. Luke, Winnipeg

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2022

*O come, O come, Emmanuel ...
and from the depths of hell thy people save ...*

A cave is still a home outside Hebron in the West Bank.



“...because there was no room for them at the inn.”



“...take the child and flee...”

**While a full picture is yet to be established,
the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
estimates that global forced displacement had reached 103 million at mid-2022!**

From the Rector



A Christmas Reflection on the Fall and Rising of Humanity

In the western interpretation of the story of the Fall, a fallen angel who appears as a serpent brings a message of disobedience to Adam and Eve. When our first parents break the only rule that

God gives them, they rebel and turn away from God and allow the pollution of sin and the corruption of death into their lives and into creation; but God has a plan to restore us and creation.

In the fullness of time, God sent his Son, born of a woman, to save all humanity, and to restore us to full communion with God and all creation. Now we have a story of another woman (a young woman), another man and another angel.

In the Gospel, the angel Gabriel brings a message to Mary, and she willingly accepts to bear God so that God can bear (save) humanity. Her obedience makes possible the rising of humanity. An angel brings a message to Joseph and rather than dismissing Mary, he willingly accepts her and the Holy Child. Joseph is obedient to God and names him Jesus, literally “the one who saves.” God invites us to come alive and experience his hand in our daily lives, by learning of the freedom which comes with obedience.

This child will grow up to become the Messiah, the Christ, who faces the Enemy and crushes the head of the serpent beneath his heel. Upon the cross Christ takes the sins of the world upon himself, and by dying for us, destroys our eternal death.

Daily, bear Jesus in your heart, and name him as your Saviour and Lord. In this season of increasing light, as disciples we are called to share the healing light of Christ with a hurting and fragmented society.

I wish you a blessed Advent and a peaceful and love-filled Christmas.

With love in Christ,
Paul✙



In Memorium

Walter (Wally) Alfred Mildren

C.D., P.Eng. (SM), LMCSCE., Wing Commander
(Retired)

24 February 1923 – 28 September 2022



Walter (Wally) Mildren passed away peacefully at Riverview Health Centre on September 28, 2022, at 99 (or, as he would say, in his hundredth year), with his wife, Gladys, and his daughter, Gail, at his side. He was predeceased by his mother and father (Winnifred and Alfred), his brother (Albert), and his beloved daughter, Janet (Jan). Left to

cherish his memory are his wife of 73 years, Gladys, daughter Gail, grandson Scott (Walker) and son-in-law Fred (Cross).

Wally was born in Barking, Essex, England, and received his certification in mechanical engineering in June 1941. Then, World War II intervened. He joined the Royal Air Force in December 1941, took part of his training in Canada, flew 30 operations in a Lancaster bomber as a Pilot Officer, then served in India until April 1946. On discharge, he was awarded the rank of Flight Lieutenant (Ret'd). Wally received four war service medals (including the 1939-1945 Star), and the Bomber Command Clasp in 2013.

Wally immigrated to Canada in December 1946 in, of all things, a converted Lancaster, and arrived in Winnipeg on New Year's Day, 1947. Wally's interest in music and the theatre was lifelong. He sang with the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir, and performed with The Winnipeg Dramatic Society, Caravan Players, Tara Players, Shoestring Players and Assiniboine Players Shakespeare in the Park. Highlights were performing in Readers' Theatre with daughter Gail and in the Pantomime “Cinderella” with daughter Jan (as the Stepmother!).

Wally has left a legacy of dedicated public service, but above all else, he was a wonderful husband and father – loving, generous, and caring, and always there to take care of and support us. He has described his dearly loved wife, Gladys, as “the centre of his world”. Married on September 17, 1949, Wally and Gladys spent much

of their 73 years together travelling and meeting people who became life-long friends. In 1958, he built their summer cottage at Victoria Beach, and greatly enjoyed spending time with family there. He was so very proud of his daughters, Gail, and Jan, and of his grandson, Scott.

To the staff at 3 West, Riverview Health Centre, who gave Wally such tender and loving care, heartfelt thanks and love from “Mama” and Gail. God bless and keep you all!

May the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in Peace, Amen.

Edna Swallow

Died 3 December 2022 in Hamilton, ON



She emigrated to Canada with her husband and three children, pregnant with the fourth in 1966.

“She worked at Riverview (formerly King George) before her retirement in 1997. It gave her a great deal of pleasure to note that she began her career at Riverview and ended it there too. Following her retirement, Mum

spent several days a week volunteering at the Children’s Hospital Book Market and went on enormously long walks, especially enjoying the dogs she met along the way. Fittingly, since Mum’s move to Hamilton, the lovely Otis was her best friend and gentle protector.” (from her obituary.)

Edna is remembered as being a wonderful helper in the Kitchen as well as other places around St. Luke’s.

Rest in Peace, Edna.

A word about the continuum of life

At the passing of his mother, Father Richard Rohr experienced a connection or “bridge” to the life after death:

I believe that one of the essential events that we must walk through is the experience of the passion and death with someone we love, with someone we are bonded to, with someone we really care about. When my mother

passed over, I had no doubt that she built a bridge — I don’t know what other words to use — she built a bridge and she took some of me over with her, and she sent some of herself back.

I understand now at a deeper level what Jesus meant by “unless I go, the Spirit cannot come” (John 16.7). I think the normal pattern in history is for each generation to pass over, and to build the bridges of love and trust for the next generation coming afterwards. The all-important thing, for all of us, is that we be bonded somewhere. If you have never loved, there is no bridge...

When you walk through someone’s passion with them, through someone’s learning to let go, and pass over with them in a moment of death, I’m convinced it’s then and only then that you really are prepared to understand the resurrection... All Jesus came to teach us, and only needed to teach us, was how to walk through the great mystery, and not be put to shame and to trust that God is on the other side of it.

And God created ... and still does

The Pillars of Creation - James West Telescope 2022



The new view “will help researchers revamp their models of star formation by identifying far more precise counts of newly-formed stars, along with the quantities of gas and dust in the region,” NASA said in material accompanying the latest image. Bright red orbs appearing just outside of the pillars are infant stars, where enormous knots of gas and dust have collapsed under their own gravity and slowly

heated up, giving birth to new stellar bodies, according to NASA.

Wavy crimson lines that look like lava at the edge of some pillars are ejections of matter from stars still forming within the gas and dust and are estimated to be only a few hundred-thousand years old, the U.S. space agency said.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/nasa-pillars-creation-james-webb-telescope-1.6622683>

How do you light a candle?



Well that is pretty easy to answer: apply flame to the wick and voila! Light. But if the candles are on the altar in St. Luke's, for example, there is a whole other set of rules for lighting and extinguishing.

First, there are, generally, two candles on the altar. One is called the Gospel Candle – the candle on the left side when you are facing the altar. The other is the Epistle Candle – the one on the right side of the altar.

In case you need a handy reminder, the Gospel Candle is closest to the pulpit from where the Gospel is preached while the Epistle candle is closest to the lectern from where the Epistles and other parts of the bible, like the Old Testament, are read.

There is a rule that the Gospel candle is never 'left in the dark', that is, the only candle left to be extinguished, so candles are lit and extinguished in a particular order. First, the Epistle Candle on the right is lit, then the Gospel Candle on the left.

When the service is over the first candle to be extinguished is the Gospel candle while the Epistle is next. You can see using that order, the Gospel candle is never without another lighted candle.

There are two other candles, one on either side of the altar in stands, which can be carried. They are called "pavement candles". They are lit and extinguished after the altar candles. They are called pavement candles because they act like street lights, they light the way ahead of the Gospel book. When the Gospel procession comes with the processional cross down through the chancel and into the nave to proclaim the *Good News of the Gospel* among the people, those candles, carried by acolytes, light the way.

Just one last word: the Gospeler takes the Gospel book which has been on the altar and stops in front of the priest for a blessing, and then continues down the centre aisle.

COVID unfortunately disrupted that procession so now, purely to make the *Good News* heard, it is proclaimed from the lectern – with no pavement candles to light the way.

Altar candles are tall and thin and are generally made of beeswax and stearin. They are topped with a brass

or glass candle follower, which helps keep wax from spilling on the altar linens. All candles are lighted using a taper, which is a lighted wick attached to a long handle.

The whole pattern of lighting the candles, getting the Gospel book, processing to read it in the middle of the people, highlights the story of the *Light of the World* coming down among us, bringing the *Good News of God's love*.

In the sanctuary, there is one last light, a red light by the right side of the reredos. It is on, day and night, from Easter morning until the last service on Maundy Thursday. It guards the aumbry, a small 'cupboard' where the reserved sacrament is kept. (It is hiding behind the flowers on the right.) When there is some 'left over' bread and wine after a eucharist, it is stored in there. Called 'the reserved sacrament', it has been consecrated and reserved to be taken when visiting the sick and shut-in of the parish family.

There is one other candle in church – the Pascal candle. It is created for the Great Vigil of Easter on Holy Saturday. It is a large candle, decorated with the letter

AΩ

"A" for *Alpha, the beginning*, and "O" for *Omega, the end*. It is new every year. It can also have a cross with five nails, representing the five wounds of Christ and

followed by the current year, 2022, 2023, etc. It is kept at the entrance to the church in the baptistry, next to the font. This is lighted at baptisms and signifies the *Light of Christ* being given to the newly baptised as they are presented with a smaller baptismal candle. The candle is brought to stand at the front of the church, usually close to the lectern and kept lit throughout the services from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, after which it is returned to the font.



The other times you will see candles – a group of five of them – is during Advent. These are mounted on a wreath and the candles are lighted in turn, each Sunday of Advent. The candles represent *hope, love, joy* (the pink one), with the last of the purple candles

representing *peace*. The center white candle is the Christ candle, lighted on Christmas Eve.

Heaven is a great party

In this homily, Father Richard considers the parable of the wedding feast and points out how few of us seem even to desire to attend God's banquet. (Matthew 22.1–10).

God has always had a very hard time giving away God: No one seems to want this gift. We'd rather have religion, and laws, and commandments, and obligations, and duties. I'm sure many of us attend church out of duty, but gathering with the Body of Christ is supposed to be a wedding feast. Do you know how many times in the four Gospels eternal life is described as a banquet, a feast, a party, a wedding, the marriage feast of the Lamb? There are fifteen different, direct allusions to eternal life being a great, big party.

Do you know how many parables there are about eternal life being a courtroom or a judgment scene? One. Matthew 25. And that's good. We need Matthew 25 because it makes it very clear that the ultimate issue is about how we care for the poor and marginalized. But we forget this good news of Jesus, sending a message out to the highways and the byways, inviting everybody who's willing to come to the banquet. It's that simple!

Jesus goes out of his way to mention the good and the bad alike. We don't like that either. We only want the good people to be there at the banquet, assuming, of course, that we're the good people. Did you ever see the irony of that? Don't you realize that every religion thinks that they are the ones that God likes? And we end up gathering at the party with that smug certitude; but when we do, it resembles something that very often isn't much like a party. I don't want to offend anybody, but sometimes only half of us even sing when we're at church; half of us don't even pick up the hymnals. I'm not trying to be cruel, but let's just be honest and admit that many of us aren't excited to be at church. For many of us, the Body of Christ is not a party.

Instead, we often believe that heaven is a giant courtroom scene. The good people win, the bad people lose, and almost everybody is bad except our group. That won't work! It gives no joy and no hope to the world. It tells people they're on the right side when sometimes they're very unloving people who don't care about the poor or the marginalized at all. And the statistics prove that Christians are no better than anybody else, in fact, very often — I'm sorry to say it — we're worse.

Do we want to be a part of the wedding feast to which all are invited? The only people who don't get in on the party are those who don't want to come — so I guess we have to ask ourselves, "Do we want to come?"

Seed Thought -

**"It is not enough for the Christian
to conform their faith
to the doctrines of their religion
but they must conform their temper
to its spirit."**

– 16 November 1905

In This Place

Why go to church?

A church-goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. He wrote, "I've gone for 30 years now, and in that time I have heard something like 1500 sermons, but for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time; the preachers and priests are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column. Much to the delight of the editor, it went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals, but, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

(from a very old saved document. - Ed.)



Sharing God's grace

For author and historian Diana Butler Bass, gratitude begins with awareness of God's grace.

The words “gratitude” and “grace” come from the same root word, *gratia* in Latin. ... “Grace” is a theological word, one with profound spiritual meaning. Grace means “unmerited favour.” When I think of grace, I particularly like the image of God tossing gifts around — a sort of indiscriminate giver of sustenance, joy, love, and pleasure. Grace — gifts given without being earned and with no expectation of return — is, as the old hymn says, amazing. Because you can neither earn nor pay back the gift, your heart fills with gratitude. And the power of that emotion transforms the way you see the world and experience life. Grace begets gratitude, which, in turn, widens our hearts toward greater goodness and love.

Bass explores the liberating nature of gratitude.

Together grace and gratitude form a different moral “equation.” The standard model of gratitude is a closed cycle of gift and return bound by social obligation and indebtedness, whereby a “benefactor,” a superior of some sort (someone wealthier, more powerful), provides a benefit for another, a “beneficiary,” a person in a state of need or trouble. In the closed cycle, the beneficiary is dependent on the benefactor in a way that feels demeaning or signals indebtedness. ... Few want to be on the receiving end of an unequal transaction. ...

If we change a closed system to an open one, banishing transaction and substituting grace, the picture of gratitude shifts. In the closed cycle of debt and duty, the roles of benefactor and beneficiary are static, and gifts are commodities of exchange, based in transaction and control. ... But in an open cycle of gratitude, gifts are not commodities. Gifts are the nature of the universe itself, given by God or the natural order. Grace reminds us that every good thing is a gift — that somehow the rising of the sun and being alive are indiscriminate daily offerings to us — and then we understand that all benefactors are also beneficiaries and all beneficiaries can be benefactors. All that we have was gifted to all of us. There would be no benefactors if they were not first the recipients of grace. In other words, gifts come before givers. We do not really give gifts. We recognize gifts, we receive them, and we pass them on. We all rely on these gifts. We all share them.

This is not a fulfillment of duty or a single act of kindness, but an infinite process of awareness and responsive action. The gift structure of the universe is

that of an interdependent community of nature and neighbour that extends through the ages in which we care for what was handed to us and give gifts to others as a response. This is not a closed circle of exchange; it is more like the circles that ripple across a pond when pebbles are tossed into the water.

Diana Butler Bass, *Grateful: The Transformative*

Practice of Giving Thanks (New York: HarperOne, 2018), 19–20, 20–21. - Rohr: 11.21.22

Bethlehem, birthplace of a great King

Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route.

I invite you to read this in a spirit of thought and reflection. Compare two views: yours and ... the view in the article, especially in the penultimate paragraph. -Ed.

Bethlehem lies ten kilometres south of the city of Jerusalem, in the fertile limestone hill country of the Holy Land. Since at least the second century AD, people have believed that the place where the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, now stands is where Jesus was born. One particular cave, over which the first church was built, is traditionally believed to be the birthplace



itself. In locating the nativity, the place both marks the beginnings of Christianity and is one of the holiest spots in Christendom. The original basilica church of 339 AD (St. Helena), parts of which survive below ground, was

arranged so that its octagonal eastern end surrounded, and provided a view of, the cave. This church is overlaid by the present Church of the Nativity, essentially of the mid-6th century AD (Justinian), though with later alterations. It is the oldest Christian church in daily use. Since early medieval times the church has been increasingly incorporated into a complex of other ecclesiastical buildings, mainly monastic. As a result, today it is embedded in an extraordinary architectural ensemble, overseen by members of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Church, under the provisions of the *Status Quo of the Holy Places* established by the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

During various periods over the past 1700 years, Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity have been,

and still are, a pilgrim destination. The eastern end of the traditional route from Jerusalem to the church, known as the *pilgrimage route*, marks the road that connects the traditional entrance of Bethlehem, near King David's Wells, with the Church of the Nativity, and extends along the Star Street through the Damascus Gate, or *Qos Al-Zarara*, the historical gate of the town, towards the Manger Square. The route continues to be celebrated as the path followed by Joseph and Mary during their trip in Bethlehem during Christmas ceremonies each year, and is followed ceremonially by patriarchs of the three churches at their several Christmases, and during their official visits to Bethlehem.

The outstanding universal value of the Church of the Nativity and the *pilgrimage route*, Bethlehem, lies in its association with the birthplace of the founder of a great religion, which for believers saw the Son of God made man in Bethlehem, and for the way the fabric of the Church of the Nativity and its associations have combined to reflect the extraordinary influence of Christianity in spiritual and political terms over 1500 years.

- Google

Hunting magic eels

Recovering an Enchanted Faith in a Sceptical Age - Richard Beck



“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to

them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Why am I going into all this? Well, during this Advent season we are exposed to many portrayals of the shepherds in Luke 2 as they keep watch over their flocks at night. And these images often look like Hallmark cards. It's sweet and idyllic. Peaceable.

Well, there was a reason these guys were up at night watching their flocks. They are examples of a herding culture. The point being, these shepherds were pretty tough, even violent, men. They aren't into sheep because they are sweet looking props for our nativity sets. When you see those sheep you should see dollar signs, stock portfolios, walking retirement plans. That's why the shepherds were up at night. If I put your paycheque, in ten dollar bill increments, in a pile in your front yard, I bet you'd be up at night keeping a watch on your flock. Gun in hand.

The point in all this is that these shepherds were likely rough and violent men. They had to be. So it's a bit shocking and strange to find the angels appearing to these men, of all people. Thugs might be standing around in our nativity sets. That scene around the manger might be a bit more scandalous than we had imagined.

But here's the truly amazing part of the story. The angels proclaim to these violent men a message of “peace on earth.” And, upon hearing this message, the shepherds leave their flocks and go searching for the baby!

Can you now see how shocking that behaviour is? This is something you don't do in a herding culture.

Now think about how all this might apply to us. For most of our lives we stand around protecting what is ours. Our neighbourhoods, borders, homes, income, jobs, status, reputation. And on and on and on. We're like those shepherds, keeping watch over our flocks, even at night. We're tensed, suspicious, watchful, and ready to pounce. And all this makes us violent people, in small ways and large. That's the ethic of this world. It's a herding ethic. Protect what is yours because someone is coming to take it from you. It's a culture of honour. And violence.

And so the angels come to us and proclaim “peace on earth and good will to men.” But how is that going to happen? Well, the story in Luke 2 shows us the way: We follow the example of the shepherds. We leave our flocks and our lifestyles of violent vigilance...and go in search of the baby.

Hunting Magic Eels. Recovering an Enchanted Faith in a Sceptical Age. - Richard Beck (Google)



Diocese of Rupert's Land 118th Session of Synod 14 and 15 October 2022



Synod opened with a joyful Eucharist on Friday evening, 14 October at St. John's Cathedral. Bishop Geoff set out his charge for the synod. He then awarded the Order of Rupert's Land to Ruth Booth, George Campbell, Marilyn Kenny, Karen Watson, and Bob Wedlake for their many

gifts and dedicated service.

At the invitation of Bishop Geoff, synod was graced with the presence of Primate Linda Nicholls.

Synod met in session at Canad Inns, Polo Park on Saturday, 15 October. As the viral illness COVID-19 is still an issue in the community, masks were required.

Prior to entering the building, a smudging ceremony was offered to delegates by an Indigenous elder. This was a powerful and moving experience to ready our thoughts and open our hearts for synod.

Once delegates were settled inside at tables, a short period of worship was led by clergy. A land

acknowledgment followed, led by one of the two Indigenous elders who participated.

In the interest of space, links taken from the Diocese of Rupert's Land website provide detailed information on the resolutions that were passed: <https://www.rupertsland.ca/synod/synod-2022>.

Resolutions arising from the Bishop's charge. To cultivate further commitment to discipleship in these challenging times.

Letter re Changing Name of Province. Synod received a letter from the Provincial Executive Council regarding a name change. The letter pointed out that the name of the Province of Rupert's Land is from the time of settlement and should be changed. Several names were put forth as possibilities, but ultimately it will be those who attend Provincial Synod who will decide.

Synod received the Treasurer's report. A deficit budget was passed with minimal comment, although there was further discussion about the budget throughout the rest of the day.

Additional resolutions. A diocesan committee on dismantling black racism presented three resolutions. The first two asked for a critical examination of the diversity, representation, participation, and leadership of diocesan level governance and decision-making bodies, and that the result be shared during *Faith Horizons 2023*. Both of these were accepted with some discussion. The third resolution, which included procedures to include all marginalized persons, raised a cry that Indigenous people did not need non-Indigenous people making decisions for them. The wording was really unclear who was being represented in the resolution, so after many word changes the resolution was passed, with a charge to return to Synod 2024.

A resolution was passed that a parochial sponsor be appointed by a parish for each newly-baptized person. The sponsor's principal role is to maintain contact with the newly-baptized and ensure that the parish is living up to its commitment to "do all in [its] power to support this person in their life in Christ." The delegates'

**"Two of the most important
days of your life:
the day you were born
and the day you find out why."**

– Mark Twain

consensus was that too often the godparents who are to provide this support are not themselves churched, or connected to a faith community.

Further resolutions regarding “Developing Discipleship”, “Examining Stewardship”, and requesting the “Bishop as Model of Discipleship” were put forward and passed.

We had a report from the Diocesan Urban Indigenous Ministry Developer about his work. What an able and caring person Rev. Vincent Solomon is! How much energy he has put into the parishes of Epiphany and St. Philip’s, Scantebury and how lucky they are to have such a priest in their midst.

When the Primate spoke at the end of the day, she identified the absolute joy present during the worship service held by the bishop to open synod. She noted how this energy and joy had continued throughout the following day.

In conclusion, the Parish of St. Luke’s delegates found the diocesan synod experience uplifting – reaffirming with the many other people of our Anglican faith how we can do God’s work together.

Clergy Delegates – The Ven. Paul Lampman,
The Rev. Deacon Susan Roe-Finlay
Lay Delegates – Ronda Pfeiffer, Ted Rennie,
Anne Rennie

The front porch



On the first day, God created the dog and said: “Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this I will give you a life span of twenty years.”

“That’s a long time to be barking. How about only ten years, and I’ll give you back the other ten?”

And God saw that it was good.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said, “Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I’ll give you a twenty-year life span.”

The monkey said, “Monkey tricks for twenty years? That’s a pretty long time to perform. How about I give



you back ten like the dog did?”

And God again said that it was good.

On the third day, God created the cow and said, “You must go into

the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer’s family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years.”



The cow said “That’s kind of hard to want me to live for sixty years. How about twenty and I’ll give back the other forty?”

And God agreed it was good.

On the fourth day, God created humans and said, “Eat, sleep, play, marry, and enjoy your life. For this, I’ll give you twenty years.”

But the human said, “Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me twenty plus, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?”

“Okay,” said God, “You asked for it.”

So that is why for our first twenty years, we eat, sleep, play, and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years, we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years, we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years, we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.

Now life has been explained to you there is no need to thank me for this information I’m doing it as a public service. If you’re looking for me, I will be on the front porch.

Thank you Bertha - Ed.

**“Yearning for a new way will not produce it.
Only ending the old way can do that.
You cannot hold onto the old, all the while
declaring that you want something new.
The old will decry the new.
There is only one way to bring in the new.
You must make room for it.”**

- Neale Donald Walsch

Haiti Report - December 2022

We sent a US cheque to GLA Canada in July to support the education of four students. A copy of the information was sent to GLA Haiti. We have been supporting four students for a few years and we are keen to learn of their progress.

I have been in communication with Trey Starnes the Executive Director of God's Littlest Angels in Haiti. Even though Canada and the USA have pledged support and troops for Haiti, there has been very little change. Trey asks for prayers from the parishioners of St. Luke's for Haiti and the Haitian people. I have to be careful with his letter as he mentions some places and situations in Haiti which I have removed.

"Thank you for keeping your church aware and for checking in regularly. I wish I could say that breaking and entering and rape are new occurrences - this has been the norm for the last year. The severity varies by region/province/state. Violence is particularly bad in areas where there is fuel, food, and other valuable resources and supplies. Thankfully, that is the other direction from GLA - although we've been working to provide any aid we can to that region - so far, it has been logistically impossible. GLA is still managing very well considering the circumstances - it is a constant drain on staff and security to be on high alert and to live in this situation. We've been able to move some of our staff onsite, but that is not feasible for everyone.

The rumors of international intervention are basically that at this point. No country wants to commit to the hornet's nest that Haiti has always been - the corruption and gang ties to the wealthy elites and political leaders run so deep that an "emergency response" will likely mean a long-term deployment. Sadly, while the world plays politics and the UN does little more than talk, Haitians are dying due to a lack of necessities, medical issues, and increasing gang violence. Should things continue this way, I don't see how many valuable economic and strategic regions will not be fully gang-controlled by the spring of next year.

Sorry again for the negative news, but I am afraid that most Haitians have given up hope, and many of my employees tell me if they could leave, they would. I am quite afraid for Haiti's future, I am not sure where she goes from here with a group of people who no longer hope for a better Haiti.

The MO of the day is to survive ... not to grow and thrive; it is heartbreaking.

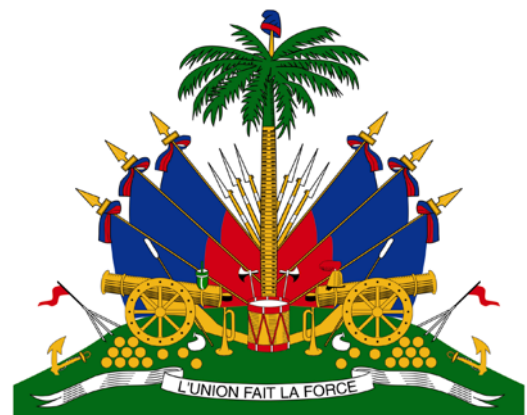
Please note that I have included some confidential information here that CANNOT make it into the larger public circles. Names of places, etc., need to be guarded carefully as it could expose and endanger individuals in the country.

All schools are closed in Haiti as the gangs attacked students leaving schools for home. They do not know when they will reopen. A priority for GLA is completion of a new home in the orphanage. It is recommended that the money which has been sent be applied to this project as it's not possible to fund education projects at this time. In the future, GLA is hoping to establish its own school for the older students in its care."

We hope to continue supporting God's Littlest Angels and if we have the funds we will send money in July next year. Please keep Haiti and our Haitian friends in your prayers.

Best Wishes for a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

- Colin and Elizabeth Briggs



Christmas Tales

Any time we want to have a perfect occasion, 'gremlins' of one kind or another manage to creep in.

According to St. Luke's Gospel there was a census which required people to trek to the town of their birth. Not too easy for Mary and Joseph since that, according to Google, it meant 90 miles over four days, at 2.5 mph, on a donkey, with Mary in the last days of pregnancy. Then when they finally got into Bethlehem it was full of other weary census travellers. Now, by car 150.6 km takes 1 hr, 44 min. via Yitzhak Rabin Hwy - Route 6, though doubtless, it would still be packed with pilgrims at Christmas time ... but the careful traveller would have booked ahead.

Having in mind that, try as we may, things will not be perfect, here are a few reminiscences, some of perfection, others not ... but all making fond memories.
- Ed.

A collection of Christmas memories

No smoking ... almost

Mr. W. was a wealthy man who lived on Wellington Crescent and was in the wholesale grocery business. One Christmas evening after dinner he was about to offer cigars to his male guests when he discovered his supply had run out. He went to his office in the exchange district to get some from his desk. While doing so he somehow set off a burglar alarm. The police soon arrived and he had some trouble convincing them that he had a right to be there but was soon on his way home with a full box of cigars

His daughter, who was very hard of hearing, was tidying up later. She saw the cigar box on the table, assumed it was empty as that was the last she had heard, and threw it into the fireplace, cigars and all!

Not my experience but true, told to me over 60 years ago by the daughter of the man involved. - B. Fisher

Potatoes, mince tarts ... and boots

Back in the nineties my husband grew a huge vegetable garden every summer which provided us with produce until the following March. One Christmas afternoon



I got a frantic call from my sister-in-law, asking if we could spare 15 potatoes. She was preparing a big dinner and couldn't find the potatoes she thought she had bought. I said we could easily bail her out. My brother soon arrived to get the potatoes



and presented us with a dozen mince tarts as a thank you. I think we came out on top of that deal!

Christmas of 1961, daughter Mary had just turned two and I was expecting Martha. For the first and only time, I was allergic to the Christmas tree, which resulted in my sneezing, coughing, etc. in church and I fainted. I quickly came to and was okay, but some kind soul who had witnessed my distress offered to retrieve Mary from the nursery.



When they arrived upstairs I noticed that Mary was wearing boots that were not hers. My husband took the boots back to the nursery and explained to the mother of the owner of the boots that it had been a mistake and we were not trying to steal a pair of boots! Someone said: "Tell Barbara I would not have thought it of her!"

Angels and Cherubs in a pageant

The Sunday School superintendent called to ask if Mary could be in the pageant that evening. I told her not to expect too much and agreed to bring her to the rehearsal that afternoon.



All the cherubs were fitted with wings and halos and instructed on their part. Well, when the big evening arrived and the lights went on, all the cherubs were standing with their arms out, but Mary was sitting on the chancel steps with her halo around her ankle! She then decided to explore the Christmas tree in the chancel, whereupon an older girl, who was also our babysitter, went to stop her and I heard Mary chirp out: "Don't touch things!" which she had heard me say dozens of times. Everyone was laughing – but I was very embarrassed. -B.F.

Nerves in the chancel

Michael, our youngest, did not want to be an angel, but foolishly was told to “join in with the rest of the angels” ... with disastrous consequences for the wings of the angel in front of him. Ah, stage nerves. -S.W.

Memories of Christmas

When I was growing up, Christmas was a special time in our house. When my mother was preparing the Christmas dinner, we listened to *A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Dylan Thomas and Stuart McLean's *Dave cooks the Christmas turkey*. Mum never forgot the Queen's speech. My father, meanwhile, would be polishing the silver; I would be laying the table and her granddaughter was given the job of stringing the cranberries to make a necklace for the turkey.

My mother and father are British and food played an important role, so there were many courses. A hot soup to start or if mum was feeling adventurous, an antipasto platter followed by turkey, roast potatoes, parsnips, and Brussels sprouts with mashed turnips and carrots with lots of gravy. Then mum would always tell my dad: “Don't forget there are two types of stuffing in the bird, one at either end.”

I always had one complaint though – that our friends, Mrs. Trott, or Felicity, always had bacon curls with her turkey, and we didn't.

The main meal was followed by mince pies, trifle, and Christmas pudding with Brandy butter. My mother would put a piece of holly on the top then pour warm brandy over the pudding, and light it with a match. We would marvel at the blue flame. After all the deserts there would be home-made oatcakes, Stilton cheese, and walnuts. We always had Christmas crackers and we had to wear the paper hats and read the jokes from the crackers, out loud. (groan)

What wonderful memories. - Sara

A Happy New Year ... Hike?

This is a story about a New Year celebration ... in Venezuela. Three couples got together and signed up for a New Year's Eve dinner at a hotel in Puerto la Cruz, about an hour's ride away from where we were staying. We all travelled our own route there. In other words, we declined to go by our hotel “bus”, thereby missing valuable information.

The evening was warm and beautiful, the dinner was superb and we enjoyed the Venezuelan salute to the New Year. Everyone was given twelve plump grapes and at each stroke of Midnight, we ate a grape and made a wish.

By 1:00am we were ready to call it a New Year and went to get a ride back to our own hotel.

“Where is the Bus to take us back to our hotel”?

The concierge at our ‘dining’ hotel: “Oh señor, no travel arrangements returning to your hotel have been made.”

No problem – a couple of taxis then? “Oh, no, señor, not on New Year's Night, all the drivers are with their families, celebrating the New Year.” Ahh. A breakdown in communication ... and arrangements.

Have I mentioned that we were about an hours' ride from where we staying?

The main road home was so deserted that we set off walking down the centre of it, prepared to hijack anyone with wheels, and not celebrating with their family. And so, when a lone vehicle's headlights appeared, that was just what we did – spread out and blocked the road: pedestrian hi-jackers. Maybe not legal or sporting, but ... hey! As luck/providence would have it, it was a taxi. The driver did protest that he really was on his way home to celebrate the New Year with his family. But we outnumbered him and we were desperate and had powerful weapons: bolivars - lots. The power of the universal language – money.

The six of us piled/squashed into the taxi and rode back to our hotel. And yes, the driver was rewarded with many bolivars, so his family was well blessed to start the New Year, if somewhat delayed. Had we gone by our hotel's bus, we would have learned that the pick up time was to be 2:00 am. A happy New Year memory, thirty-eight years ago. - S.W.



From the Rupert's Land News, Gifts: December 2022

A Sponsorship Connection for Advent: A Family in Venezuela

The Rev. Gwen McAllister discusses her long-term, cross-continent friendship with Henry Gómez, and outlines ways our diocese can contribute to the well-being of Henry and his family. This article is supplemented by a piece from Henry Gómez about the present economic situation in Venezuela.

Venezuela is currently being subjected to a set of sanctions and an economic-financial blockade imposed by the government of the United States and others. These actions have impacted the conditions and quality of life of the Venezuelan population. Many of the achievements made in previous years in terms of access to health, food, education, housing, decent work and poverty reduction have been harmed.

A biblical-theological look: The Israelite People, the biblical people of Israel, in their long history of salvation/liberation were subdued and besieged by the empires of their time. The possibility of being a different society, focused on the protection of the defenceless, the orphan, widows, the elderly, the foreigner, and the right to rest on the land, lived in a perennial threat from external and internal powers. The prophet Isaiah rightly denounces both situations. In the first place, he denounces the internal powers that deviate from the liberating project of God and which commit acts of injustice against the weak, the poor, the widows and the orphans (Isaiah 10.1–2).

Secondly, he denounces and highlights the imperial mentality of his time represented by the King of Assyria, characterized by arrogance.

Venezuela, like the besieged and blockaded people of Judah, is threatened and attacked by imperial powers that use strategies similar to those used by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib, who, through a high official, warns the besieged and blockaded people of Judah that they will have to eat their own dung and their own urine (Isaiah 36.12). The entirety of chapter 36 of the book of the prophet Isaiah reveals a speech of imperial domination; it is a speech that seeks to sow fear, terror, division, and distrust in the people of Judah. This is especially seen in verses 16 and 17 in which the empire makes use of a deceitful offer: “Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: Make your

peace with me and come out to me; then every one of you will eat from your own vine and your own fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.”

Centuries later it is worth asking who is King Sennacherib today? Who is a high official? And who are the people of Judah today? What are the strategies of submission and conquest that are used to subdue people? Our communities in Venezuela continue to have hope. Many dream of seeing a new heaven and a new earth, many walk day-by-day towards a dawn of justice.

The project of the Kingdom of God, the history of the salvation project, is this: the constant struggle for a world of justice in favour of the oppressed, the underprivileged, the widow, the orphan, the disabled, the poor, the people who belong to the LGBT community. We have hope in our small project of liberation and justice that is built day-by-day here against systems of injustice.

Henry Gomez is a member of *Iglesia Evangelica Pentecostal Jesucristo Liberador* (Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ the Liberator) in Barquisimeto, Lara.



Looking forward to 2023 Seed Thought

“Sad will be the day for any man when he becomes absolutely contented with the life he is living, with the thoughts he is thinking, and with the deeds he is doing - when there is not for ever beating at the doors of his soul some great desire to do something larger”

**- In This Place
22 May 1904**

Christmas Services

Weekly and special online services are available on Facebook and YouTube by typing:
“The Parish Church of St. Luke, Winnipeg” in the respective search fields.

In-Person Services

Advent IV - Sunday, 18 December

8:15 - HOLY EUCHARIST, 10:30 - SUNG EUCHARIST

4:00pm - FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Christmas Eve, Saturday, 24 December

6:30pm - EUCHARIST WITH CAROLS

10:30pm - CHORAL EUCHARIST

Christmas Day, Sunday, 25 December

10:30 am - EUCHARIST WITH CAROLS

The Naming of Jesus - Sunday, 1 January 2023

10:30 am - HOLY EUCHARIST

*We wish you a blessed Advent
and a Happy Christmas and New Year.*



“Yearning for a new way will not produce it.
Only ending the old way can do that.
You cannot hold onto the old, all the while
declaring that you want something new.
The old will decry the new.
There is only one way to bring in the new.
You must make room for it.”

– Neale Donald Walsch



The next **Winged Ox**
will be the
Lent / Easter edition.
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The Winged Ox

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