

# Our Adventure

Issue 33

Newsletter of Church of the Advent  
(Anglican)

December 2005

Reverend Kenneth Gray, Rector

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## GET THE HEART READY

### The Essential Advent Season

At Christmastime familiar symbols surround us. Joseph and Mary, the infant Jesus, the Holy Family together, angels, animals, stars and beams of light, shepherds and animals in a manger.

At Epiphany we add the sagas of kings exotically named magi. Then come devious characters like Herod. These are still far off however as the four-week season of Advent has a whole set of its own characters, images and symbols.

“The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mark 1)

In Advent we meet John the Baptist. John represents the apotheosis of the Hebrew prophetic tradition. He says hard things in hard times to people who have been treated harshly. He does so in a harsh environment. In our day he would be called a “street-involved person” or be viewed in the guise of some sort of social misfit. Yet Jesus came to him for his own Baptism.

**Continued on Page Two**

### Inside This Issue

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Bears Bring Comfort                            | p. 4      |
| Liturgical Fibre Arts/Enneagram                | p. 6      |
| Pilgrimage 2005                                | p. 8      |
| Readings & Prayers for Advent                  | p. 9      |
| Jazz Vespers                                   | p.12      |
| Widows & Widowers pack it up                   | p.13      |
| Caroling/Nursery/Annual Meeting                | p.14      |
| Kairos/Seasonal Preps/Legend/<br>Quotes/Humour | from p.15 |

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## Our Adventure

John stands on the threshold of the Messianic age. He embodies hope and judgment together. Around him gathered a strange sort of fringe community. John embodies the traditions and passions of Isaiah before him. He criticizes that which Jesus would later condemn. His life travels the path that Jesus would later follow.

In Advent we meet Mary. Mary's response to God's coming is no less daring but has been treated historically quite differently. As a mother with child she is viewed as thoughtful, though passive. Truthfully she is caught in a bad spot, cornered by social convention and the well-meant intentions of a tacit partner. She could run away but chooses to stay and face her future. Her YES to God allows the cosmic divine drama to unfold. Her story begins with the annunciation celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Advent. It continues through to the cross and is perpetuated through the traditions of the early church even into the present day.

Some have taken Mary's resilient attitude and applied it to the entire Advent season. To be pregnant is to wait. Sometimes described as the feminine season of the year, we are invited to consider a spirituality of waiting through our experience of contemporary life in a secular culture which exhibits little tolerance for any delay of gratification. If a mother has special insight into new growth and physiological change, Advent helps us accept, understand, tolerate, and even welcome change and challenge in obligations and circumstances of life. Advent teaches us to wait!

Advent further invites us to welcome that which is simply inexplicable, especially with respect to the emerging unity between heaven and earth. Advent calls out to us, to make room for mystery and awe, for beauty, and especially for the pursuit of justice. Advent teaches us about life and love in the context of past, present and future. The quintessential Advent image is that of Jesus and the beginning and the end, the ALPHA and the OMEGA.

If you have trouble putting "beginning" and "ending" together" try combining other images of Advent that demonstrate a paradoxical reconciliation of opposites. A partial list includes ...

- Sin and restoration
- Light and dark
- Lion and Lamb
- Heaven and earth
- Spirit and matter
- Exile and freedom
- Time and eternity
- Possible and impossible

## Our Adventure

to each of these, recited slowly, add the words “nothing is impossible with God” and you have an Advent canticle.

While in exile, and while trying to understand the reasons for the destruction of their once proud nation, the people of ancient Israel now living in exile discover that God’s goodness remains steadfast. They thought their calamity was caused by ritual sin. Their position is arguable and quite likely incorrect. Nevertheless they come to an understanding, through Isaiah, that having received double comeuppance, they were delivered from the consequences of their sin. They remain within the scope of God’s favour despite their apostasy. Jesus will have more to say on this.

So what to do in the meantime? They, and we, must keep awake. Such waiting is not passive but an active yearning for and expectation of God’s presence in our life, environment and culture. God is a God of history. Remember, Christ has died; Christ has risen; Christ will come again.

In Advent, and certainly in the global northern hemisphere, nature and mystery combine in a powerful union. As we see less and less of the winter sun we long for its return. Likewise we long for God’s return and invite God’s further intrusion into our lives. Waiting is O K; it is part of a natural cycle. In the midst of waiting we prepare, not just the “stuff” of the season. We prepare ourselves for the Incarnation of Christ in our midst.

Sure we get our homes ready for Christmas. Likewise lets get our hearts ready.

Gertrud Mueller Nelson writes that in Advent we “are given the forms and formulas to make whole every human experience.” From our part, every experience is incomplete without God’s presence. From God’s part there is always something to impart to every human experience. This is why God came in the person of Jesus Christ. God is with us. To remain absent would leave us impoverished.

But lets not rush the story. You don’t take the cake out of the oven until the ingredients are properly cooked. A lack of patience will produce a lack of taste or texture. Christmas will come and soon enough. Lets savor the ingredients of Advent, John, Mary, deliverance from sin, the coming together of opposites . . . and prepare our hearts for God’s refreshing and encouraging presence. Amen. ■

Ken Gray

## Season’s Greetings



To those who have read this far, we send you and yours the blessings of the season. May “*that Peace which passes all understanding ...*” warm your hearts and keep you safe until our **issue next spring**. By then you’ll no doubt be out smelling blossoms and telling your Eastern friends how difficult it is living in paradise. ■

## Our Adventure

# Bears Bring Comfort through Local Micro-Project



Since 1998 approximately one hundred men and women, mostly located in the Western Communities, have produced over 26,500 bears for children in over 50 countries around the world.

It's worth pausing for a moment to consider this momentous statistic. Biblical miracles employ equally large numbers. Four thousand or five thousand men, women and children were fed from loaves and fishes, with twelve baskets left afterward. Bears and Bags is a miracle of compassion happening right here in our back yard, facilitated by men and women for children. 26,500 bears have been produced in eight years through the industry of around one hundred men and women scattered throughout Canada. Amazing!

Articles in both church and secular media over the years note the inspiration of founder Melody McQuitty who got the ball rolling in partnership with Christian Blind Mission International to distribute emblems of hope and love to children in need. In recent years it has been Sylvia Hatfield who has carried the torch for youth in need. As she ponders the identity of her own successor she knows the challenge ahead.

Who alone can coordinate a large team of volunteers who can work to a production schedule, maintain a network of contacts, and can get the job done without the incentive of profit and motivated by a self-giving love? It's a tall task.

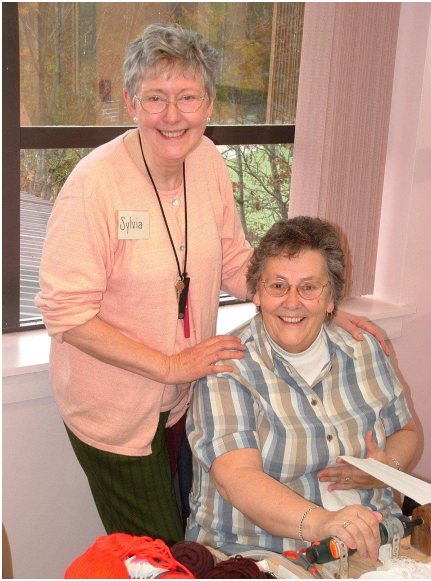


Joined by her husband Don, Sylvia gathers with members of the church of the Advent, folks from other local churches and some with no church connection at all. They all see a need and want to respond.

The morning I visited a dozen or so volunteers worked busily at cutting and sorting fabric for assembly. The project of the day was bears for Pakistan,

## Our Adventure

especially for the northern emergency camps where stories of children facing amputation without anesthesia stretched the realm of reality.



Busy volunteers serged and sewed bright coloured fabric. Some wrapped medical bandages. Others sorted and sized and secured decorative elements to each product. Still more placed Canadian flags in highly visible places on each item going out from this factory dubbed by some as “Sylvia’s Sweatshop.”

The stuffed bears are carefully assembled and finished as if each one was destined for a relative. These however go to strangers. The attention to detail is impressive. They are designed with the special needs of recipients in mind. For victims of landmines care to is given to the strings that bind the bag carrying the bear. Where only one hand is available, special design is required. Where the recipient is blind the face must be tactile and the fabric varied to the touch. For those who can see facial expressions must be encouraging, happy and full of love.

In the short span of eight years Canada Comforts (first called Bears and Bags) has switched distribution away from CBMI and now utilizes the Compassionate Warehouse in Victoria, a special ministry associated with the Church of the Nazarene. With other non-profit organizations, they are able to package and transport the bears to organizations in afflicted regions of the world. This eliminates the possibility of black-market abuse, theft or destruction of these specially crafted items.

Destinations over the years have included Afghanistan, Uganda, Philippines, Guatemala, China, former Soviet bloc countries and El Salvador.

Bears and Bags is a classic example of a Microproject. Micro-projects are designed with the idea that “Many hands make light work.” Instead of trying to find a few volunteers to take on a major project, the project is broken into the smallest possible components and shared amongst the greatest number of people by accessing individual skills, talents, time, and resources (Eda Birch).

Further analysis of this project demonstrates that while committees are a necessary part of any democratic process,



## Our Adventure

most projects flourish where one clearly identifiable leader articulates respectfully what is to be done. Volunteers thrive and remain motivated when they experience satisfaction, especially through a faith perspective. They also like to have a good time but will work hard when required. Prayer and financial commitment undergird such activity. Finally, the ability to change gears and respond to emerging situations, disasters, and new social realities assures a project's longevity.

A final note. I picked up a colourful toque. I noticed the careful stitching, assembled and finished with love. I would have been proud to give it to my own children when younger. It was for an AIDS baby. I knew where the clothing had come from. I knew where it was destined. I knew why it was made. I felt good. Something was working out in the midst of global tragedy. People working together can and do make a difference. Thanks be to God. ■

Submitted by Ken Gray

## Liturgical Fibre Arts Group

We are a new group of **creativity** at Church of the Advent! We started meeting in September, with the intent of creating fabric "works of art" for display in our church, in the form of banners for the walls, frontals for the altar, garments for the priest or small banners for those being baptized at Church of the Advent. We are also exploring making either layettes or quilts as outreach gifts to individuals in the community. Alas, we have discovered we have too many ideas and not enough time!! (the cry from most people who enjoy crafts!). We meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues at 7:00 pm in the room behind the kitchen, (next meeting is Dec. 6). Please join us if this group sounds intriguing to you! For more information, contact Kathie Gray 391-7546.

PS. Keep your eye out for the new blue Advent Altar Frontal and lecturn hanging designed and constructed by Margaret Mitchell. These pieces will be in use for the 4 weeks of Advent. ■

Submitted by Kathie Gray

Add your name to the 20 already signed up for ...

## **A Brief Introduction to the ENNEAGRAM**

**Barbara Baillie Facilitator**

**NEW DATES FOR 2006**

**Friday Evening, Jan 20<sup>th</sup> - Saturday Jan 21<sup>st</sup>**

# Our Adventure

## What is the Enneagram?

The Enneagram symbol is a nine-pointed, star-like figure. The nine lines comprise a perfect triangle and a twisted hexagon contained within a circle. There is intrinsic meaning in the relationship between the parts of the figure and the whole. It forms the basis for an exploration of human evolution, including the evolution of consciousness and self-development. It claims Sufi (Muslim) roots, has become widespread in Christian spiritual direction, and has proven to be useful for anyone who desires more insight into their own and others' personalities.

## How does the Enneagram relate to personality and life?

The Enneagram offers deep insight into the motivations that lie behind the things we do, motivations that control us but of which we may not even be consciously aware. The value of the Enneagram is in raising our awareness of these motivations, thereby providing an important key to spiritual self-knowledge and personal growth.

## How does the Enneagram relate to my family of origin?

Because pain and suffering are a part of life, we develop coping strategies to deal with these things by a very young age. The difficulties of our childhood lives and the strategies we adopted to deal with them are the building blocks of our adult personalities.

## Who would benefit from such a workshop?

Essentially everyone over the age of 25, but especially:

- couples seeking relationship enrichment
- Teachers, health care professionals, social service providers, parents
- people who are curious about personal behaviours, "why do we do the things we do?"

## Where and when:

Friday Evening, Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 7-9 p.m.

AND

Saturday Jan 21<sup>st</sup> 10 a.m. till 4 p.m.

You must attend both sessions for an effective participation

**Cost:** \$15 a head, \$25 a couple

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH

PRE-REGISTER BY CALLING 474-3031 ■

## Our Adventure

# Pilgrimage 2005

A simple dictionary definition of pilgrimage is “a spiritual journey”. Our Rector further refined this as: a journey to a sacred place or shrine, or a long search or journey, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. It does differ from the usual weekend at the cottage or tourist trip (such as “doing” Europe or Indonesia). Christians have undertaken pilgrimages for thousands of years, often at great physical and monetary cost.

This fall, five modern pilgrims joined us in our chapel for a Wednesday evening service of worship in the Celtic style and shared their journeys with us. These were evenings well spent – interesting and rewarding. Speakers were:

Our Rector, Ken Gray – showed photographs of his trip to Australia and spoke of the environmental conference there and of his hopes for the November UN climate change conference in Montreal. Ken outlined the current state of the environment, past Judeo/Christian attitudes towards it, and what is required of us now.

The Reverend Jim Holland - a former RC Priest in the U.S.A., told us of his leaving the church, his marriage, a move to Canada, his spiritual struggle, and of finding a new home in the Anglican family. Jim, who was recently ordained in our Diocese, said his wife supported him on this journey.

Captain Ian Gibbs and Mrs. Karen Hogg, Diocesan Companion Diocese Program Coordinator, a fellow pilgrim - told us about their visit to our sister Diocese of Myanmar (formerly called Burma), a tiny band of Christians who struggle in a Buddhist land under a fairly brutal dictatorship. They showed us photographs and told of the joy expressed by these Christians in just knowing that someone was aware of their struggle and cared enough to visit. This November, this same couple and our Bishop returned to Myanmar to be with these Christians, reportedly amid further turmoil.

There are traditional and legendary Christian pilgrimages. One of these is the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella, a well-worn trail across Europe to the coast of Spain. Mr. Peter Ambery told us of planning a solitary, meditative journey on this trail and then deciding to share the adventure with his wife, children, brother and sister-in-law. They walked from Lyon to Santiago, and he regretted including his blistered kith and kin who slowed his journey and intruded on his thoughts. In the end, he achieved discovery and fulfillment in an unexpected way – relating to loved ones around him! His family was with him at his presentation and seemed to find him as interesting and entertaining as the rest of us.

## **Our Adventure**

Canon Herbert O'Driscoll, noted author and lecturer, was the final pilgrim of this series. He spoke, not only of St. Columba and the mission at Iona, Scotland, but also of the historical journey of our church through time, the individuals and groups which have nourished and influenced it, and the spiritual pilgrimage on which each of us as Christians have embarked. Canon O'Driscoll left us with the lovely "Night Prayer" from the revised New Zealand Prayer Book (1989). It is included here at the request of Mrs. Moore:

**Lord, it is night.  
The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.**

**It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
what has not been done has not been done;  
let it be.**

**The night is dark.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
all dear to us, and those who have no peace.**

**The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
new joys, new possibilities.**

**In your name we pray.  
Amen ■**

**Submitted by John MacDowell**

## **Readings and Prayers for Advent**

The following are prepared by the Rev. Bass Michael Mitchell and are used with permission.

You will find a Bible reading and prayer for each day of Advent. You are encouraged to use these each day. A good time for this is early in the day for many, and others like to do this at meal time. If you have children, involve them in the reading of the Scriptures and leading the prayer.

### **Grace at Meals**

Loving God, we ask you to be with us in a special way during this Advent season. Help us to be patient with each other as well as patient for the feast of your birth to come. Help us to prepare our hearts, as well as our homes, gifts, and

## Our Adventure

decorations, for your coming. Thank you for this meal, and please bless all those who are hungry today. Amen.

December 11

Matthew 23:13-26

Dear Jesus, we know that you can give us eyes to see the signs of your presence in the world, and we pray for this. But we also pray for faith in you for those times when we will not be able to see, to understand or to feel your presence in our lives. Grant us the courage to persevere and to hope in things unseen. Amen.

December 12

Matthew 23:27-39

Lord God, you sent Jesus to be a sign of your unlimited and unbroken love. May this Advent season help us to accept just our own weaknesses and failings, but the faith, hope and love you are constantly offering us. Amen.

December 13

Matthew 24:1-14

Good and gracious God, you know how much fills our minds and hearts these days. Help us to pay attention to your presence in our lives. Help us to look for and find opportunities this Advent to become more aware of how you touch our lives each day. May we become evermore a sign of your love in the world. Amen.

December 14

3rd Sunday in Advent

Luke 3:7-18

Dear Jesus, we long to be free of fear. We know that you have the power to cast out of our fear. If it be your will, help us to hear the voice of your angel saying, "Do not be afraid." Amen.

December 15

Matthew 24:15-31

God, we thank you for all the good gifts you have given us and we ask for patience and trust when things don't turn out the way we think they should. Amen.

December 16

Matthew 24:32-44

Lord Jesus, during this season of preparation, we have tried to look for true satisfaction in your Kingdom, not the things of this world. As we begin to celebrate your coming into the world, help us to cherish the good things of life as we look forward to your coming among us again. Amen.

December 17

Matthew 24:45-51

Loving God, you gave us a second chance when you gave us Jesus, the Light of the world. Give us grace to be more like Jesus this Advent. Amen.

## Our Adventure

December 18

Matthew 25:1-13

Loving God, you sent your precious Christmas gift wrapped in swaddling cloths. So may we this Christmas wrap ourselves in loving gifts of service to others in your name. Amen.

December 19

Matthew 25:14-30

God of light, we remember this day all those walking in the darkness of grief, for those for whom this is not such a merry time. Somehow, we pray, that you bring the light, the joy, the hope of Christmas anew into their lives. Amen.

December 20

Matthew 25:31-46

Lord Jesus, all Christian people are united in their expectation and hope of your return. Grant that we all might draw strength in our common celebration of Christmas and that it might bring us a step closer to the complete unity of your followers that you desire. Amen.

December 21

4th Sunday in Advent

Luke 1:39-45

God of angels and sheep, God of the poor and meek, in these few days before the celebration, quiet us to hear where the new life is struggling to be born. Slow our rush so we may hear the faint sound of angel wings and the words whispered in dreams. Open our hearts to the wonder of Emmanuel: God with us. Amen.

December 22

Luke 1:1-25

We pray this day, Dear God, for all the little children of the world who are hungry and sick and homeless. Your Son knew what it was like not having room or shelter. Help us to reach out in practical ways to these needy ones so close to your heart. Amen.

December 23

Luke 1:26-38

Dear God, we thank you for sharing Jesus with the whole world. Please help us to care about and befriend those who might be different from ourselves. help us, too, to remember that the gifts we share with each other at Christmas are reminders of the gift that Jesus is to us. Amen.

December 24

Christmas Eve

Luke 2:1-20

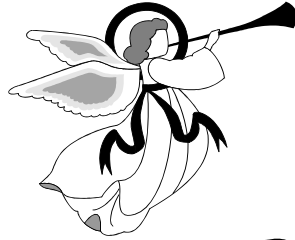
Dear God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus to the whole world. As the shepherds found Jesus in a manger, may we find Jesus in the love and joy that we share together. Help us, O God, to love one another. Help us to do our share to bring happiness, goodness, and peace to the world. Amen.

For When you Decorate Your Tree

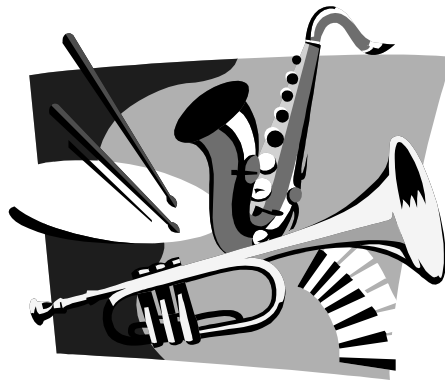
O God, in the time between now and the day we finally pack up our decorations and take down the tree, let us treasure them. Let us know

## Our Adventure

them. let them speak to us of you and the goodness of the years. We ask this in Jesus' name, the Savior we await. Amen. ■



# JAZZ VESPERS



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510 Mount View Ave.

Colwood BC

(Behind PayLess Gas)

Rev. Ken Gray, Presiding Minister

250 474 3031

[adventpr@telus.net](mailto:adventpr@telus.net)

<http://www3.telus.net/advent1/index.htm>

David Enns, Music Director

**We put JAZZ and VESPERS together  
On the Third Sunday of each month  
Commencing at 7 p.m.**

**Dates in 2006**

## **Our Adventure**

Sunday, January the 15<sup>th</sup>  
**Ian McDougall**

Sunday, February the 19<sup>th</sup>  
**Karel Roessingh**

Sunday, March the 19<sup>th</sup>  
End Spring break with style  
**Hugh Fraser**

Sunday, April the 16<sup>th</sup>  
An Easter Celebration  
**Jeff Agopsowicz**

Sunday, May the 21<sup>st</sup>  
**Mike Herriott**

**A freewill offering will be taken in support of both the church and the  
artists**

**ALL WELCOME  
SPREAD THE WORD**



## **Saturday Evening Socials**

### **At Church of the Advent**

**(also known as Widows & Widowers)**

These events began in 1985 at the Priory and were organized by Beth McLean for grieving Widows and Widowers in the surrounding Western Communities. When that Priory building was removed and a new one was built, a new location had to be found.

Rooms A & B of our Parish Hall were made available for the gatherings, renamed "The Drop-in Center". Up to 26 people from our church, as well as from other churches in Colwood, Langford, View Royal and Metchosin attended.

A donation of \$1.00 per person was collected each night and records have been kept since 1997. This money allowed us to donate \$100.-\$150. a year to the church and also defrayed group traveling expenses.

Several people had taken responsibility for the group, but in their absence Ruth Welham not only took on the task of phoning us, but arranged bus tours for lunch and plays at Chemainus theatre, to see fields of daffodils and tulips in Washington State, to see a musical at Stanley theatre in Vancouver, and to a barbeque on Main Island.

## **Our Adventure**

Romance bloomed for one couple. A lady member brought a male friend who, at the time, seemed to be in poor health. Over time, with continued friendship, he improved to the extent that they moved to Duncan to live together.

As time went by attendance declined. Some of the group moved away, others became busy at Juan de Fuca Seniors Centre, and others were no longer able to drive at night. Attendance has dropped to 3 or 4, and a decision has been made to discontinue the gatherings.

Our final get together will be for lunch on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Royal Roads Café. This will provide an opportunity to thank Ruth for all her time and care and to wish each other well. ■

Submitted by Audrey Stickle

## **Things To Think About**

### **Garage Sale - May 6th, 2006**

Please save any unwanted items for the spring garage sale. Ask your neighbors and friends to save items for our sale. If you know anyone moving, please ask them for items they will not be taking with them. We cannot take mattresses, TVs, desks, and small appliances that are not in working order. For further information call Bob Flint and for pickup call Ed Robinson at 888-6584.

### **Carol Singing – December 15<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>**

Our annual Carol sing at the Priory is December 15<sup>th</sup>.

We will meet at the Priory at 6:30. We need lots of singers, adults, teens and children welcome. The residents really enjoy our visit so please come out and support this evening of singing.

Our annual caroling for shut-ins will be on Dec 21st. We will gather at the church at 6:30 p.m. Please sign-up on the sheet in the Narthex if you can come. You don't want to miss this wonderful time to sing all the well-known favorites and bring special cheer to someone's door. Choir members are always welcome, but please remember, no singing experience is necessary!! Just a warm heart to share with others. ■

More info? Contact Joan Hoffman

### **Nursery Co-ordinator**

Melanie O'Munn has agreed to be our co-ordinator for the nursery.

Watch the bulletin for the opening of the nursery. Call Melanie for further information 477-9919 ■

Submitted by Joan Hoffman

## Our Adventure

### Annual Meeting - February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006

There will be just one service on February 19th at 9:00 a.m. Following the service there will be a "coffee break" and the annual meeting will begin. Please be thinking of members you wish to nominate for Parish Council. Also we will need a "People's Warden".

Please get your Annual Reports into Liz Garland. ■

For more information call Liz at the church 474-3031

### Kairos – Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives - Water

- Water is a sacred gift that connects all life.
- Access to clean water is a basic human right
- The value of the Earth's fresh water to the common good takes priority over any possible commercial value.
- Fresh water is a shared legacy, a public trust and collective responsibility.
- One in six people, most of whom live in Asia, Africa, or Latin America, have no access to clean drinking water.
- Every 14 seconds someone dies from a disease caused by contaminated water.
- Most victims are children under the age of five.
- Doubling the number of people with access to water and sanitation by 2015 is one of the key Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.
- According to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Nov. 2002), the right to water is as fundamental a human right as access to food.

In the hopes of adding our voice to this cause, an event or **gathering is planned for January 2006**. Prior to the meeting, you can learn more about Kairos through their website at [www.kairoscanada.org/e/ecology/water/index.asp](http://www.kairoscanada.org/e/ecology/water/index.asp) ■



Horse or Frog?

Sometimes it's how we look at things

Submitted by John MacDowell

## Our Adventure

# Seasonal Preparations

### GOTTA GET READY . . . for ADVENT:

#### Ideas for the Home:

1. Explore the meaning of these Advent symbols with your family or friends:
  - Lit candles represent God's presence and remind us that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.
  - Evergreen trees and branches suggest eternity.
  - The holly oak with its thorny leaves and red berries recall Christ's crown of thorns and blood.
  - The round circle of Advent and Christmas wreaths which have no beginning or end suggest the never-ending love of God.
2. Make or purchase an Advent calendar to serve as a focal point for family devotions. They're often a favorite of children. Each day in Advent, or each day in December, a window or door on the calendar is opened. Behind the window is a Bible verse to read and often a corresponding illustration. If you choose to make your calendar, you might select some of the texts from the Bible readings listed here.
3. Incorporate a tradition from another country to remind you that our observances unite us in anticipation, faith, and hope with Christians all over the world. In Sweden Advent "coffees" on Sunday afternoons make it possible for people to share the season with friends. You might invite neighbors and friends to your home for a "coffee."
4. Observe St. Nicholas Day, December 6, by giving an anonymous gift to a child in need or an organization that cares for children. Children in your family may delight in helping to choose the recipient and the secrecy of the gift. St. Nicholas was a bishop of the Church of Myra in Asia Minor in the fourth century, known for his generous and often anonymous gifts to the poor. In Europe, gifts are traditionally given to children on the eve of St. Nicholas Day. This tradition inspired the contemporary Santa Claus. ■



## Our Adventure

### GOTTA GET READY . . . for CHRISTMAS:



#### Ideas for the Home:

1. Make a calendar for the 12 days of Christmas, noting special activities for each day. You might use previous years' Christmas cards to decorate the calendar.
2. To celebrate the unity of the global church family, include one dish from another country as part of your Christmas dinner. In Mexico, for example, tamales are a traditional Christmas food.
3. On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day read the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 2:1-20. Reciting poetry or stories on Christmas Day is an old tradition from some European countries that you might try.
4. On Boxing Day, the day after Christmas, enlist your family's help in bringing food to a shelter or to someone in need. This is a tradition in Kenya where leftovers from the Christmas feast are boxed and taken to the poor.
5. During the 12 days of Christmas read stories about Christmas celebrations in other cultures and countries.
6. If you are musical, sing Christmas carols. Try to learn some carols in another language. Then go next door and sing a carol or two for your neighbors.
7. Invite people to join in your celebrations who might not have others with whom to celebrate.
8. Give thanks. Write cards to people whose lasting friendships, humor, or love in one of its many forms are gifts to you. Thank them for their presence in your life.
9. Include prayers for peace in your table prayers and devotions. ■

Submitted by Ken Gray

## Our Adventure

# The Legend of the Candy Cane



According to the legend there was a candy maker who wanted to invent a candy that was witness to Christ. The result was the candy cane. First of all he used a hard candy because Christ is the rock of all ages. This hard candy was shaped so that it would resemble either a "J" for Jesus or a shepherd's staff. He made it white to represent the purity of Christ. Finally a red stripe was added to represent the blood of Christ shed for the sins of the world and three thinner stripes for the stripes he received on our behalf when the Roman soldiers whipped him.

Sometimes a green stripe is added as a reminder that Jesus is a gift from God. The flavour of the cane is peppermint which is similar to hyssop. Hyssop is in the mint family and was used in the Old Testament for purification and sacrifice. Jesus is the pure Lamb of God, come to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

So the next time you see a candy cane, hear the lesson it preaches: Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, is the rock of all ages who suffered and died for our sins. ■

Submitted by Mollie Medcalf

## Some Notable Quotes

Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell --Edward Abbey

All the animals except man know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it -- Samuel Butler

One's real life is so often the life that one does not lead --Oscar Wilde

Total abstinence for me is easier than perfect moderation - Saint Augustine

In the nineteenth century the problem was that God is dead. In the twentieth century the problem is that man is dead. --Erich Fromm

It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time. -Sir Winston Churchill

## **Our Adventure**

Any idiot can face a crisis--it's the day-to-day living that wears you out --Anton Chekhov

The cruelest lies are often told in silence --Robert Louis Stevenson

When you are getting kicked from the rear it means you're in front --Fulton J. Sheen

When we are not sure, we are alive --Graham Greene

The manner in which one endures what must be endured is more important than the thing that must be endured --Dean Acheson

Pain forces even the innocent to lie. --Publius Syrus

Unhappiness is best defined as the difference between our talents and our expectations --Edward de Bono

When the missionaries came to Africa, they had the Bible and we had the land. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, we had the Bible in our hand, and they had the land. --Jomo Kenyatta, Kenyan independence leader and first president

Humankind lives on this planet with global consent, which can be withdrawn at any time --Simon Winchester, author and geologist, speaking of the movement of tectonic plates ■

Submitted by John MacDowell

## **An Anti-dote For Use When Needed**

### **What does Love mean?**

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?"

The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

Rebecca- age 8

## Our Adventure

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth."

Billy - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

Karl - age 5

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any of theirs."

Chrissy - age 6

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."

Terri - age 4

"Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK."

Danny - age 7

"Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My Mommy and Daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss"

Emily - age 8

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

Bobby - age 7 (Wow!)

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate,"

Nikka - age 6 (we need a few million more Nikka's on this planet)

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday."

Noelle - age 7

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well."

Tommy - age 6

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and I was scared. I looked at all the people watching me and saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."

Cindy - age 8

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night."

Clare - age 6

## Our Adventure

"Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken."

Elaine-age 5

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."

Chris - age 7

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."

Mary Ann - age 4

"I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones."

Lauren - age 4

"When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you." (what an imagination)

Karen - age 7

"Love is when Mommy sees Daddy on the toilet and she doesn't think it's gross."

Mark - age 6

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

Jessica - age 8

And the final one -- Author and lecturer Leo Buscaglia once talked about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child.

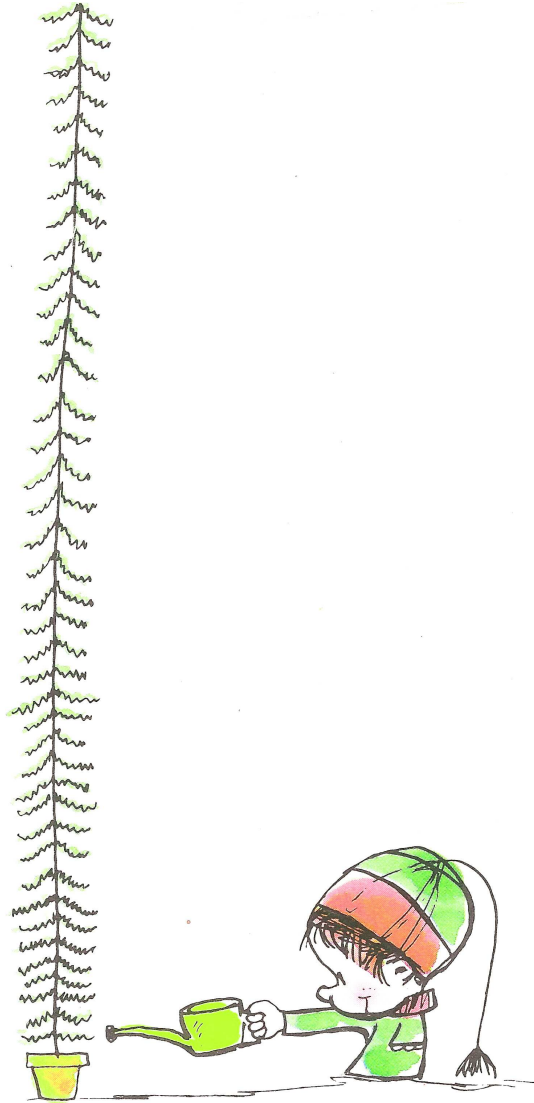
The winner was a four year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there. When his Mother asked what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry".

When there is nothing left but love, that is when you find out that love is all you need. Take 60 seconds and give" this a shot. All you do is simply say the following small prayer for another person.

Bless my friend in whatever it is that you may be needing this day! And may your life be full of peace, prosperity and power, courage, compassion and wisdom as he/she seeks to have a closer relationship with love. ■

Submitted by Barb Gossman

# Our Adventure



MARTY LINKS