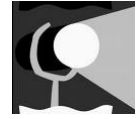


THE SPOTLIGHT



Advent, 2008

CHRISTMAS AT ST. MATTHEW'S

Jack Bresnahan has created a new stand for the Advent Wreath in our sanctuary. The altar guild will have decorated the church with greenery, assisted by Ken McMath and Ross Skelton. Ross will have installed a new sound system. David Braund and the choir will have prepared their anthems and carols. Now we only await you and your family as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, into our midst.

We welcome you to join us for any of our services listed below.

Sun. Dec. 21

7:00 p.m. Festival of Nine
Lessons & Carols

Wed. Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

7:00p.m. Sung Eucharist
(Communion & Carols)
11:00p.m. Midnight Mass with Carols

Thurs. Dec. 25 Christmas Day,

10:00a.m. Sung Eucharist

**Sun. Dec. 28 First Sunday after
Christmas**

8:00a.m. Sung Eucharist
10:00a.m. Sung Eucharist

What's Inside:

- A Word from the Pastor
- News of the Season
- Episcopal Visitors
- Our Future
- Our Ministries

TELLING OUR STORIES

Bishop Patrcik Yu joined us in September for a workshop he entitled "The Church's Business." His hope was to help us ordinary Anglicans to find ways to reclaim what God is doing in our lives and in the world.

In the workshop he took participants through the stages of finding the story of God in each of our lives, owning the story for ourselves, and then telling the story to another.

Using the analogy of the "fishing" occupation of some of Jesus' disciples, the Bishop asked us to think of how we cast our nets to gather others to Christ's message. It is Christ, however, who fills the nets, not us. Remember when Christ encouraged the disciples to cast their nets again, even after completely unsuccessful efforts the previous night, and what a marvelous catch it was in the morning. That is the meaning for us, the bishop said.

In the same way, Christ calls upon us to do the work of casting our nets. But as Anglicans we have become unfamiliar with just how we do that task. With our standing as a "major faith group" for so many years, we presume that others simply want to be part of our congregations. This is no longer true.

So the bishop asked us to think about the most important events of our lives, and then to use these "life lines" to share our story with others. He shared with us his story of his life and asked us to tell each other ours. It is good practice for us, and now we have the opportunity in this season to share our fount of Christmas stories with others outside the Church.

15 YOUNG PEOPLE CONFIRMED

Our largest group of young people since 1986 received confirmation from Bishop Patrick Yu when he joined us for our celebration of the Feast Day of St. Matthew on September 21. We congratulate the newly confirmed: Gordon Allen, Alison Atkins, Jaclyn Atkins, MayaJo Blake-Janniere, Emma Braund, Kayla Denomme, Kiana Denomme, Steven Edmonds, Anoushka Gunawardana, Michael Jansz, David Kerr, Christina Leonard, Graham Mount, Alexander Mukerji, and Roshan Parks.

You have seen many of them already taking full part in our activities of the parish, as readers and servers at our worship, as volunteers at the clothing store and the bazaar, and as active members of the youth group.

A VISITOR FROM AFRICA

A new diocese, of Wiawso in the Western Region of Ghana, was formed. Its new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Abraham Kobina Ackah recently visited Canon Brad Lennon at St. Matthew's, Oriole. The bishop has been busy these past two years training personnel to work in parishes setting up administrative structures for the diocese.



Bishop Ackah has about 15,000 Anglicans on the rolls worshipping in 70 congregations in 17 parishes served by 25 priests and 50 catechists. That means that the priests are extremely stretched to serve so many people and congregations. There are many people who feel

called to ordained ministry and tremendous opportunity to train them (including scholarships of various kinds, etc.).

The problem is that Wiawso is rural and very poor and can't really pay many of their priests. The bishop has refused to accept wages as well, since he feels he can't be paid when his priests aren't. This lack of economic development in the region clearly impedes his diocese's ability to create sustainable ministry.

So, he came to Toronto to seek partnerships to help his people. What such a partnership for us at St. Matthew's might mean is still up in the air. Bp. Ackah's good friend, the Rev. Leonard Abbah, came to worship with us on the first Sunday of Advent. Fr. Leonard had come to visit our Outreach Committee to explore how we might link with one of the parishes in the new Ghanaian diocese.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

We bade farewell to Gerry Kileeg at the end of September. Gerry has been a long-time member of the choir here, but he began singing as a chorister at St. Simon's Church, Bloor Street as a young boy. A fellow member of the boys' choir in those days was David Cleverdon, also now a member of St. Matthew's choir. We will miss Gerry's experience in our tenor section.

Gerry also served on our Advisory Board and as our synod representative. Gerry has moved to Penatanguishene, and we wish him well.

We also have said goodbye to our interning student from Wycliffe College, Ian Martin. Ian is in his last year at seminary and hoping to be ordained in the Diocese of Ontario. He is doing his training in Belleville this winter.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY?

You've seen the sign advertising the new condominium complex that has begun development in Parkway Forest. The builder has erected construction trailers near the fire station; a sales pavilion now stands next to the Don Mills subway station entrance.

Across the street, the Fairview Mall renovation nears completion. A new Cineplex Theatre

complex will open there just in time for Christmas.

Down the street at Leslie and Sheppard, excavation has begun on the first of the twenty condominium towers proposed for Concord Park. Across from the North York General Hospital on the north of Sheppard, construction is well underway on the Aria Condominiums. The hospital itself is now building an addition to its parking garage.

The City of Toronto is well under way with its plan to replace the Sheppard Avenue bus eastward from Don Mills station with electrically-powered light rail vehicles, operating at street level in dedicated transit lanes, separated from automobile traffic. It is also looking to run such a line down Don Mills Road.

The Don Mills Civitan Community Service Club hopes to build a three-rink arena on the southwest corner of Don Mills and Hwy. 401 to replace its aging 47-year-old Civitan Arena on Don Mills Road just south of Lawrence Avenue. This is causing considerable complaint from residents of Henry Farm because it will replace protected green space and disrupt traffic flow along Don Mills Road.

With the help of members of our congregation and our parish working group, Parkway Forest now has a new Community Association with a local board of seven members. Congratulations to the new association and to our parishioners who have worked so hard to help with this project.

A HOLIDAY MESSAGE

I was 19 years old when I spent my first Christmas away from home. Although I was warmly received by the people who surrounded me that year, I was still lonely, missing my family and friends.

I was in a culture totally unlike my own, among people who did not speak my language as their first tongue. I felt uprooted from my supports, a stranger in another people's country. Christmas that year was very much a reminder to me of how the holy family had also been far from home on the first Christmas.

Jesus' earliest years were spent with his parents on the run. He lived with them in hiding. His exile recalled that sojourn in Egypt, many

centuries earlier of his ancestors, the offspring of Jacob.

The number of refugees in our world fleeing to other countries to escape conflict and persecution rose in 2007 to 11½ million as factors from climate change to overly scarce resources threatened to push numbers even higher this year. The number of people displaced by conflict but remaining in their countries also rose in 2007,



to 26 million. Jesus' early childhood should remind us of their plight.

However, Jesus' birth also speaks to me of a similar kind of dislocation that happens when one does not feel 'at home' with oneself. This was what I experienced on my first Christmas away from my family. The French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, speaks of the violence that most often occurs when we feel this sense of self-alienation. We try to overcome our unease by undertaking to "appropriate, control and master" our environment around us.

In sharp contrast to this customary reaction, our Christian faith encourage us not to be self-seeking to *get what we need*, but instills in us our desire to *be at home with others*. That is precisely what God has done for us in incarnating the Divine Self in Jesus. Dwelling fully in Jesus, who is one of us, God, so intrinsically different than us, now resides among us in our being human.

What is distinctive about Christmas is that it sets circumstances where, despite the differences we have amongst us, we all can find belonging. So it was that I awoke that first Christmas away from home to find an entire village waiting at my doorstep to greet me with "Merry Christmas".

- Canon Brad Lennon



GROWING OUR PARISH

The wardens, members of the finance committee, our clergy, and the members of the Parkway Forest Working Group met in November to monitor progress on our plans for the parish since our Visioning Conference in June, 2007. The group retreat at the convent of the Sisters of Saint John the Divine recommended that we continue with our mission in Parkway Forest.



However, those attending the workshop also agreed that our leadership had to continue to focus on the neighbouring community bordering our property, as well as the neighbours just to the north of Sheppard. Those residents have also formed a pocket from which we have traditionally drawn our membership, and not just Parkway Forest.

Therefore, the workshop members also proposed to the wardens and to the advisory board that our parish set up an ongoing task force of three to five members to research outreach initiatives for Henry Farm and the Shaughnessy North communities. At least two of the members of this group should come from our younger parishioners.

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

What is Natural Church Development? It is a different way of thinking about church growth that focuses on quality (or health) and not just quantity (or numbers).

NCD bases itself on the biblical picture of the Church as a living organism, not just an organization. The growth of organisms depends on their health, their capacity to reproduce, and how their individual body parts interact. If a church can become increasingly healthy over time, it is better able and more likely to reproduce disciples, ministries, and eventually itself.

At the heart of this process is the Natural Church Development survey, which offers an accurate and up-to-date "snapshot" of the local church's health. Each survey enables the church leadership to see the parish's current state of health, how the church's health has changed over the previous year, and what areas need greatest attention over the coming year.

More than 1000 churches in 32 countries on 5 continents have been surveyed and tabulated. The surprise is that churches have a great deal in common, from the village house churches of Indonesia to the historic denominational churches of Norway to mega churches in North America. Every church of every tradition and culture, thriving or otherwise, had the same eight components: Leadership, Ministry, Spirituality, Structures, Worship, Small Groups, Evangelism, and Relationships.

How do you think our parish would do with each of these components? Which ones would you rate as our weakest? Should we take the NCD survey to find this out for ourselves?

Christmas Bazaar Results

Thanks to all who helped to make this event such a success!

<u>Bake Table</u>	<u>Men at Work</u>	<u>Books & Games</u>	<u>Handbags</u>	<u>Stitch and Craft</u>	<u>Trinkets and Treasures</u>
\$781.75	\$197.00	\$807.80	\$580.90	\$155.00	\$2974.60
<u>Bottle Table</u>	<u>Lunch Room</u>	<u>Linen</u>	<u>Jams</u>	<u>Silent Auction</u>	Total
\$581.00	\$680.00	\$486.20	\$739.50	\$640.00	\$8,820.10

NCD suggests that the task of bringing a church to health in all eight areas is overwhelming. The good news, however, is that all a congregation needs to do to change the overall quality is to identify and improve its weakest component, the "lowest stave of the barrel." Unexpected areas of the church will then improve "all by themselves."

WHAT IS MY MINISTRY?

Our people's warden, Janice Sanders and Fr. Jeff recently joined three members of our sister parish, the Church of the Incarnation, to join a diocesan workshop titled "Energizing Volunteers." The workshop looked at the ministry of all of us who are baptized.

It examined what motivates someone to volunteer in a congregation. It offered resources about how parish leaders can recruit helpers, about how to match a parishioner's gifts with the opportunities the parish presents, and ways to generate the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers in our parish.

Watch for notices about when Janice and our partners from the Church of the Incarnation share their learning with us in the new year.



OUR FAMILY PORTRAIT

Once again we are looking at getting a parish photo directory done. Having a parish directory helps us to get to know each other better, putting names to faces. It helps us to develop a stronger community. For those who choose to participate, watch for details on booking your appointment.

Here's how it will work:

- ? There is no cost to our church.
- ? Parishioners book an appointment to meet with the photographer.
- ? Each family or single parishioner participating will receive a free pictorial directory.
- ? The photography company makes its economically priced high-quality portraits available for purchase, but at no obligation to those who choose to participate.

The photographer is now scheduled to be with us on

FEBRUARY 5 2:30PM-8:30PM

FEBRUARY 6 2:30PM-8:30PM

FEBRUARY 7 9:30AM-3:00PM.

Make-up dates will also be available.

AN ADVENT PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" Amen.

Henri J.M. Nouwen



CHURCH SCHOOL UPDATE

We have welcomed three new church school teachers (and one returning teacher) this fall. Arlene Allen has taken on the responsibilities of church school superintendent. She is assisted by Claudette Blake, Margaret Allen, and Megan Roberts. They are enjoying their time with the children, and they welcome newcomers.

The teachers are using a new curriculum this year called "One Room Sunday School." This course is designed specifically for a children's Christian education program where four or more age groups are taught in one classroom. It provides materials that children, ages 3 through middle school, can study and learn together. The aim is that students will grow together through Bible study, the application of Bible lessons to everyday life, and a variety of age-appropriate activities.

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Epiphany Gala

Join your clergy hosts, Brad, Jeff, and Lesley at Church of the Incarnation on January 4, 2009, at 7 pm for cider, Christmas cookies, and a screening of the televised adaptation of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night".

Sir Alec Guinness (The Bridge on the River Kwai, Lawrence of Arabia) and Sir Ralph Richardson star in this merry on-stage mix-up of identity, gender and love in Tony Award® winner John Dexter's production of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night - a fanciful farce of classic proportions with a wealth of slapstick, puns and double entendres that have amazed and amused audiences for over four hundred years.

St. Matthew the Apostle Anglican Church, Oriole
80 George Henry Blvd.
North York,
Ontario, M2J 1E7



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