



# The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener

# ON EAGLE'S WINGS

November 24, 2019

Available online at [StJohn316.com/OEW](http://StJohn316.com/OEW)

## Christmas Holly

*Margaret Hendley*

I called my favourite florist shop on Belmont Avenue early last week to place an order for a large bunch of holly which they bring in annually from the west coast. Until five years ago this wasn't necessary. Soon after we bought our house in Waterloo, (which was home to our family for almost forty years), I planted two holly bushes in the side yard. At first I thought perhaps they wouldn't thrive in that area as nothing seemed to happen. And then, after about three years, they got a growth spurt and grew wonderfully "bushy" flourishing each season with many red berries. I delighted each year in picking a healthy bunch for our own household, placing a large number of branches in a simple pewter pitcher to decorate the antique chest in our dining room, as well as selecting a few smaller sprigs to go in bud vases in bathrooms and/or bedrooms. And often, when invited to a December gathering at a friend's house, I would arrive with a fresh bunch of the evergreens in hand. Now, living for the past five years in a high rise condo, I cannot step out my door and gather these lovely signs of the season, but I do make a point of purchasing enough to decorate our home.

Holly, of course, is one of the many evergreens associated with Christmas. And actually it has a much longer history being part of the pre-Christian Druidic tradition of bringing greens into the home as the darkness and cold of the winter closes in and the Saturnalia festival was celebrated. In early medieval days it was thought to be a particularly Christian form of greenery, with some even believing that the crown of thorns placed on the head of Jesus was from a holly tree and that His blood turned the white berries forever after to bright red.

I must admit that none of this was in my mind when for so many years I gathered my own holly branches. I would sometimes recall the wonderful year when Brian's sabbatical took us to live in England for a year with our twin sons of nine and daughter of four, turning five. One brisk day just before Christmas we all took a drive to a nearby village, stopping along the way to walk in a park where towering evergreen trees of holly, the like of which are not to be seen in this part of North America, abounded. I'm sure ending that outing eating fish and chips from rolled newspapers while sitting outdoors on benches in the little village made a more lasting memory for our three children, but for me, seeing that wonderful holly park is a vision I will cherish always.

Now, as I arrange the holly branches in a vase I do think about the contrast of the smooth bright red berries against the dark green prickly leaves which for me symbolizes the whole concept of Christmas. For most of us who have achieved a "certain maturity" Christmas is a time of many memories, both joyful and sad. Recalling childhood celebrations with family and friends who are no longer with us, while preparing for the happy gathering of loved ones here today, is a reality many of us face. While hanging ornaments on our Christmas tree, which include many gathered over the years from trips in North America and abroad, as well as items made by the childish hands of beloved grandchildren, I remember myself as a child decorating the family tree with my dear big sister Judy, now deceased.

Leaving St. John's on a December Sunday evening with the chorus of that lovely carol "The Holly and the Ivy", "Sweet singing in the choir"-, ringing in

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The next issue of On Eagle's Wings will be available on December 22nd.

# Nurses Notes

Elsie Millerd, Parish Nurse

## Light Shines in the Darkness

This month we are heading toward the darkest day of the year, the first day of the winter solstice. We began the month with days of remembrance of those who are no longer with us: All Saints Day, All Souls Day and Remembrance Day. For some of us November also holds the anniversary of the death of a loved one. Others face life changes which create feelings of loss. Together these events can have a negative effect on our psyche, making us feel sad or even depressed. The inclement weather can tempt us to pull the covers over our head and wait for spring.

As people of faith, we have another option in response to the experience of darkness and grief. Our faith in the arrival of Jesus into the world presents us with a vision of hope in our darkest hour. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted," he said. (*Matthew 5:4*) How might we find this comfort in the glitz and noise of the secular Christmas preparations?

Joyce Rupp identifies in her book *Praying our Goodbyes* four steps in seeking this comfort. The first is to **recognize** the feelings of grief and sadness that we are experiencing. Secondly, it is to sit with our hurt; to give ourselves to **reflection** by slowing down, being still, dwelling in solitude and aloneness, not being afraid to look inward or to go deeper. We wait in hope:

"My soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning." (*Psalms 130:6*)

It is in this quiet posture of waiting and listening that we can most likely hear the "still, small voice" of God (*1 Kings 19:12*). Rupp then suggests that out of this reflection may come some form of **ritual**. Ritual includes two elements: the use of images and symbols and the use of some kind of movement in our prayer (eg. lighting a candle, receiving the bread and wine, donating to a food bank). In this way we act out some of the pain within us. In the midst of our reflection and ritualizing we experience **reorientation**. As the God-connection happens, life is gradually reoriented or given renewed direction and energy.

In an interview by Joel Rubinoff with Mike Farwell, local radio host and Voice of the Kitchener Rangers, we can hear of such a reorientation from grief. Farwell says of the experience of the death of his two sisters due to cystic fibrosis: "It marked a fundamental shift in my outlook.... I thought about death a lot and it made me appreciate life in a whole new way." This shift led him to his fund raising activity for the fight against cystic fibrosis, Farwell4Hire.

November and the Advent season can be an opportunity for finding light and hope in the midst of darkness. From the prophets we hear the words:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined." (*Isaiah 9:2*)

"When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me." (*Micah 7:8*)

"If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday." (*Isaiah 58:10*)

May our time of preparation for Christmas be a time of reorientation to the light as we recognize our need for healing, reflect on it with God and move to rituals which act on out our pain and lead to hope. Then on Christmas Day may we hear in a fresh way the words of the Gospel: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

## Resources:

Rubinoff, Joel. Mike Farwell: tragic loss sparks passion for 'community betterment.' *Waterloo Region Record*, November 19, 2019.

Rupp, Joyce. (2009). *Praying our Goodbyes*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press.

Scripture texts from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*.

## Leadership for Kids' Sake – Parenting Tips

In this fall series here is a final segment of parenting tips from Barbara Coloroso, parent advocate and author of *Kids are Worth It: Giving your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline*. They provide an attitude and environment to help children develop a sense of self-discipline.

### Help your children become more responsible, resourceful, resilient and compassionate by:

1. Treating your kids with respect.
2. Giving them a sense of positive power in their own lives.
3. Giving them opportunities to make decisions.
4. Letting them take responsibility for their actions.
5. Letting them learn from their successes and mistakes .

Your goal is to encourage your child to act with integrity, stand up for values and speak out against injustices.

**Resource:** Barbara Coloroso: [www.kidsareworthit.com](http://www.kidsareworthit.com) Click on "Articles and Handouts" for more resources on parenting.

## Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course

Being up to date in knowing how to help resuscitate someone whose heart or breathing have stopped is one way to be prepared to serve one's neighbour. It is possible to set up a CPR course in our church if we have at least 10 people who would like to take this 4 hour course. If you or someone you know would like to take it, please put your name on the list on the table in the narthex or contact Elsie Millerd at [parishnurse@stjohn316.com](mailto:parishnurse@stjohn316.com) or 519-743-0228 ext. 30. So far, we have 3 names.

## Coming Soon

### A Carol Sing with a Global Twist

Inshallah Community Choir

Kitchener City Hall

Friday, December 13, 7 – 8 pm

Freewill donations will go to Reception House.

A wonderful way to celebrate the light and hope of Christmas in a dark world.

## Christmas Bazaar wrap-up

*Sarah Guthrie*

Thank you to everyone who attended the Pudding Pickup Christmas Bazaar and Tea Room. A total of \$458 was raised.



# The Meaning of Words

*Elaine Duncanson*

The members of the writing group were gathering and chattering as usual. Gina was telling of the visit by her son and granddaughter. The child had brought something she had made, a drawing or a craft of some sort. Her enthusiasm bubbled over as she passed it to her grandmother. "I love you, Grammy"

Gina replied, "No you don't. You don't know what that means."

Some of us responded with surprise or even shock. What did the child think? Was she confused? Did she think her grandmother did not love her? Gina said, "No one knows what 'I love you' means. I never say it to anyone."

After the group was finished for the day, that thought haunted me. When teaching a child to speak or learning a foreign language, we start with naming concrete objects: chair, book, apple, boy, girl. Most languages have a single word that is always translated the same way for the object of interest. Then you move into more subtle aspects of the language.

We say we travel 'on the train'. A student of French would translate it as 'sur le train' only to be told they would be more comfortable 'dans le train', in the train. I spent quite a bit of time with seniors who were learning French comparing ads from grocery stores or any other store to see how the two languages expressed the same idea. They marvelled that a word they recognized came at the end of an expression in French but at the beginning or in the middle in English. Or the other way around.

When you try to explain an abstract concept or word, often it is best to give one or more examples hoping to find an idea the other person understands already. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" That is not an easy question to answer in a few words. Similarly, justice, peace, love, would also require long explanations and examples. The words can mean different things to different people and in different contexts.

Perhaps you have heard that Greek has four words to refer to love since the ancient philosophers distinguished the different types of love. English lacks that richness in vocabulary. That makes it more difficult for us to express certain forms of love. A linguist once said that a person who has not experienced one of these abstract concepts would not comprehend the meaning of the word.

In a regency novel, the main character, Isabella, is very angry. Throughout her childhood her mother kept telling her that she would marry a man with a title because she was so beautiful. She was given the prettiest dresses, plenty of hair ribbons, all the trimmings to make her noticed. She was sent to the best ladies' academy where girls of wealth and noble families would be her friends and introduce her to their brothers.

She managed to marry a lord but he only wanted her huge dowry and treated her very badly. She has a child but takes no interest in her. Her husband died suddenly and now Isabella is no longer Lady Caverleigh.

A school friend and her husband take her in but she creates chaos in the household. A neighbouring squire, a widower, meets her and sees a damaged soul who could be made whole with patience and love. They marry but Isabella's temper tantrums are too much. Dan takes her to a convent where Mother Superior talks to her daily trying to help her see the error of her ways and how she could live comfortably in her new home.

Isabella tries to ignore these wise words, assuming it is just like the prattle of the Headmistress that she ignored for all her school years. She escapes to the convent garden where the sisters are diligently tending the crops while she sits on a bench scuffing dirt into the path. An elderly nun who can no longer bend to pull weeds sits beside her. In time they talk. The nun remarks that no one has loved Isabella. She hotly replied that certainly her mother loved her because she got her everything she asked for. And her father paid for it.

Gently, the nun points out that receiving everything is not a sign of love. A loving mother would have taught her to value people

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# Thank you so much to everyone who came out to help with the Pudding Factory!

## *Pudding Factory Coordinators*

We had so many wonderful helpers, starting with the "before the week" people.

### **Thank you to those who;**

- arranged for advertising in the newspaper and on social media
- wrote bulletin announcements
- took pudding orders
- contacted corporate people
- coordinated volunteers
- contacted family and friends to purchase puddings
- went to the Kitchener market to take orders (and have returned to deliver those orders and sell some extra puddings)
- picked up ingredients from as far away as Milton
- entered all of the orders and made labels
- folded recipes
- helped to cut circles
- cut waxed paper to wrap puddings
- made sure we had stoves that worked
- weighed and bagged dates
- cleaned raisins and currants
- emptied out the Pudding Factory room and set up for us to begin production early Monday morning



**Thank you** to the kids who came from Ray of Hope to cart all of the ingredients upstairs and came back on Tuesday to wash dishes etc.

**Thank you** to those who supplied the goodies for us to enjoy at our break times and to those who came in early and stayed late to setup the tea, coffee, and snacks.

### **We are grateful** to all of you who came out during the week to help;

- grease cans
- measure ingredients
- mix and mix and mix and mix some more!!
- fill the cans, weigh them (on scales that had been calibrated to make sure they were accurate), tap them down, put on their paper circle caps, and get them ready to be steamed for hours and hours by our wonderful steamers, then "knocked them out"
- hand-wash the cans before putting them through the dishwasher, dried, and stacked the cans so we could use them again next year

After sitting overnight, the puddings are ready to be wrapped in waxed paper and put in Christmas bags with recipes. **Thank you** to those who came and helped with wrapping and bagging .

**Thank you** to the crew who came in on Friday to make sure everyone's order was bagged or boxed and to those who delivered the corporate orders locally and as far away as Toronto.

**A big thank you** to our Pudding Treasurer and helpers who spent two weekends in the cold gym for people to pick up their orders.

**Thank you** also to those who came out to help with and arranged the Christmas Pudding Pickup Bazaar that was

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# Same-sex marriage update

*Preston Parsons and Marilyn Malton, Co-chairs, Parish Council*

Parish Council has considered, by the following process, whether same-sex marriages would be made available at the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

In its considerations, and as we move forward together, Parish Council is committed to the affirmations in *A Word to the Church* passed this summer at General Synod.

## **Affirmation #1: Indigenous Spiritual Self-determination**

Whatever the action of the church at this General Synod, we affirm the right of Indigenous persons and communities to spiritual self-determination in their discernment and decisions regarding same-sex marriage.

## **Affirmation #2: Diverse Understandings of the Existing Canon**

We affirm that, while there are different understandings of the existing Marriage Canon, those bishops and synods who have authorized liturgies for the celebration and blessing of a marriage between two people of the same sex understand that the existing Canon does not prohibit same-sex marriage.

## **Affirmation #3: Diverse Understandings and Teachings**

We acknowledge the ongoing reality that there is a diversity of understandings and teachings about marriage in the Anglican Church of Canada, and we affirm the prayerful integrity with which those understandings and teachings are held.

## **Affirmation #4: Our Commitment to Presume Good Faith**

We affirm our commitment to presume good faith among those who hold diverse understandings and teachings, and hold dear their continued presence in this church.

## **Affirmation #5: Our Commitment to Stand Together**

We affirm our commitment to walk together and to preserve communion, one with another, in Christ, within this church, within our Anglican Communion, and with our ecumenical partners.

Members of Parish Council were engaged in the consideration process between General Synod 2016 and 2019:

- A member of St. John's parish council was also a member of General Synod 2016 and 2019 and shared information with the parish;
- Diocese of Huron synod members from St. John's participated in conversations at Synod 2017 and 2018 and shared this information with the parish;
- Parishioners were invited to participate in deanery conversations as part of the Diocese of Huron's consideration process.

Following General Synod 2019:

- Further information was shared with the parish including a summary of what happened at General Synod and key documents such as *"A Word to the Church"* and Archbishop Linda Nicholl's July 18, 2019 letter outlining the process for requesting permission to make same-sex marriages available in parishes.
- At its September 11, 2019 meeting, parish council members:
  - Reviewed Archbishop Linda Nicholl's July 18, 2019 letter;
  - Discussed *"A Word to the Church"* including theological understandings coming out of the *The St. Michael Report (2005)* and *This Holy Estate (2015)*, and the five affirmations in the document;
  - Reviewed a time-line of same-sex union discussions/decisions in the Diocese of Huron;
  - Agreed to study further these documents prior to its October 23, 2019 meeting and solicit feedback from the congregation.

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- Feedback from the parish was solicited via email and announcements at services:
  - Thoughtful feedback was received, in writing, from parishioners;
  - Only two parishioners wrote that they were not in favour of the parish offering same-sex marriages at St. John's and, based on follow-up conversations and our commitment to the affirmations of *A Word to the Church*, Preston is confident we will continue to walk together.
- At its October 23, 2019 meeting parish council engaged in a discernment process:
  - The intent was that everyone would feel they had the opportunity to express their views, be heard, and could actively support the decision as the best one parish council could make at this time;
  - Each member had the opportunity to voice questions and concerns they needed to be addressed in order to give consent to the proposal to make marriage available at St. John's to same-sex couples;
  - Council members responded to concerns;
  - Parish council agreed, by consensus, to ask the Rector and wardens to write the Diocesan Administrator to request permission to make marriage available at St. John's to same-sex couples;
  - It is understood that the church and the rector will continue, for all church weddings, to discern a couple's suitability for marriage, and take seriously our pastoral responsibility to appropriately prepare couples for marriage;
  - We affirm the five affirmations contained in *A Word to the Church*.

The result of the process outlined above is that Parish Council agreed, by consensus at its October 23, 2019 meeting, to request permission to make same-sex marriages available at the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

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my ears, reminds me of that time long ago, holding firmly on to the hand of Judy as we left the service of Lessons and Carols given at the Episcopal church of our small New England town, which included the angelic young voices of the boys from the prep school at the bottom of our hill.

One embraces the duality of human life when one celebrates the joyous birth of Christ, yet knowing the fate that is His to come. And yet, the red berries of the holly make me smile with their bravado and the leaves which are ever green, reminding us all that the dark days will not be forever and that, with faith, the hope of spring and rebirth will be fulfilled once again.

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open for the public to see what wonderful things some of our parishioners make. Thank you to other parishioners who made wonderful short bread cookies and hand made items to sell and contributed the profits to the Church. You can see what a devoted and committed group of people we have who have made this a success for 71 years.

**Thank you** also to those of you who were unable to physically join us in the work and fellowship, but kept us in your prayers.

## McKay Trust

*The Revd Preston Parsons*

I am very pleased that I can now make the following public!

Many of us remember Allan McKay and his love and commitment to St. John's, often expressed in his ongoing interest in careful economic stewardship and evangelism.

Allan's interests will continue for us in a very special way. Anne and Allan have generously arranged that the interest from a \$750 000 trust, roughly \$22 000-\$25 000 per year, will be available to St. John's specifically for evangelism. The trust will be administered by the Anglican Foundation, under the supervision of Ann and Allan's daughter, Martha Jakowlew.

From the trust agreement (emphasis mine):

*"The Trust Fund is to be used to provide funding to facilitate the support of programs and ministries of evangelization (not for maintenance or renovation of church-owned buildings nor normal operating expenses associated with a parish church) within the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener and the community it serves. Funding of operating expenses associated with evangelization projects may be considered."*

*"Evangelization is defined as 'Actively soliciting new members, former or lapsed members, or non-Anglicans or non-Christians to join our Parish and thereby experience the Love of God and message of Jesus' ... It specifically does not include ... Outreach Projects ... unless more than 50% of the project is evangelization as described above. While many of these projects are worthwhile, they are primarily Social Outreach Programmes and not Evangelization."*

*"The Executive Director and Treasurer of the Foundation will meet at least annually with one or more of the surviving children of Anne and Allan McKay or their appointees to update them on the activities being undertaken as a result of the funds being provided by this agreement. If in the opinion of these survivors, the funds are not being used in a manner described above, they, acting on their own and after discussion with the Anglican Foundation may direct that the funds be applied to another Evangelization purpose within the Anglican Church of Canada, as described above."*

As you can see, this is both generous and given for a very specific purpose: that others would experience the love of God and the message of Jesus, specifically through evangelism centred around sharing the story of God's work in Jesus. It is very generous, and very welcome!

The plan, for now, is for a group of people to come together to discern ways that we can begin to use this gift in the coming year. More details will come in the near future. I look forward to working with St. John's, the Anglican Foundation, and Martha in putting this gift to good use as intended.

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for their fine qualities not their wealth or titles. In time, Isabella sees that Dan has offered her love with discipline which she has always refused before. Her change in attitude brings a welcome change in behaviour and Mother Superior says she is ready to go home with Dan.

Isabella had never experienced love and had to learn through a difficult experience that 'no' can be as loving as 'yes'. Similarly, people who have not experienced peace, or justice, or any other abstract concept that we value will have trouble understanding how to make those things happen for others.