



The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener

ON EAGLE'S WINGS

January 21, 2024

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Is the Pudding Factory Pudding Really That Good?

Charles Stuart

As anyone who has read my previous musings on the subject is aware, I am a big fan of the plum pudding. Growing up, no Christmas Day supper was complete without a pudding to cap the feast. My mother was no hidebound traditionalist when it came to the main course, which might be a roast capon with mashed potato one year, a roast beef with Yorkshire pudding the next, and rock Cornish hen with wild rice the year after. All of which were delicious. But while there was considerable variety in the centrepiece of the meal, the one constant was the dessert pudding.

I have carried on this tradition, always insisting on a Christmas pudding to round off the festive meal, even if it has to share space with inferior desserts meant to satisfy less discriminating palates. Christmases spent abroad were no impediment; there is always an expat community that demands such treats.

When I became a congregant at St. John's, it was a great delight to find myself at a church that produces Christmas puddings. Although I was slow to volunteer for Pudding Factory, I was quick to take advantage of the product. And I could not have been more pleased to discover that my church produces the finest Christmas pudding.

I have often wondered, though, whether my appreciation for St. John's puddings is not uncritical. Does my identification with St. John's impede my capacity to be impartial in evaluating our puddings? Are St. John's puddings really all that, or is it just the partisan in me who is eager to claim their supremacy? Were the samples I tasted during last November's Pudding Factory really so remarkable? And how can I begin to judge St. John's puddings against the competition if I only ever eat our own product?

This past Christmas, I put these questions to the test. I decided to serve not a St. John's pudding, but a commercial product, and observe the response. And it wasn't as though I didn't have the genuine Pudding Factory product on hand; I am a bit of a pudding hoarder and always have one or two in the freezer for emergencies. But in the spring I had purchased a leftover, discounted pudding manufactured by a well-known and reputable company, whose bright red cellophane wrapper seemed to be taunting me to the challenge. Game on!

It was immediately clear to all around the table that they were not being served a St. John's pudding. And they weren't happy. A church pudding is dark, dense, and heavy. This one was pale and lightweight, even after steaming. A slice of church pudding reveals its abundance of dried fruit; a slice of this one showed only an occasional

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Shortbread Profits

Jean Wright

Thank you St. John's parishioners for supporting the sale of shortbreads.

Congratulations for the grand profit of \$801.

*Thank
you*

The next issue of On Eagle's
Wings will be available on
February 17th, 2024.

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fragment of raisin or peel. And a church pudding provides an explosive and intense burst of flavour; this one was bland and resembled less a pudding than a panettone. All points to the St. John's pudding. And no points to yours truly, who was not especially popular for foisting an impromptu tasting match on unsuspecting family members.

In the following weeks I bought another couple of discounted puddings from other manufacturers to continue the test. One was merely adequate, fruitier than the first and denser, but still short of the standard of excellence of a church pudding. Another was quite poor, containing less fruit but compensating with sliced almonds, whose nuttiness I found quite displeasing.

So, there it is: St. John's Pudding Factory produces a superior Christmas pudding. After all, the proof is in the pudding!

Sanctuary Beyond Sermons

Al Coughlin & Simon Guthrie

Faith communities have been at the forefront of addressing homelessness and housing insecurity worldwide. Their efforts reflect the core values of their faith, seeing shelter as a manifestation of their faithful duty to love and serve others. Many Christian communities view their work in providing shelter as a direct response to Jesus' teachings about caring for the needy. Similarly, in other faith traditions such as Islam and Judaism, charitable acts, including providing shelter, are deeply ingrained as religious obligations.

At St John's we are on a path that will lead us to ask what we can, and should, do with our property in the long-term. While the status quo is unsustainable, we will take our time to consider any changes. Our neighborhood has changed immensely over the years, and we must ask how we change along with it. We have an opportunity to embrace bold change.



With this in mind, we point to three examples within our own communities of Kitchener Waterloo where faith communities have given new purpose to their underutilized property as an instrument to address housing insecurity.

At the corner of King & Green, right beside Grand River Hospital, is what was once St Mark's Lutheran Church. As the community changed they made the decision to let go of their building. It has now been rebuilt and repurposed by Indwell to provide supportive housing for 40+ people that have struggled to keep up with the world around them. The outline of the church is still very much present from outside and from within, but now it provides a different kind of shelter. [More can be learned here](#) (online version only).

Closer to St John's is (or rather, was) Trinity United Church on Frederick St between Duke and Weber. For a long

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time, this community supported our neighbours through the Out of the Cold program, but a few years ago they took the path to let go of their property and relocate to another location on Benton. The building was demolished and replaced with the condo tower that we see today. The faith community is stewarding the proceeds of that sale to support their ongoing faith journey as well as other aligned projects across Waterloo Region. [More can be learned here](#) (online version only).

Finally, and on the same block as the last example, is St Peter's Lutheran Church on Queen St. For quite some time, their sign had this provocative message to the Kitchener community, offering partnership:

*40+ Deeply Affordable Units
With Supports
We Are Shovel Ready
Over To You Govts*

As we now pass by this church, the signs of construction and rebirth are unmistakable and it remains a living faith community. Clearly, someone saw their sign, read the message, and joined them in creating solutions for housing insecurity. Those units are being created! [More can be learned here](#) (online version only).

As we grapple with the realities and opportunities of our downtown location, we should learn from these other communities...

...What have they chosen that aligns with our mission?

...What have they chosen that does not?

...How can we make the best use of our property while staying true to our commitment to being a vibrant presence in Downtown Kitchener?

It's not always necessary to start from "zero", to reinvent the wheel. We can lean on and learn from the experience and wisdom of our neighbours. The examples we've touched on here have made permanent and irreversible changes to the communities, and it has not stopped them. The approaches chosen are varied and offer us inspiration - from sharing a square of property, to . We need to embrace this time as an opportunity!

Staying Healthy This Winter: Important Vaccine Information for Our Parishioners

Casey Howard

As the winter season approaches, it's crucial to prioritize our health, especially for those over the age 65 or pregnant women. This year, there are several vaccines available to help protect us from common illnesses. Here's a brief overview of what's available and how you can access these vaccines.

1. COVID-19 Vaccines (For anyone 6 months and older):

Updated mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccines have been approved by Health Canada. These vaccines are specifically designed to combat the most recent variants of the virus. These vaccines are available for free across all provinces and territories. If it's been more than 6 months since your last COVID-19 shot, it might be time to book a booster as vaccine-induced immunity naturally wanes. We strongly encourage you to stay up-to-date with your COVID-19 vaccinations to maintain the best possible protection.

2. Influenza (Flu) Vaccines (For anyone 6 months and older):

The flu can be particularly severe for seniors. Thankfully, updated flu shots are approved and made available each year to match the evolving flu strains. Like the COVID-19 vaccines, standard flu vaccines are free in all provinces and territories. Getting your annual flu shot is a key step in staying healthy during the winter months.

3. Pneumonia Vaccines (Typically 65+, but talk with primary-care provider):

Pneumonia is a serious infection that can have significant health impacts on older adults. In Canada, there are multiple types of pneumococcal vaccines approved. While eligibility for a free vaccine varies by province and product, it's worth discussing with your primary-care provider to understand what you're eligible for.

4. RSV Vaccine (60+):

Health Canada has recently approved the first Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine for adults aged 60 and up. RSV can cause severe respiratory illness, particularly in seniors. While most seniors will have to pay for the RSV vaccine, it's provided free-of-charge in Ontario for those in long-term care homes. If you're at risk, this vaccine could be an important part of your health plan this winter. While the RSV vaccine is not yet approved for pregnant women in Canada (it is in the US), it may be available in the near future and worth asking your primary-care provider about.

How to Get Vaccinated:

For any of these vaccines, your first step should be to contact your primary-care provider. They can offer personalized advice based on your health history and current health status. Additionally, many local pharmacies offer these vaccinations, making it convenient to get vaccinated. Please note that not all pharmacies offer pediatric vaccinations (6 month to 4 years). Shoppers at 658 Erb St. W, Waterloo, ON is providing both COVID-19 and influenza vaccines. The Region of Waterloo offers vaccine clinics for seasonal vaccines. For more information about the region's vaccine efforts, go to <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/covid-19-vaccine.aspx>.

Remember:

Vaccinations are a critical part of staying healthy, particularly for those over the age of 65. They not only protect us but also help safeguard those around us, including our families and fellow parishioners. Let's embrace this opportunity to care for ourselves and each other during these colder months.

Remembering Sheryl Loeffler

James Brown

Before her annual winter holiday in Malta, our parishioner, Sheryl Loeffler, left us a Christmas present with her article *Remembering Christmas 2006 in Malta (On Eagle's Wings, December 2023)*. The unwelcome news of Sheryl's death reached us on January 12, and many in the church, music, and literary communities of Kitchener-Waterloo and beyond began a period of mourning, remembering, and giving thanks for Sheryl's life among us, her friendship, and her many gifts.

Sheryl was reluctant to toot her own horn, but her poetry has been published in Canada, the US, the UK, Austria, and Japan. In 2014, FARAXA Publishing in Malta published her book *A Land in the Storytelling Sea*. In 2015, she was invited into membership by the League of Canadian Poets.

Remembering Christmas 2006 in Malta is a good primer for appreciating *Three Maltese Christmas Legends*, submitted to this month's *On Eagle's Wings* in tribute to Sheryl and in gratitude for her many contributions to our parish community.

I

Why We Put Tinsel on the Tree

Mrs. Abela or Mrs. Zarb –
 one or the other – trained a broom
 on a corner and beat it blameless.
 No cobwebbed hearth for the coming Christ!
 The spiders scowled beneath the stairs.
 But while she slept, the spiders danced
 among the boughs, spun subtle silk
 in the Christmas tree. The Christ Child came,
 small and still in the secret night.
 Spiders, spiders, what shall we do?
 Your webs will grieve the woman greatly.
 So he touched them, turning them to light.

II

How the Robin Got Its Red Breast

A sacrament – that speechless beasts
 should be the first to wonder at
 the birth. But in the bitter night,
 when Mary bade the ox to fan
 the fading flame with its warm breath,
 its dim eyes closed in sleep. The ass
 slept, too. The robin fixed its eye,
 bead-bright, on the expiring embers,
 blew to no effect – too slight –
 then leaned its breast against the coals
 and sang them into light. The waning
 fire leapt up. Its blood orange breast
 a testament to the burning passion,
 small-but-fearless steadfastness.

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III

Why There's a Blacksmith in the Crib*

See the terracotta townsfolk,
 pious Neapolitans –
 naked Poor Tommaso in the foreground,
 the one we have to look through
 to marvel at the rich, brocaded kings,
 or the blacksmith,
 his hammer raised time without end
 over the anvil,
 the one who heard a story from a shepherd
 and believed his wonder,
 the one who forged great spikes
 and wouldn't give them decades later
 to a Roman executioner
 making his grisly way
 to the Place of a Skull.

*Creche

Senior's Fellowship

Jennifer Uttley

The next gathering of the Senior's Fellowship group is Wednesday February 14th at 1:30 at St. Columba church. Because February 14 is not only Ash Wednesday but also Valentine's Day, the focus is love. Although there are several forms of love, our guest speaker Dwight Storrington will show his documentary film *Anna Kaljas: The Untold Story*, that shows her response to "love your neighbour". The story documents her work, lived experience and compassion for those who had no home. Anna came to Canada as a WWII refugee from Estonia. As she settled in downtown Kitchener, she noticed those without a home and because they had many issues were unable to find a home – they were unwanted. Anna purchased several houses and turned them into rooming houses to look after them. It wasn't always easy. Come to find out more of her interesting life.

Following the film Dwight will be available for a Q/A and refreshments and fellowship will follow. All are welcome. Several have joined us from St. Columba's and St. Andrews. I hope you can join us. For more information contact Jennifer Uttley at acw@stjohn316.com or call 519-578-6052.

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church Women (ACW)



For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.

At the December meeting of our ACW, the Executive and Council voted to dissolve St. John's ACW after nearly 60 years of ministry after three years of visioning and after much discerning. Why did we decide to close this chapter of women's ministry?

History of Women's Ministry at St. John's

The Women's Auxiliary (W.A.) of Canada was founded in 1885 which later became the Anglican Church Women. The W.A. was formed to *support missionary endeavours of the Church overseas and in Canada*. Through the years this support has continued and broadened to include other areas of the work of the church. Some of St. John's W.A. projects that spanned many years included support for the church in Northern Ontario (Bales), relief work in the parish during the 1930s depression, making protective clothing and knitted articles for the armed forces during the Second World War, starting the Pudding Factory in 1949, founding the Pakistan Embroidery project in 1952 and furnishing rooms for Renison College when it was dedicated in 1962.

Another active women's group was the Ladies' Aid Society organized in 1902 by the rector. The object of this group was to *raise funds for parish purposes and to aid with work of the parish as shall from time to time be decided upon by the rector and the Society*. In their first year they raised enough funds to purchase a pipe organ and motor for about \$2000. In the following few years, they purchased a surplice, stole and altar cloths, a desk telephone for the rector as well as improving the church interior and exterior. This organization was later renamed the Parish Workers.

In 1966, the W.A. had a membership of 70 with 23 Life Members. Their average attendance at business meetings was 45. In that year, the Annual Meeting of the Dominion Board of the W.A. revised their Constitution and made a name change to Anglican Church Women to provide an umbrella organization for coordinating women's ministries in parishes and dioceses. The ACW continued the work that had been ongoing through the W.A. and Parish Workers and Altar Guild and at St. John's, new projects were started that included the Clothes Closet as a means of social action in the community, Parish Services to minister to the sick and shut-ins, the Gift Case with hand-knitted articles and other crafts, a Catering team, refreshments for funeral receptions and a senior's group called Over 39ers.

Evolution of the ACW

Over the past 60 years, women's roles in the church have changed. In 1976 the first female priests were ordained in the Anglican Church of Canada. By the 1980s, the Canons of the Anglican Church were changed to permit women to be church wardens. More women were members of what was then the Board of Management. Now women were involved in all aspects of parish life.

With all the changes, the ACW continued their ministry. When I became Coordinator in 1998, the ACW Executive and Council had 32 members. Our ministry still included Altar Guild, Bale, Catering Committee, Clothes Closet, Coffee Hour, Gift Case, Kitchen Supplies, Over 39ers, Parish Services, Funeral Receptions, Pudding Factory and Sunday Secretaries.

In 2001 we became involved in the World Day of Prayer. In 2002 the Board of Management became Parish Council and the ACW organization was asked to become a Council committee. After much discussion the ACW remained

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independent but maintained a reporting role to the Council. Parish Services moved to Parish Council and Altar Guild moved to report to the rector. In 2005 we started providing lunch for Habitat for Humanity volunteers. This ministry continued until the start of the pandemic. Parish Council had agreed to set aside funds for a Habitat build just prior to the pandemic.

In 2008 we added an Outreach position to look at additional ways to reach out to our community and beyond. Outreach had always been an important part of our ministry. While a large portion was donating funds to a number of organizations, other ministries like the Clothes Closet generated some of those funds but any profit was secondary to serving their clients. For many years, ACW sponsored a student at Dr. Graham's Homes in India. The Bale was sent to Kenora until 2022 when we were told it was no longer needed. Now supporting Migrant Workers with clothing as well as funds and last year donated some bicycles. Outreach has been ongoing in so many ways not highlighted here. In the 5 years between 2013 and 2017 funds donated were \$103,000. In the 6 years between 2018 and 2023 we raised and distributed more than \$76,000 which included no pudding factory in 2020.



ACW Exec/Council Christmas 2012 front row: Linda Jarrett, Carol Thurnell, Bernice Payne back row: Nancy Chittick, Enid Emery, Gillian Westwood, Pam Nagge, Stephanie Airey, Jennifer Uttley, Linda King, Susan Rollo, Judy Shantz, Eleanor Brown, Mindy Hurley, Dede Boulden

By 2012 only 15 belonged to the Executive and Council. In June 2013 "The Clothes Closet" closed its doors after 45 years in operation. With declining clients due to other facilities giving similar assistance and a declining pool of volunteers, the difficult decision was made to close.

In 2019, The ACW still met with 14 members but decided to move to meeting bi-monthly and to share the coordinator position.

We began the February 2020 meeting with plans for *Everything Old is New Again* hat tea and Habitat for Humanity build. Then everything was shut down for Covid. When we resumed meeting by Zoom some of our members had left. The ACW presence had waned. Following the shut down we no longer were able to hold our Annual Meeting during Vestry. In the past the ACW Coordinator had been a member of the Parish Leadership team but changes in leadership over the years eliminated that position. The ACW financial contribution to the church was also reduced. The ACW was structured so that all women are members. Today's congregation has changed and many women don't necessarily

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identify as an ACW member.

We began visioning in 2021. We brainstormed based on our devotional prayer and the Marks of Mission. Over the next two years we continued visioning at each meeting focusing on different aspects such as events, fundraising, outreach, how other parishes minister that do not have an ACW.

After so much visioning and discussion, we discussed how we move forward with ACW and decided that it is time to move to shared ministry for all that we do. Our members are aging. No one came forward to take over leadership which historically had been a 2-year term. It has been a difficult decision for our ACW Council members to decide to dissolve our ACW.

The main concern for ending the ACW is finances and ensuring that our ministries continue especially our outreach ministry. I am working to determine how we continue these ministries within the Parish Council structure together with the Parish leadership and Parish Council committees.

We are thankful for the inspiration, service and leadership of our ladies throughout all those years. We remember in particular the spirit of Mildred Robertson, mentor to many of us. She was St. John's W.A. President 1946 – 1948. With her leadership, the membership grew to 63. She founded the Pudding Factory in 1949 and was Dominion President of the Women's Auxiliary in 1962 then became the National President of the A.C.W. when it was founded in 1966. She received the Order of Huron in 1980, one of the first three, and the first woman to be honoured.

Thank you to all who have supported our ministry. On Sunday January 28th we will celebrate ACW ministry of almost 60 years. The 10 am service will focus on the ACW followed by a Celebratory Coffee Hour. Please celebrate with us.

Altar Guild Memorial Flowers for 2024

Enid Emery

I am in process of making up this years list for the flower Memorials, and would like to invite any member of the congregation who wishes to remember family or friends or who has received a special Blessing to consider putting flowers on the Altar. My contact numbers are:-519-896-0637 or e-mail:

davidemery@rogers.com.



A Sabbatical Sketch

The Rector

I am so very thankful to be planning my upcoming sabbatical, and thankful especially that Karen and I will be on sabbatical at the same time. The opportunity to share sabbatical time like this won't happen very often. So thank you, St. John's, for helping to make this happen.

Though my sabbatical officially begins on July 1st, I will be away from day-to-day things at St. John's by the second week in June when I go to South Africa, where I will take part in the next round of International Pentecostal-Anglican Commission meetings. It will be a very full week of meetings and discussions. Karen will be coming to South Africa with me, and after the meetings we are hoping to stay on for a combination of holiday for both of us, and research for me if I find the right contacts.

After getting back from South Africa, we will pack up our new-to-us teardrop trailer and head towards Winnipeg. I will have a box full of theology to read—all the ones sitting on my bedside table, shelves, and desks, books that I would very much like to read, but haven't had a chance to dig into yet, busy as I usually am with other matters.

The rest of my sabbatical is unstructured at the moment. From Winnipeg Karen will head her own way. I will spend a good deal of my time in the library and at my computer, reading and writing. I am, though, looking for the right place to be on retreat while doing my writing, as some of the material is quite challenging on a personal level, and to be in a place of prayer will be important. Other than that, we hope to get to Cambridge, UK, in the fall, probably in October.

During these months, despite being in different places, it's the writing that will drive my use of time. I am looking for a publisher for my doctoral thesis. If I have the right one by June, a good deal of my time will be preparing that for publication. If I don't have a publisher by then, I will continue to look for one. I will continue reading, thinking, and writing on vicarious repentance, asking questions like: Can we repent for the sins of others? And, if so, how?

The writing project that is the most taxing on the personal level is on Julian of Norwich. She had a great deal to say about pain from a theological perspective and from her own personal experience. It is deeply challenging material, but so far it's been very helpful in reorienting my understanding and experience of pain.

And rest. I will take a good deal of rest. The reading and writing will be restful, as will be the opportunity to hand over the care of the parish to others. We have an excellent team in place, even if all the details aren't entirely sorted out.

You will be in my prayers, in a different form, come June; I trust that I will be in yours.

Many thanks, again, for helping to make this sabbatical happen.

The Revd Canon Preston Parsons, PhD
Rector, St John the Evangelist, Kitchener