

# The Messenger

Christmas 2024

## Reverend's Reflections

### Christmas in Canada, Christmas in Germany!

Merry Christmas! I am grateful to each of you who are assisting me with leading our Christmas worship. Our community's thanks go especially to Patrick and our choir members, the members of our Altar Guild, and our chalice bearers, greeters, prayer leaders and readers.

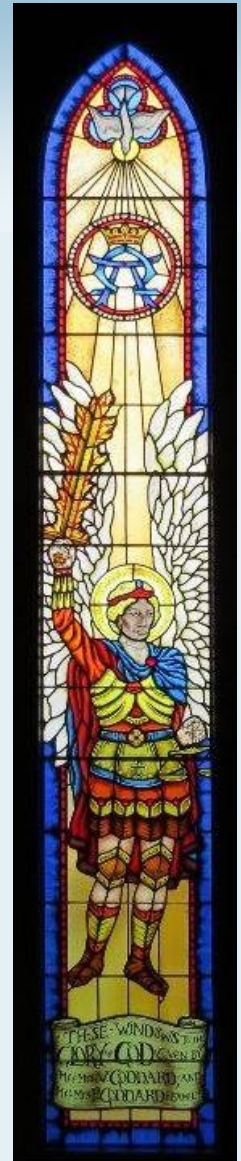
Thank you also to the parishioners who joined me in organizing and overseeing our Christmas Pageant and to all our children, youth, and adults who took part in it. If you would like to start helping to lead our worship services, just tell me. It's a great way to serve God and to get to know your fellow parishioners better.

The world around us will soon turn its attention to New Year's Eve. Yet we know that the season of Christmas is just beginning... I am looking forward to December 29<sup>th</sup>, when we continue our observance of the 12 Days of Christmas with our Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:30 am.

I recall that our parish worship in Germany was quite like our observances here. At the Anglican/Episcopal Church of Christ the King in Frankfurt-am-Main we had a pageant service on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, followed by a choral service of the Holy Eucharist at 11 pm. On Christmas morning, while choir members travelled to visit friends and family elsewhere, a small congregation worshipped at the Holy Eucharist with hymns.

In Frankfurt, I was blessed often by the presence of a priest of the Church of England or a retired German Lutheran pastor, who assisted me with Christmas services. A couple of times some of them took part in our family dinner on the evening of Christmas day. We even exchanged presents, including a sweater I still wear.

Frankfurt is very proud of its *Weihnachtsmarkt* - its Christmas Market - which the city considers one of the most beautiful and important in Germany. From my viewpoint, this annual event is not really a Christmas event, because the Christmas Market opens as the Church is concluding its liturgical year and closes as the Church is still observing Advent!



(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

## Christmas in Canada, Christmas in Germany! (continued)



Of course, I'm not surprised that this Christmas Market begins during our "Ordinary Time" and concludes a few days before Christmas. After all, the Christmas Market is about food and drink, shopping and fun around the large, lit-up tree, next to the Christmas carousel in the historic market square of the old city. For sale are traditional (some hand-crafted) candles, marionettes, metal toys, nutcrackers and ornaments. More interesting to me were the foods: roasted almonds and chestnuts, grilled sausages and various baked goods, including a local speciality, the almond marzipan cookies called Bethmännchen. Cat and I always enjoyed Glühwein, the spiced red wine that is sold at many market stands. We usually forfeited part of our deposit on the small metal Glühwein mugs so that we could keep one or two, decorated specially for that year's Christmas Market.

I carefully sipped my hot Glühwein as our parish choir sang Christmas hymns and anthems from the small stage in the market square. Each year, our choir was one of several that performed a half-hour concert at the Christmas Market, but ours was unique in providing traditional Christmas music in English! Their concert finished, members of our parish choir in small groups went in search of dinner. Cat and I usually walked a short distance past the Kaiserdom - the Imperial Cathedral - to a restaurant that served Bavarian food. Only there have I savoured the traditional meal of roast goose, served with two large dumplings and red cabbage, accompanied by their darkest beer.

Writing this piece has made me very hungry and very nostalgic! With a son settled in Berlin for the long term, I can hope that Cat and I will return to Germany in Advent in the coming years.

Wherever you celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus, may God bless you richly with the joy and peace of knowing Christ Jesus as your Emmanuel, God-with-us. And may the divine life, light and love that was revealed in him shine through us as a light to the world!

Submitted by John Perris



### It's Christmas

Each time we give from our hearts and laugh from our souls, and each time we say thank you for something that made us smile...it's Christmas.

Each time we look upon the heavens with wide-eyed wonder, and each time we see God in ourselves and one another... it's Christmas.

Each time we chose to be a voice of hope and joy in the world... it's Christmas.

Contributed by Valda Kitching.

## Warden's Window

Advent is well upon us, and soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is a time of peace, reflection and family. Let us embrace the season and remember our friends and neighbours. We will also be remembering the members of our congregation who have passed this year. We have gone through a lot in 2024 with several changes to our customary ways.

The fall saw the Taizé services, evensong in our outdoor worship space, and open Church during the week. We adjusted our fall and Christmas sales to one event, thus reducing the organizational burden on the parish. Monthly Children's Service has been revived, and our musician and choir are also resuming.

I offer a well deserved 'Thank You' to Grant Smalley, who undertook the improvement of our organ this summer and fall by getting trumpet pipes for it. They arrived this month and have been installed by Grant in the organ loft, with Don MacSween and Lanny Hubbard ably assisting him. For more information, please ask Grant.

Our biggest change is John's announcement of his retirement in February 2025. Both Cat and John will be greatly missed by our congregation. John's last service will be February 9th, and a farewell coffee fellowship will follow the 10:30 am joint service. We all wish John and Cat the best on their retirement and return to New York City.

The rest of February will be led by Canon Jenny Reploge. After our Vestry Meeting (AGM), Bishop Logan will be leading us on our continuing spiritual journey. Though we are once again on the search for a new Rector, we are being well supported by the Diocese and Bishop Anna. Canon Jenny and Archdeacon Lon Towstego are assisting us and are part of our hiring committee. The rest of the members are Helen Love, Lanny Hubbard, Margaret Eagle, Nancy Paxton, Sally Tuckey and Stan Willow.

The Wardens wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Submitted by Stan Willow and Helen Love

## A Unique Record of a Church's Family

This idea is one I am bringing with me from my former parish of Red Deer (Alberta). To get it started, each family was asked to donate one Christmas tree ornament to the Church's Christmas tree, and to write the family's name somewhere on it. The ornaments often reflect something about the family, but that is not a precondition! The ornaments are kept from year to year, and when new members join the congregation, they too are also asked to contribute an enscripted ornament. Each Advent, when the Christmas season starts anew, all the ornaments are displayed somewhere on the tree's branches. It is both entertaining and informative to "read" the tree year after year, to peruse this unique archive, to remember the church's family of members old and young, those present and those passed, and to reflect on this vivid record of the church's history. When the tree is first put up in Advent, children are often found tiptoeing round it in order to find which ornament is uniquely their own.

Submitted by Trish MacSween



## Our First Maritime Christmas

Terry and I have had many adventures in our travels within Canada. We both grew up in Victoria and often dreamed of the classic white Christmas but rarely saw it. That all changed when we received our first posting to Oromocto, New Brunswick.

First, we had to get our old Volare station wagon ready for the hot summer road-trip to NB. In anticipation of the frigid Maritime winters, I opted to get the newly established Canadian Tire in Victoria to install an in-line heater for the engine.

Once prepared, we set off in August for the first of many trips across Canada, with (then) nine-month-old Robyn and faithful Chica dog strapped into the back seats. At one gas stop east of Montreal, while looking under the hood I saw an electrical plug nestled next to the radiator. I had no idea why it was there and asked the gas station attendant. He looked at me with the finest Quebecois glance (only reserved for us western Anglos) and stated it was for my block heater.

So now I was really prepared; I had both an in-line heater and a block heater. I must say we needed it that first winter. Snow started in October and didn't give up until April. Our duplex had snow drifts in the mud room and to the top of the door frame. Terry was on her own while I was on a 4-month course in St. Jean, Quebec, but she was able to dig out a snow tunnel to escape for groceries and cabin fever. I finally returned home in mid-December, and we were able to prepare for Robyn's first Christmas together.

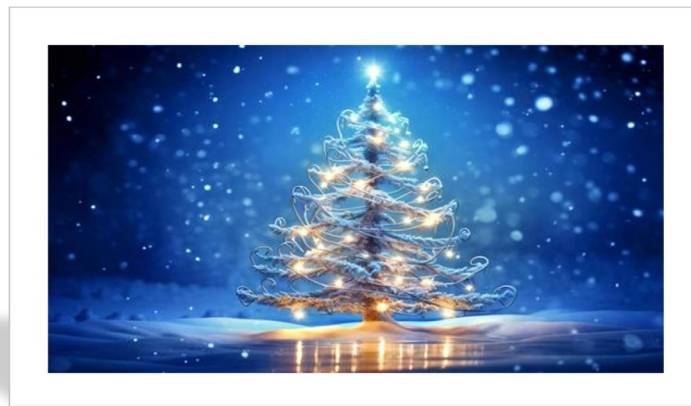
First things first: we needed a tree, and it had to be real. So off we trekked into the training area with a wood permit and a saw. I promptly got the old Volare stuck so we continued searching on foot. With snow deep and pristine, we trudged along with Robyn on my back while we searched for the "just right tree". Success was a twenty-foot pine tree with an exquisite crown . . .

We traded Robyn, and I crouched in the snow to saw the tree down. I bucked the top to a perfect size and got ready to haul the tree back. In the distance I saw the tiny blot of Plymouth brown and realized it was a long way to trek back to the Volare. But off we went with me pulling the tree by the stump through the snow, and losing more than a few branches along the way. By the time we got to the car, our magnificent find was by then a distant shadow of its former self. But we agreed that it was good enough after all that effort, so I dug out the car, loaded the tree, and we returned home triumphantly!

That Charlie Brown tree was darned magnificent when it was dressed! It was fortunate that we could see all our decorations from front to back without the obstruction of too many branches. Trudging through the snow to search out "just the right tree" became a well-loved tradition for Terry and me among family and friends during the many postings that followed.



Submitted by Stan Willow



## Just the Right Tree - again

It could have been just the right tree. It was 1947 and Dad was a "Milk Recorder", his official duties including tours of local dairy farms to check the quality of the milk that was being sold for public consumption. It was close to Christmas, and wishing to please his two little girls at home he asked one farmer whether he might find an evergreen tree that would be acceptable as a Christmas tree. The farmer willing agreed, and told Dad to help himself to what he fancied, so when his work was completed Dad set off to an evergreen spinney and sawed the top off what looked like "just the right tree". He then discovered that it was far too tall to fit into his humble car (a pre-war Austin 7), so he sawed the top off his prize choice until it did fit into the car, though only with the roof-light open so the top of the tree was sticking out for more than half its height.

Because it was still wartime mentality and everything (not only groceries) was in short supply, people felt cheered by the sight of the old car with the Christmas tree sticking out of the roof and cheered as Dad drove carefully by. When he arrived home he quickly discovered that the tree was way too tall for even the tallest ceiling in his two-bedroomed house, so again he sawed its top off and tried to install it in the hall. But the tree had other ideas, and as well as being heavy (and wet), it had wide branches and one of them knocked the telephone off the wall and broke it, causing no end of trouble, costly visits by the Telephone company, and many displays of irritation and severe annoyance. But without a doubt, it was exactly the right tree.

Submitted by Elizabeth Griffin



## The BAC

St. Michael's Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen (the BAC) was formed by Rev. Jack Rogers in the early 1960s. The prime activity of the group was to meet for a monthly dinner – though the dinners were in fact provided by members of the Parish Guild (*Oh, where would they be without the ladies?*) The membership of the BAC in those early years was in the 20s, but over time the increasing age of all, and the passings of some, brought our numbers down to 10 or so. When the Covid pandemic hit we had to disband the group. But it was the dinners provided by the Parish Guild that was the chief reason for our long and successful existence. And it wasn't only eating dinners: the BAC started, and organized, the Fall Sales at a time when Parish finances needed assistance.

Another BAC project that was created in the early 1980s must have attracted considerable publicity: a night-time lighted display of the nativity scene, installed at the head of the present balcony for the season of Christmas, before the stained-glass windows of St Michael were placed there. This photograph offers a realistic image of how it appeared. The display was well received, though winter weather gradually eroded it after a few years. The BAC also constructed a manger scene at ground level near the west (main) entrance to the church, and flood-lit it in the evenings for two weeks around Christmas itself.



Submitted by Peter Goddard, BAC Treasurer for 50 years

# The Year in Pictures

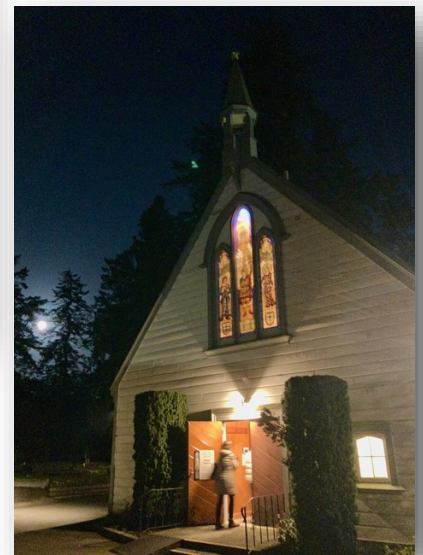
Sale Prep Weeks (Spring & Fall)



Summer Tea



Food-Safe Training



Worshiping and Remembering Together



## How Far Back Do You Go?

In the 1950s, 60s and 70s the Parish was very ably served by two devoted ladies: Kathleen Tuckey and Anna Goddard. Between them they kept the Parish, in particular its officers, informed in detail, not only about the Events (of whatever variety) which the Parish had organized, hosted or invented, but also concerning numbers of attendees at the services, the requests made of the incumbents for visitations or special creations, and the numbers of children registered for Sunday School. The rest of the information which Kathleen and Anna garnered so faithfully reads more like the stuff that AGMs are made of, and has been collected into a notebook, but the juiciest facts concern the Parish's overwhelming population of children.

In the late 1960s there were 120 (read that again! ...120) children registered to attend Sunday School, and 14 Staff to lead and instruct them. The following year that number had grown to 150. The Hall couldn't cope, so new accommodation for the Sunday School was built in the basement. The reasons behind this situation are not hard to find. It

was the post-war boom; troops had returned home wanting to start the families that they had dreamed of while being posted overseas. It was also the age of restraint: Grandmothers expected children to listen to Bible stories (or similar) on Sunday afternoons – there were no competing activities; Sunday was still that pure and holy day of rest (though where farm animals, especially dairy cows, fitted that rule was never quite clear).

However our furry or domesticated friends coped with the church calendar, Sunday School at St. Michael's seemed not to be anything out of the ordinary. But how many remained as firmly attached as the Register had made them feel? Whom can you name? Who was your Sunday-School teacher?

Submitted by Bookworm



### The Queens Came Late

The Queens came late, but the Queens were there  
With gifts in their hands and crowns in their hair.  
They'd come, these three, like the Kings, from far,  
Following, yes, that guiding star.

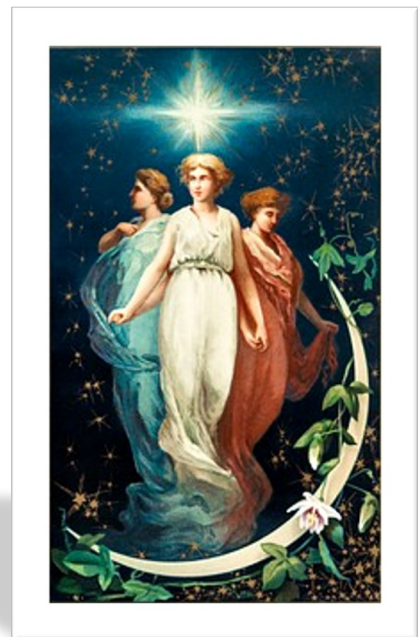
They'd left their ladles, linens, looms,  
Their children playing in nursery rooms,  
And told their sitters: "Take charge! For this  
Is a marvellous sight we must not miss!"

The Queens came late, but not too late  
To see the animals small and great,  
Feathered and furred, domestic and wild,  
Gathered to gaze at a mother and child.

And rather than frankincense and myrrh  
And gold for the babe, they brought for her  
Who held him, a homespun gown of blue,  
And chicken soup—with noodles, too—  
And a lingering, lasting, cradle-song.

The Queens came late and stayed not long,  
For their thoughts already were straining far -  
Past manger and mother and guiding star  
And a child aglow as a morning sun -  
Toward home and children and chores undone.

From Norma Farber, "When It Snowed That Night"  
(Submitted by Cat Perris)



## Congregating in the Kitchen

“*Congregating in the Kitchen*” is an opportunity to share those favourite recipes that are featured at our social events and coffee fellowship. All contributions are welcome, and Helen (as editor) is open to food bribes at any time should there be too many contributions to include.

### Ginger Molasses Cookies

Katie and Charlie’s piano teacher made these for her students and I asked her for the recipe back in 1999 and have been making them ever since. Made them with regular flour until I learned I had celiac and then used GF flour and they are just as good.

Submitted by Cat Perris



#### Ingredients:

- ◆ 1/4 cup Molasses
- ◆ 1 egg
- ◆ 3/4 cup butter
- ◆ 2 teaspoons baking soda
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon salt
- ◆ 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ◆ 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- ◆ 1 cup sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350
2. Mix all ingredients in a bowl
3. Add 2 cups white flour (or 1-to-1 gluten-free baking flour). Stir until well mixed
4. Roll dough into 1-inch balls and then roll them in sugar to coat lightly. Place on ungreased cookie sheet
5. Bake for 8--9 minutes (a bit longer for a crispier cookie). Each ball will flatten as it bakes
6. Let them cool awhile on the cookie sheet, then transfer to cooling rack.

### Butter Brittle

This recipe is a family favourite. Submitted by Sue Jones

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Mix together the flour, oats, brown sugar and pecans in a large bowl. Add the melted butter and mix thoroughly.
3. Spread the mixture evenly on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. (watch closely during the last few minutes as the edges can start to burn.)
4. Using a 9-inch x 13-inch pan, crumble half of the mixture into the bottom.
5. Top with half the jar of butterscotch sauce.
6. Cover with ice cream.
7. Sprinkle the remaining cookie mixture over the top of the ice cream and top with the rest of the butterscotch sauce.
8. Cover and freeze for at least a couple of hours before serving.

*Tip:* Open the box of ice cream completely and slice it into 1-inch slices. It will soften slightly once on top of the warm cookie mixture, so let it sit for a few minutes and then spread it so that it forms an even layer.



#### Ingredients:

- ◆ 2 cups flour
- ◆ 1/2 cup oats
- ◆ 1/2 cup brown sugar
- ◆ 1 cup chopped pecans
- ◆ 1 cup (2 sticks) of butter, melted
- ◆ 1 box vanilla ice cream
- ◆ 1 jar butterscotch sauce



## Parish Social Life

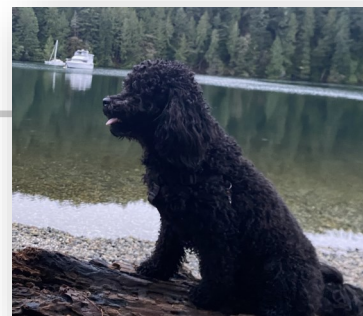
St. Michael's has lots of opportunities for us to gather and grow together and have a little fun. Here are updates from three of our regularly scheduled groups.

### Walking Group

The walking group continues to be a small but dedicated cadre that meets every **Friday morning at 9:30 for a one-hour walk** somewhere interesting. Over the past few years walks have moved away from the more challenging (Mount Doug) to include a repertoire of easy favorite parks in the peninsula area.

This past year we had two important additions to the group: Leo and Xena, who love to have a good run, especially on the beach or along the forest trails. Consequently we have added some new popular destinations, including the beautiful Royal Oak Golf Course Park and Parker Park Beach. However, the old favourites continue to attract us, including the woodland stroll of Todd Inlet, the sea air at Island View Beach, and the easy Elk/Beaver Lake trails. During the winter months the choice of walk is adjusted to accommodate the weather, and always to the walker preferences that week. Everyone is welcome to join for a stroll and chat.

Please contact Ricky @ 250-896-9630 ([ricky.love@shaw.ca](mailto:ricky.love@shaw.ca)) to be added to the walk email list.



### Craft Group

The Craft Group evolved from fellowship and a love for all things creative. This group meets **every other Tuesday from 1:00-3:00 pm** to learn from each other and be creative. Many different projects are underway including the continued creation of pew cushions to beautify the church. Next year we are working on a project to repurpose some donated liturgical vestments to create a hanging for the church and also knitting face cloths for 'Soap for Hope'.

Contact Diana Caleb ([wintercott@gmail.com](mailto:wintercott@gmail.com)) if you would like to join in!



### Card Crafting Group

Throughout 2024 the card crafting group has grown as new members (some new to our parish) have joined and become addicted to this fun social activity—not to mention the excellent cards created! This year, again, the group created Christmas cards to sell which has been a wonderful little fundraiser for our outreach priorities. I think we might try that for Easter too next year!



Workshops are held on the **second and fourth Monday each month from 1:00-3:00 pm in Littler Hall**. Sessions are instructed by seasoned leaders and you will always take home one (or more) hand made cards relevant to the season. There are always opportunities to include your own creativity as many deviate from the lesson to add their personal flair.

Please contact Terry Willow ([tjwillow@telus.net](mailto:tjwillow@telus.net)) if you are interested in joining in.

## A Nocturn of Sprouts

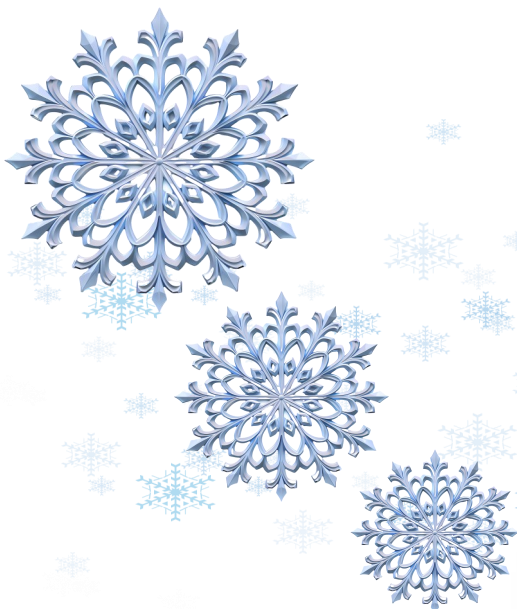
It was near the end of the Autumn term at university, and work was already piling up. There was also a need to find some means of earning money during the coming vacation, and it was then that I happened upon an advertisement in the Common Room announcing vacancies for kitchen staff over the Christmas period at a hotel being hired specially by the Workers' Educational Association of Great Britain. It promised remuneration, and also some free time to spend with my books, so I applied and was accepted. The hotel was in a draughty spot on the chalk cliffs outside Folkestone, not far from the better-known town and port of Dover. The work was routine and the hours long, but the company – mostly temporary, hired for the WEA's holiday house-party – was generally pleasant. Only the Chef, and the Housekeeper (along with 'Reg', her electricity-savvy husband), were regular employees.



As the guests duly started to arrive, work to keep everything polished and dusted rapidly increased, and we younger staff ran rather than walked about our duties (except when waiting at table). Full board was served throughout, and most people stayed indoors anyway as the weather was its usual wintry self. However, the sudden extra loading on the heating and lighting circuits soon began to find cracks, and Reg was kept busy kneeling in various cupboards trying to shoot some of the failures that were beginning to threaten. Temporary 'fixes' were manageable but not at that rate of demands, and the real crunch came on Christmas Eve. Late into the evening, when all the other young staff had taken themselves off to the pictures, I was plunged into darkness somewhere in the region of the kitchen as the whole of the lighting system gave up the struggle. Chef was quick to deal with the matter, fetched a candle for the two of us, and invited me to sit in semi-darkness and help him as he had several bushels of Brussels sprouts to peel for the next day. And so we worked together, Chef and I, telling jokes to help lift the tedium, but altogether enjoying our candlelight vigil in the kitchen as we peeled and cleaned, cleaned and peeled.

Something about the honours of serving came to mind much later, but I'm sure it was one of the most willing and enjoyable unpaid overtimes it had ever been my privilege to do (pre-motherhood). And sprouts remain one of my favourite vegetables.

Submitted by Elizabeth Griffin



### Snowflakes

Snowflakes drifting all around me, banners of ethereal grace;  
Borne upon the winds of midnight, gathered to their resting place.  
Silently in swirling visions, teeming from each sculptured cloud,  
Weaving wonders with their patterns, milling as a jostling crowd!  
Snowflakes spread across the landscape, picturesque for all to see;  
Giving us a glimpse of nature's dazzling, wintry scenery.

Contributed by Valda Kitching.



## No Dinner Without an Apple Pie

In 1959, just three months after we were married, Lois and I were living in a motel in Cold Lake, Alberta, while I was on a course. My brother sent us two twenty-pound turkeys for our Christmas dinner. Lois had never cooked a turkey before, but nevertheless she invited another air-force couple living in the next suite to dinner at our unit. When Christmas rolled around Lois set to work and cooked the turkey, prepared stuffing, cranberry sauce and all the trimmings like potatoes, peas, carrots and squash. She also baked an apple pie. The dinner was excellent; all the food was cooked to perfection and served beautifully.



At the conclusion of the feast Lois offered us the apple pie. She had wanted to put a latticework topping on the pie but had difficulty getting it right, and wound up rolling the pastry several times in an attempt to get the thickness just right. Being a first-time cook she didn't realize that the more she rolled the pastry the harder it became.

When we tried to cut into the pie we could not penetrate the crust of the latticework topping. Our neighbour said "wait a minute", and went out of the door, returning with an axe. He placed the corner of the axe blade under a piece of the crust and applied some pressure. The crust, still in one piece, flipped off and landed with a clang like a man-hole cover.

The pie was great.

At first Lois was embarrassed, but after the laughter died down I had to admit that that Christmas dinner was the best I had ever had, thanks to my brother's generosity and to Lois' efforts. It also provided a memory for a lifetime of an outstanding accomplishment by a new bride. Lois is still embarrassed when I tell this story, but I believe it is indicative of her skill and talents.

Submitted by George Herbert

## Santa's Advice

Here I am again, reporting another weird dream that featured the big fir tree by the Church Hall. In previous dreams I sat in the tree's celestial electronic office talking to the Wise Old Owl. But this latest dream is all about Santa Claus, and a window that opened in the tree.

The dream began when I saw the tree, beautifully decorated, with an open window. Before I could utter a word I saw Santa retreat into the tree. I could hear strange voices from within, and then Santa reappeared. "Sorry mate", he said, "I'm not supposed to see you today. I'm on a run cheering up spirits. But you are a human being—I'll get to you next week."

"Aren't you supposed to be on the job for everyone and all the time?" I replied, "I never thought for a moment that you had anything to do with spirits." But Santa would hear none of that. "Spirits are spending their time trying to get you humans turned around", he explained. "You have been busy doing evil things like bombing, burning, killing and starving women and children." "Why does God let us do that?", I asked in some perplexity. Santa again had a ready answer: "You should start worrying about another great flood. I'll call around again this Christmas— but it may be the last time."



Submitted by Jim Bullen

## I Believe in Angels

I was born in the 1950s in a small village in the European countryside. Life was not easy as we were poor, but we were also lovingly close, which made us content.

Our Christmas tree came straight out of the forest. Mother wrapped candies in thin foil, hung them on it, and added paper angels on the top. There were no fancy shiny decorations, just home-made candles to light the tree, but when my 4-year-old brother and I woke up on Christmas morning we thought it was magical and beautiful.

As we lay in bed wondering about that tree, standing high and mighty, its branches heavy with candies, my brother said, "Oh, I wish just two candies would drop down for us! Don't you?" Then, as we were watching the tree eagerly, two wrapped sweets miraculously fell down to the floor! We jumped out of bed, and never had a better, sweeter Christmas treat or such a happy secret morning. I was 5 years old.

Sadly my brother passed away twenty years ago, but for me those angels are still here, and especially around me every Christmas morning when memories from those bygone innocent days return, when angels seemed – and surely were – so real, listening to our wishes.

Submitted by Eva MacBride

## Starlight Blessings

Above all I love these nights,  
Moments in tender starlight,  
When dreams and hope unify  
And the heavenly silence resounds  
All over it - the universe:

Myriads of stars, sparkling melodies  
Surrounding all over me,  
So many angels guarding us  
From the etherial world, our shelter,  
Covering the firmament with eternal joy,  
A majestic magic upon everything,  
While the noble world slumbers.

Only who is dark in heart  
Must fear the night, as you know.  
But those who enlighten themselves  
In heavenly calm, listening,  
Cannot be frightened by silence.  
For demons only emerge from within,  
Not from celestial creation.  
And those who enjoy the nocturnal hours  
Draw blessings for all their days long.

(c) 2021, Martin Dee / Nitramica Arts

## Angels

Perhaps you'll glimpse them briefly  
From the corner of your eye,  
Or hear the music of their wings  
As they float softly by ...

Perhaps you'll recognize their work  
In some kind word or deed,  
Or feel a gentle hand on yours  
When you are most in need ...

Perhaps you won't remember them,  
Or notice what they do,  
But what is most important is that  
They remember you!

By Valda Kitching



## Animals Don't Take Days Off

Growing up as a kid, I had to sometimes work on Christmas Day. My dad was co-owner of Claremont Poultry. If no one was able to work on Christmas Day, my brother, sister, dad and I had to work on the farm that day.

Our day would start by waking up, going downstairs to find our stockings beside the wood fireplace. We opened the stockings followed by our present from Santa. We ate breakfast. Then we would walk a few minutes through the back fields over to the farm. We would collect the eggs by hand. My dad would push the egg cart between the barns. The eggs were normally collected four times per day, twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon. But on Christmas Day, we only collected the eggs twice. An average day's collection would be 15,000 to 17,000 eggs.



After we finished the first collection, we would go home, clean up and get ready for our Christmas tree. Mom's side of the family would arrive, and we would open the presents. We would have lunch then head back to the farm again.

The second collection was done. Back home to clean up. Then to grandma and grandad's house a couple of minutes walk down the road. By that time, dad's relatives had arrived from the mainland. We would have dinner with 15 to 18 people. Grandma would make a great turkey dinner for us on her birthday, December 25<sup>th</sup>. After dinner we all would help do the dishes, clean up and put everything away. Then grandma would open her birthday presents first. Then we got to attack the Christmas tree. The last present was usually not opened till at least 9 p.m. Then we would say goodnight and go home.

We usually did not have to work on Boxing Day, other people were able to work. On Boxing Day, my uncle, cousin, brother and I would drive downtown, park and then visit A&B Sound, with the ad from the Times Colonist in hand. Then a couple of days of visiting with relatives, playing board games and card games.

So, growing up on a farm does not mean taking days off. As my dad would say, "Animals don't take days off."

Written by Bruce Goddard

Note: Bruce is Peter's other son, and Brian's brother.

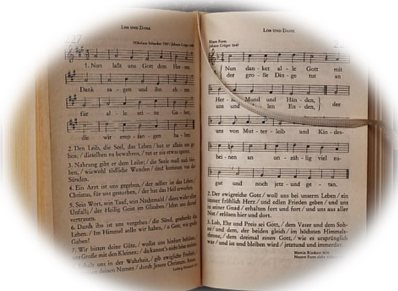
Submitted by Phillis Fatt.



## Another "Choir" for St. Michael's

As we get closer to Christmas, both the music and the history remind me what a fine legacy we share. The "human" choir, of course, is made up of members of the church who share their talents to lead the congregation in singing. Yet the Pipe Organ also leads the congregation's singing, with a "choir" of wind-blown (almost human) pipes. Those pipes sing and share their various pitches with many different voices, from soft strings and flutes to the principal pipes which stand at the front of the casework to lead the singing of hymns.

This Fall I have been working hard to install a 'Fagotto', the loudest voice of all, and to complete it by Christmas. Preparing these reed pipes requires much accurate attention to many details to get them truly ready; with their bold, brassy sound they can be very fussy, and demand specific care and support in order to achieve the effect of a powerful, soloistic voice to sing in the organ "choir". We hope it will all come together for everyone to enjoy.



Submitted by Grant Smalley

## Christmas in Brazil

*Our home in Cabedelo,  
Brazil*

For those living in the southern hemisphere, Christmas bears numerous differences compared to the more traditional experiences of snow, reindeer, sleigh-bells and skating. Yet for a little girl growing up in northeastern Brazil during the 1970s, Christmas nevertheless bore a magic of its own, a time filled with excitement. Although the days were hot, the air would cool in the evenings, bringing the streets to life with colourful lights and decorations. In small communities it was customary to take an evening “promenade”, chatting with elderly neighbours as they shared treats with children and offered advice to the adults.



On Christmas Eve we would attend Midnight Mass, and marvel at how beautifully adorned the church was, with flickering candles and a large nativity scene. I felt a sense of wonder as we sang carols and listened to the priest’s message of hope and love. Before the service we had been allowed to open one present - almost certainly a book that would keep us quietly entertained that evening. However, we could barely contain our excitement for the Christmas stockings waiting for us early the next morning.

Our house was large, Brazilian style, with open verandas facing the beach, making it a popular gathering point for expatriates as others too far from home to visit there. So after breakfast on Christmas Day we would spread to the verandas and the beach, each to his own corner or choice of common space, and by early afternoon visitors would arrive in their dozens, filling the house with conversation and laughter. Instead of offering a single festive meal, mother designed a non-stop buffet from the kitchen. As evening approached, the house would fill with music from the local university orchestra, primarily constituted of expatriates and friends. I preferred to watch all this curled in a hammock on my bedroom veranda, noticing the little fires on the beach and listening to the music from below.

Boxing Day was a day of rest when we would fend for ourselves with leftovers and enjoy our new toys. The household staff were given the day off, and headed home carrying gifts and food for their own families.

Christmas in Brazil was not just about material gifts but also the spirit of togetherness and celebration. The warmth of family and friends, the joy of giving and the beauty of our traditions made each Christmas unforgettable. It was a time of love, hope, and the simple pleasures that come from being surrounded by those we cherish and - especially - those who needed a home away from home. Just as my own family of two adults and 5 children aged 6 to 16 had arrived penniless at Brazil's coast literally by accident (a shipwreck - but that's another story!) and had been welcomed, fostered, educated and protected, so we found in the celebration of Christmas a worthy opportunity to give back - with interest! - to expatriates, and others very far from home, some of the bounty which that kindly community had shown to us when we were in dire need.

Submitted by Helen Love

### Inspiration

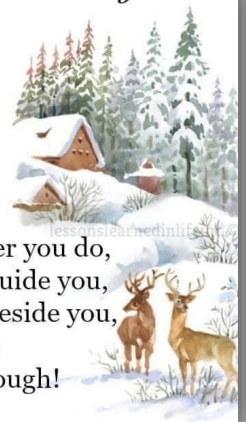
With time we see, through wiser eyes, the greatest gifts God sends  
Aren't power, fame, or fortune, but our families and friends;  
We find that dreams aren't just for kids, that prayer can save the day,  
That life's a whole lot sweeter when we laugh along the way ...

We learn that simple caring means the world when times are tough,  
That hugs can sometimes say it all when words are not enough;  
We learn to keep a childlike faith forever in our hearts  
For that's where hope and love are born, where every good thing starts.

By Valda Kitching

### *A Christmas Blessing*

May you have-  
Warm hugs  
to greet you,  
Fun times  
to meet you,  
Joy in what ever you do,  
God's love to guide you,  
Good friends beside you,  
And happiness  
All season through!  
—Emily Matthews



## Diocesan Women's Retreat

Dear Sisters in Christ,

On behalf of the Planning Team we send greetings for a blessed Advent and Christmas to you and your families. We hope you have been keeping well and weathering our stormy weather safely.

The Spring 2025 Retreat will feature two dynamic women, The Rev. Jacqueline Stober and The Rev. Colleen Lissemer. The Theme chosen by Rev. Jacqueline is "**Still I Rise**". We hope you will give consideration to come and participate in a very exciting retreat weekend of April **25th to 27<sup>th</sup> 2025** being held at Camp Pringle. Registration will open in January. God bless, Brenda (Dhaene) – Coordinator



*The Rev. Jacqueline Stober*  
Facilitator



*The Rev. Colleen Lissemer*  
Spiritual Director

## Blessings from the Bishop and Diocese Bishop Anna's Christmas Message

THE RIGHT REV ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE

# CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace."  
Luke 1:78-79

*Blessings  
for the Season*  
FROM THE DIOCESE OF  
ISLANDS AND INLETS

Despite - or perhaps because of - the non-moving mail, our old friend Norma Meggitt sent an email to Sally Tuckey, which Sally now passes to us with a request to squeeze it into the Messenger if possible. In the nick of time (thanks, Sally!) and slightly abbreviated, here is Norma's message:

At this time of year I always think of Victoria and dear St. Michael's and the services there. Some things have certainly changed. Now of course, I am not expected to cook Christmas dinner any more, and my contribution is merely to go there and enjoy the company and the meal. And there is nothing too taxing in that! We will be in my daughter Diane's largish home, and that seems to include most of the family and some visiting grandchildren. Our Christmas Eve Service this year will be held at 8:00 p.m. and I will be attending with Rose Ann and her family. This service is one of my favourites and I always enjoy the carols so much.

Say "hello" to my St. Michael's friends, and give them my best wishes.

Much love and many blessings to you all, Norma Meggitt

## Peace Tree



**Peace  
be with you  
in this place of  
confusion and sadness.  
Peace be with you in your brokenness.  
Peace be with you in your hoping,  
Peace be with you in your examination.  
Peace be with you in your reconciling and in your learning.  
Peace be with you in weariness.  
Peace be with you in bewilderment and anger.  
Peace be with you in your pain and your dis-abled places.  
Peace be with you in your struggles and jealousies and insecurities.  
Peace be with your demons -  
may they rest from their torment and sit quietly in another room.  
Peace to your clutching and clamouring and scrambling and places of disease.  
Peace to the cyclone of terror that threatens to dislodge all goodness from you.  
Peace to wonder,  
Peace to joy,  
Peace to awe,  
Peace to rest.  
Peace, peace,  
Peace, beloveds.**



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We acknowledge that for thousands of years the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakwaka'wakw peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, worship, and play.

We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here; one based on honour and respect.

Editors: Helen Love &  
Elizabeth Griffin

The Messenger is the newsletter of St. Michael and All Angels' Anglican Church. The Messenger is a communication means for members of the parish. It does not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the editors, or the church. While the newsletter exists for parishioners to contribute their news, opinions and views, the editors may edit articles in order to facilitate understanding and fit space.

Contributions should report on parish activities, advertise upcoming events or be original literary articles that are church related, up to a maximum of 500 words.

Please send submissions to the church office, preferably by e-mail to [smaaac@telus.net](mailto:smaaac@telus.net).

by Rev. Dr. Dawna Wall  
Submitted by Lanny Hubbard

### Last Thought to Ponder

When the Reindeer are electricity driven, where does Santa charge them up?

