



THE BURNING BUSH

101 COBURG STREET, SAINT JOHN, N.B. E2L 3J8

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Advent 2012

MINISTER: THE REV. DR. JOHN CRAWFORD, B.A., M.Div., D.Min.

Qui Conceptus Est De Spiritu Sancto, Natus Ex Maria Virgine

Christians are peculiar and more so the Christian Church. As I write this letter it is only 3 days away from the end of the year, and at the end of every year we celebrate Christ the King Sunday. No, I have not made a mistake in the day or month of the year, its only 9:42a.m on a Thursday morning (please reference Peter's address in Acts about the coming of the Holy Spirit) and I am absolutely lucid. The reason I may appear to be ahead of myself is there is a difference between the church and Julian calendar.

The reason for the difference in time is that Christian people for 2,000 years have always maintained that the times and seasons of our year correspond to what is most important to our worldview or reality. Our reality, that is to say the way we order our world, is couched in the centrality of Jesus' Incarnation, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension as evidenced by the ending of Regular time by celebrating Christ the King Sunday and the beginning of the Season of Advent which moves us toward the Incarnation of Jesus.

Karl Barth wrote in his seminal work *Creedo*, "The Incarnation of the Word of God is the divine decision, which constitutes the content of human faith, and which forms it also into a human decision: *Dominus noster!*" He explains that "Our Lord" whose inward nature lay hidden from our mind's eye is a mystery of a thing and can only be understood through the miracle or the sign of the very event which is incomprehensible to us: that a virgin conceives a child! In becoming "Word made flesh" God is iconoclastic and destroys human conceptions of both time, space, and what it means to be human.

In Jesus there is fullness of God and man without distinction in substance but the genius of the Incarnation is that the glory of the sign that God is among us is wonderfully present and yet hidden from humanity most of the time (except for the Transfiguration). Even with the angels chorus in the fields for Shepherds to hear Jesus is King of lowly beginnings. The Incarnation teaches us that when the Father redeems the world it was not from a distant throne with a loud decree but with a vulnerable cry from a manger in Bethlehem. God has always come to us and delivered us in ways we could see but not always understand. The Incarnation is nothing less than a physical marker in eternity which tells us in a certain place and time our world was

redeemed. This is why we have church seasons and do not march to the regular cadence of the world – our God has come and He alone orders our lives.

Consider the Incarnation as an event which changes your life and Christmas will have newfound purpose and meaning for your life.

- Dr. John Crawford

After School Program

One of our current commercials reminds us that we are never asked to lend a foot; it's always and extra hand that is sought.

I really appreciate the extra hands that have helped in this and the other programs affected by my enforced sick leave. Wendy Rowe, a member of the Co-Op Kitchen has been able to step in, and along with Leo LaFleur, our Sports Director, is doing a wonderful job of running the program, and has described Wendy as a "Godsend".

Brenda Wright, who brings children from "Family Plus" pitches right in and our own Katie Gunter has proved invaluable. With Christmas craft time upon us we are very grateful that Tina Barthalot is lending a hand as well.

Now that soccer is over at Prince Charles more of our children are back, enjoying camaraderie of our program. Sometime they will arrive with wet socks or with cold ears or hands. We always appreciate the socks, mittens or hats that you donate. Most of the children are ages 7-14.

Books and Blankets

I'll be glad when I can drive again and join Wendy or Krista and the children for this enjoyable program. Most weeks the children enjoy a book set in a different country and culture. They get their passport stamped, draw in the country flag and from the reading learn the capital city and some distinguishing cultural facts.

One of our boys, intrigued with the passport idea, brought up a picture of a Canadian passport on his Mother's phone and proceeded to draw, in a few minutes a duplication of the Canadian Crest on his passport. Excellent work! Anyone out there who can tutor in art? He loves to draw and would enjoy lessons.

With Christmas coming, we'll have a new focus in our crafts and reading and I'll be hoping to find just the right book for each child.

Co-Op Kitchen

As the girls worked in the kitchen a week ago the fragrance of roasted turkey with all the trimmings wafted up through the church. By 11:30 A.M. we were enjoying a relaxing meal together with our guest Judy Heatherington, the church secretary. Our 30 lb. turkey served us all generously and there was plenty to go home to each family. There was even a plate for Laurie who was driver for the day. Desert was apple crisp. Later, with Laurie's help, I made 7 ½ litres of stock from the turkey carcass-a great start for soup at the co-op kitchen in January.

Next month the girls will gather for their Christmas cookie bake and our little Christmas party.

Those of us in the programs would like to wish everyone a Blessed and Joyful Christmas.

Glenda Hossack

Outreach Co-ordinator

Church Management Committee

Your church Management Committee has been busy trying to get the church cleaned up for Christmas. The Ladies Group has offered to help fund the expense for doing this.

We had six people from the Management Committee and with Jim Thompson's and David Cunningham's help last Friday we loaded a one ton truck loaned by Leroy and Heather Hatfield with junk and took it to the dump. The truck was full!! Any items that were worth salvaging we loaded in three other vehicles and these items were taken for recycle or donated to Value Village. Other items are going to be placed for sale on Kijiji.

The Ladies parlour is used daily by Vision of Hope and Out of the Cold for three months or so during the cold weather. This room is badly in need of new flooring. The committee is going to approach the building supply companies to see if anyone of them will donate the flooring material to replace the floor and members of the church men's group will come in some Saturday morning and put down the flooring. That is the plan at this time.

Three weeks ago a couple of the older "fogies", myself included, worked outside cleaning up the leaves in the rose garden and in the church front yard.

The Committee is looking at getting an outside cleaning company to do a complete cleaning of the floors on all three levels and hope to have the sanctuary level cleaned before Christmas.

On behalf of the Committee I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Laurie Hossack

Chairperson

Church Home News

The nursing home is bustling once again with activity now that the Advent season is upon us. Soon the van will be going out on evening drives so that residents can enjoy the outdoor light displays in the neighbourhood and beyond. Choirs of all ages and genres will soon be visiting to bring their messages of joy. It truly is a busy time for the residents and they love it! Christmas trees are being decorated and the judging will be on December 6th. Also, residents appreciate the difficulties some people have at this time of the year and they raise funds for Christmas charities.

The Candlelight Christmas dinner will be held for residents and family members on December 13th at 5:00. If you would like to see just how many people we can possibly fit into the home for this wonderful feast come and be a volunteer for the event! All you need to do is call the front office at 643-6003 and give your name. On the 13th show up at 4:30, dressed in your festive best, to receive directions. Bring your appetite, too, because you'll receive a turkey dinner with all the fixings for helping. This is a wonderful evening filled with smiles, music, good food and friendship. It's a win-win proposition!

We can't forget other home news. Janet Reed, a member of our congregation, celebrated her 90th birthday in style on October 28th in St. Andrew's Lounge. There are some pictures floating around indicating that she had a wonderful time. A good group from the church was on hand to help her mark this momentous occasion.

The home is in the midst of replacing furniture in the resident rooms. This will provide the rooms with some better organization and a little extra space for movement. We can't make the rooms bigger and every bit of space is valuable!

If you are interested in volunteering at the home, you are invited to come and help out in the various activities. The residents who are able like to keep busy and appreciate anything you can do from playing cards, reading, pastoral care, helping with church services, transporting residents to other parts of the home, going on excursions in the van, to even holding a hand. Anything is welcome!

Did you know that our church holds two services a week for the residents? They are on Thursday afternoons at 1:30 and Sunday mornings at 9:30. If you want to offer your assistance a few times a year to help with Sunday worship please let Anne Murdoch know (847-3701). The short service is done in plenty of time to get to Grace for regular services. The sermons are condensed "Cole's Notes" versions of the longer winded versions we're used to!

White gift Sunday is coming up on the second Sunday in Advent. This is an opportunity to provide residents with some personal care items. Not all residents have family or friends in the area and these gifts give them a little something for them to look forward to on Christmas day. Suggestions for white gifts include: non-skid socks, playing cards with large numbers, shaving cream, bath gel, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, talcum powder, aftershave, deoderant, low scent body lotion, hair spray, pajamas, women's jewelry, hair clips, slippers, large print books, leather belts for men, hats and mitts/gloves. They also have been known to have a

sweet tooth! Wrap the gifts simply or place in gift bags with a small tag indicating what the contents are and size (if applicable).

The Christmas Eve service will be held on December 24th at 2:00 PM in St. Andrew's Lounge.

- Janet Soper

Dates to remember

White Gift Sunday: December 9 @ Grace

Candle Light dinner: December 13 @ 4:30 (call 643-6001 to volunteer)

Christmas Eve service: December 24 @ 2:00

Sunday service: Every Sunday @ 9:30 (call Anne Murdoch at 847-3701 to volunteer)

Women's Group

Since the Thanksgiving newsletter, we have continued to make soup for Romero House. We would love to have two more volunteers to buy the vegetables and meat and make the stock. You may take it to the church the Sunday prior to the date or bring it to the church the day you volunteered by 8:45am. If you would like a tax receipt, submit your receipt in an envelope and put it in the collection plate. You could also help us make soup any Tuesday we are making it.

We have prepared and served two Funeral receptions, one for Joan Henderson and the second for Peggy Bulmer.

We will supply the Treat Bags for the Sunday School Christmas party.

Respectfully submitted

Vivian MacDonald

May Megaw

P.S. Soup Volunteer list for after Christmas is posted on the bulletin board.

Announcements

THE AFTER SCHOOL CLUB and Co-op Kitchen Programs are wondering if anyone has a girls size 8 snowsuit and girls size 12 ski jacket and pants that could be passed on to them. Also useful are socks, mittens, and hats to fit up age 14. If you can help, please speak to Glenda Hossack.

COMMUNITY FOOD BASKET NEWS – Community Food Basket thanks church members for their contributions of food items, plastic shopping bags and jars. Please do keep these coming and make sure that the jars and lids are clean and remove the labels. We are **DESPERATELY IN NEED OF CEREALS** for our clients. We are also in need of instant coffee.

SNOWSUIT - Philip and Sybil Barthelot have a new snowsuit, size 12-18 mos, pink and a pair of size 5 pink and blue snowboots to give away. If you know of someone who can use them or can use them yourself, please speak to Philip after worship.

COURSES AVAILABLE - Good news for those who wish to improve their understanding of the Christian Religion. We now have a series of courses on 30 min. CDs. They are available to individuals or groups. Length of courses and subject matter varies. Please see notice on bulletin board to see subjects available.

CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE – It is time once again to think about the Christmas Exchange. We would like to be able help out 20 families this year. Each family receives a turkey and a \$50 gift card from a local grocery store. In order to do this, we need help from the congregation of Grace Presbyterian Church. If you would like to give a financial donation please mark an envelope “Christmas Hampers” and put it in the offering plate. This year we are also looking for someone willing to coordinate this project. If you are that person, please call the office at 634-7765.

BIBLE STUDY -The congregational trip to the Holy Land (February 27-March 7) is fast approaching and for us to be fully prepared and “operational” when we land in Tel-Aviv a Holy Land Primer is being prepared by Dr. Crawford and Dr. Lee. The Primer will follow the tour route so that you will be able to hear and learn about the biblical narratives and stories. For instance, the first day centers around the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River so the study will focus on some of the events which took place there.

Date(s): Wednesday, November 28 and December 5

Time: 7-8 p.m.

Where: Grace Presbyterian Board Room

All congregational members and interested persons are invited to attend this study and we hope that if you are unable to join us on the Holy Land Pilgrimage that you will attend the studies for your spiritual enrichment. There is still room for more members and friends of Grace to participate in the trip. Please consider this trip as an opportunity to enrich your life as we follow in the footsteps of our Saviour.

Esther Shanks was honoured with the Community Service Award by the Greater Saint John Community Foundation

Fred Hammond has been very successful in high school football. He has won several awards on both a provincial and national level. As a result, he has been approached by a number of universities. Fred has chosen to attend McGill, where he will be studying pre-med.

CONCERTS

"Festive Sounds!" concert featuring St. Mary's Band and the Rotary Boys Choir at St. Luke's Anglican Church, corner of Main Street and Lansdowne Avenue, Saint John, on **Thursday, December 6, at 7 pm**. Adults: \$10. Children 10 and under: \$5. Come and enjoy festive music and songs of the season and join in the carol sing! Proceeds to St. Mary's Band and St. Luke's ministries.

The Saint John Men's Chorus under the direction of David Mitchell, and the Cantabile Women's Ensemble will present a **Christmas Concert on Tuesday, December 11, at 7:30 pm** at Portland United Church. Tickets: \$15 Tickets are available from any choir member or at the door or from Netta Chase. This concert is presented in partnership with the Salvation Army Auxiliary.

DEATHS

Joan Henderson - October 6

Peggy Bulmer - November 15

BAPTISMS

Ronan Trecartin McDonough - October 21

ADVENT SCHEDULE

December 2nd Celebration of Holy Communion

December 8th "Deck the Halls" Come help decorate the sanctuary for Christmas

December 9th White Gift Sunday (for residents of Nursing Home – a small gift wrapped with a detachable tag indicating Female or Male and contents.)

December 16th Children's Christmas play during worship

Children's Christmas party after worship

December 21st Christmas Hampers (tentative date)

December 24th Family Service with Koreans 6:30pm

December 24th Candlelight Service 11:30pm

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The deadline for the Lent issue of THE BURNING BUSH will be February 10th, 2013. Please contact me at 849-8934 or nancyhossack@hotmail.com to submit articles at any time up to that date. Please pass along news of graduations, anniversaries, or things that the congregation would be interested in reading about.

- Nancy Hossack

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