



The Parish Window

ADVENT / **CHRISTMAS** 2019



Christ Church New Street BOROUGH VILLAGE

PONDERINGS FROM PASTOR PAM



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Looking Ahead

"Just as we can block natural light, we can draw the curtains of our soul and block the light of God; ..."



John chapter 1, speaks of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world...and all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

At Christmas, we celebrate the light of God coming into the darkness. I don't know

about you, but with all that is taking place in the world today, sometimes I am challenged by the darkness. Like the winter weather, some days feel a dull gray. Our passage states that light has come into the world and that the darkness did not overcome it. This is true in our day when it seems there is only space for "happy holidays", but no "room in the inn" for the Christmas message. What is our call? I think it is to be "shone on" by the light and then to reflect that light into the lives of others. Not that we make it happen, but we can hinder it. Just as we can block natural light, we can draw the curtains of our soul and block the light of God; fear, guilt, not meeting our own or other's expectations, bad choices, unforgiveness, selfishness etc. These can block the light of God.

This Christmas, I invite you to take some time to ponder...what blocks the light of God from getting into your life more fully? Where does God want to shine the warmth of His light?

Many years ago, a young child was helping me put up a Christmas tree. We put all the branches on the artificial tree and then we started looking through decorations. He stopped and asked, what I thought was a puzzling question: "Where's the Necessity set". My response

was, "The what?". Then he proceeded to find one of the pieces he was looking for and then I understood. I said "oh, you mean the nativity set". As I started to correct him, I realized that he had it right. It is a necessity - a necessity that we know the birth of the one who came as the first Christmas gift, who came to offer light in the darkness of our lives. This Christmas, I hope that you will know something of what Isaiah wrote about - those who live in darkness have seen a great light.

Your Priest and Pastor Pam



THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Today, the Christmas tree is a centre of festivities. Topped with a star and glittering with lights and ornaments, it is a part of the beauty and meaning of the Christmas season.

How did the Christmas tree come to play such an important part in the observance of Christmas?

There is a legend that comes down to us from the early days of Christianity in England.

One of those helping to spread Christianity among the Druids was a monk named Wilfred (later Saint Wilfred).

One day, surrounded by a group of his converts, he struck down a huge Oak tree, which, in the Druid religion, was an object of worship. As the Oak tree fell to the earth, it split into four pieces, and from its center there grew a young Fir tree, pointing a green spire towards the sky.

The crowd gazed in amazement. Wilfred let his axe drop and turned to speak.

"This little tree shall be your Holy Tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of the Fir. It is the sign of an endless life, for its leaves are

evergreen. See how it points towards the heavens.

Let this be called the tree of the Christ Child. Gather about it, not in the wilderness, but in your homes. There it will be surrounded with loving gifts and rites of kindness."

And to this day, that is why the Fir Tree is one of our loveliest symbols of Christmas.

Submitted by: Canon Jacquie Boutheon



Canon Jacquie at clergy conference
2019

A different kind of Christmas "Wish List"

Christmas will soon be upon us, and children (and some adults) are busy preparing their "wish list" for the gifts they hope to receive. However, the gifts we treasure most often don't come from Amazon, The Bay or any other store. Here is a very different kind of "Wish List", an ancient prayer reputed to have been found in the 1,000-year-old cathedral and former abbey at Chester in England.

Give me a good digestion Lord, and also something to digest;

Give me a healthy body Lord, with sense to keep it at its best.

Give me a healthy mind, Good Lord, to keep the good and pure in sight Which seeing sin is not appalled, but finds a way to set it right.

Give me a mind which is not bored, that does not whimper, whine or sigh;

Don't let me worry over much about that fussy thing called "I".

Give me a sense of humour, Lord, give me the grace to see a joke;

To get some happiness from life, and pass it on to other folk.

No matter how rich or poor we are in the world's terms, we can surely ask for, receive, recognize and truly appreciate the gifts on this very different "wish list".

– Submitted by: Canon Jacquie Boutheon



A Word from Father Roy

Joseph and Mary face a time of preparation – the birth of their first child. They have already gone through one time of preparation – settling into living together in their new home. At least they are in Nazareth, their hometown, where there are family and friends to help with the coming event. Plans are going quite smoothly.

Suddenly, things change. The Roman government forces Joseph to go to Bethlehem for a census count. Altered plans. New preparations. Mary must stay with her cousin Elizabeth. Joseph must plot his 80-mile journey to Bethlehem.

But Mary wants to go with him. She's not expecting for a few weeks. There's time to go and come back before her child is born. Reluctantly, Joseph agrees. New preparations – a weeklong trip – places to stay overnight – food to prepare and carry for meals on the way – how to make the journey. Finally, they set off, Joseph walking and Mary riding on a donkey.

Arriving safely at Bethlehem, they find it overcrowded, with nowhere for them to stay. Luckily, a kind-hearted innkeeper allows them to use his stables as a temporary resting place.

Now there's a real crisis – Mary's pregnancy has accelerated, due to the long donkey trip, and her new baby boy is born there in the stables! Problem after problem, but Joseph and Mary survive. Through it all, God is with them, because it's his big event too. Guiding and supporting, he's making sure they successfully complete their journey to parenthood. And the faith of Joseph and Mary gives them the courage to make it through to their big event.

It's now our big event! Our traditions determine what our preparations will be: writing and sending Christmas cards to friends past and present; putting up a tree and decorating it; adding other special decorations in our home; carefully selecting particular gifts for people we love; planning celebrations with family and friends; deciding who is going to cook our Christmas dinner and when; doing something to help the celebrations of those less fortunate; sensibly taking care of all these things and more without spending beyond our means.

Where is God in these preparations? For me, the answer is simple. If our preparations are just another "chore" which we are expected to do every year, then they're just plans for a holiday on the 25th of December. But if the Holy Spirit of God is present in our heart, mind and spirit, then everything we do is a delight, not a chore.

There's a smile when we send a Christmas message to an absent friend. Every decoration we place on the tree is a sparkle of fun. Every gift we wrap brings a sense of joyful expectation. Each shortbread cookie contains a measure of warm delight.

All these become real Christmas Preparations – full of joy for our coming celebration of God's wonderful gift – the gift of Jesus – God with us.

Fr. Roy Shepherd

"And when the Lord Jesus has become your peace, remember, there is another thing: good will towards men. Do not try to keep Christmas without good will towards men."

-Charles Spurgeon"



Financial Report - We Need Your Help.

So far this year, we have received the following income:

Operating Fund:	\$191,406.
Rejuvenate Capital Campaign	22,190.
Designated for the sign replacement	<u>4,150.</u>
Total Income	<u>\$217,746.</u>

As of the end of November, our 2019 operating expenses have exceeded our operating income by \$13,594. (excluding capital campaign and sign replacement income). Total operating income and expenses are about the same as last year, so our operating deficit is currently similar to last year's.

The following are the numbers for this year and last year:

O/F:	<u>Jan - Nov 2019</u>	<u>Jan - Nov 2018</u>
Income	91,406.	\$192,300.
Expenses	<u>205,000.</u>	<u>204,237.</u>
Deficit	<u>(\$13,594.)</u>	<u>(\$11,937.)</u>

Last year, when we were faced with a similar deficit, the congregation responded generously, almost eliminating the deficit. Can you help us again this year to help eliminate the deficit?

For envelope users, Christmas envelopes may be used to make a special donation at this time of year. For those who are on the pre-authorized giving program, or do not use envelopes, special Christmas envelopes are available from the sidespersons.

Note: All donations to be included in your 2019 tax receipt, must be received by the church by December 31st, 2019.

Thank you for your support.

The Wardens & Treasurer

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

It's that time of year again. The Christmas decorations have gone up in the malls: towering evergreen trees decorated with glittering ornaments and ribbons, over-the-top North Pole houses with long lineups to see Santa, and bright strings of lights hanging on ceilings and storefronts. Every year when I see these decorations, I find myself feeling disappointed by what Christmas has become in this modern age. It has become a holiday of extravagance and consumerism, the exact opposite of what it is meant to represent. I have to search for any mention of Jesus.

If we take ourselves back to the time of Jesus' birth, we see a picture of humility and simple beginnings. Being the Son of God, Jesus could have come to earth in a great show of lights and power, riding a chariot of gold with angels by his side, born into a prestigious family and adorned with jewels. Instead, he was born to a young, virgin girl, a commoner. Unable to find a room in an inn, Mary had to find an alternative place to give birth. Little baby Jesus—our Almighty God in human form—didn't even get a crib or a bed, let alone a golden chariot. Instead, he was laid in a manger, a trough out of which animals ate their food and drank their water. He wasn't wrapped in silk or fine materials, but in simple cloths (Luke 2:7). It was truly humility and simplicity at its finest. These two qualities would go on to become evident in Jesus' life and ministry, whether he was washing the feet of his disciples or dying a humiliating death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, sins he didn't even commit.

To me, Jesus is the very definition of humility right from his birth. So when I see the way Christmas is celebrated now, I find it couldn't be further from the truth. It shouldn't be all about the extravagant decor, the lights, or even the gifts. It should be a reminder of our Almighty God sending His only Son to earth in human form in the humblest way possible, in a way that would lay the foundation for who Jesus would become and what he would do for us. Now doesn't *that* make it the most wonderful time of the year?

- R. Luther



Christmas Service Times



Dec. 21

- **7:00pm - A Blue Christmas Service**

For those who have lost a loved one recently or who find Christmas a hard time

Dec. 22

- **10:00a.m. - Lessons and Carols**

Hear the story of God working in history and sing Christmas carols

Dec. 24

Christmas Eve

- **7p.m. - Family Service**
- **10:00p.m. - Communion Service**

Dec. 25

Christmas Day

- **10:00a.m. - Quiet Eucharist**

Dec. 29

- **8:30 - Eucharist**
- **10am - Eucharist**

Dec. 31

New Year's Eve Service

- **5:00p.m.**

MILESTONES

If you or any of your loved ones have had a birthday, an anniversary, or any other reason to celebrate since the last issue of the newsletter, here's to wishing you



We welcome and uphold in prayer the newly baptised

Ezra Angelo Young



We remember with love and in prayer those to whom we said goodbye this past year and are no longer with us: May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

We uphold in prayer their loved ones as they miss them at the dinner table this Christmas.

Let us also uphold in prayer those who are battling loneliness this Christmastide; those with no one with whom to share a word, a laugh, a memory.

May the Lord bless each one and lighten their burden with a companion, a friend, someone who cares. Amen.



THE PARISH WINDOW



JUST A THOUGHT...

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Please call the church office to
be directed to any member of
staff or committee member.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.christchurchscarborough.com

A new church or liturgical year begins with the season of Advent. The season precedes Christmas and sometimes can be confusing to many as there are those who believe that Christmas things like decorations, are not for Advent.

(Honestly that part confuses me because I love them and there would be very little time to enjoy them.)

From Christian.com... *'The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word adventus, meaning "coming," which is a translation of the Greek word parousia. Scholars believe that during the 4th and 5th centuries in Spain and Gaul, Advent was a season of preparation for the baptism of new Christians at the January feast of Epiphany, the celebration of God's incarnation represented by the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus ([Matthew 2:1](#)), his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist ([John 1:29](#)), and his first miracle at Cana ([John 2:1](#)). During this season of preparation, Christians would spend 40 days in penance, prayer, and fasting to prepare for this celebration; originally, there was little connection*

between Advent and Christmas."

Interestingly history shows that this connection was not the intent of the Roman Christians, who were thinking of the second coming, and it only came about in the Middle Ages.

We too are awaiting the second coming of the Christ. From the previous quote we can clearly see why Advent is still referred to as 'little Lent'. What is important though is how we wait. What are we doing during this waiting period?

As we do so with hopeful hearts while being thankful for all who teach, exhort, and encourage us, I believe it is important to cling to the words of God and pray always for purification of our souls, because whether we want to admit or not, we slip up from time to time.

Letting go of that which enslaves us can lead us to that which we long for and are constantly being encouraged to strive toward, a closer/deeper relationship with God.

This relationship is so very personal and engages each of us on a non-

-competitive level. Then we will be able to think of those we are failing... those on the fence, those who are hurting and want a reason to believe, those who are watching us the 'ambassadors' of Jesus.

With our own struggles we might think we are not in a place to offer anything to others. But let us remember that in our brokenness God makes us whole; in our spiritual darkness He makes us ready to be enlightened; in our spiritual poverty He prepares us to be enriched; in our spiritual emptiness He makes us ready for filling with riches in Christ, thereby preparing us to do all things in and through Him who strengthens us.

May God guide us on our journey that things we do, individually and as a community are in accordance with his plans for us and will honour him.

Thanks to all our contributors to this edition of the Parish Window.

Merry Christmas and a happy new year to you and your family!

Hyacinth

**Please pick
up your**



**For 2020
on December
24**

