

CONTACT

Christ's Church Cathedral | Christmas 2017



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CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

by Anne Harvey & Paula Esteves



This year we thought it would be interesting to hear about memories and traditions from other places. We asked several parishioners to share some memories with us and have sprinkled them throughout this issue of Contact. In the same spirit we have decided to offer our own memories. To all a very happy Christmas from us both and every best wish for 2018.

Anne: Isn't it interesting that when we think about Christmases past, we remember quite clearly things we ate but very little about the gifts we received. Shared meals are a hallmark of the season and one of the things I think of from my childhood. My mother was not a good cook. My younger sister has many memories of "nasty" spiced beef from Boxing Day. But having grown up in a hotel, she had very definite ideas about how things should be done on special occasions and Christmas was no exception. Our Christmas morning consisted of champagne and orange juice and Eggs Benedict—a tradition that continues at our house to this day.

My maternal grandmother took charge of making the Christmas cake and plum pudding. Since my mother was an only child, this event usually took place at our house with my grandmother heading up the production line. She made so many cakes, there wasn't a mixing bowl big enough, so she purchased a baby's bathtub just for this task. I can see very clearly this small woman (less than 5 feet tall) wielding a large wooden spoon mixing the fruit together. She was a great believer in the value of brandy in a fruitcake and had a very liberal hand when "feeding" the cakes.

Family gathered around the table is an important part of the Christmas season in my family, and though we are scattered across the country, we delight in hosting honorary family and extended relations to celebrate this magical time. ■

Paula: Most of my childhood memories are a blur, but I do have three distinct Christmas memories - brandy, a prince and a princess, and midnight mass.

The brandy is a very warm memory of my father. On Christmas morning, he'd be up pre-dawn making a traditional Madeiran dish of *carne de porco com vinho e alhos* (pork marinated in wine and garlic—lots of garlic). Once done, he'd ring a bell and greet us with a shot of brandy—years before we were legal. The follow up was a hearty breakfast of pork with bread soaked in the juices. Delicious! My sister still makes this dish—not in the morning. Conveniently, she forgets the brandy!

The prince and princess harkens back to the days of the decorated Simpson's windows in downtown Toronto. Our parents would take us downtown not to shop, but to marvel at the windows, and marvel I did. The only window I remember with clarity was one with a prince and princess skating under a moonlit sky glittering with gently falling snow. Just beyond the rink, was a Christmas tree providing the canopy for spectacularly wrapped gift boxes. It was all so magical and wondrous!

Midnight mass is a Mom memory, "There is no Christmas without midnight mass". And she was right! Once over, we'd head home and open our Christmas gift—and yes, it was just one gift! Having just been reminded of the meaning of the birth of Jesus, one gift felt about right! ■

AMAZEMENT IS ALL AROUND



...and all who heard it were amazed at what the Shepherds told them...Luke 2.18

by Peter Wall †



It is the time of the year to be amazed! While somewhat overdone and sappy music surrounds us from every place during the month of December, there is that one line, now being usurped by commercials even at other times, which says: *'It's the most wonderful time of the year...'*

It is hard to see the wonderful part of it sometimes. A two and a half year old has incurable brain cancer; a three month old was born with severe birth defects and will probably not live to reach even her first birthday; a colleague, at a very young age, suffers a (mild, thankfully) stroke; a young man who was trying to help someone else, is killed by gunfire in our city; a nation which was founded on values of freedom and inclusion, moves to build walls around itself in order to isolate itself (even more) from 'others'; community after community in this very blessed country wonder how long it could be until they have a safe water supply for their citizens; this list of things which are very definitely *not* wonderful goes on and on and on.

Into this very world and into these very realities, shepherds tell us again of good news of great joy, and we are amazed! Indeed, amazement is all around. Amazement at the generosity of people from around the world as they respond to natural disasters, significant weather events, and tragedies of mayhem and murder. Amazement at the basic goodness of so many, in the face of such deprivation by a few. Amazement at our families, communities, workplaces, and churches, when those around us, in ways that leave us, at times, breathless, offer what may seem like small gestures of

friendship, of care, of love. Amazement at the strength of the sick and suffering and, yes, even the dying, whose grace and serenity under pressure completely overwhelms us in its integrity, its simplicity, and its profound meaningfulness. Amazement that, even though it is easy and seemingly fashionable to let our inner Scrooge come out and decry all the glories and greatness of Christmas, it is still that time of the year when we are, often powerfully, reminded that love really does overwhelm and defeat hate, that gentleness and care is so much easier and better than harsh responses and cold callousness. Amazement that, in the face of a child enchanted by the lights, the colour, and the sounds of Christmas, we see the best in ourselves reflected.

Amazement that God could love us enough to come among us as *one* of us – fully human and yet equally fully divine. Amazement that, like those folks to whom those shepherds proclaimed their good news, we, too are delighted and warmed and enlivened by this amazing truth.

So, if your amazement metre is not where it should be, if you find so much of it just overwhelming and irreconcilable, if the bleak and bad news threatens to run roughshod over *your* Christmas, give a thought to those shepherds. Take a moment to hear the heavenly music. Let yourself be bathed in amazement at all the goodness which is yours and ours.

May the amazing news of Christmas settle gently on your hearts, in your homes, and on your souls! A very happy Christmas. ■



**CHRISTMAS
SERVICES**

**CHRISTMAS EVE
December 24**

10:30 a.m. Advent 4 Holy Eucharist

4:30 p.m. Family Eucharist & Crèche Blessing
Storyteller: The Very Reverend Peter Wall

9:30 p.m. Congregational Carols with Organ
Animator: Michael Bloss

10:00 p.m. Procession & Choral Eucharist
Presider: The Right Reverend Michael Bird
Preacher: The Very Reverend Peter Wall

**CHRISTMAS DAY
December 25**

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Hymns
Presider & Preacher: The Very Reverend Peter Wall

**CHRISTMAS ONE
December 31**

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Preacher: The Right Reverend Ralph Spence
Presider: The Reverend Brian Shoesmith

**THE NAMING OF JESUS
January 1, 2017**

10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Hymns
Presider & Preacher: The Reverend Canon Peter Ford

**EPIPHANY LESSONS & CAROLS
January 7, 2018**

**4:00 Organ Recital
4:30 Carol Service**

ELECTORAL SYNOD

 Grace filled ride

by Peter Wall †



Last month, our beloved Bishop, Michael Bird, announced his intention to step down as Diocesan Bishop and to take up duties in a new ministry in the Diocese of Ottawa, effective June 1, 2018. Michael's episcopacy has been an important one for our Diocese and he has accomplished much with grace and wisdom. He will be truly missed by us all, both as a leader and, for me, certainly, as a valued and close friend.

The Diocese now moves into an electoral mode, whereby the Diocese will gather together in the Cathedral on Saturday, March 3 for an *Electoral Synod*. Unlike regular, annual Synods, this Synod will have just one agenda item: the election of a new Bishop, in this case a *Bishop Coadjutor*, which simply means a Bishop with the automatic right of succession once the *see* (Diocese) is vacant. The new Bishop will take office on June 1. If the new elected Bishop is not already in episcopal orders, it will be necessary to hold an Ordination and Consecration service, set in the calendar for Saturday, May 5.

Bishops in our church are within the jurisdiction of Ecclesiastical Provinces, in our case, The Province of Ontario, which is comprised of seven Dioceses – Ottawa, Ontario, Toronto, Niagara, Huron, Algoma, and Moosonee. The chief

Bishop of the province is its *Metropolitan* – currently Archbishop Colin Johnson of the Diocese of Toronto. (Provincial metropolitans are elected for six year terms by the Provincial Synod, and are styled as *Archbishop*).

So, Archbishop Johnson will preside at the Electoral Synod in March and will be the Chief Consecrator in May. Canons of the province and of our diocese govern the election of Bishops and the qualifications for same. To be nominated, one must be a Priest in good standing in the Anglican communion, must be at least 30 years of age, and must have been in Priestly orders for seven years. This includes bishops and is worldwide. Any priest, anywhere, so long as he or she fulfills these requirements, may be nominated. Candidates must not have been found guilty of ecclesiastical crimes and must not have held or taught anything contrary to the faith of the church.

This process will start with Synod Council, acting as a nominating committee, in December wherein they will nominate up to 10 candidates. Other nominations may be received prior to the election. When Synod convenes, successive ballots will take place until one candidate re-

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ceives 50% plus one vote in both the lay and clergy houses. It may well take several ballots to elect a candidate depending on the final number on the ballot.

So, the editors of *CONTACT* asked me to reflect on this process and my experiences of it. During the course of my career, I have been on seven episcopal ballots (in six dioceses) in Canada and was part of a much longer and more protracted process in an American diocese, in which 38 people were originally nominated and I made it to the final 6, but not to the final 4 which went to the electoral convention.

Letting one's name stand in an episcopal election is a humbling, gratifying, nerve-wracking, stress inducing, and, ultimately, grace filled ride. The decision to accept nomination is a huge one – it means being open to a move, to the uprooting of one's family, and to a vastly different kind of work. It means being prepared, sometimes in relatively short order, to leave the parish or ministry in which one finds oneself, and to assume a mantle which is not easy, laden with huge responsibilities, and suffused with a certain kind of loneliness. The office and work of a Bishop is deeply important to the church, and requires great wisdom, strength, and compassion. Candidly, it also means that one is becoming the *de facto* boss of those who have been the electors, not an easy position in which to find oneself.

The nomination process usually involves answering questions, being available for open meetings, sometimes taking place in video presentations, and often fielding sets of questions put to all of the candidates. Often, people will want to know *exactly* where one stands on all of the hot button issues in the church and, sometimes, it feels like those asking are just

waiting for the candidate to misstep or misspeak. It is a process fraught with many pressures and potential pitfalls. At the same time, it is enormously affirming to have one's peers put one's name forward and to receive the support and affection which that brings with it. The actual decision to 'put oneself out there' is a difficult one, involving one's own prayer life, one's faith, and one's family.

The actual election, while always deeply led by the spirit, and always taking place within a context of profound prayer, can also be brutal. Ballot after ballot, vote after vote, and the inevitable jockeying, which comes with that, all come at a price. It can be very disheartening, if as is the case in this Diocese where one needs 10 nominators to appear on the ballot, to receive 5 or 6 votes on the first ballot – where did the ten go? In one case (in another Diocese), I received two lay votes on the first ballot and no clergy votes!

However, in the midst of all of this, it is a system which works, even for all its flaws. The Holy Spirit is indeed present in every election, and we always end up with good people of God to act as our chief shepherds. Once the Synod has spoken, there is always great joy at a new Bishop being elected, and a great sense of anticipation as s/he prepares to take up exciting and daunting new duties.

So, please remember and pray for those who will be asked to nominate and for those who will be asked to allow their names to stand. Pray for the members of Synod who will gather in March to do a difficult job and for the presence of God to be with them all. Pray, with thanksgiving, for Bishop Michael and his gracious leading of us all.

Pray for God's church in this place. ■

FIND GOD'S LOVE

Children's wisdom

by Sharyn Hall†



Of all the seasons in the Christian year when children should feel welcome in church, Christmas tops the list. Christmas is a time for children because the story of Christmas is about a Child. Children can relate to baby Jesus much more readily than they can to the adult Jesus and his teaching. However, we sometimes underestimate the wisdom of children to perceive as important what we grown-ups overlook as obvious.

A few years ago, I saw a poster entitled, 'Kids' Little Instructions on Life'. Here are a few examples:

Michael (age 14) says 'Never tell your Mom her diet is not working.'

Ricky (age 9) suggests 'Always wear a hat when feeding seagulls.'

Rosemary (age 7) declares 'Never try to hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.'

Some of the sage advice on the poster reveals an understanding of what is really essential in life, especially where to find love.

Molly (age 11) states 'Remember you're never too old to hold your father's hand.'

Molly's advice touches something very profound about being human, which often is taken for granted. Our hands reveal who we are. Our

hands have our fingerprints, which identify us as unique individuals because no two fingerprints are identical. That fact seems unbelievable when we realize that there are billions of people on earth.

Often I have the privilege of placing a consecrated piece of bread or wafer in the hands of anyone who comes forward to receive the sacrament. Many times, I have been moved by the thought of how individual those hands are and yet how those hands also represent all humanity – male and female hands, young and old hands, hands strong and muscular, hands weak and trembling, hands scarred by the experiences of life.

We might wonder about the hands of Jesus. We believe that he grew up working with his father as a carpenter or craftsman. His hands likely became strong and rough and weather-worn. While his hands may have revealed his humanity, the mystery of Jesus is that he was more than human. In his humanity, he united all humanity with God. In the creation story, all life comes from God the Creator. In the Christmas story, all life, in particular human life, is affirmed and reunited with God the Creator.

Each one of us is a unique individual; that imprint of uniqueness is in our hands, but through

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the incarnation of God in Jesus, we are all joined together with God. We may try to grasp the magnitude of this idea with our rational minds. What we can learn from children is their openness to wonder, wonder at what we cannot really explain.

The more we welcome God in our lives, the more we become aware that each one of us carries a spark of divine love. Sometimes it is a dying ember, which needs to be kindled anew. Sometimes it is a tiny flame, which struggles to stay alive. Nevertheless, the spark is there and that spark can grow into a fire of love for God and for all God's people.

When we recognize that Jesus embodies all humanity, our response as Christians can only be respect for the dignity of every human being, compassion for the suffering of all people, and an inexhaustible hope for the world. For the children in our world, we need to keep that hope as the strength of our daily lives.

Through the wisdom of children, we can learn where to find God's love.

Joanne (age 11) writes 'Remember the two places you are always welcome – church and grandma's house.'

Children accept that Jesus was special just because he was born into our world. Through their eyes, we can believe that a Child born two thousand years ago brings hope and love to generation after generation of people in all walks of life.

In the famous story, 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens, it is the very sick and poor child, Tiny Tim, who smiles at the happiness of a Christmas dinner and declares, 'God bless us, everyone.' God's blessing is for everyone, young and old, rich and poor, because a Child was born for all. ■

THE BAHAMAS

by Rena and Randy Woods

Christmas in The Bahamas is a time of great celebration, a time for gatherings of family and friends.

Christmas in The Bahamas begins with Church services on the 1st Sunday of Advent and ends on January 6th, Epiphany, with a children's service, which includes a short skit of the Three Wise Men and then distribution of gifts. There is a midnight mass on Christmas Eve and on New Years' Eve.

Celebrations include visiting from house to house where there is an abundance of food and drinks. On Boxing Day, December 26th, there is the junkanoo parade where groups of people dress up in costumes, dancing in the street with drums, horns, whistles, and cowbells to make sweet dancing music. These celebrations continue until January 1st with another junkanoo parade after the midnight church service, celebrating the beginning of another year. ■



AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH

FREE SPEECH

 In the church

by Dan Tatarnic †



At this time of the Church year, our religious imaginations are bombarded with images of the Christ Child, meek-and-mild; the secular imagination is just plain bombarded. It's a popular image: the baby Jesus cradled in His Mother's arms. Joseph, poor old Joseph, makes his annual guest appearance before receding into obscurity for the rest of the year; such is the life of the common man. For the most part, the nativity scene is, well, polite.

Since my ordination I've struggled with Christmas, and in the last few years, I've found it hard to reconcile the politeness of the crèche with the earthy, embodied affirmation of our faith: in Christ, God's *word* is revealed in its entire radical splendor. Jesus is *the* WORD, the in-fleshed-language-of-God; he will topple empires, raise the dead, cast out the powers of darkness, and he will re-animate creation from within a cold, dark tomb. Jesus is a very powerful word. According to St. John, this clear-word-of-God became flesh and blood, and lived among us – how incredible is that!

Our Christian tradition is grounded in a theology of the word-made-flesh. Words – spoken words, written words, sung-out-loud words, acted-on-the-stage words, simple words, complex words.

Words are powerful. We inhabit a world of communication and language, of art and beauty, of truth and language, form and content, mystery and intelligibility; in our world of spirit and matter, nature and super-nature all coalesce around this theme, “And God *said* ‘let there be’.”

Words are central to our faith, and it is the Church's responsibility to safe-guard the integrity of language and the necessity of public theology (free speech in the Church). What do I mean? In the mid-1950's, theologian Karl Rahner, wrote a modest book, “Free Speech in the Church.” It's hardly a classic, but Rahner makes a few good points. First, he reminds the church that there is something holy-necessary about a church that ‘talks its head off’. What we assume at times to be useless rambling and/or the tyranny of popular opinion is still an event of revelation. The problem isn't talking; the problem is when we stop talking. We might cringe at the thought of sitting through meetings and synods where people are encouraged to talk their heads off, and Rahner isn't promoting misinformed, unbridled public opinion. But he does uphold the fact that, and this is his second good point, the laity are slowly losing a sense of what the shared practice of doing

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theology is about.

For Rahner, the ‘doing’ of theology is a public event and the moral responsibility of every baptized Christian. He predicted (mid-1950) that Communism in the Soviet Union would fail, not because it wasn’t powerful, but because the system wouldn’t be able to withstand the cross-pressure of the suppression of free speech. People need to talk, to express themselves meaningfully, and when they don’t, they *will* go rogue and bring the system with them. I remember the fall of the Berlin wall, and find it disconcerting that my kids think I’m an old guy who’s lived through history. This is what they’re learning in school these days.

Like it or not, our ancestors, and early councils of the Church, took free-speech-in-the-Church deathly seriously. Gone are the days of Nicaea and the IV Lateran Council; but similarly, gone are the days in which public discourse could bring an Empire to its knees. Words have power!

I once heard it said that in the past two-thousand years, the Church has been called upon, more than once, to save civilization. It may sound like a grandiose idea, but as I scroll down my daily news feed from sources south-of-the-border, I wonder. Then again, free speech is an issue north-of-the-border; what liberal arts patron wasn’t gob-smacked by the Governor General’s recent dip into the shallow, populist waters of the neo-modernist polemic of science and religion. How did we get here? Is this a moment of witness? Is the Church being called upon to save civilization? Perhaps; but in the meantime, it’s a big enough task to simply save the Church. And we’d do well to begin with a simpler task - to talk our heads off – to do theology, and maybe, just maybe, we’ll take the Empire along with us. ■

WALES

by Gaynor Low

I am searching my memory bank, forcing it to remember traditions and events that happened 60 plus years ago when I was a child in Wales. We lived in a seaside town called Llandudno. My father was a Presbyterian minister in a two point charge. However, I do not remember church going as a Christmas Eve or Christmas day event. Perhaps that’s the Presbyterian way!

Times were simpler then, and likely so in Canada too. Father Christmas was called Siôn Corn which literally means John of the chimney pot. Our stockings, socks borrowed from my father would be hung at the foot of the bed. There was always an orange in the toe, and other small items filled the meagre space. I don’t remember writing to Siôn Corn, visiting him, or having anything other than picture books to excite my imagination. I only remember one particular Christmas tree which was positioned in the front hall; it was big and magical. A parishioner gave us a string of lights in the form of little lanterns. Imagine my disappointment when they failed to light up when plugged in. Some of the magic was lost for me. Other decorations were strung in the ‘parlour’ – garlands of tissue paper crisscrossing the ceiling, emerging to create beautiful patterns. At the centre point where the chains intersected, was hung a tissue paper bell. A traditional goose dinner was served but because a goose is often slim pickings, Yorkshire pudding was served first in generous portions to fill us up. The Yorkshire pudding followed me to Canada, and is now a best seller with all our grandchildren, not necessarily to fill them up! My mother always made Christmas puddings and hid a silver sixpence or two in each dark moist interior. It would be served with a creamy hot custard sauce.

So ends my retreat into memory. Nadolig Llawen. Merry Christmas! ■

LIVE IN

The musical moment

by Michael Bloss



The Advent season is about openness to Oneness. The stories of Advent reveal figures like John the Baptist and events such as the Angel appearing with some astounding news for Mary. Importantly, they tell of the ways in which God tries to connect with each of us individually. We hear about the darkness becoming light and the making of the rough places plain. Through these stories we welcome Incarnation – the way in which our relationship with God is re-clothed in restoration and refreshment.

We know that dramatic experiences of faith can be encouraged and coloured by what we hear; a certain scripture, a choral sound, an organ sonority, or even liturgical ritual. Let me describe some of the listening moments that you will hear in Advent.

Lo, he comes with clouds descending (Advent I)

This is one of the defining hymns for the beginning of Advent. Readings for Advent 1 tend to the apocalyptic and the text of this speaks of great movement and energy. The tune Hemsley picks up on this with great sweeping melodic contour, not surprising given the authorship of the Wesleys. I love the power of this tune and it is a tradition of mine for the season. Of particular excitement is the organ arrangement of the

last verse. It enhances the text of “Yea, amen, let all creation praise”. This hymn definitely sets the tone for the season.

Ave Maria (Advent IV)

One of the most amazing examples of Renaissance polyphonic writing, this version of the text is usually sung on the Sunday where the story of the Annunciation takes place (Advent IV). A song of devotion to the Virgin Mary, this work projects a remarkable peacefulness with the most deep and spiritual weaving of the choral lines. If you listen to the soprano line you will hear longer notes each entry of which rises by a tone. This imagery depicts the rising of Mary’s prayer to heaven. I never cease to be affected by the quiet emotion of this work. It is always a moving experience despite the years of being associated with it. This is definitely a moment to savour and to pray through and to allow the sonorities within the space of the Cathedral to settle into your soul.

The world awaits the coming of the Saviour (Advent I)

This organ piece also marks Advent for me. It comes from a large four movement work by the

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French organist and composer Marcel Dupré. Called the *Symphonie-Passion*, each movement describes a part of the church year: Advent, Christmas, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. This first movement demonstrates the element of uncertainty of this time into which Jesus was born. Uneven rhythms, strident harmonic sections and a driving yet trudging pace mark this as another side to the approach to the Annunciation. In the middle of it all comes a quiet meditation on the plainchant *Adoro te devote* which serves as a supernal promise of the gift to come before the music returns to the unease which began. The apocalyptic nature of this resolves in a triumphant conclusion, yet not one with a terribly clear harmonic centre. This remains as a core musical experience – a work of great devotion and artifice.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Advent I-IV)

Advent would not be advent without the singing of this hymn. Perhaps it is the timelessness of the plainsong inspired melody or maybe too the mystery of the text. Though, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (Latin—*Veni, Veni, Emanuel*) was first published, pretty much as we know it today, in 1854 in England, its roots go back over a thousand years before that. To find its beginnings, we have to go to France and travel at least as far back as the reign of Charlemagne (768-814). At that time the Benedictines, specifically at the Abby of Fleury, were singing in Gregorian chant during vespers the week prior to Christmas, a text that would later become known as the “O Antiphons.” These “O Antiphons” were so-called because each verse of the Latin text they were singing began with the word/letter “O.”

Each of the “O Antiphons” centered on a specific Messianic title and correlating Scripture found in Isaiah amidst his numerous prophecies concerning God’s Messiah. Originally there were seven verses comprising the text the monks and parishioners sang: “O Sapientia” (O Wisdom); “O Adonai” (O Adonai); “O Radix Jesse” (O Root of Jesse); “O Clavis David” (O Key of David); “O Oriens” (O Morning Star); “O Rex Gentium” (O King of the nations); and “O Emmanuel” (O Emmanuel). Beginning with December 17th, amidst the smoke of incense and candlelight they would sing just one verse, “O Sapientia,” then add an additional verse at each day’s vesper service until finally on the 23rd of December, “O Emmanuel” was added with great joy and anticipation for Christmas Eve.

As we sing this hymn as the Gradual Hymn for each week of Advent you will trace these antiphons as a journey through the different shades of the season.

Of course, these musical moments are all the more potent when unexpected. All too often, music in worship is seen to be background music, inviting conversation at worst, distraction at best. As part of your Advent path, resolve to live in the musical moment and focus on what your soul responds to in the still small voice of the music and text.

So in Advent as you experience all of these musical moments consider listening actively to the choral pieces and see yourself in the hymn texts you sing. Discover what it is you are hearing. How does it make you feel? How does the text inspire you and what words seem to stand out for you? ■

CHURCH IN THE AGE OF



by John Bradley



In Romans 16:16, I Corinthians 16:20, II Corinthians 13:12 and again in I Thessalonians 5:26, the Apostle Paul calls upon his readers to “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” The Apostle Peter instructs his readers to greet each other with the “kiss of love” (I Peter 5:14). Is this a realistic practice in our modern age? Is it okay for any of us to place our lips on fellow parishioners, both those we know well or those we don’t?

Like all scripture, Peter and Paul’s instruction to their followers must be understood within the cultural context in which it was written. Blindly applying the literal meaning of scripture, without regard to the culture and times when it was penned, has led to the commitment of many horrific injustices by the church. Proof texting the bible has resulted in the Church’s subjugation of women and visible minorities as well as justifying slavery and homophobia.

Cheek kissing, or even kissing on the lips, is a social norm in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultures. Thus members of the churches to which Paul and Peter wrote would already be familiar with this culturally acceptable practice. There was nothing sexual or predatory about this custom, rather it was the normal way for two people to greet one another – whether it be two men, two women, or a man and a woman.

Had Peter and Paul been writing to the churches in Northern Europe or North America, might they have pronounced the injunction to greet one

another with a warm handshake or a hearty fist bump? If writing to Christians in Cambodia or Japan, would the instruction speak of a holy and respectful bow? Such instructions to the Christians in Rome, Corinth, or Thessaloniki would have seemed bizarre and inappropriate. Instead, Peter and Paul tailored their message to fit the culture of their readers.

Another error we often make when reading the scripture is to not only ignore its cultural context but also what is written in the verses that precede and follow. In Romans 16, Paul’s mention of a “holy kiss” is within greetings to a close knit, family like a congregation. It is immediately followed by the warning to “keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and offenses...for such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites...by smooth talk and flattery.” Even while encouraging his followers to greet their fellow believers in a warm manner, it is almost as if Paul adds a warning to not allow this practice to be abused.

In I Corinthians, Paul’s mention of the “holy kiss” is surrounded by calls to “Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love” and “Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord.” Within this context, Paul’s call for warm, familial greetings comes within an environment of pure love and careful vigilance to guard against false motives.

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In I Peter, the mention of the “kiss of love” is coupled with instructions to “clothe yourself with humility in your dealings with one another”, “discipline yourselves”, and “resist the devil.” Anyone who would use the Bible to justify forcing unwanted physical contact on another person, would be hard pressed to find support for their actions from Peter.

Where does this leave us in an age of multiplying accusations of sexual harassment, assault, and intimidation? It seems that every day we read in the newspaper about another public figure who has been called to account for their horrible actions towards women, the young, and vulnerable. Paul and Peter’s call to greet one another with a “holy kiss” seems sadly out of touch with the reality of our times. Yet if read within a cultural and broader scriptural context, Peter and Paul are suggesting that our greeting and treatment of our fellow believers should be a testimony to the warmth and acceptance in Christian communities. The Church must never be known for cold, formal greetings, and maintaining barriers of class, race and gender.

Peter’s call to “discipline ourselves” is of utmost importance. We must never allow our actions to intimidate or harm. In this day of raised awareness around issues of sexual harassment and assault, it is important that each of us “discipline ourselves”. Even in the Church, touching, hugging, kissing, or embracing can only happen with the consent of both parties. The Church is the last place on earth where anyone should be subjected to unwanted physical contact or advances. This type of behaviour in a church is not only illegal but also unchristian to its core. Sexual harassment or assault committed in the Church is subject to not only the courts of the land, but also discipline by the Church.

So let us continue to greet one another warmly with a firm hand shake (or fist bump if you prefer), a smile and eye contact as we say, “May the peace of the Lord be always with you!” ■

DENMARK

by Jette Thomas

Christmas in Denmark is celebrated on December 24. On December 23, a live tree is brought into the house and decorated in a closed room, out of sight of the children. In addition to normal decorations, the tree also includes strings of Danish flags and woven paper baskets filled with candy.

After the 4:30 pm Christmas Eve Service, the family (possibly including aunts, uncles, grandparents etc.) gathers for the special Christmas Dinner, consisting of roast goose stuffed with prunes and apples (no bread), cooked red cabbage, sugar glazed small potatoes, and a special dessert (riz à l'amande) in the Danish flag colours (white & red). The dessert is a glorified rice pudding with chopped almonds and whipped cream stirred in, served with a cherry sauce mixed with sherry. In the dessert is a whole white almond, and the person who finds it must show it whole, between their front teeth, to win a small prize – usually chocolates. If no one shows it on the first round, more dessert is served until a winner is found...and almost no one shows it on the first round!



After dinner, the small candles on the tree are lit (a pail of water is always at hand) and a Christmas song is sung. The pre-

sents are distributed by the youngest child, with help if they're very young. When we moved to Canada, the big question was what to do on Christmas Day – we chose to sleep in! ■

December/January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
17 Advent 3 Holy Eucharist 8:30 Choral Eucharist 10:30 followed by Town Hall Meeting	18 Holy Eucharist 12:15	19 Holy Eucharist 7:30 am Meal Tickets 9:30 - 11	20 Holy Eucharist 12:15	21 Brass Monkeys 9 am - 12 pm Jamesville Child-care Christmas Party 10am - 1 pm Holy Eucharist 12:15 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	22 Altar Guild Decorating 9:30 am - 12 pm The Litany of Reconciliation 12 noon Cathedral Place Offices close at noon	23
24 Advent Four Choral Eucharist 10:30 Christmas Eve Family Service 4:30 pm Carols 9:30 pm Choral Eucharist 10 pm	25 Christmas Day Holy Eucharist with Hymns 10 am	26	27	28 Meal Tickets 9:30 - 11 am	29	30
<p><i>Cathedral Place Offices will be closed from noon on Dec 22 to Jan 1st..</i></p> <p><i>Reception Desk will be open Dec 27 to 29 from 10 to 2.</i></p>						
31 Christmas One Choral Eucharist 10:30 (one service only)	Jan 1 The Naming of Jesus Holy Eucharist 10 am	2 Holy Eucharist 7:30 am Meal Tickets 9 - 11 am	3 Holy Eucharist 12:15 Prayer Shawl Knitting 1-3	4 Holy Eucharist 12:15 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	5 The Litany of Reconciliation 12 noon	6
7 The Feast of the Epiphany Holy Eucharist 8:30 Choral Eucharist 10:30 Organ Recital 4pm Lessons & Carols 4:30pm	8 Holy Eucharist 12:15 Parish Life Outreach Meeting 5:30 pm	9 Holy Eucharist 7:30 am Meal Tickets 9:30-11 am	10 Holy Eucharist 12:15 Prayer Shawl Knitting 1-3	11 Holy Eucharist 12:15 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	12 The Litany of Reconciliation 12 noon Art Crawl 7-11pm	13
14 The Baptism of Jesus Holy Eucharist 8:30 Choral Eucharist 10:30	15 Holy Eucharist 12:15	16 Holy Eucharist 7:30 am Meal Tickets 9:30 - 11 am	17 Holy Eucharist 12:15 Prayer Shawl Knitting 1-3	18 Brass Monkeys 9-noon Holy Eucharist 12:15 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	19 The Litany of Reconciliation 12 noon	20

January/February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
21 Epiphany 3 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 8:30 <i>Choral Eucharist</i> 10:30	22 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Corporation Meetin</i> 6 pm	23 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 7:30 am <i>Meal Tickets</i> 9:30 -11	24 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Prayer Shawl</i> <i>Knitting</i> 1-3	25 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Choir Practice</i> 7:30 pm	26 <i>The Litany of Reconciliation</i> 12 noon	27
28 Epiphany 4 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 8:30 <i>Choral Eucharist</i> 10:30 <i>Followed by Vestry to elect Synod Delegates</i>	29 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15	30 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 7:30 am <i>Meal Tickets</i> 9:30 -11	31 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Prayer Shawl</i> <i>Knitting</i> 1-3	1 February <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Choir Practice</i> 7:30 pm	2 <i>The Litany of Reconciliation</i> 12 noon	3
4 Epiphany 5 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 8:30 <i>Choral Eucharist</i> 10:30 <i>Guest Preacher The Venerable Val Ker</i>	5 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15	6 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 7:30 am <i>Meal Tickets</i> 9:30 -11	7 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Prayer Shawl</i> <i>Knitting</i> 1-3	8 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Choir Practice</i> 7:30 pm	9 <i>The Litany of Reconciliation</i> 12 noon <i>Art Crawl</i> 7 - 11 pm	10
11 The Feast of the Transfiguration <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 8:30 <i>Choral Eucharist</i> 10:30 <i>Ordination, Collation of Archbishop, & Installation of Canons</i> 4 pm	12 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15	13 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 7:30 am <i>Meal Tickets</i> 9:30 -11	14 Ash Wednesday <i>Holy Eucharist*</i> 7:30 am <i>Holy Eucharist*</i> 12:15 <i>Prayer Shawl</i> <i>Knitting</i> 1-3 <i>Holy Eucharist*</i> 7:30 pm *with imposition of ashes	15 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Choir Practice</i> 7:30 pm	16 <i>The Litany of Reconciliation</i> 12 noon	17
18 Lent One <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 8:30 <i>Choral Eucharist</i> 10:30	19 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15	20 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 7:30 am <i>Meal Tickets</i> 9:30 -11	21 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Prayer Shawl</i> <i>Knitting</i> 1-3	22 <i>Brass Monkeys</i> 9am to noon <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Choir Practice</i> 7:30 pm	23 <i>The Litany of Reconciliation</i> 12 noon	24
25 Lent Two <i>Choral Eucharist</i> 9:30 <i>(One Service Only) followed by Vestry meeting</i>	26 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15	27 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 7:30 am <i>Meal Tickets</i> 9:30 -11	28 <i>Holy Eucharist</i> 12:15 <i>Prayer Shawl</i> <i>Knitting</i> 1-3			

JO COOL

 Sing his praises

by Wendy Newman



In honour of The Rt. Rev. Jo Fricker's 90th birthday (December 1st), we have reprinted excerpts from an article that appeared in the Hamilton Spectator on September 9, 1983.

**They Sing the Praises of 'Joe Cool'
by James Ross)**

Not many Canadians have had a psalm written in their honor.

One who now has his own psalm is Reverend Joachim Fricker, Anglican Dean of Niagara and rector of Christ's Church Cathedral.

The psalm, written by parishioner Bill Russell, was given its world premiere by 200 members of the congregation who gathered at a reception at the church on James Street North to mark Mr. Fricker's 10th anniversary as dean and rector.

They also came to congratulate Mr. Fricker for winning a Proctor Fellowship. The fellowship is available to Anglican clergymen world-wide and entitles its winners to spend a three-month period at Harvard University's Episcopal Divinity School.

He plans to study the strategies of urban churches. It would be hard to find a better student for that particular subject.

Reverend Peter Elliott, Christ's Church curate, pointed out that "this innovative and creative

pastor has not only supervised the restoration of the cathedral, he's also helped it become a centre for the performing arts.

In the words of psalmist Bill Russell "Jo is in our hearts and ranks as number one."

Mr. Fricker, nattily dressed in his bright red "Harvard '83 T-shirt, with "Joe Cool" on the back, admitted that he was swept away by the whole thing. He and his wife, Shirley, thought they were being invited out to dinner.

The words to the "psalm" were found in the Cathedral archives. The tune looks like a riff on the Policeman's Song from The Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert and Sullivan)

Ode to Joe

Greetings from us to our Rector, Father Fricker
Who's completed ten years as Cathedral Dean:
Always calm, Jo is no temp'ramental vicar
'Cause he's strong, secure, and ever so serene.
As a leader he's an understanding brother;
Recall the way the Pew/Chair Vote was run.
Ah, take one consideration with another,
Jo is in our hearts and ranks as Number One.
Ah-h-h-h-h
When a Testimonial Toasting's to be done
Jo is in our hearts and ranks as Number One!

Now this decade has seen Fricker alterations.

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(Will the next ten see a possible increase?)
What with concerts, study groups, and Restora-
tions,

Who knows, one day all will like to Pass the
Peace!

Perhaps in time he'll hire a Reverend Mother.
What a trinity: two Peter's and a nun!
Ah, take one consideration with another,
Jo is in our hearts and ranks as Number One!
Ah-h-h-h-h etc.

So we wish him well in starting Year Eleven,
And the three months he'll be occupied in school.
Without Wardens 't will be academic heaven;
In his Harvard beanie he will be Jo Cool.
Our feelings we make no attempt to smother
With serious thoughts that are expressed in fun.
Ah, take one consideration with another,
Jo is in our hearts and ranks as Number One!
Ah-h-h-h-h- etc. ■

Happy birthday Jo!



LOUISIANA

by Charlotte Read

We have something that is unique to south Louisiana called Bonfires on the Levee. On Christmas Eve between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, we burn elaborate bonfires on the Mississippi River Levee. Groups work on their bonfire for up to 2 months before Christmas. We have had crawfish, boats, state capital building, trains, and everything you can imagine. Some are just 20 feet tall cone shaped. To see some of the incredible things built to just go up in flames, google "Christmas Eve bonfires on the Levee". It's amazing what is built as a bonfire!!!

The reason for this is so the Cajun Santa Claus, "Papa Noel", can find his way to the Swamps and Bayous where the Cajuns live. The riverboat "Delta Queen" comes every Christmas Eve from New Orleans so its passengers can watch from the river. It's a fun time and my favourite food at this festival is fried Alligator on a stick! It really does taste like chicken. My husband, Geoff, has gone with me a few times and loves it! Papa Noel needs his bonfires to find the Cajuns in the swamps.

Have a Merry Christmas Y'all! ■



FAMILY SERVICE

 Everyone participates

by J. Lefebvre



Christmas is a season filled with traditions. One of my traditions is the honour and privilege of being the story teller at the family service on Christmas Eve. I was asked recently how it came about that I have that role every year and to be honest, I don't remember. When Peter Wall arrived on the scene those many years ago, I seem to recall that on his first Christmas here, he did the story telling and the romp through the Cathedral to pick up the figurines to place in the crèche, and it wasn't until a couple of years after, that I was asked by Peter if I would take on that role. And when I did take that on, I guess I made an impression as I have been the story teller ever since.

It is a service that I love to be a part of and I look forward to it every year. It may come as a surprise to you that I get stage fright each and every year as I'm driving to the Cathedral to get to the service. I second guess myself and start to doubt that I will be as effective as I was the year before or that folks are getting tired of my light hearted way of interacting with them. And I have angst that I will not be able to control the kids or keep their interest during the story telling and as we parade around the Cathedral in search of the precious and coveted figurines.

But once I get started and those present respond in a way that I know they are not only enjoying themselves, but they are interested in what I'm doing, I quickly get my bearings and by the Grace of God, it always goes smoothly and we all end up having a delightful time.

While I am a bit on the silly side during the story telling, I have tried over the years to incorporate moments of teaching. Having those assembled tell me the Christmas story as presented in both Luke and Matthew has, I think, been an effective way to highlight the differences in both of those accounts. I also try to ask more general questions around the New Testament itself. And each year, I've tried to build on this knowledge by incorporating another little "tid bit" of information, that is new.

Last year, for instance, I asked for the first time, what biblical scholars felt were the oldest writings in the New Testament (The Letter of James, circa 50 CE and Paul's First Letter to the Church in Thessalonica, circa 51 CE) – but there is a lot of debate around this so there is really no definitive answer. While introducing something new each year, I also try to repeat all of the questions I asked the year before. And I always ask about the differences in the accounts in Matthew and Luke and to point out that Mark and John do not contain birth narratives (usually by asking if all 4 Gospels have an account of the birth of Jesus).

I particularly love that everyone participates. Well, the adults are usually reluctant at first but they soon discover that I expect them to answer the odd question and that if no one is volunteering, I have no problem asking someone (usually a grown up), to step up to the plate. All of this is deliberately presented in a relaxed and friendly

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environment and so if the answer isn't correct, no one is any worse for wear. For answers that are correct, I've been known to grant a "star" in that person's crown (a phrase that a certain long-time Bishop friend of mine is known to use), though I am always quick to point out that it may not be the one they need to enter into the Kingdom – meaning that they have to keep up the good work going forward!

One of the things that I learned right out of the gate is the need to ensure that the sojourn through the Cathedral in search of the crèche figurines is both orderly and controlled. I remember that at my first attempt at this, I didn't have any "rules" or "directions" to the children (and any adults that accompany us around the Cathedral), and it kind of got out of control. Now, I am quite deliberate in my direction and no one is permitted to get ahead of me or face the consequences! (Thankfully no one has gotten ahead of me as I don't know what the consequences would be but I make it sound like it would not be good!)

It is not all fun and games. I love the solemnity and quiet that descends upon us when we have placed all the crèche figurines into the manger and we all take a moment of silence to contemplate and look at the scene before I ask for God's Blessing on our handiwork.

Another highlight for me is to watch the kids go to the tree to get a cookie made especially for those present by Anne Harvey. Another brilliant and warming moment to be sure!

Christmas is an exciting and important time of the year for all of us. I am always, without fail, in awe that we get to spend that time together in such a meaningful and enriching way. The family service on Christmas Eve is a special and cherished happening for me. I always feel the presence of God's love and joy as it has come to us in the baby Jesus and this love is expressed and shared freely and openly in that service. For me, not only is it an enjoyable, lively, and interactive experience, it is one that contains meaning and purpose with a touch of solemnity that our observing the birth of the Christ Child deserves. I am honoured and humbled to play my part in this Cathedral tradition! ■

NEWFOUNDLAND

by +Michael and Susan Bird

One of the things that made Christmas unique in Newfoundland was the visits we had from groups of mummers. Mumming is an ancient custom that originated in England and Ireland. The strange visitors had their faces covered with masks and veils and they were dressed in the most comical outfits. Some of them had underwear on the outside of their clothes, and men were dressed as women, and vice versa. They spoke in high pitched voices and they laughed and danced and accepted our offerings of Christmas cake and something to drink.

In the 1980's (we arrived in Newfoundland in 1984) a local band recorded "The Mummer's Song" that helped to revive the custom, and in our town of Burin, on the south coast of the province, it was common to have such a visit during the twelve days of Christmas. I am not sure whether we would welcome such a visit here in Hamilton today but in those days, it was always a happy occasion when the mummers came to call. ■



KYLE SOFIANEK

 Mac and cheese
& community



1. *What is your idea of a perfect day?*

My perfect day starts with sleeping in. It goes on to include reading, riding my bike, walking my dog, and spending time with a friend.

2. *Why did you choose the Cathedral as your spiritual home?*

I wanted a church that was accepting, cared about the important things (not sweating the small stuff), and one that looked outward into the community. Christ's Church does all those things.

3. *What is the one thing that you most look forward to at the Cathedral?*

I look forward to the spiritual grounding I receive from participating in the Sunday eucharist and socializing with the people I have come to know through the Cathedral.

4. *If you could change one thing at the Cathedral, what would it be?*

I would change the way we pass the plate for the offering.

5. *Which living person do you most admire?*

Rob

6. *What would be your desert island pick for a book, a piece of music, and food?*

Book: *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi;

Music: Spirit of England by Edward Elgar;

Food: currently Rob's buffalo mac and cheese (yum!)

7. *Where would your dream vacation spot be?*

My favourite place in the world to go is the Adirondack Mountains in New York. ■

ROB JONES

 Bike ride &
Tuesday mornings



1. *What is your idea of a perfect day?*

My perfect day includes a fresh cup of coffee and a good book in the morning, a bike ride by the lake with Kyle in the afternoon, and a few craft beers with friends in the evening.

2. *Why did you choose the Cathedral as your spiritual home?*

I was first drawn to the beauty of the sanctuary and the richness of the liturgy, but the community has kept me coming back week after week.

3. *What is the one thing that you most look forward to at the Cathedral?*

Volunteering with the Meal Ticket program on Tuesdays.

4. *If you could change one thing at the Cathedral, what would it be?*

Nothing comes to mind!

5. *Which living person do you most admire?*

Barack Obama.

6. *What would be your desert island pick for a book, a piece of music, and food?*

Though I typically read non-fiction, if I were stranded on a desert island, I would likely pick a collection of short stories. Flannery O'Connor's would likely be my first choice.

7. *Where would your dream vacation spot be?*

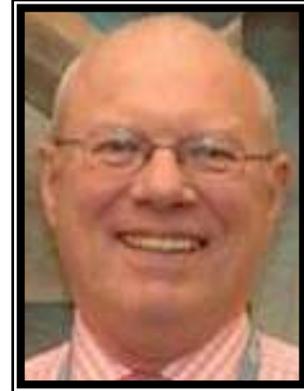
I would really love to go back to Belgium. Or, if I wanted to go somewhere new, then I would probably pick Iceland! ■

THE COVENTRY CROSS OF NAILS

GRACE AND FAITH



by John Watts



On the pillar that rises above the pulpit in Christ's Church Cathedral is a small silver-coloured cross. It is a cross which holds special meaning for communities across the world, and even more special meaning for me.

I was born and grew up in the city of Coventry in the centre of England. Coventry was originally the centre of the wool trade in medieval England (the phrase "true blue" comes from Coventry Blue, a uniquely permanent dye used in the Middle Ages). The city was also known for its medieval Mystery Plays, biblical stories acted by members of guilds of craftsmen. The play acted by the Tailors' Guild includes a favourite of many modern carol services, the Coventry Carol - "Lullay lullay, thou little tiny child".

From these beginnings, Coventry grew to become the centre of the British automobile industry, and as a result, was the target of the first mass urban bombing of World War 2.

On November 14th, 1940, 500 bombers laid a carpet of incendiary and high-explosive bombs across the city. In the centre of the devastation was the magnificent 14th Century cathedral church of St. Michael, which was reduced to piles of rubble surrounded by the cathedral walls and the skeletons of windows with barely a fragment of their medieval stained glass remaining.

In the days after the bombing, the Provost of the cathedral (the equivalent of the Dean) arranged for a cross of two charred roof beams to be placed on the stone high altar which had survived the bombing, and in the centre of this was placed a cross made out of three of the huge medieval nails which had held the beams together. Behind these two crosses, the Provost had carved into the wall the words "Father Forgive", and he made a commitment not to seek revenge, but to strive for forgiveness and reconciliation with those responsible. During the BBC radio broadcast from the Cathedral ruins on Christmas Day 1940, he declared that when the war was over we should work with those who had been enemies 'to build a kinder, more Christ-like world.'

These actions and words became the foundation of a world-wide movement of reconciliation, the Community of the Cross of Nails, which now has more than 200 churches, educational institutions, and peace oriented organizations in its membership; a further 150 churches are friends of the Community which spreads across 45 countries and all continents. Although the concept of reconciliation initially referred to war enemies, it has subsequently been expanded to include a much broader range of circumstances where one group of people has suffered at the hands of others. In Canada, for example, recon-

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ciliation with aboriginal peoples is recognised as an important focus. Members of the Community say the Litany of the Cross of Nails on a regular basis as we do at the Cathedral every Friday at noon.

I said at the beginning that the cross of nails in Christ's Church has special meaning for me. It is one of the oldest such crosses, having been given to the cathedral in 1949 following a series of organ concerts held across Canada, one here at the cathedral, given to raise money as a Canadian contribution to the rebuilding of the new Coventry Cathedral. I watched the new cathedral rising from the ground next to the ruins of the old one as I passed on my way to school; it was consecrated in my final year at high school.

However the link does not start there. My father was an electrical engineer responsible for designing and making radio-telecommunication equipment during the war. At night and on weekends he served in the auxiliary Fire Service, and was on duty that night of November 14th. He was fighting the fires at the old cathedral in Coventry during the bombing when a bomb exploded between him and his friend; his friend was one of more than 600 people to be killed that night. My father was seriously injured and had to be taken to hospital in Rugby 12 miles away – the hospitals in Coventry were largely destroyed in the bombing. Fortunately he made an excellent recovery, not least because of the care provided by a young Irish nurse named Ruth. Some of you will have known her; she married that injured fire-fighter. She was my mother, and spent her last few years here in Hamilton.

Each time I glance up at the Cross of Nails, I am reminded of my childhood, growing up in a city still scarred by acres of devastated bomb sites and by the holes in rows of houses, some of which had been hundreds of years old. I am reminded of my parents, and the events that



Original cross of nails now on the high altar of the new cathedral.

brought me into existence. And I am reminded of the grace and faith that resulted in both a magnificent new Cathedral, and in a world-wide movement of forgiveness and reconciliation. ■

The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
FATHER FORGIVE

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
FATHER FORGIVE

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
FATHER FORGIVE

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
FATHER FORGIVE

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
FATHER FORGIVE

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,
FATHER FORGIVE

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,
FATHER FORGIVE

Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

THE HUMBLE PEANUT BUTTER BALL

SUPERSTAR STATUS

Childhood traditions

by emily wall



I was recently invited to a potluck dinner party where the theme was “dishes from your childhood or family tradition”. Normally I love a theme party, and I am incredibly proud of the culinary legacy that has been passed down to me by my mother and the other strong, talented women in my family. However, at this particular occasion I was daunted: would something from my family’s not-insignificant arsenal of holiday dishes pass the test? You see, the guests at this potluck were no ordinary millennial foodies; they are all pastry chefs at the upscale, artisanal bakery where I’ve recently started working in Montreal. And this, my first real social engagement as a newcomer to the city, could be a make or break moment both personally and professionally. What would be just the right thing to impress, yet radiate an air of “oh, just whipped this up” insouciance?

In our house, one of the absolute “musts” of Christmastime, along with our Dickens’ Christmas village and a mandatory viewing of “Love, Actually”, is the Christmas cookie plate. It has evolved to become a family effort, although as children, the cookies were entirely my mother’s domain. Patrick and I were eager sous-chefs, fighting over whose turn it was to crack eggs into the bowl. But our main task, and one that

we still take seriously, was decorating the sugar cookies. Rich, buttery dough, much of which went raw into our stomachs, punched out into festive shapes of Santa’s sleigh, angels, bells, and even a camel, were all decorated with coloured egg wash, heaps of red and green sanding sugar, and if we were especially well-behaved, silver dragées from our mother’s secret decorating stash.

I’m not sure when exactly the Christmas cookie plate was cemented as a holiday fixture, but most of the offerings have been so sacred in our household that it simply wouldn’t be Christmas without them: wonderfully boozy rum balls, spicy, chewy ginger cookies, brown sugar spritz cookies pressed through an old-fashioned die press that Patrick and I would argue over wielding. In recent years the line-up has been modified to include peppermint meringues (one of my favourites) and mince pies for those so inclined (hard pass, unless absolutely drowning in hard sauce). One cookie has long enjoyed superstar status atop the plate: the peanut butter ball. An iconic combination, peanut butter and chocolate, like gin and tonic or fried chicken and waffles, is so beloved for a reason: deca-

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dent, nostalgic, it fulfills a need for something creamy, crunchy, yet not too sweet. It is the perfect way to finish off a gluttonous holiday meal, and makes an excellent midnight snack. Peanut butter balls are also a great complement to a frosty glass of milk, which was our childhood choice for a sweet treat left for Santa on Christmas Eve.

So, I dutifully broke out our family recipe and arrived at the party, humble dessert in hand. The kitchen, always the life of any party, was bustling with last-minute preparations, everyone eagerly awaiting the feast. Around the table the fare was delightfully diverse: from something as bizarre and wonderfully retro as tuna salad on canned peaches - of Belgian origin and a surprisingly tasty combination of sweet and salty - to the traditional and deeply comforting Quebecois dessert pouding chomeur - thank god for the ingenuity of frugal housewives of yore. I was quite interested to learn of some holiday traditions from farther afield - crunchy tostadas with hard-boiled egg, creamy avocado and salty queso fresco from Guatemala, and a spicy, creamy coconut milk and albacore tuna curry from Mauritius. Happily, I savoured being part of an evening where food was the *raison d'être* and the unifying force; where culinary heritage - or lack thereof - had become the catalyst for careers, obsessions, and indeed, social occasions. It seemed I had finally found my tribe - but would they accept my meagre offering?

As the dessert plate was passed around after supper, I held my breath. Is peanut butter as cherished in Quebec as it is in southern Ontario? Did my chocolate coating properly temper? Would they take one bite and scoff “not bad, for an amateur”? My answer was in the blissful faces savouring each morsel, the lack of crumbs left on the platter, and happily, the many re-

quests for the recipe. The proof was in the pudding, as it were, that breaking bread together can lead to shared community, friendship, and understanding; that sometimes the best foods are the simplest; and that be it ever so humble, there's nothing like home-cooked treats from childhood. ■



Peanut Butter Balls

2 cups peanut butter (crunchy or smooth—depending on personal preference)

2 cups icing sugar

4 Tablespoons softened butter

2 Teaspoons vanilla

1-2 cups Rice Krispies cereal

Mix together and form into walnut sized balls.

Place on a cookie sheet and freeze.

Melt 350 gr package of chocolate chips with 1/4 of a bar of paraffin.

Dip frozen balls into chocolate and drain on wire rack.

Keep in the refrigerator.

*Recipe courtesy of Ingrid Larking
St. Mark's by the Lake, St. Clair Beach*

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

THE WAY OF ST. JAMES

 Walking in the footsteps
by Janina Vanderpost



Inspired by congregation member Wendy Newman who completed this 800 km pilgrim path a few years ago, this past October, I too walked a portion of the Camino de Santiago.

The Camino de Santiago, the Way of St James, begins just over the Pyrenees in France and crosses northern Spain to the City of Santiago de Compostela, the reputed burial site of James the Apostle (James son of Zebedee and brother of John the Apostle). St James is recorded as having preached in Spain and, after he was executed during a visit back to Judea, his friends took his body back to Spain to be buried on the site where the Cathedral of Santiago now stands.

The Camino became the primary Christian pilgrim route after the siege of Jerusalem in 1187. Thereafter, no longer permitted to visit Jerusalem, millions of Christians during the Middle Ages followed the Way of St James, and other routes across Europe, to the City of Santiago. This city became one of the three most important Christian pilgrimage destinations, the others being Jerusalem and St. Peter's in Rome.

In the Middle Ages, pilgrims were provided safety along the route by the Knights Templar, Order of Santiago. Stories and legends around the Knights Templar are among the many intriguing aspects of the Way. The Cross of Santiago, one of the symbols of the route in addition to the scallop shell, is reminiscent of a sword.



(Today, Pilgrims carry a *credencial* or "pilgrim's passport" which is stamped with official St. James stamps at churches, cafes, albergues, museums etc. along the Way.



This document provides the Pilgrim's Office in Santiago with proof that the journey was accomplished according to an official route.

Pilgrims who have walked at **least the last 100 km** into Santiago submit their *credencial* to the Pilgrim's Office for examination; a pilgrim who qualifies receives a *compostela* or certificate of accomplishment.



(Continued on page 29)

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My journey on the Camino was different from that of Wendy, and very recently John Bradley, in that I went with a group rather than traveling alone, we walked 200 km only (over 11 days), and we spent some time as “tourists” as well as being pilgrims. The tourist part involved taking side-trips by bus to see other towns and cities such as Lugo and Padron where the ship carrying St James’ body landed in Spain, sites such as the splendid Benedictine monastery in Samos, and the 12th century Knights Templar church in Vilar de Donas, with its 15th century frescoes. The cathedral in Leon, featuring superlative, essentially floor to ceiling, stained glass windows, was also a high point.



But of course, the most meaningful and joyous part of this adventure was walking the actual Camino, in the footsteps of the millions of pilgrims who have gone before. Our path led through the gorgeous northern Spanish countryside of hills, fields and forests. Interspersed were little villages, with churches, crosses, statues, monuments, and other Christian symbols appearing at frequent intervals. I thanked God for the opportunity and privilege of being able to



experience this holy pathway.



A culminating



highlight was attending a Pilgrim’s Mass at the Cathedral of Santiago in the company of members of our group and people from countries around the world, all celebrating and giving thanks for our walk. A further thrilling experience was seeing the ceremony of the Boto-fumeiro, the 180 lb. incense burner hanging from the cathedral ceiling that is swung by six monks in a 213 foot (65 metre) arc across the transept. There was of course so much more to this jour-



ney than one can describe in a short article. For any of you who can walk some distance, I would recommend the Camino. If you are unable to do all 800 km, then at least, as we did, start further east than the last 100 km into Santiago. The best countryside is to be seen outside the Santiago urban region. In gratitude and thanksgiving. ■

SOUTH SUDAN

by Justin Okomi

I was born and raised in a Christian family in the Sudan. As a young boy, I attended church services in Loa parish with my parents and siblings. In 2011, the Sudan split into two countries and my birth place became the Republic of South Sudan. As a child, we celebrated Christmas holidays as one of the most special times. No matter one is a Christian, Christmas remained a special time for families to get together, a time to set aside any disagreements and to celebrate the sharing of life together as one family in Christ.

Celebration of Christmas in Canada is quite different compared to Christmas celebration in South Sudan. Although the joy of Christmas is the same, celebration of Christmas in Canada is mostly indoors. While in South Sudan, the hot climate gives opportunity for people to celebrate Christmas outdoors. The celebration in the churches is often followed by parades similar to the Santa Claus parades in Canada.

During Christmas 2017, we have to pray for peace in South Sudan. Peace in the hearts of individuals can rise above the hideous conflicts in which they are embroiled. The people of South Sudan have learned to be grateful for what little they have, including the gift of life itself. However, in the last three years the joy of Christmas has been disrupted by the ongoing civil war. There is a longing for peace among the South Sudanese people all over the world. We pray for leadership that will enable peace among people rather than continue the futile fighting occurring in parts of South Sudan. ■



Passages

DEATHS

Deedie Reese October 24
Bill Wadley October 28
Steve Hopkins October 28
Jack Dougherty October 29

BAPTISM

Adelaide Mae Ludwig November 5

MARRIAGES

Chelsea Craig & Stephen Brennan October 21
Jennifer VanderWoerd & Remus Belu November 11

FINANCIAL UPDATE

A GENEROUS YEAREND

 With thanks

by Corporation



We all know that the Cathedral relies on the offerings of parishioners for all of our needs. As the year comes to an end, we ask you to remember the Cathedral as you offer generous gifts of the season. Your faithful support of this community is so deeply appreciated, and so deeply needed. Please consider a special year end gift to your Cathedral. Christmas envelopes are in the pews, or simply put your gift on the offering plate or mail in to the office.

Please note that donations must be received at the Cathedral Office by December 31 to qualify for a 2017 tax receipt. Thank you so much!

Income	30-Nov-17	Budget	Variance
Parishioner Givings	\$ 269,964	\$ 269,428	\$ 536
Other Income ¹	\$ 18,668	\$ 22,366	-\$ 3,698
Open Collection	\$ 5,576	\$ 8,250	-\$ 2,674
Misc Income	\$ 6,303	\$ 4,125	\$ 2,178
Fund Income ²	\$ 128,646	\$ 122,423	\$ 6,223
Special Offerings ³	\$ 40,038	\$ 16,500	\$ 23,538
Total Income	\$ 469,195	\$ 443,092	\$ 26,103
Expenses			
Staffing	\$ 265,282	\$ 270,987	-\$ 5,705
Property ⁴	\$ 84,544	\$ 57,423	\$ 27,121
Admin and Programs ⁵	\$ 126,181	\$ 114,819	\$ 11,362
Total Expense	\$ 476,007	\$ 443,229	\$ 32,778
Net Income (Deficit)	-\$ 6,812	-\$ 137	

¹Other Income includes Choral Leads, Dean's Discretionary, Memorial Flowers and Festivals and Outreach.

²An additional draw of \$6223 was made from the Bishopsgate maintenance fund to offset the cost of the Cathedral's portion of the cost of the new LED display sign in Bishopsgate.

³Included in special Offerings is a one-time donation received as a memorial to offset the cost of the chairs (\$23,228).

⁴Property is above budget target due to the replacement of the LED Sign in Bishopsgate and the purchase of the chairs. Both these expenses are entirely offset by income received specifically for these purposes.

⁵Admin and Program expenses are higher than anticipated largely due to expenses associated with our Outreach program (\$5,700 over budget target) and our office and administrative costs (\$5,068 over budget target). ■

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