



The Spirit of St. Mark's

Advent/Christmas Newsletter

November 2021

A Message from the Interim Priest

*O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appears. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Can you believe that it is November 28th? Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent...the season of waiting...waiting and praying; a season of anticipation, expectation, as we await Christ's birth... a time of preparation...waiting upon the Lord.

With the secular world ramped up from Black Friday and onwards, with the music cranked in the malls, with the hardships going on around us, with the climate catastrophies (please pray for British Columbia and elsewhere) and the violence and uncertainty in the world, with the pressures brought on by COVID, it may be difficult to quiet our hearts and minds, to be present to the coming of our Lord. As we wait and wonder and we wander.

We, as a church, choose to use the ritual around the advent wreath to help us focus in Advent. The advent wreath appears in our church (and many of our homes). The candles we light each Sunday represent Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. On the First Sunday of Advent, a blue candle is lit to celebrate Hope, the inspiring and uplifting hope that Christ among us represents. On the Second Sunday of Advent, another blue candle is lit to celebrate Peace, both the Prince of Peace himself and the promise of peace on Earth. On the third Sunday of Advent, a pink candle is lit to celebrate joy, the joy the shepherds received at hearing the news of Christ's birth, or the joy that God brings in our lives. As the coming of Christ draws near, the final blue candle is lit on the Fourth Sunday of Advent to celebrate Love, both God's boundless love for us and our love for one another. And finally on Christmas Eve we light the centre candle, the Christ Candle. The Christ Candle is white to celebrate the purity of Jesus and the joy felt on this day. The light of the candles takes back the darkness and declares God's love and Jesus' presence in a world that can seem dark. The light represents our faith.

As we journey through Advent together, as we wait for the Lord together, let us pray for one another and share Hope, Peace, Joy and Love with each other and with the world. Let it be a season when we remember how much we are loved. Let this be a season of transformation in our lives and in the lives of those with whom we have contact.

Canon Bob Schroeder, Reverend Margaret Shortell, Reverend Deacon John Ogilvie, our Student Janet Ternes, our Parish Nurse Deb Belowitz and our Parish Administrator Christine Fournier join with me in wishing you each and all a blessed Christmas and joy and peace in the New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Janet+

The Venerable Janet Griffith Clarke+
Interim Priest
Archdeacon of Brant/Norfolk

Church Envelopes for 2022

The delivery of offering envelopes for 2022 will be delayed this year until closer to Christmas. At that time, they will be available for pick up at the church.

For those who wish to change their method of giving to St. Mark's, please contact Anne Walker at 519-756-3685.

Annual Reports to Vestry

All reports to be included in the annual report for 2021 from staff and group leaders need to be emailed to Anne Walker at walker.anne@rogers.com no later than January 12th.

The Annual Meeting for all Vestry members will take place on January 30th.

A Letter from the Church Wardens

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13

It is hard to believe we are coming to the end of yet another year. 2021 was perhaps almost as strange as 2020 with Covid-19 lockdowns, vaccinations and finally being able to get together again with friends and loved ones. As we look forward to the Christmas season and the New Year, the wardens wanted to take the opportunity to reach out to you. St. Mark's is a remarkable body of believers who have stayed together in spirit, if not in person throughout the uncertainties of the past two years. We feel blessed to be able to serve this community.

We would like to thank all those who have helped to bring back in-person services in a safe way: the Reopening Team, Greeters, Soloists, Chancel Guild, servers, and of course, parishioners. We would also like to thank Janet Griffith Clarke for her unfailing work as our interim priest this year. She has led us through a lockdown and reopening and unfortunately many illnesses and losses in our congregation. Thank you also goes out to Janet Ternes, our ministry student, who continued to minister and grow with us. Her online morning prayer service was enjoyed by many. We are pleased that our fun-raising team was able to launch a few events this fall – pies, a turkey dinner, and gift cards. Our monthly food drive continues to support the Food Bank and various additional charities such as the Blessing Centre, St. Leonard's and the SPCA. St. Mark's has also been able to hold a few family and community events to bring back some fellowship. The Hallowe'en Trunk & Treat was very well received, and we anticipate the living nativity coming soon.



We deeply appreciate all of you who have continued to support St. Mark's financially. Our income has dropped since last year, but we recently received Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy money through the diocese. This will help us significantly. Included in this mailing is a Christmas envelope if you would like to support our mission and ministry during this season.

As we look forward to the New Year and the arrival of our new priest, Canon Robert Park, we are filled with hope for what God will be able to do through us in 2022.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace,

Your wardens,

Christine, Neil, Sharon & Cindy

Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule



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| December 19, 2021 | Fourth Sunday of Advent and Lessons and Carols There will be one service ONLY on December 19 th at 10:00 a.m. |
| December 24, 2021 | Christmas Eve Services 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eucharist (<i>not geared towards children</i>) 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service <i>We will not be offering a 10:30 p.m. service, however, Grace Anglican will be offering this late service.</i> |
| December 25, 2021 | Christmas Day Service 10:00 a.m. service with Canon Bob Schroeder presiding |
| December 26, 2021 | First Sunday of Christmas There will be one service ONLY on December 26 th at 10:00 a.m. |
| January 2, 2022 | Epiphany There will be one service ONLY on January 2 nd at 10:00 a.m. This is our first service with our new Rector, Canon Rob Park. |
| January 9, 2022 | Baptism of Our Lord/First Sunday after Epiphany Regular worship at 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. |

A Note to All Parishioners: An Upcoming Induction Service

The induction service for our new Rector, Canon Rob Park, will take place on January 23, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at St. Mark's. More details to follow.