



ADVENT NEWSLETTER

A Virtuous Christmas

No, not a virtual Christmas. I don't know what that would look like, although I'm pretty sure it would involve Facebook, Instagram or Tumblr. Or maybe all of them. I'll certainly be FaceTiming with family over the holidays.

Here at St Martin's, we'll be having a real Christmas, not a virtual one. But starting on November 29, we are going to use the Sundays leading up Christmas to consider the traditional Advent Virtues: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Check the calendar for all the activities planned for this season, which involve everything from sinfully good baking to some righteous tunes! And have a virtuous Christmas.

Children's Ministry

It's been an exciting autumn for St. Martin's children's ministries! The Little Voices United Choir has already performed once this year and is now practicing music for the Christmas season but children who are aged 4 to 10 are welcome at any time. Little Voices meets under the guidance of Andrea Pittman (477-1762) and accompanist Donna Thiessen from 10:30 to 11am on Sundays, between the end of the 9:30am service and the beginning of the 11am service.

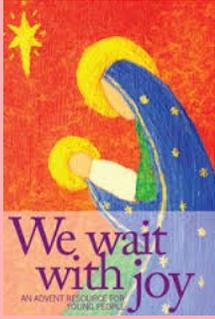
Our Bible Adventures programming continues during the worship services at 9:30am and 11am. On November 29 and December 6 we will be using that time with the children to practice the Christmas pageant on Sunday Dec. 13. There will be pageants at the 9:30am and 11am services. On December 20 we will have a party to celebrate Jesus' birthday during the Bible Adventures time. Don't forget on December 24th that at 5:30pm is our Children's Christmas service. It is lots of fun for the family!

We've had two PD Day Faith Adventures with 20 and 18 children attending. Our program is growing and we've had a lot of fun together. Many thanks to the volunteers for these days without whom I wouldn't be able to offer this ministry to the children of the church and the community.

Just a reminder—children who are 3 years of age and older are welcome to attend Bible Adventures and children who are under 3 are welcome in the Nursery which is also downstairs. All children are also welcome at any time in the worship service!

If you know of someone who might be interested in staffing the Nursery during church time (Sunday mornings from 9:30am to noon) please let me know.

Darren Wooff, Minister for Children and Outreach



Advent Schedule of Special Services and Events

Sunday November 29th - Regular Worship- 9:30 and 11:00 am "HOPE"
- Senior Youth Group Poinsettia Sale

Saturday December 5th - Christmas Tea and Bake Sale 2-4 pm

Sunday December 6th - Advent Worship 9:30 and 11:00 am "PEACE"
- Senior Youth Group Poinsettia Sale
- Sounds of the Season Concert 7:00 pm

Wednesday December 9th Home Communion

Sunday December 13th – Children Leading Worship -9:30 and 11:00 am "JOY"

Sunday December 13th - Hard to Be Merry Service -7:00 pm Lounge

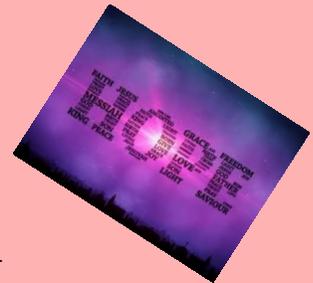
Thursday December 17th - Community Potluck Supper 6:00 pm followed by Carol Singing

Sunday December 20st- Advent Worship- 9:30 and 11:00 am "LOVE"

Wednesday December 24th Christmas Eve - Worship for Children -5:30 pm
-Candlelight Family Worship- 7:30 pm
-Candlelight Communion Service- 10:30 pm

Sunday December 27th – Pajama Sunday – 9:30 am

Sunday January 3rd – Communion Sunday- 9:30 and 11:00 am



Christian Education Committee

The main objective for the Christian Education Committee is to nurture the development of each congregation member's spirituality, faith and knowledge as it pertains to the United Church of Canada. The committee strives to meet this objective by providing artistic experiences, physical activities and direct instruction.

Worship Committee

Blessings of the Season from the Worship Committee. We continue with our regular duties and than all those who signed up to help with the various duties. We were please with the response to our plea.

We'll be decorating the church once again on November 25th for the advent season.

God Bless You All.

Board Representative—Bunny Pfeifer

Refugee News

**There are stories
embedded in our skin
and words enfleshed in us,
and so may you bless us
with those who by tender touch
release the tales,
trace the lines,
free the words
one by one.
Give to us those
who will listen us
into our own language
till we are hoarse with the telling
and with the laughter
at being released
from the silences we had kept
so long.**

Jan Richardson, "Night Visions"

In recent months, the Refugee crisis has become front and centre in the minds and hearts of many. The United Nations estimate of the number of displaced persons worldwide is 59 million. In Advent, how do we prepare for and focus on the coming of Jesus into our hearts and lives once again? Could it be that one of the ways is to assist, in some way those people who are suffering in desperate circumstances? There are many ways to take action, get involved, and raise your voice in support of refugees. Please see the Outreach bulletin board or speak with a Refugee Committee member [Dayle Armstrong, Brian Walton, Dick Neal, Esther Edmonds, Jean Nahachewsky, Darren Wooff] for more information.

As you may know, we are currently involved in three sponsorships. Full names of family members are not used in order to ensure their safety.

Abel We applied to sponsor Abel in May 2011. This sponsorship has progressed very slowly due to loss of paperwork by various agencies. The Cairo Visa Post through which his application was being processed became very backlogged. Recently, his file was sent to Rome. In April/15, Abel's young sister also escaped her country and joined Abel. She is unable to register with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees because of the extreme violence, kidnapping and danger in the area. Therefore she is not technically a refugee. We have applied to have her declared a de facto dependent of Abel's in the hope that she can be processed with him and come with him when he is cleared to do so. This will surely delay his process yet again but he cannot leave her behind unprotected.

Hamid's parents: The three week "Let's Build a Home" campaign to support this sponsorship which began June 22/15 generated \$9703.40. The support of the congregation has been nothing less than phenomenal and the committee is so grateful for your support. Hamid's dad is very much enjoying his English classes five afternoons a week at the Open Door. As a former teacher, he is very focused on education. Unfortunately, his mom is on a very long wait list for the class for which she was assessed. She is however, enjoying all the "quality time" with her grandchildren.

Hamid and his family: Hamid continues to work part time as a cashier and takes all extra shifts offered. He continues in English evening classes two nights a week and has recently begun enhancing his writing skills with tutor, Al Loewen. Thanks Al!

Hamid and Halima's young sons attend daycare while she is in English class five mornings a week. She then drops the five year old off at kindergarten before going home for the afternoon of homemaking duties. Halima's comprehension of English is growing in leaps and bounds and she is speaking with more confidence.

Earlier in the fall we applied for funding from the Third Ave. Community Foundation. Recently, a cheque for \$7560 was received with gratitude. This will help greatly as we continue to supplement Hamid and his family.

Many Advent Blessings to You from the Refugee Committee

Submitted by Dayle Armstrong.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Community is like a large mosaic.....a fellowship of little people who together make God visible in the world.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

This is a ministry that touches the hearts of so many; those that knit or crochet the shawls, congregation that blesses the shawls and those that receive the shawls.

Dianne Freiling shares with us how the shawl received from St. Martin's touched her life.

"Please pass this on to the wonderful group of knitters who make the Prayer Shawls and the congregation who blesses them. I had surgery rather suddenly in November (2014) and the day before the surgery my Mom(Myrtle Dixon) brought me a beautiful prayer shawl that Bunny Pfeifer had given her for me. I was touched beyond words and felt instantly comforted, the shawl came with me to the hospital and it was the first thing I asked for once I was back in my room. I kept it close my entire hospital stay and continue to keep it close.

Such small acts of kindness have such a huge healing property
Thank you to all of you

Blessings
Dianne "



Staff Absences and Office Closures December 2015 and January 2016

Michael away December 28th 2015 to January 26th 2016

Darren on call December 28th and 29th, 2015 and out of the office December 28th. 2015-January 1st, 2016

Keith out of the office December 28th-January 1st, 2016...on call December 29th and 30th, 2015

Sandra away and office Closed December 28th, 2015 and January 1st, 2016

Kevin away December 28th,2015 and January 1st 2016. Building check will be done on December 29th, 30th and 31st, 2015

Sandra will be in the office December 29, 30th and 31st, 2015

Sandra away January 4-15th, 2016

