



THE ST. MARGARET'S BEACON

Issue 3

St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican Church

December 2012

OUR MISSION

Our mission at St. Margaret's is to be a loving, leading community of God's people, dedicated to involvement in the life of the parish and surrounding community, following the example of Christ and welcoming all in friendship.

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IN HIS SERVICE

CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

From Reverend Stephen

In comforting his disciples, Jesus in John's gospel assures them that he is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). It is through him that the disciples and all of humankind to follow will find salvation and peace along with a place of refuge in the Kingdom that he and the Father share. In the busy technological world of 2012 it is hard to fathom at times a kingdom other than the one of this world, and perhaps even more difficult to know the way to it. This passage was read at a funeral I recently attended at St. George's here in Barrie. Roberta had been a very dear and faithful friend. She looked after our boys when they were younger and our dog Max when we would travel. I recalled her generous spirit of giving and how she would come to our house complete with hot dogs for the boys so that we could get on with our evening. As I sat in that funeral, I lamented that so much of the time we were rushing off to do "our" thing while Roberta, in her unassuming way served and invested in our lives in ways that will affect me for the rest of my life! Roberta knew "the way" and expressed it clearly in the things she said and in the way she lived!



Christmas is that unique time of year when we are given opportunities to express to people in our lives and communities just how much their lives matter to God and to us. We are reminded of the angel's declaration to the shepherds that they were receiving "good news of great joy" and that this news was for everyone. It was an ordinary evening for the shepherds who were going about their business as usual. It was into the "ordinary" that God visited humankind with the extraordinary gift of Jesus. This news of Christ's birth extends to us still today. He visits us in the midst of our ordinary busy lives with hopes of filling them with his everlasting life, love, peace, and joy.

May we remember the "Robertas" in our lives this Christmas and allow those memories to rekindle our hearts with love for God and those precious ones he has entrusted to us. In the memory of Roberta Sanderson and the God she served I write this article.

Merry Christmas—The Reverend Stephen Pessah

THE POWER OF OUTREACH

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20: 35)

Christmas is the time when we look outward, remembering those in our community who are in special need of help. People at St. Margaret's are actively involved assisting others.

ST. MARGARET'S CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROGRAM

Submitted by:

Celine McCarthy-Beckett and Kathy Fitzmaurice (Hamper Co-Ordinators)

Since 2009, we have had the pleasure to co-ordinate the annual Christmas Hamper program here at St. Margaret's. Over the years, this task has morphed considerably from its original form. No longer are actual hampers handed out to families in need. Large baskets filled with contents that once contained Christmas goodies, clothing, toys and other gifts have now been replaced by simple store gift cards. You may be wondering why such a colourful method of giving no longer exists. It is simply because of the changing needs of our society. We live in a hectic world where targeting the specific needs of those less fortunate can be done in as convenient a form as possible.

To answer further questions you may have about the Christmas Hamper Outreach...

How do we choose who to help? Applications are submitted in November of each year by you, our parishioners, who act as sponsors for families in need. Along with Reverend Steve, we review these applications taking into consideration the unique needs of each family. How do we ensure families get the help they need? Along with the sponsor, applicants fill out a form indicating in priority sequence the specific gift cards they feel would be of most help to them and to their families.

What is the true intent of this outreach? Even though the dynamics of this annual outreach have changed, the mission remains the same: to help those within our community who are at the most risk at this time of year. We wish everyone the safest and happiest Christmas possible filled with all the joys of the season.

How are funds raised for the Hamper Outreach? Proceeds have come from a variety of sources. The annual Christmas dinner has been the traditional method for raising funds with great success, but for the past two years a generous donation was made by the Bertlesen family in memory of Joyce. Additional proceeds are also collected by means of individual donations made by parishioners. If you strongly believe in this mission a donation of any amount would be truly appreciated. Thanks to all generous donations, St. Margaret's can comfortably assist approximately 12 families per year.

Assisting with Christmas Outreach at St. Margaret's has been a truly rewarding experience for us. Helping those less fortunate during a time of year that can be emotionally and financially difficult for many is the true meaning of giving. We pray this mission can continue within our community for many years to come. In the words of Joyce Bertlesen, *Vaya con Dios*. God be with you this Christmas season.

SUNDAY SCHOOL OUTREACH—HELPING ANIMALS

During his children's talk on Sunday December 2nd, Reverend Stephen commented on how much their family had learned from their dog Max.

Dogs give unconditional love, unquestioned loyalty and are always welcoming and pleased to see you.

St. Margaret's Sunday School is putting together a collection for animals in need at the Barrie S.P.C.A. Shelter. These include, Iams dry and wet food for both cats and dogs as well as good quality toys.

Other appreciated items are 6 foot leashes and all sizes of Martingale collars for dogs, and non clumping clay cat litter.

Grocery Store or Wal Mart gift cards to purchase supplies and liquid soap and bleach are also welcome.

THE BARRIE FOOD BANK

Submitted by Pamela Williams

St. Margaret's supports the Barrie Food Bank through ongoing food donations brought into the Barrie Food Bank Bin as well as by donations raised by special events such as the recent Concert and Dessert evening. Pamela and David Williams are the St. Margaret's liaison with the Food Bank. Pamela writes about her volunteer experience below.

For 26 years I have been volunteering once a week at the Barrie Food Bank. I have watched the client numbers go up and up. From the start we have been open three afternoons a week, when each client is interviewed so that their story is heard and their needs established - how many children, income, etc - and their order is made up by volunteers. This full order may happen every 5 weeks and includes everything from soap to cereal to butter and eggs.

I now work in a large room with an outside door which opens every day at 8.30 am, by which time there is usually a line-up. Before opening I help to sort and stack day-old bread of all kinds which fills one wall above eye level. From this the folk may help themselves without limit. In addition there is usually a choice of one or two cans of vegetables or fruit per client, and recently we have also had shampoo and hand cream available. Two weeks ago we were given an enormous carton of fresh carrots - a great help-you gift.



An interesting spot is a table where clients themselves place all kinds of unneeded or unwanted things - dishes, shoes, clothing, ornaments, last week a bird cage! Some bring and take, some just look and touch.

This morning drop-in doesn't give much food, but no questions are asked and it is enough to help. There are frequently over 60 people in a morning, and I have sometimes had over 100 who find it worthwhile braving the cold to come.

BARRIE OUT OF THE COLD PROGRAM

"Barrie Out of the Cold provides safe, respectful and welcoming overnight accommodation and meals to the homeless from November to April.

As much as Barrie Out of the Cold was once considered a temporary solution for those who could not find a shelter bed, the increased number of homeless people has, over the past several years, made this program a necessity. Every effort is made to ensure that nobody has to spend the night outside but a better, long term solution needs to be found. A mat on a basement floor with a stranger sleeping beside you is not the answer to homelessness.

Our wish is that homelessness, hunger and poverty no longer existed, but, as long as people seek food and shelter, we hope that this program can be there for those who need our assistance.

The Barrie Out of the Cold program provides guests with a hot dinner, breakfast and a place to sleep from mid November until the end of April. BOOTC is indebted to the six host churches and to the over one thousand volunteers. "

The above information and more about Barrie Out of the Cold can be found on the organization's website - www.barrieoutofthecold.org. St. Margaret's is not a host church for Out of the Cold but does assist in providing hot meals at various times during the year. If you could assist with this ministry, please contact Shelley Sweazey.

CONNECTION

Following are two short essays written by St. Margaret's Parishioners. Robert Hamann writes about natural and spiritual insight. David Williams looks back upon his youth to give us a glimpse of a childhood Christmas celebrated in a tropical climate.

WINDOW TO A WORLD UNSEEN

Submitted by Robert C. Hamann

When I had "Niles", my faithful Chow-chow, we would venture out to the woods for a hike on a regular basis. It wouldn't matter what type of weather, rain, sleet, snow or a hot muggy day, my hardy dog was always a willing participant. I on the other hand had to dress for the occasion whereas the dog was outfitted for all weather conditions. In the dog days of summer I would walk with him in the early morning or late evening, due to the risk of heat stroke. Of course the dog would have walked in the blazing heat of the day if allowed, but I would have none of it.

One early spring morning we were hiking in the county forest at the end of Anne St. at Carson Rd. It's a heavy forested track of mixed deciduous and conifers, predominately Red Pine, but quite a variety of Oak, Wild Cherry, Birch, Ash, Jack Pine, White Pine, and the occasional quivering Hemlock, Maple and Ironwood. There are also abundant patches of Morels and Trilliums; White Trilliums mostly but there are pink and red patches to be found. One day, I happened upon a pink to red patch among the mixed pines.

Quite the Sight! They prefer the acidic soil conditions for cultivation. I am told it is okay to pick them just don't transplant them to your own garden. I wouldn't however due to the slow cultivation of the Trilliums. They require seven years from seed to

flower. Trilliums are sensitive to light; full sunlight will kill them. Selective lumber harvesting is okay but clear cutting will kill them. So when they clear cut our county forests for housing development bid farewell to our majestic trilliums for they will be never more. Paradise Lost!



In any event, when Niles and I would go on our jaunts through the woods, I would keep a close vigil on his behaviour because he was my "window to the natural world". A twitch of the ears or sniff of the air and I knew he had caught the scent of an animal. There is quite a variety at our doorstep; turkeys, deer, osprey, red-tailed hawks, porcupine, skunk, foxes, coyotes, cottontails and snowshoe hares are just to name a few. On one particular occasion while we were hiking, Niles became very agitated. His ears went back, and he was growling. In all the years before and after I seldom heard a chow growl.

As I settled Niles down (he was well trained and easily manageable), we quietly waited. We were crouching on the crest of a hill in an area where there were a lot of rolling hills. The air was warmer than the ground which left a fog-cover in the low lying areas. With the rat-tat-tat of a woodpecker in the background I noticed Niles was concentrating his gaze to the left. Out of the fog there rose a ghostly apparition of a family of deer. First the heads appeared, then the torso, walking ever so quietly up the next hill in single file!

Not a sound was heard; nary a snap of twig or rustling of leaves. If it wasn't for Niles, I would never have witnessed this beautiful and heavenly sight. The deer disappeared as silently as they appeared. I suspect the deer were grazing on the trilliums for they are very fond of them.

Jesus is my guide to the spiritual world and gives me insight into the scriptures, and how to better live in this world of ours. Niles was my ears and eyes to the natural world and Jesus is my guide to the spiritual world.

**PALMS AND PLUM PUDDING
OR CHRISTMAS THE RIGHT WAY UP**

Submitted by David Williams

"Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noonday sun", sang Noel Coward, celebrating the penchant of his compatriots for maintaining their habits in unsuitable surroundings. My mother was an Englishwoman. She remained unflinchingly English throughout her married life in the palm-fringed, sub-tropical city of my birth and never was this more evident than at Christmas time.

We children were awakened early, not so much by the traditional magic of this day, as by the brilliance and warmth of the summer sun streaming through open windows. After a rush downstairs to seize bulging stockings from a mantelpiece perversely lined with wintry Christmas cards, we dressed and went to our suburban church, its congregation colourful in cotton skirts, in sandals, shorts and sport shirts, its doors open to a welcome breeze. During an impatient drive home, we recalled the previous week's visit to Woolworth's Father Christmas, resplendent with padded red suit and perspiring face, dispensing promises beneath the merciful draft of an air-conditioner.

Where were our gifts? They lay in the lounge, under an evergreen whose branches mother had carefully treated with canned "snow" and draped with tinsel "ice". Outside we could see our gracious jacaranda and flamboyant bougainvillea, all in full bloom and hear the buzz of bees, the whirring of cicadas and the chirrup of crickets in joyful chorus. But there were no sleds or skis, no mitts or muffs for us. The frenzied tearing of holly printed paper might reveal roller-skates, perhaps but more likely such surprises as a cricket bat or tennis racquet, a surfboard or a swimsuit.



After breakfast (paw-paw with lemon, followed by bacon and eggs) we had to test our new delights, of course, in a morning spent on the palm-lined beach and in the foaming surf of the Indian Ocean. There the hours flew like minutes until, under that noonday sun, we returned to the highlight of the day and the most incongruous ceremony of all – Christmas dinner.

In the dining room, beneath streamers hung with paper sleigh bells, snowflakes, holly and mistletoe, the table shone with Mother's best silver, glass wear and napery, offset by colourful party crackers. Standing around the table, we crossed arms and together pulled the crackers, grimacing in anticipation of the sudden explosions; we donned the paper hats, blew the tin whistles, laughed at

the silly jokes and sat down to await what I cannot forbear to relate: Father's annual battle with the turkey, with the odds as ever, on the bird.

In sudden solemn silence there enters Mother's turkey, golden-brown and steaming. We crinkle our noses in delight, and lick our lips in expectation. With crisp-roast potatoes in protective attendance around the platter, it is reverently laid at the head of the table. Excitement heightens as Father, the light of battle in his eye, hones the carver, takes up the long fork and plunges it like a lance into the bird. Under the weight of that opening blow, two squiring tubers desert their knight and soil the tablecloth. Father brandishes the carver and attacks the breast, but it is a glancing blow as the crisp skin deflects the blade and a potato is beheaded. Now battle is joined in earnest. The point of the knife goes squarely into the breast and Father begins to hack at the white meat, dumping the resultant chunks ceremoniously on the nearest dinner plate. More potatoes are now on the tablecloth and Mother is sighing resignedly as always, while she waits with the peas, the pumpkin, and the gravy. One of us offers another plate for the potatoes, giving Father elbow room to grab with bare hands at the turkey's ankle, gritting his teeth the while in ferocious zest. And so the conflict continues, until each of us is served with a dinner, now lukewarm. And the turkey, although it has cost more than a wing and a leg, lies battered but unbowed, while Father wipes his fevered brow and lays down carver and fork in silent acknowledgement of defeat.

But no "English" Christmas dinner could be complete without another triumphal entry from the kitchen: the rich dark, juicy plum pudding, topped with its sprig of holly and aflame from its moat of brandy. It was Mother's special privilege to cut and serve this treat. More excitement mounted as we explored our steamy fruity portions for their hidden treasures: tiny metal charms, and if we were lucky enough, a silver tickey or sixpence to augment our holiday pocket money.

There was more to come on this strange, paradoxical day: an afternoon visit to Grandfather's great stone house, where uncles and aunts had foregathered. Beneath the gently turning blades of the punkah, the family alternately consumed hot mince pies and sang of Wenceslas' crisp and even snow or of the frosty wind of Rosetti's bleak mid-

winter, while the western sun blazed relentlessly through the long windows of Grandfather's library.

And then this mad-dog day drew slowly to its close in the warm brilliance of star-studded southern night. Picture palm trees and plum pudding. Dear Mother had once more loyally observed her northern feast-day under our subtropical summer skies. Father was resigned to his defeat in the lists. We children dropped into bed, confused but content. All was well.

NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A.W.A.R.E. Conference – 2013. The theme is from John 15:5, "*You are the Branch*". Dates: May 3-5th, \$215.00 for the weekend which includes food and accommodation. For more information, contact Maggie Prentice.

ADVERTISING RATES

To offset production costs, advertising will be accepted for the newsletter at the following rates for two insertions. 1/8 page (business card size) \$25.00; 1/4 page \$45.00; 1/2 page \$85.00; full page \$160.00



And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

(Luke 2: 7)

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

7:00 p.m.
Family Service
10:30 p.m.
Candlelight
Service

Epiphany Thoughts

I am a candle
of colourless unscented plain paraffin,
shaped in a standard one-inch cylindrical mold,
equipped with a wick
of common issue store bought string,
unadorned and undecorated,
functional not fancy,
but lit with the light of Christ
and set in the lampstand of the church,
I shine with beauty and usefulness.
And so I am grateful
because the fire that lights me,
and the lampstand that holds me.
cannot fail;

These are my strength and my salvation;
In these shall I trust.

Elizabeth Morley