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**Fall
2020**

A look at what's happening at our church

St. John's



Sure and Stedfast: A Message from Rev. Adams



As a boy I belonged to a Christian organization for boys, The Boy's Brigade. It was similar to – and indeed is the precursor of – the Scouting movement, but with a more significant faith component. While it does not have a large footprint in Canada, the Boy's Brigade is still a significant organization in many parts of the world – especially Scotland and Ireland. As its motto, the Boy's Brigade selected the words “Sure and Stedfast”, taken from Hebrews 6:19, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...”.

In many ways, this year has been anything but sure or steadfast. The arrival of COVID-19 in our lives challenged our normal routines, forcing us to wonder how we can safely interact with one another and how our common life can continue. Every day seems to bring questions about what aspect of our lives might be put on hold or altered. While we have resumed in-person worship – along with our online services – many of the groups and gatherings have still to resume. Because we are not meeting with one another, planning has become much more challenging.

Despite all these changes, one thing that has remained is the centrality of our faith. It was amazing how quickly we moved from bricks and mortar worship to virtual praise; and how the message of Christ's love and sacrifice continued to be proclaimed. In our solitude, people seemed genuinely engaged in worship and happy to “be with” one another in worship, even if at a distance. It has been wonderful to go back after worship and see your comments and greetings to one another on Facebook and Youtube.

Through these 6 months, I have been reminded in both large ways and small, of the steadfast love of God. Even though we live in turbulent times, it is good to know that we have an anchor that keeps us secure – Jesus Christ. Several times during this pandemic, people have said to me as they arrived for worship that with all things that were going on in the world they needed to come to church – they needed to be reminded that we have an anchor. When we are overwhelmed, we know that we can release our cares to God; that our God is indeed Sure and Stedfast, and in that there is peace.

MacRae Bursary 2020

Bella Gwanyama is the 2020 Clifford MacRae Bursary Recipient. Clifford was a member and Elder of St. John's. He was a Special Education teacher and consultant with the S.D. & G. Board of Education. Education was very important to him, and his family began awarding the bursary in his name upon his death in 1993. Bella is the recipient for 2020. She is a graduate of Holy Trinity Secondary School and is attending McGill University, working towards a degree in microbiology. She is studying on-line due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Bella has been a member of the St. John's Youth Group, participating in their Christmas pageants, Mother's Day pageants, and the weekly programs. She attended the Canada Youth Conference at Brock University as part of the St. John's delegation.

Carol Esdale



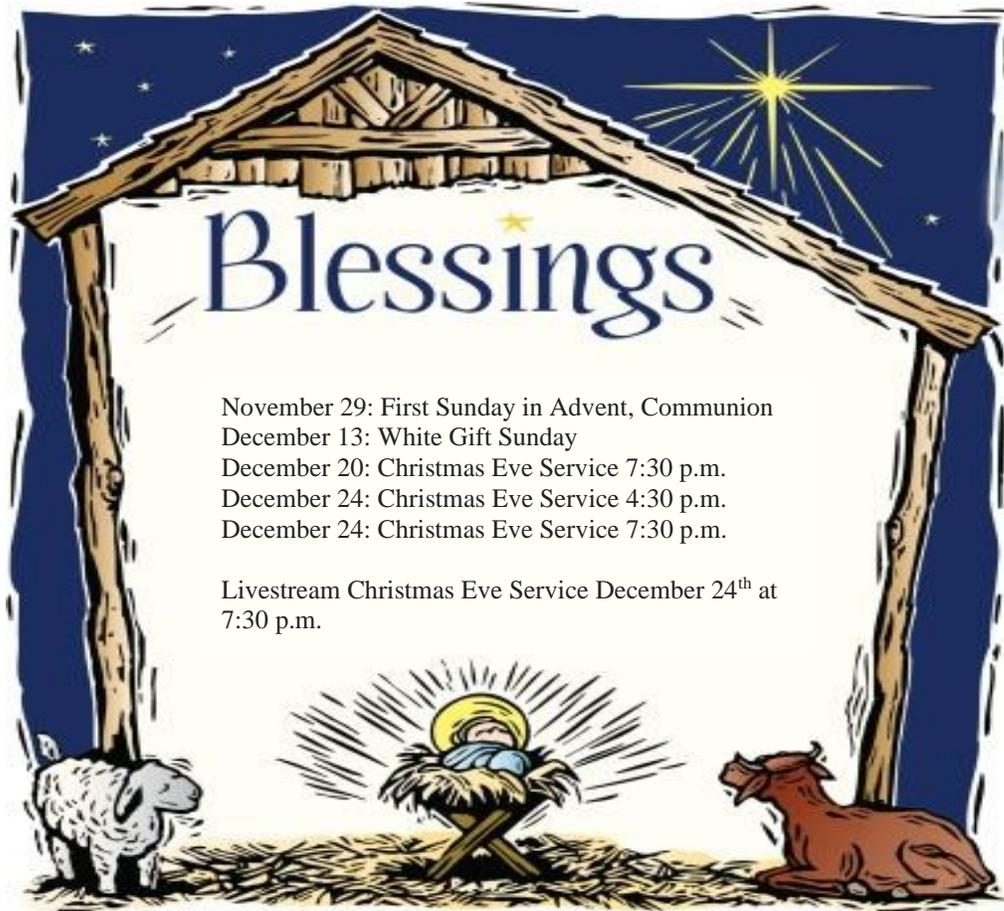
Honouring the Reverend Doctor Fred Rennie

On Sunday, October 4th the congregation of St. John's honoured the Reverend Dr. Fred Rennie for his many years of dedication and service to preserving the history of our church. Rev. Rennie was the first Archivist in our church and he spent every Wednesday in the Old Vestry cataloguing and filing the documents and photographs that tell the story of our past.

Rev. Rennie was always willing to share his knowledge about St. John's and would happily meet with people, even holding "open house" after services on Sunday mornings. We were frequently blessed with newsletter articles, as well as collages, that would bring back memories and teach us about our friends both past and present. We extend our heartfelt thanks and wish him much happiness in his latest retirement.

As of Saturday, November 21st, we have raised \$12,453.97 towards our \$17,000 goal for Presbyterians Sharing. Please consider making a donation to this important work.





November 29: First Sunday in Advent, Communion
December 13: White Gift Sunday
December 20: Christmas Eve Service 7:30 p.m.
December 24: Christmas Eve Service 4:30 p.m.
December 24: Christmas Eve Service 7:30 p.m.

Livestream Christmas Eve Service December 24th at
7:30 p.m.



The Big Read

Copies of The Magician's Nephew have been ordered and those who have spoken to Rev. Adams will be notified when they arrive. A couple of additional copies have been ordered, so it is not too late to join in. Once the books arrive, those who are interested are invited to join the Zoom study on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm.

Trustees Update

In the spring the Board requested a transfer of \$10,000 from the Trustees, mostly due to the uncertainties of Covid-19 and the closure of the church. Last month the Board transferred \$10,000 back to the Trustees, and they do not anticipate they will need to request further funds in 2020. This is the first year in many that monies from the Heritage Trust Fund have not been needed. The outstanding balance owing to the HTF, and the church's only existing debt is \$59,665.

A great deal of work has been done at the church, thanks to bequests from the estates of Dorothy Cook and Colleen Cox. These include investigation into the tower foundation by St. Lawrence Testing and EFI Engineering, which was found to be satisfactory. They recommend a base line be established for all parts of the church to detect movement. You will see the new Flaming Bush Rondels in the two circular openings in the stone work at the front. A full face-lift for the church was undertaken by I.M.G. Innovation, including detailing the windows of the church with paint and new wood as required and replacing louvers in the tower, pointing, venting, east side tower windows, copper flashing repair, etc. Work is being done to replace some of the Lexan coverings with tempered glass. Extras incurred to date are removing and reinstalling Lexan to repair, paint and putty all exposed wood; measuring openings and installing the rondels, protective covering the top two small and one round window high in the tower, and LED bulbs in the outside lights shining on the stained glass.

We thank the families of Dorothy and Colleen for these generous donations to beautify our church.

Wes Libbey

Communion November 29th

Communion Sunday is on November 29th. If you would like to receive the prefilled communion cups from the church, please speak to your elder or telephone the church office at 613-932-8693. Otherwise, please have your own elements prepared for this service.

Calling all singers!

Christmas Eve is approaching, and we are looking for individuals and/or families who would be willing to record themselves singing some of the Christmas hymns we will be using in worship. We are also looking for a family group who would like to be part of the 4:30 service. Please contact the church if you can help.

To Be A Blessing – A Financial Update

One question that I have been asked by many of you – and which I am sure has been on the mind of others – has to do with the financial health of our congregation during this pandemic. What effect has closing the church for three months, and limited attendance for three and a half more, had on givings? I am pleased to share that the news is good; in no small part due to you, the members and adherents of St. John's and your generosity in continuing to support what we do here in the heart of Cornwall. So let me begin this good news report by saying "Thank you". Thank you for your financial support. Thank you for your encouragement as we have sought to reimagine what ministry might look like.

Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, givings to the end of October were \$160,110; approximately \$7,000 less than at the same time last year. To provide further detail: givings to the operating budget of the church are \$6,000 less than at the end of October 2019, while the amount given to Presbyterians Sharing is down slightly (~ \$ 1,000) from this time last year.

One area where we have seen a decrease in revenue during the pandemic is in revenue from our user-groups. When the lockdown began, the use of the building by outside groups was also suspended. With decreased activities came decreased user-fees during the first nine months of 2020. We were able to offset some of these losses by applying to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy; although most months we did not qualify for this grant.

Taking all these factors into account, we have a small shortfall of approximately \$1,818 as of October 31st.

Thank you to for your continued support.
Reverend Adams

Syrian Family Update

Some of you may be wondering how the Nahhas family are doing since their arrival in Canada a few years ago. They are still in Kemptonville where the Refugee Committee moved them into a townhouse. Tamy is working as an Office Administrator for Ardron Landscapes. Her parents are both doing well and Joud, who is now in Grade 6 is doing his schooling online but he misses his friends.



Hiba's next Pharmacy Exam is on November 8th. This is an oral "case" exam, where she will be asked to respond verbally to questions about cases. She said this is the biggest hurdle for her - the next two exams will be English and Law exams, and she thinks those will be straightforward.

Also, she is still anxiously awaiting Fadi's (her sweetheart) arrival to Canada. Due to COVID-19, the processing of refugee visas has essentially ground to a halt right now. Rev. Marianne Emig Carr has worked with her MP to make additional contacts with the Visa Office in Lebanon, but so far we have no further news. The situation with Fadi is identical to what is happening with other refugees being sponsored by the PCC.

So, I ask for prayers from our congregation for Hiba as she prepares for this next exam, and continued prayers for Fadi's health and well-being as he waits for his visa in Lebanon.

Blessings,
Jennifer Adams

