

“IN GOD’S SERVICE”
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE REGIONAL MINISTRY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCHES IN SOUTH
GEORGIAN BAY

Happy New Year and welcome back to our regional newsletter. Mother Nature has finally provided us with winter! I hope you are keeping warm this week! And while the snow makes it somewhat inconvenient to get out and about for some of us at times, we must keep in mind that many individuals depend on ‘the white stuff’ for their employment. It is important for our regional economy.



We have much to share with you in this newsletter---all the wonderful things that have, are, and will happen at our three Parishes in the South Georgian Bay ministry!

As Canon Gordon relates, “A New Year Brings New Beginnings and New Hope!

A New Year brings New Beginnings and New Hope

I love this time of year. The days get longer, and the air is crisp, which meant playing hockey and skiing in my younger years. Those of us who may have made New Year's Resolutions may not have had time to break them yet and there is still an air of new beginnings in this new calendar year. But our hope is not placed in our ability to keep our resolutions, it is based on the hope that the birth of Jesus we just celebrated has brought to our world.

We are in the season of Epiphany. Epiphany comes from a Greek word that means ‘manifestation.’ We often hear the word Epiphany used when someone suddenly understands something. It’s also used to describe a religious experience. Epiphany Sunday celebrates the Wise Men's visit to Jesus, who recognised the wisdom, peace and salvation that the world was seeking. That salvific love is ready to be made manifest in each of our lives if we will seek it as the wise men did.

We know very little about the Wise Men, or Magi, except that they came from the east to Jerusalem (Matthew 2:1). They would probably have been educated in the wisdom of the Babylonians and Persians and studied the ancient book of Daniel with its Messianic prophecies. We know that they saw and followed a star. We also know that it’s a matter of historical record that a star appeared for the first time in the first Decan of the Constellation of Virgo immediately preceding Jesus’ Birth. We know the Persians, Egyptians, and Chinese all recorded this event, too.

The star first appeared before Jesus was born and, regardless of whether God used an existing astronomical phenomenon, or created one for the occasion, it had a supernatural purpose in that God was guiding the Wise Men in a very special way. They were curious to find out where it was leading. They were hoping to find the King who would bring everlasting love and joy and peace to this world. We know now that their hope was well placed – that God came into the world and was with us – Immanuel. We who also have the evidence of history continue to place our hope in God’s love through the Christ-child who would become our Redeemer, the Risen Christ.



Concerning hope, the renowned author Fyodor Dostoyevsky writes, “Totally without hope one cannot live. To live without hope is to cease to live. Hell is hopelessness.” To live without hope is to cease to live. That’s so true. In the difficult and often confusing world in which we live, hope, for many people, is something that seems to be in short supply. I would even go so far as to say that in a world of pain, grief, sorrow and bereavement, of complex family relationships, of problems at work, alongside many other hardships of life, hope, for many people, has become exhausted!

But hope, I believe, is one of the most important gifts God gives to us. And nothing, nothing, brings hope back to life like the Christmas story and the journey of the Wise Men. Unlike the Wise Men, however, we don’t have to travel thousands of miles to find Jesus; we can find him right where we are.

Through the timeless truth of scripture, Isaiah 40:31 reminds us that things may seem crazy, “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength”. Our hope is in God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only wants us to live and have life, but to “have it more abundantly” (John 10:10)!

May each of us find Hope in God’s Guidance, Hope in God’s Word and Hope in Jesus in the year, and years, that lie ahead.


Blessings in the Lord who is our Hope,
Fr. Gord+

A Prayer for Epiphany

Glorious Creator of the heavens and giver of Life,
who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us in this New Year.
Merciful grant that the sustaining hope
brought by our Lord Jesus Christ
be manifest more deeply in our hearts,
and more clearly in our lives,
this we pray in His holy name.
Amen.

Father Michael shares with us a “A Note From the Priest In Charge”.....

Happy Epiphany! If that seems like a strange greeting, I encourage you to read the article “What Is Epiphany” in this edition of our Regional Ministry Newsletter.

It’s been a wonderful season of Advent and Christmas between our three congregations and while I didn’t get to every single event, I was delighted by the various carol sings, nativity plays and parades, and of course all the outreach that means so much at this time of the year. 

Every single ministry is important because they all show us answering God's call according to our time and talents. The tradition of awarding certain people with the Order of the Diocese of Toronto does not mean to suggest that some ministries are more important than others. Rather, it serves to hold up specific kinds of activities as "best practices" for us to recognize and to inspire us in our own callings.

This year I'm particularly grateful that four of our own were awarded the ODT on New Year's Day, and you can read an article on our laughter-filled bus trip to Toronto in this edition. It was a great example of how regional ministry brings congregations together, and it was certainly noticed and well-received by our Diocesan leaders.

Fairly soon now we will all be turning to vestry meetings and budgets as we plan for the year ahead. I'm excited at the growth we've seen in the last year, and I look forward to seeing what God is calling us to. Thank you all for all you do to make God's kingdom visible in our part of the Georgian Bay region.

May God bless and keep you,

Father Michael
Priest in Charge
The Regional Ministry of South Georgian Bay

Reverend Sharon's VW 'Punch Buggy', puts on a lot of kilometres between Collingwood, Creemore and Campbellford! Don't know how she does it but she does!!!! She also tells us about 'Epiphany' and what it means to us.....

The Secret Code of Epiphany

Epiphany begins on the 6th of January each year, a day when we celebrate the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah to the whole world – to the "gentiles". Though the prophesies of the Old Testament refer to a Saviour for the people of Israel, God's salvation is for all people, regardless of age, race, gender, nationality or any other things which may seem to separate us. In God, we are all one. All of humanity in one under God.

The Three Wise Men, the three Kings, the three Magi, are the first non-Jewish guests to the child Jesus. It would probably have seemed strange to Mary and Joseph that these three had put their lives on hold, traveled many miles guided by a star, and left gifts fit for a King. Yet we know that they were welcomed by this humble family. And the costly gifts they presented would have given them the resources for their journey over the coming years.



We too are followers of this Messiah, and we too seek to welcome him each day. We open our hearts to his presence in our lives and ask God to use us in spreading the good news of God's love. But there is also a way to remind ourselves daily of the welcome we may provide. It is an ancient practice which is a tangible sign that Christ is welcome in our homes. Here is the code:

20+C+M+b+24.

This can be written over the front door of the home, usually with chalk. And the meaning of the code? The numbers are for this year – 2024. The plus signs in between are symbols of the cross. The letters have two meanings. The first is the initials of the three Wise Men – Casper, Melchor and Baltazer. But they also represent an ancient blessing, Christus Mansionem Benedicat. May God bless this house.

What a wonderful way to remind ourselves each time we enter and leave our home that Christ is present with us.

Epiphany Blessings,
Sharon+

A year and a half ago, the Diocese of Toronto decided to venture into a regional ministry with the three active Parishes around South Georgian Bay...Prince of Peace, St. Luke's and All Saints....all had a strong base with dedicated Anglicans. With the appointment of Father Michael as Priest In Charge, (ed note..I like the sound of 'Incumbent'!!), we have seen many examples of shared ministries among All Saints, Prince of Peace and St. Luke's in the last 18 months...we are blessed with the leadership that Michael, Sharon, Louise, Lorna and Gordon, are doing to create and share this Anglican spirituality and liturgy. Father Michael shares with us an example of what 'regional ministry' is all about.....

What does regional ministry in our Diocese look like? Well, this New Years Day, it looked like three churches on a bus.

The three parishes of the Regional Ministry of South Georgian Bay were delighted to learn that four of our members were among those awarded the Order of the Diocese of Toronto: Val Beasley (Prince of Peace, Wasaga Beach), Eileen Martin (St Luke's, Creemore) Sharon Goldsworthy and Moira Southwell (All Saints, Collingwood).



Their friends and parishioners were certainly not going to let these four go to Toronto alone! Our resourceful curate, the Rev. Louise Dightam, put her years of Girl Guides leadership to good use and found us a bus charter company. An anonymous donor stepped up and generously covered the cost. On New Years Day, after stops at each church, forty five passengers (including Jack the service dog) were headed south.

We sometimes forget how big our Diocese is. Some of the folks on the bus had not been to Toronto for many years, and a few had never visited St. James Cathedral before. So the mood on the bus was excited and joyful, evoking old memories of school field trips.

The service of Evensong and the awards ceremony did not disappoint. The breadth of ministries described in every ODT ceremony is always inspiring, and for some of our group, it was all gloriously new. One young man, a new Christian, told me that the beauty of the cathedral and the music left him in tears. The trip back home included singing and laughter. It was a long day, but totally worthwhile.

Regional Ministry in our Diocese is very much a work in progress, and requires that new ideas are tried. This trip helped build friendships and bonds between our three congregations. We grew closer together, and saw a larger vision of what we can accomplish as the people of God.

The Rev. Dr. Michael Peterson
Priest in Charge, Regional Ministry of South Georgian Bay



NEWS FROM ST. LUKE'S.....Deacon Lorna and Reverend Sharon and the team at St. Luke's, are doing an amazing job in Creemore and in the 'Purple Hills'. Lorna has provided us with a reflection on the Advent and Christmas season in her Parish, and with upcoming events as we approach Lent.

News From St. Luke's Creemore

Happy New Year!

It hardly seems possible that Christmas and New Years' celebrations are over for another year, and we are already planning the Easter Vigil!

St. Lukes is blessed to have four Ukrainian nurses who come regularly to our services. On November 25 we were treated to a demonstration of making pirogies. Nadia, Eugenia, Olga and Anna, are very talented and were very helpful as we learned how to make and from the dough. Fortunately, there were some left over to donate to the foodbank!



Beginning December 1st, with the support of DJ Wiley, we were able to have a village wide food and toy drive for families in need. This involved decorated donation baskets in several businesses, a raffle at the local Pub, with weekly updates in our local paper The Echo. We continue to be very well supported by Creemore Foodland, who raise funds for the foodbank thought the year.

The elves were busy beginning on December 1 organizing and sorting toys for our Christmas hampers. We aren't sure how Santa gets it right every year, but seemingly we managed to deliver toys to parents by the middle of December!

December 9 we were pleased to welcome the choir from Prince of Peace, and Ken Robertson as soloist, as well as parishioners from all three churches to our carol sing. Thank you to everyone who came and for those who helped prepare the delicious refreshments afterwards.

We were very thankful that the weather cooperated on December 24 so we could celebrate Christmas in our beautiful church. It was wonderful to see children, teens and young people, and to hear their voices joyously celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

January 1 was indeed a very special day as a bus full from Southern Georgian Bay travelled to the Cathedral of St. James to the Bishops Levee, and to honour those from our parishes who received the Order of the Diocese of Toronto. Congratulations to Eileen, Moira, Sharon and Val! We wish everyone a safe and healthy Epiphany season.

Our Vestry at St. Luke's will be held on Saturday February 24. Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 11am.

On February 24th, The St. Luke's Walkers will be walking in the village to support The Coldest Night of the Year. We will begin at 3pm from St. Luke's and enjoy a walk through our beautiful hillside. This outreach supports Home Horizon who serve people experiencing hurt, homelessness and hunger. Please consider joining our team or a team in your community.

Looking ahead:

Service times for Holy Week at St. Lukes are

Maundy Thursday 12pm Good Friday 10am Easter Vigil 7pm and Easter Sunday 11:15

Blessings, Lorna

Photos:

Kelly "The Elf" sorting Christmas toys and gifts for families in need.

Deacon Lorna reads the citation awarding Eileen Martin the Order of the Diocese of Toronto:

Learning the skill of making pirogies thanks from Ukrainian experts



NEWS FROM PRINCE OF PEACE....Reverend Louise tells us of all the wonderful things that Prince of Peace was involved with during the Christmas season, including the choir visiting St. Luke's, the float in the Wasaga Beach Santa Clause parade, bake sale and special Christmas church services....

Happenings at Prince of Peace Anglican Church, Wasaga Beach

Prince of Peace had a busy and spirit-filled Advent and Christmas season. We marked the end of the church year with an interactive congregational activity about the church year and its colours. Then in Advent, Rev. Louise's monologue as Elizabeth along with the words of the Magnificat brought us into the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth as we prepared for the birth of our Savior. We got into the seasonal spirit by marching with our float in the Wasaga Beach Santa Claus parade, and the single ladies group enjoyed a festive lunch.

Leading up to Christmas, our new choir enjoyed singing at St. Luke's Christmas in Creemore service on December 9. Saturday, December 16 was our annual Bake and Craft sale, and then on Sunday, December 17 we welcomed 65 people into our little church for a community carol sing, with the Rev. Louise Dightam as MC and All Saints' own Barry da Silva on the piano. Not only did we have a great time singing, but it was a successful fund raiser for the Wasaga Beach Ministerial Foodbank. In 2023 we raised a total of \$2,690 for the Foodbank our through monthly noisy change collection, parishioner donations and our carol sing.

In addition to collecting financial and food donations, Prince of Peace is one of the partner churches in the Wasaga Beach Ministerial Foodbank. Rev. Louise serves at the food bank as the lead pastor on alternate Thursday mornings, and many parishioners have volunteer roles from packaging food and receiving donations to preparing statistical reports. Food insecurity is a growing issue in Wasaga Beach (as elsewhere in the province). This year our Foodbank distributed about 400 Christmas hampers and supported a record number of clients in December.

Prince of Peace celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ with over 110 worshippers over three Christmas services. Arguably the most popular service was our Christmas Eve morning children's service, where the children lit the candles, led the prayers, helped at the altar and brought the Christmas story to life with a simple pageant. Mary even rode Harriett the donkey (formerly Humphrey the camel) up the aisle. Our evening service was also well attended, with reading the Gospel and singing Silent Night by candlelight a spirit-filled time. Christmas morning we had a smaller quiet service.

Before we know it, we will be cooking up a storm at our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Feb 13 at 4 to 6 pm – contact us if you would like a ticket:

PrinceofPeaceChurchWB@gmail.com or leave a message at 705-429-5242.

Submitted by Prince of Peace Anglican Church, Wasaga Beach

Regional News: Praying into Advent -

On Saturday December 2, Rev. Louise Dightam led a regional Quiet Saturday called Praying into Advent in the quiet spaces of All Saints Anglican Church, Collingwood. 15 parishioners from Prince of Peace, All Saints Collingwood and St Luke's Creemore attended.





NEWS FROM ALL SAINTS....Like the two sister parishes above, All Saints was a 'hive' of activity through Advent and the Christmas season. Christmas Eve services were well attended, especially the Sunday service on December 24th with the Christmas pageant. A special service for the Feast of Epiphany was held on January 6th and last week, the first Après Ski service took place. More information about the ski services can be found in this newsletter. Friday, February 2nd, 'Candlemas' (the Presentation of Christ in the Temple), will be observed at All Saints. All are welcome to attend this 'sung mass' from the Book of Common Prayer.

The regular Parish programmes are now back after a brief Christmas break. CO-3 continues at 10:00 a.m. on Thursdays, Colourful Meditations on Saturdays at 2:00 p.m.; Men's Breakfast group will meet on January 25th at 8:00 a.m.; the Chronicles of Narnia book club on January 31st at 1:30 p.m.

For those who like to plan ahead, the annual All Saints Vestry meeting will be held on Sunday, February 25th.

Please check the All Saints Church website for information about other activities taking place.

The Food Ministry programmes at All Saints, served close to 200 meals in January! 'Five Loaves' delivered 50 meals to the 'Mobile Soup Kitchen' and Out of the Cold' programme, plus another 50+ meals to parishioners and others in the community. Last week, the Community Friendship Dinner provided a hearty, sit down dinner. Penny Bourne's report is attached.

FRIENDSHIP DINNER

Last evening was cold and icy with freezing rain in the forecast, but still we had another successful Friendship Dinner with many guests from all areas of the community. In all, there were about 75 people served, including some of our volunteers. Dinner was lasagna (purchased), salads, veggies, dinner rolls (donated by Cobs Bakery), and some wonderful desserts!

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who donate their time and talent to help make this happen. It is so appreciated. This month we give a special thank you to the Clean-Up Team who worked their magic in the kitchen and the hall in record breaking time!

Thank you also to those who make a financial donation to our ministry. Please make sure you mark it for Food Ministry, and that your name and address are on it so that we may issue a tax receipt.

Next month's dinner will be on February 14th - Ash Wednesday and St. Valentine's Day! So I expect there will be lots of chocolate desserts!

Thank you again for all you do,

Penny

Parishioners of all three of our regional churches are welcome to attend events at the other churches. It is always special to walk into a building and feel that it is part of your spiritual home. May you all have a 'Happy and Healthy 2024'!

And below is the link to a special wish for you for this new year.....God Bless!

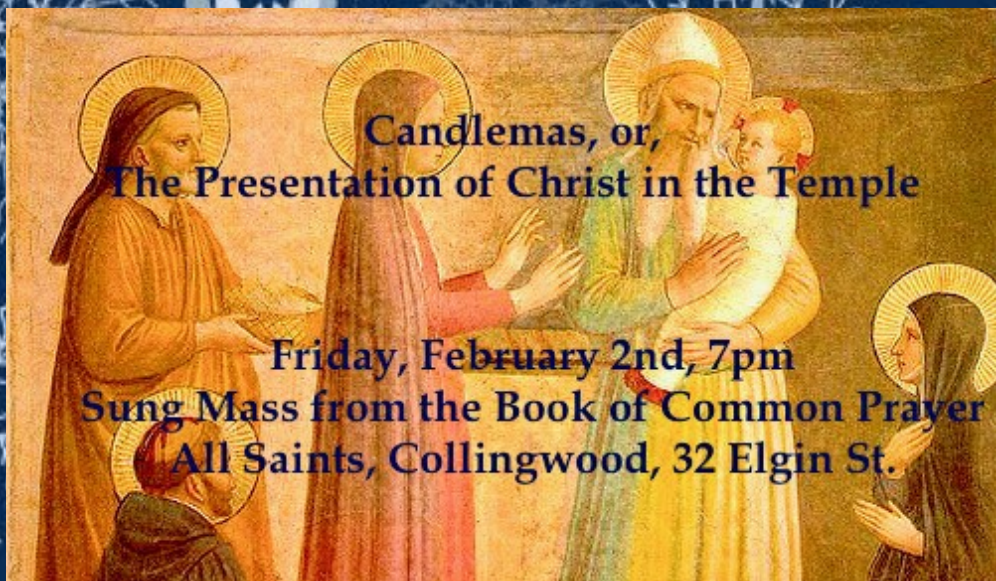
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmtyvQw5ROk>

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE PARISHES OF ST. LUKE'S, PRINCE OF PEACE AND ALL SAINTS, RESIDE ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE ANISHNAABE AND WENDAT PEOPLES. THIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REMINDS US OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS TO THE ANCESTRAL LANDS ON WHICH WE LIVE, LEARN, SHARE AND PRAY.



Après Ski Saturday Eucharists

5pm Saturdays From January 13 until March 9th
Candlelit Contemplative Eucharist Followed by Refreshments
32 Elgin St Collingwood www.allsaintscollingwood.com



**Candlemas, or,
The Presentation of Christ in the Temple**

Friday, February 2nd, 7pm
Sung Mass from the Book of Common Prayer
All Saints, Collingwood, 32 Elgin St.