

**IN GOD'S SERVICE
THE REGIONAL ANGLICAN MINISTRY OF SOUTH GEORGIAN BAY
DECEMBER 4, 2025**

Welcome back to your newsletter. As we proceed through our Advent Season, we are mindful that Christmas is just around the corner. This newsletter shares with our Anglican friends in Southern Georgian Bay, information from our clergy and members of our four regional Parishes.

Reverend Sharon tells us about the "Light in the Darkness".

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

At this time of year, we are well aware of the shorter days and longer nights. The nights can seem to last forever. It is a hard time of year and many struggle and long for sunshine, especially with so many cold, dull and rainy days.

Throughout the centuries, God's people have struggled with dark times, as nations, communities and as individuals. There have always been challenges to be faced. The early Christians faced persecution, exile from families, and their faith communities became such an important source of compassion and support.

We may not be persecuted for our faith, but we certainly struggle with health concerns, loss and grief on many levels, and rising anxiety. We hesitate to turn on the news, the radio, read the papers or source our computers as there is yet more and more "bad" news. Does it help to know that so many others have gone through similar experiences?

What does make a difference is our faith. God's promises have been proven true through the centuries. Time and time again God has promised to be with God's people. Time and time again these promises have been fulfilled.

With our season of Advent beginning, we hold to the hope, peace, love and joy that are spoken about week by week. We light the Advent wreath, a symbol of God's presence with us. There are many events in the community, such as musical concerts, which bring back memories and help create new ones. There are decorations bringing joy all around us.

In the midst of a dark time of year, there is the light of Christ shining. When we open our hearts to the light of Christ we begin to see it in unexpected places and at unexpected times. As this gladdens our hearts, we pass this light on to all that we meet. We are agents of light, bringing God's hope, peace, love and joy to our world.

Blessed Holy Season!
Sharon+

It has been a very busy autumn in our parishes and in the Diocese. Father Michael shares with us the good news from our recent Synod and the distinctiveness that comes from our regional churches.

Message from the Regional Priest in Charge

It was wonderful to have all four churches in our Region represented at Synod earlier this month. This year's Synod showed the diversity and health of our Diocese, and we were encouraged by the news that many congregations are healthy and growing in numbers and in Sunday attendance.

Bishop Andrew Speaking to Synod



In his Charge to Synod (kind of a state of the union speech), Bishop Andrew mentioned regional ministry as one of the key strategies of our Diocese going forward. As +Andrew described it, a regional ministry such as ours a grouping of “congregations with distinctive identities bound together by a shared understanding of what it means to be the Church, what God is calling us to do in our region, and the practices of worship, outreach, education and pastoral care that embody this vision”.

This newsletter is one manifestation of that shared understanding of church. Another example would be our celebration of St Luke's 170 years of ministry to the people of Creemore, that we celebrated in October. Likewise, you're invited to gather on Sunday, December 28th, at 10:30am for a regional Carols and Lessons service, when we can close out the year together.

Going forward, we are pursuing several ideas for the coming year that will aim to strengthen ties between our four churches. As your regional priest in charge, I'm excited about the future, I'm blessed with a wonderful team of clergy and lay leaders, and I'm always energized by visiting the churches in our region.

May Emmanuel, God with us, be near to you all this Christmas season.

Michael+

Deacon Lorna gives us an Advent Meditation....and news from St. Luke's...

An Advent Meditation from Deacon Lorna

Advent is a season which calls us to consider both past, present and future. It looks back to the coming of Jesus Christ, not just his birth in Bethlehem, but the promises of God made long before to Abraham and his people across the centuries. It looks forward to his coming again; that day when he will return in glory to establish his kingdom and reign victoriously. And in the light of both these perspectives, the season of Advent urges us to examine the life we are living, and then to ask ourselves, quite simply; have we received the joy Christ offers, and are we ready to welcome him should he return here and now?

What is Advent asking of us? What do we expect? What should we expect?

As we listen again to God's promise, and recall the voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord, let us open our minds, our ears, our hearts, and our eyes, and may God fill our souls with the living presence of Jesus Christ.

Advent blessings to all,

Lorna

News from St Luke's, Creemore

Greetings everyone,

First of all, thank you very much for joining us for our 170th Anniversary in October. What a delight it was to have our congregation host new comers, members from our Regional Ministry team, and former parishioners from our three point parish! Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way, to make this so successful.

This fall we are continuing our monthly Double Toonie lunch, which offers a wide variety of home-made soup, bread, coffee, tea, and treats! Please consider joining us the last Wednesday of the month. We do not meet in December.



Angie, one of St Luke's parishioners, at work in the food bank.

St Luke's Deacon Lorna was present recently when the City of Toronto cleared the homeless encampment on the grounds of St Stephen in the Fields Anglican church. The priest at St Stephen's, Mother Maggie Helwig, has been a tireless advocate for unhoused persons.

Starting in January, Fr Michael will be leading a book study on Maggie Helwig's book *Encampment: Resistance, Grace, and an Unhoused Community*.



Reverend Amy reports on Advent and a Christmas Update from Prince of Peace ...

Prince of Peace – Advent & Christmas Update

By Rev. Amy, Regional Ministry Curate

As we enter this season of watching and waiting, Prince of Peace has been busy sharing joy and hope in our community. On November 22nd, our All-Ages Ministry team created a beautiful Chronicles of Narnia-themed float for the Wasaga Beach Christmas Parade. Children and families bundled up on hay bales under blankets, and together we handed out over 1,000 candy canes to our neighbours along the route. We couldn't help calling out cheerfully, "Merry Christmas!"

It was a wonderful evening of light, laughter, and connection. It was an early taste of the Advent promise that Christ's light shines in every corner of our town. And yes, I even got to meet Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus!

As we move further into Advent and Christmas, we continue to pray that our presence in the community reflects the warmth, generosity, and hope of Christ's coming.



Church of the Good Shepherd continues to be a beacon of hope in the “Friendly Town of Stayner. Our Anglican brothers and sisters in this community are blessed with the tireless work of a very special ‘good shepherd’. I have been privileged to have known Gren Bray for many, many years. Gren lives his faith by doing what Jesus taught us to do. He does it through his commitment to his church and to his community. During this time of Advent, we acknowledge all that his special man gives to his church, community and his wonderful family!

David Penhale is our church representative for the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund. He gives us some insight into the ‘Advent Conspiracy’...

Join the Advent Conspiracy!

By David Penhale, Alongside Hope (PWRDF Rep)

During this season of Advent, Pimatisiwin Nipi (Living Waters Group) invites all of its networks to GIVE Christmas presents differently to their loved ones, to BUY LESS & GIVE MORE. Rather than buying “stuff” this year, give the gift of water to communities in Canada in need of clean, running water.



Pimatisiwin Nipi

The crest of the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh. The clean water project is their initiative.

For thirteen years, a network of concerned Anglicans (and friends!) has been partnering with First Nation Communities in securing clean, running water in Indigenous homes across Canada. Lack of clean, running water impacts physical and mental health, hygiene and access to education.

Our partnership work has:

- secured clean running water in approximately 60-75 homes in Pikangikum First Nation
- been part of developing a model between PWRDF and First Nations’ communities across Canada that allows our fundraising to be directed to responsive Indigenous-led grants.
- raised \$150,000 toward a water truck in Kingfisher Lake First Nation, a need identified by First Nations’ leaders of Mishamikoweesh. The new water truck was delivered this past winter.

It’s easy to participate in the Advent Conspiracy, a global movement of Christians to reclaim the true generosity and transformative power of Jesus’ love this Christmas.

Advent Conspiracy Steps

- Ask yourself what you would normally spend on a Christmas gift for someone you love.
- Don’t buy “stuff” this year, give the gift of water!
- Make a donation to PWRDF’s Indigenous Water Partnership (through your church or directly to PWRDF) <https://alongsidehope.org/water-project/>
- Take or download a Donation Card.
- Give that Gift Card to your loved one this Christmas to tell them how much you love them!

The Art of Advent (Fr Michael)

At All Saints we are half way through a short book study on *The Art of Advent: A Painting a Day from Advent Through Epiphany* (2018) by the English priest and theologian Jane Williams. In this short and very reader-friendly book, Williams takes us on a tour of some famous and not-so famous paintings that offer insights on the big themes of the Christmas season.

As an example, she starts with William Blake's *The Ancient of Days* (1794). Jane Williams notes that the Christmas story begins with the story of creation, God creating the world as a dwelling place for humans for God's self ("the Word became flesh and dwelled among us" as we hear in the Christmas Day gospel reading from St. John). She notes how the figure of God is strong and muscular, full of creative energy, releasing light into the chaotic darkness below. God is holding a compass, an instrument for



measuring and creating, showing that the creation is God's design that humans will be invited to live in and learn about. In the same way, the human figure of God at work creating reminds us that we encounter God in the human figure of Jesus, showing that God wants to be accessible and known by us, the created.

In a similar manner, Jane Williams unlocks the secrets of Ethiopian icons, Renaissance masters, and modern paintings one might otherwise never know about. Each short chapter ends with a set of thought-provoking questions and a short prayer, making this a perfect book of personal devotions. *The Art of Advent* is available through Amazon as a print and Kindle book, and is quite reasonably priced.

Reverend Sharon tells us about the special angels at All Saints....

QUIET ANGELS

From time to time I arrive at All Saint's to find that there is a group of people quietly at work. I have found them at all times of the year, and in all kinds of weather. The most recent encounter was just a week ago. A chilly and rainy day did not deter their enthusiasm – they went about their work with cheerful smiles and happy hands.

Who are they? They are the garden group who look after the grounds. They check to make sure that the plants are healthy, choose new plants to be included, change the urns and move the benches as required. Obviously this is more intense in the summer, as they were often present to water the gardens and planters, especially as this past summer was so hot and dry. They were changing the planters to reflect the fall season, and get them ready for the upcoming holiday season.

We thank them for taking such care of our gardens! It helps to make sure All Saint's outside reflects the warmth and welcome on the inside. On that cold and rainy day, they then came inside for a hot cup of tea and goodies. A reward well deserved, and a good chance to warm up and have fellowship. They are angels!



The Food Ministry at All Saints continues to assist those in need in the town of Collingwood. Last evening the Five Loaves programme served over 100 take out dinners to the Busby Out of the Cold Centre, the Mobile Soup Kitchen programme and to 50 others in our community who are unable to venture out to the Community Friendship Dinner. Speaking of which, the next dinner will be held in the Parish Hall at All Saints on December 10th at 5 p.m. Our Food Ministry Programme was recently recognized by Rotary International as a recipient of a Paul Harris Award for outstanding community involvement. This is a tribute to all those volunteers who have committed themselves to helping those in need in our community. We are so grateful to all those who contributed to this award.

As we move closer to the 'special day', here is the Christmas schedule for our regional ministry.

Regional Ministry Christmas Schedule

Dec 20

10am to 2pm Christmas Craft and Bake Sale at Prince of Peace

Dec 21

7pm Carol Sing Prince of Peace

7pm Quiet Christmas Service at All Saints

Christmas Eve

4pm Eucharist at St Luke's

4:30pm All Ages Service at Prince of Peace

7pm Eucharists at Prince of Peace, Good Shepherd, and All Saints

10:30pm Eucharist at All Saints

Christmas Day

9:30am Eucharist at All Saints

10am Eucharist at Prince of Peace

Sunday, December 28th

Regional Joint Carols and Lessons Service, **10:30am**, All Saints
(note there are no other services in our region this Sunday)

We pray for those in our parishes who are ill or who have requested prayers. We remember their caregivers and all who assist others in need.

"Please pray for these people during the week" - Eric Vignola, Wolf, SSN, Irene McVeigh, John, Gail, Sean, Terry, Patricia, Rickey Lemire, Meryl White, Stephanie Plewes Howard, Lindsay, Jim Cunningham, Sheila.

We pray for the repose of the souls of all those who have passed away. May they find comfort and love in the everlasting life that our Lord and Saviour has given them.

At this special time of the year, we pray for all who call themselves Christians.....(we also pray for those who don't but hope, at some point, they will see light!!). And may you all have a wonderful Christmas with your family and friends. God Bless You!!

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE ANGLICAN MINISTRY OF SOUTH GEORGIAN BAN RESIDES ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF THE ANISHNAABE AND WENDAT PEOPLES. THIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REMINDS US OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS TO THE ANCESTRAL LANDS ON WHICH WE LIVE, SHARE, LEARN AND PRAY.