

Knox News & Notes



December 2015/January 2016

God's face is always towards us

Matthew 11:2 -11

Advent and Christmas is a time when we would like everything to just be joyful and peaceful. What a joy to feel that things seem to go exceptionally well. Even better if this is the case in the coming weeks – our plans work out and our dreams take shape. In good times we rejoice, for it is clear to us that life is good and we feel good.

But life can be very unpredictable because circumstances can change in an instant and when circumstances change for the worst we feel as if everything seems to go wrong and it is almost as if a shadow covers our thoughts and emotions.

Many years ago my youngest son JC went to the funeral of one of his friends killed in a motor accident two weeks before Christmas. When the shadow of disaster covered that family I thought to myself - there goes their Christmas.

We all prefer our Christmas to be pain and sorrow free because pain and sorrow spoils the spirit of the season doesn't it?

But we are aware of the inevitability of life fluctuating between light and darkness, between laughter and tears. And yet knowing that life fluctuates between laughter and tears it does not seem to make the shadowy experiences any easier. There might be some of us reading these words and feel well this is me - this time of year isn't all about joy in my life. You might be struggling with difficult circumstances maybe with tears running down your cheeks when you are alone because you are hurting very badly inside; there where no one else can see but you.

Matthew 11:2 -11 is kind of a non-Advent/ Christmas passage - John the Baptist asking Jesus: (3) Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?

Why this question?

John was in prison because he challenged King Herod's immoral behavior. But John expected the Messiah to have His winnowing fork in his hand, and that he would clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire Matthew 3:12. As the weeks went by Herod was still on the throne and it became clear to John that Jesus was not going to do anything to get him out of prison. John waited and waited for the winnowing fork of the Messiah to change his circumstances and cut down those who were causing all the pain and suffering in his life but nothing happened. Given his personal circumstances in the dark prison cell it's as if the light was fading for John - with the deck stacked against him, he wasn't so sure about Jesus anymore.

Do you know this feeling - living between hope and despair because of circumstances out of our control. There is a John the Baptist in all of us and John's question becomes our question because we sometimes feel being let-down - hard to believe God is managing everything when the shadows fall on our lives. We want to cry out: Jesus if you are the Messiah, why this, why me?

We don't know each other's circumstances but let's follow John's example and reach out to Jesus in this Advent and Christmas season. Ask your questions and listen to Jesus' answer. Jesus didn't judge John because he had questions laden with doubt, no Jesus sends word to John: tell John what you have seen and heard (5): the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And then Jesus added (6) blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.

In listening to Jesus' answer I am reminded of a story that helps to live with the contradictions we sometimes experience in our faith journey and personal lives.

A young man lost his wife in an accident, leaving him with their 3 year old son. Back home from the cemetery, they went to bed early because there was nothing else the father could bear to do. As he lay there in the darkness grief-stricken and heartbroken, the little boy broke the silence from the room next door with a disturbing question, "Daddy, where is mommy?" The father got up and brought the little boy to bed with him, but the child was still restless, asking questions like: Why isn't mommy here and when is she coming back and the young father trying to explain and answer his questions. Finally the little boy said: Daddy, if your face is toward me, I think I can go to sleep. In a little while he was quiet and fast asleep. The father lay there in the darkness, and then in childlike faith, prayed this prayer: O God, I don't see how I can survive this. The future looks so miserable. But if your face is toward me, somehow I think I can make it.

This is what Matthew 11:2 -11 wants us to understand: God's face is always towards us even if we don't understand the reason behind our difficult circumstances. Jesus and I are in this together. Jesus Christ is still bringing good news to the poor - He is the one we are looking for. There is no need to look for another helper.

Rev Johan Olivier



♪ *Musical Notes* ♪

By Chris Fischer, Pastoral Musician

“Music at Knox: Relating to Our Vision, Mission and Values”

We are entering a new church year with the season of Advent: a name which means “coming,” a time of waiting in hopeful, peaceful, joyful and loving expectation for the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. But how do we wait?

Our contemporary culture doesn't like to wait: everything has to be instant (or as close to it as possible), from our meals to our travel times, from our shopping trips to our time in the doctor's office or dentist's chair. How on earth can we Christians manage to wait, not only with patience, but with hope, peace, joy and love (the keywords for our four Sundays of Advent), for the Saviour to bring justice to our world at last?

To begin to answer this question for ourselves, I'd like to make a suggestion: Let's use our congregation's vision, mission and value statements as guides. First and foremost, we need to allow God to do the work: Christ is the head of the church, so it is Christ who is “renewing our life together,” as our vision for Knox states. How does Christ renew our life? As a musician, I experience renewal (not surprisingly) through singing: especially the singing of the church gathered in worship. Music, particularly vocal music, has been shown in studies to build community, prolong life (!) and increase physical and emotional health outcomes in people throughout the world. When we sing during this Advent season, I invite you to look around; listen not to your own voice, but to your neighbours in the sanctuary; allow the music (through vibrations, in the air and through the floor) to touch you. You'll be amazed at the power of sound to evoke calm, healing, peace and joy!

Not long ago, Johan came across our congregational mission statement, adopted some years back and now printed on the front of our Sunday bulletins: “As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to share his Good News with the world, through loving service and vibrant worship.” There is a verb at the heart of this statement, “to share,” that I believe sums up our calling here at Knox: when we serve one another and the people in our community, and when we worship on Sunday morning, we are sharing Christ's Good News with the world. When we worship and serve, we ARE church: we are fulfilling our call as disciples of Jesus. And our worship is to be “vibrant” – to have life, and energy and power. Once again, music lies at the centre of this experience, as a sacrament of God's loving and constant presence within us when we gather as Christ's Body. When we sing, we are ourselves “vibrant.” Let's let go of whatever inhibits us in becoming the instruments we were created to be.

Finally, you might have seen the set of 6 value statements on the back of your Sunday bulletin. These are the congregational values as adopted by our Session during its discernment process using Kennon Callahan's *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*. Our first principle is also the “one rule” of our congregation's LOGOS ministry with children and youth: “You are a child of God and I will treat you that way.” Absolutely everything we can do as a church family flows from this statement: we not only accept and tolerate others, but we are called to treat them – each one of them – as “a child of God.”

When we gather as God's family for worship, on the Sundays of Advent and beyond, let's renew our commitment to treat everyone as a Child of God: to include everyone in our sharing of Christ's peace, in our singing praise to our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer as the many parts of his Body in the congregation of Knox, Guelph, and especially in our listening for the voice of God's Holy Spirit, in sacred scripture and through the gift of sacred music, as God seeks to transform us into loving and vibrant disciples of his Son – come into this world to draw all things to himself. This Christmas, let's sing with renewed hope, peace, joy and love: “Prepare the way of the Lord... and all people will see the salvation of our God!”

Amen.



**Prepare the way of
the Lord.**

John 1:23



A Special Call to the "Technologically Savvy" Amongst

In today's age of hand-held devices (mobile phones, ipads, Tablets, Skype etc.,(or such by any brand name), we find that more and more seniors, many of whom are new to these forms of communication, are discovering how useful, even necessary, these can be in helping family members keep in touch. This is especially the case for seniors whose family members live some distance away from Guelph.

Learning how to use these devices can be a challenge to those of us who call ourselves 'seniors'. Having reached our senior years, however, we have learned along the way that there are times in life when one must ask for the help of the "experts" or at least the "more qualified".

Thus it is that Knox is seeking to compile a roster of names of those of you who could be classified as "technologically savvy", and is asking for your help.

If you are blessed with such talents are you willing to share your talents with . . .

- a. seniors who are making their first venture into the world of technological devices, or,
- b. seniors who are experiencing difficulty with their mobile phone or other device, and feel that conquering the basic techniques of using such equipment is a mountainous, somewhat discouraging, task?

If you are willing to have your name included on this roster of 'tech-assistance', please contact Dr. Shirley Gale at the Knox office (519-821-0141) or by email (revshirley@rogers.com) and leave your name and contact information. Shirley will contact you and answer any questions you may have regarding this project.

It is expected that the requests for such help will be infrequent. However, the help you could provide would contribute to the enrichment of the lives of those seniors who would benefit from, and welcome, your assistance.

"Generous hands are blessed hands because they share their talents with those in need".

(A Paraphrase of Proverbs 22:9 The Message)

Look into the Word

When Jesus lived on earth, He invited people to come to Him and He still does today (John 6:35). But what do He and the Father have that we need?

Salvation: Jesus is the only way to have forgiveness of sin and the promise of Heaven. (John 3:15)

Purpose: We are to give all our heart, soul, mind and strength to follow Jesus. (Mark 8:34).

Comfort: the "God of all comfort comforts us" in all our trials and sorrows. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Wisdom: We need wisdom beyond our own for making wise decisions. (James 1:5)

Strength: When we're weary, "the Lord will give strength to His people" (Psalm 29:11)

Abundant Life: Jesus said "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly". (John 10:10)

Anything left out? The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians "...my God will meet all your needs...". (Philippians 4:19) from Our Daily Bread

Fellowship of the Least Coin

Thank you to everyone at Knox who in the last year collected their least coin (pennies and nickels) for the support of women around the world. Thanks also to those who didn't collect during the year but still gave a donation when the Women's Missionary Society members collected at the door. The total amount collected and dedicated at the Least Coin Service in Guelph was \$170.

The **Fellowship of the Least Coin** is a world-wide ecumenical movement that links prayer and "least coins" in a very significant way, as the least coin becomes the symbol of prayer for peace and reconciliation. It was begun in 1956 by Shanti Solomon of India and continues today as a global ecumenical prayer movement. As the coins, symbolizing prayers, are gathered from around the world, they become a sign of our oneness in the common quest for peace, justice and reconciliation. The least coins become grants for special projects of evangelism, service, ecumenical solidarity, awareness-building among women and relief throughout the world.

Grants are made by an international committee for special projects of evangelism, service, ecumenical solidarity, awareness-building among women and relief throughout the world.

Please continue to save your nickels and pray for peace and reconciliation as you do so. The traditional time for collecting the Least Coin Offering at Knox will be in September and/or October.

Knox Women's Missionary Society

Church School Chatter

December is upon us and that can only mean one thing.... Church School Christmas Pageant time!

Our pageant this year will be held on Sunday December 20 during morning worship. Our kids will be working hard on their presentation so we hope everyone will plan to attend worship that day to enjoy their efforts!

Following the pageant and worship service, everyone is invited for Birthday Cake for baby Jesus during fellowship time.

Christmas Eve services are being offered again this year. Of interest to our families with young children might be the 6:30 p.m service... It will be an interesting service for our kids to participate in!

There will be NO church school classes offered on Sunday December 27. Children are encouraged to worship upstairs with their parents, and maybe check out the inter-generational area at the back of the sanctuary.

Regular classes will resume in January. Have you ever considered helping out in church school? We all want our children to learn about Gods love....what better way to teach them then by example! By showing you care enough to spend time with them, you are demonstrating gods love! I would be happy to chat with you about our Church School teaching schedule. It is not difficult.... All materials are provided and it only takes a short time to prepare.

Finally, I would like to extend my wishes to all of the Knox Family for a very Merry Christmas! May God bless each of us with peace, joy and love.

Blessings
Karen Bellamy
Church school coordinator



From the Library

New Fiction in the Library

Have you read them all?

Historical

The Rose of Winslow Street

by Elizabeth Camden

Remember the Lilies

by Liz Tolsma

My Servant Caleb

by Kerstin Sheldrake

Contemporary

Come rain or come shine

by Jan Karon

Somewhere Safe With Somebody Good

By Jan Karon

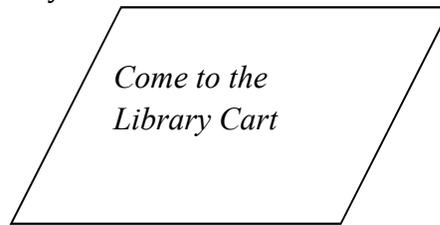
Suspense

Hope Harbor

by Irene Hannon

Unspoken

by Dee Henderson



Angels Walking

by Karen Kingsbury

Chasing Sunsets

by Karen Kingsbury

Why Not Share Some Christmas stories with Your Children and Grandchildren?

Browse the Many Wonderful Christmas books that you can borrow.

Marjorie Bethune, Judy Steer, Library Co-ordinators

Free Bus Transportation To and From Church



Every Sunday, a small school bus delivers members to Knox in time for the worship service at 10:30 and takes them home again at noon. This service is offered on a trial basis and will be evaluated soon to see if it is being well used and should continue.

If you or someone you know would like to take advantage of this service, please call Sharp Bus Lines 519-824-8480, ext. 0. Their office is open Monday to Friday during regular business hours. You would be responsible for cancelling your pick up when necessary.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Judy Steer, Convenor of the Worship Committee, 519-822-2263.

A Call to All Who Enjoy Gardening

Many of us love to garden, be it in a large plot of ground or a couple of flower pots on our window sill. If you have gardened in the past and/or would like to try gardening in the future please read this Call to a new ministry - the ministry of gardening in Knox's "Enough To Share Garden".

The book of Proverbs (22:9) contains this promise:

**"Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor."**

The "Enough to Share Garden" is a way for us to put this promise into action. This garden will be located on a plot of ground being provided by John and Nancy Gordon, and will be prepared in time for the 2016 Spring planting season.

Scripture repeatedly reminds us that our food, like all good things in life, comes from God who intends all God's gifts of grace to be used not only for our own well-being but to be shared generously with those who are in need.

For many of us, our weekly travels are limited to trips to the grocery and drug stores, the doctor or therapist, and to church on Sunday. During these little sojourns we are seldom exposed to the needs suffered by many in our community. Many of whom are in need of the basic food items of a healthy diet, especially fresh vegetables and fruit - which today are priced beyond the budget of so many. Local food banks struggle to provide non-perishable foods and usually cannot provide fresh produce. This need for fresh produce is not limited to any one age group; it includes children, women and men in our community who are on low or limited incomes, and the homeless. Among those who go undernourished, even hungry, are many of our elderly, especially those living alone.

John and Nancy Gordon have graciously offered to Knox the use of a plot of land suitable for gardening. The hope is that there are gardeners (and would-like-to-be-gardeners) among us who will welcome this opportunity to grow vegetables in this plot trusting that, as the Psalmist (85:12) testifies,

"God will give what is good,
and [the] land will yield its increase."

Trusting also, that the God-given increase will not only provide for the gardeners but will also provide enough to freely share with others in the congregation and community who would benefit from these nutritional additions to their diet.

Each gardener will be assigned a portion of the garden in which they can plant the vegetables of their choice. The garden is located near the home of Nancy & John Gordon which is just a short distance out of Guelph. We expect that travel to and from the garden will be provided by carpooling.

Because this is a new venture for all of us, we are asking those wishing to explore and/or share in this gardening ministry to meet at Knox with John and Nancy Gordon, and myself, in the early Spring to work out the details. (Meeting date to be set). This is also an opportunity for more experienced gardeners to contribute their expertise and advice. This support would be most welcome.

Those interested in learning more about this ministry and exploring the possibilities are invited to contact me through the Knox Church office (519-821-0141).

Rev. Shirley Gale

Peace Word Jumble

Peace	I	I	have	leave	said	with	this	you	to	my	you	peace	so	I	that	give	in	to	me	you	you	I
may	do	have	not	peace	give	In	to	the	you	world	as	you	the	face	world	persecution	gives	But				
Do	take	not	courage	let	I	your	have	hearts	conquered	be	the	troubled	world									

Starting with the first word, write it and every other word in the blanks below. Read the verse.

_____ / _____

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled. John 14:27

Now start with the second word and write every other word in the blanks below. Read this verse.

_____ / _____

John 16:33

I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world! John 16:33

Church Register:

Deaths:

Sharon Currie	Died September 15, 2015	Age 66 Years
Alfred Werner Kuemmling	Died September 24, 2015	Age 83 Years
Margaret Motzok	Died October 24, 2015	Age 98 Years
Jack McIlvenny	Died November 12, 2015	Age 91 Years
Myrtle Hamilton	Died November 17, 2015	Age 91 Years

We are always saddened by the death of a good person. It is from this sadness that a feeling of gratitude emerges. We feel honored to have known them and blessed that they were in our lives. Their passing serves as a reminder to us that our time on this beautiful earth is limited and that we should seize the opportunity to forgive, share, and love. I can think of no greater way to honor the deceased than to live this way." May all of them rest eternally in the loving arms of Our Savior. You'll be sadly missed & forever in our hearts. (Miss you Uncle Blues). MJ & TW



**Christmas Blessings and a prayer for Peace,
 Love and Hope to all.**