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## E-News from the St. Mark's Pews 142nd Edition - December 23rd, 2022

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### From the Rector

Think of all of the artistic depictions of the Nativity that you've seen. In almost every one of them, we're presented with a scene of beautiful serenity, with a radiant Mary who doesn't have the disheveled, tired look common to all newly delivered women and an ivory-skinned, plump little Jesus who bears no resemblance to the red and wrinkled newborns I've seen. The scenes aren't realistic.

Of course they're not necessarily meant to be—at least when we're talking about the Old Masters. Though their paintings are realistic in terms of the depiction of people, animals, architecture, and so on, they are, in fact, highly symbolic; everything in them—including the colors—has been included to convey a particular meaning.

The trouble is, these highly symbolic works of art—dare I call them sermons in paint and canvass?—are now so deeply ingrained into our consciousness that we can hardly think of the nativity in any other way. Its earthiness has been painted over with the sentimentality that prefers beauty to reality. And I think I know why.

Think about how disruptive and exhausting and, yes, frightening having a baby can be—especially a first baby. Even those who are ready for a baby's arrival, who have the nursery and the little jammies and the rattles already organized, are never really ready for just how life-changing having a baby can be. Of course, there's no doubt having a newborn in the house is exciting and beautiful and lovely, but it's also wearying and loud and smelly—to say nothing of being demanding. When you have a baby around, your life is no longer your own.

You see, it's not by accident that God incarnate comes to us as a baby. He's very demanding, this God of ours, to the point of asking that we devote our whole lives to his service. It's up to us how we will respond. We can ignore him, of course, except "little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes," is another bit of Christmas lore, for he *does* cry, this little Lord of ours. And not just for our attention, but for a world plunged into the darkness of sin and death. We can give him to others—make him their responsibility—but then we'll have to live with the persistent, nagging longing: if only we'd learned to love him he'd have become our heart's desire. We can even smother him beneath the tinsel and wrapping of our own

insistent desires, but we'll wait until he's older when we can get rid of him for good, with a bit of wood and some hard iron spikes.

Of course none of these choices is very appealing. So there's only one choice left for you and me, and that's to embrace him, demands-and-all. We may not have been expecting him—at least not expecting him in this way—and we may not have wanted him—at least not wanted him at this great cost—yet here he is in front of us. He's ours and we're his and, like all babies, he's bound to us because of this simple fact.

And here's the thing: as any parent knows, the more we give of ourselves to a baby, the deeper our love grows—despite the tiredness, the lack of personal time, the amount we're spending on him. This is the miracle of love. The more we spend it, the more we have to give away. It truly is the gift that keeps on giving.

So, when you get right down to it, he only wants us to love him. Maybe it feels like a one-sided kind of love but the little baby who asks everything of us will, soon enough, also give us everything. In a season of all kinds of meaningless gift exchanges, here is one which truly—eternally—matters: we give him the gift of our love. He gives us the gift of his life. Grace and peace,

Leighton

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## From the Wardens

As we draw close to Christmas and the birth of Jesus we give thanks for all the blessings that surround us, many that we don't frequently recognize. We live in a peaceful and democratic country. We have an abundance of food, clothing and housing that we can share. We have a medical system available to us, and education. None of this is perfect, but we are very fortunate.

Christmas is a time to be thankful and blessed for all we have and can share. St. Mark's has again been generous in supporting Newark Neighbours with several bins of food and gifts. Many parishioners support the farm workers, the new families to our community as well as the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF).

To all our volunteers who suggest, plan, help and deliver on so many activities for St. Mark's, we are so grateful for what you do. To our Rector Leighton, our parish administrator Erin, our music director Jim, our bookkeeper Gary, the altar guild, our greeters, our counters — thank you.

To those who have given to our 13<sup>th</sup> month project, 2022 has exceeded the previous three years since we started. Thank you!

We hope and pray that you all have a peaceful, quiet and reflective Christmas. Thank you for the support you have given us as your Wardens.

**\* A reminder that our office will close for the holidays on December 22rd and will reopen on Tuesday January 3, 2023.**

*For emergencies please call 416-617-4125*

For non emergencies please call the office when we reopen on January 3, 2023. You may also wish to leave a voicemail at 905-468-3123, keeping in mind messages will not be returned until January 3, 2023.

Alternatively, you can email the rector at: [rector.stmarks.notl@gmail.com](mailto:rector.stmarks.notl@gmail.com)

**We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.**

## Parish Updates

### ***In-Person Sunday Services***

8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

Wearing a mask is now an individual's choice.

### ***On Duty this Week***

December 24, 2022 - Greeter(s) - Harriet Tunmer and Nancy Bongard

December 25, 2022 - Greeter(s) - John MacBeth

December 24, 2022 Reader - Jamie Mainprize

December 24, 2022 Intercessor - Jamie Mainprize

December 25, 2022 Reader - Jane DeMunnich

December 25, 2022 Intercessor - Bob Cross

Altar Guild - Peggy Walker, Susan Baxter, Diane Turner

### ***Order of Service***

The Order of Service can be found on our website: [Order of Service Web Site Page](#)

### ***Church Bells***

A reminder to all that the Church Bells play on Sundays at 12:05 pm. Enjoy!

### ***Staying Up to Date!***

Click on this link to find this and recent copies of our E-News: [View our recent E-Newsletters](#)

Click on this link to view our Calendar: [Visit our Calendar](#)

[Click here to access St. Mark's Anglican Church Facebook page](#) You can also access our Facebook page when on our website by clicking on the Facebook icon that looks like an "f".

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### **NEWARK NEIGHBOURS' CHRISTMAS GIFT AND FOOD DRIVE**

St. Mark's food donation bin and Christmas gift donation box overflowed with your love. Your thoughtfulness and generosity made an important contribution to providing Christmas cheer to those most in need, including the Ukrainian families taking refuge from the terrible war in their homeland.

**The people of St Mark's always show their spirit of Christian kindness. Thank you so much!**

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## ***St. Mark's Christmas Services***

Christmas Eve 5 p.m.  
Christmas Day 10:30 a.m.

**Services will last approximately 75 minutes**



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## HOLIDAY SEASON SERVICES

### Please note

There will be no service on Wednesday December 28, 2022.

There will be **ONE** service on Sunday January 1, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.  
Refreshments will be offered in Addison Hall after service.

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#### **Bible Study via Zoom**

We are sending Zoom invites via Constant Contact to those who regularly join the Bible Study group. If you would like to attend Bible Study via Zoom, please contact the Rector to have your name added to the distribution. [rector.stmarks.notl@gmail.com](mailto:rector.stmarks.notl@gmail.com)

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#### **Wednesday Morning Eucharist - 10:00 a.m.**

We look forward to seeing you in Church!

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#### **Men's Communion and Breakfast**

**Next date January 11th, 2023.**

On the first Wednesday of each month men of our congregation and their guests will participate in a quiet spoken Eucharist service in the church at 8:00 a.m., followed by breakfast at 8:45 a.m. If you would like to join us, please contact Greg Walker by email or phone (905) 262-6605 by Noon on Tuesday prior so that we can confirm numbers for breakfast.

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**There are baked goods in the kitchen at Addison Hall. Please take home – for free – any that you can use!**

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**Volunteers are required to work in the Winter Kitchen.**

If you prepare a bone in ham, please consider donating the bone and any leftover ham to "St. Mark's Winter Kitchen". Those who donate will receive a 1 litre container of pea soup. St. Mark's Winter Kitchen will be preparing pea soup, tomato sauce, cottage pies, pickled beets and lasagna.

**Please call the office if you are interested in volunteering.**

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## PIE AND JAM MAKERS REQUIRED

**Cherry Jam makers are required for two sessions in February and March. Jam makers are required on Wednesday February 22nd and Thursday March 2nd 9 a.m.**

Cherry Pie makers are required for four sessions in April 2023.

**If you are interested in joining a jam or pie making team please contact Diane Turner**

at

19ab39@gmail.com

289-362-1827

**Newcomers are welcome!**



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***Please be advised that St. Mark's office will be closed for the holidays from December 23rd, 2022 to January 3rd, 2023, reopening at 9 a.m. on Tuesday January 3rd, 2023.***

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***Please note if you unsubscribe from any email sent from St. Mark's Church via Constant Contact, you will no longer receive any emails or information from us. If you wish to unsubscribe from a specific mailing list (ie, Bible Study, E-News), please email the office at [stmarks@cogeco.net](mailto:stmarks@cogeco.net) Thank you.***

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[St. Mark's Anglican Church Website](#)



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