



E-News from the St. Mark's Pews 192nd Edition - December 15, 2023



From the Rector

In one of his published collections of sermons, the well-known American theologian, attorney and politician William Muehl tells the story of a children's Christmas pageant which his young son was part of. Because of the size of the nursery class, there were a larger than usual number of angels and shepherds as part of the *tableau vivant*. In order to make sure each child was in the right place, the teacher made a series of chalk marks on the floor: circles for angles and crosses for shepherds. The rehearsals went magnificently

well, and the children were easily able to find their mark. The trouble was, the children were always in street-clothes at the rehearsals, and so, at the time of the actual event, each angel's long, diaphanous skirt covered not only their own circle, but the adjacent cross as well. The children playing the shepherds were confused and tried to find their places—but to no avail. Finally, one little shepherd boy said to the teacher in the wings, "These damned angels are fouling up this whole show. They've hidden all the crosses!"

The author continues:

The pageant is over, the embarrassment has passed, and the child is a man. But his furious proclamation still strikes me as a trenchant comment on the human predicament. We are, indeed 'damned angels,' possessors of gifts and insights which we turn to works of destruction, victims of burdens and infirmities which become occasions for glory. The rich pageant of life is often fouled up by our rigid moralism and the cross is hidden beneath the flimsy fabric of our simple piety. With the best intentions we do the worst thing, and then perform miracles of love almost by accident. Our flesh drives and afflicts us from birth to death. But we have the gall to affirm that it once sheltered the Eternal.

The nativity story isn't simply a beautiful image on a Christmas card. It was a real event that happened to people not so different from you and me. Christ was born to, among, and for, the damned angels: ordinary and flawed folk like you and me who yearned for redemption, and who knew that there was nothing they could do to secure that redemption for themselves. Like all of us, they were perhaps expecting that God would appear and magically make their problems disappear.

But that's not what happened. Quite the opposite, in fact. The divine Eternal took on the human flesh of us damned angels, and this paradox has always been a problem for the

Church. Any attempts to resolve this paradox are bound to fail, for they present us with an impossible standard, or veil the deepest truth of Christ's incarnation from us.

That deepest truth is that you and I have a place in the world, and a role to play in the great pageant of life. But in order to find our mark, in order to make our mark, we need to look beneath and beyond, and even push aside, the insubstantial yet all-too-voluminous folds of popular, cultural Christmas piety in order to discover the cross of new life hiding beneath. Such a discovery may not be pleasant, and it certainly clashes with all of the contrived *tableaux* of our religious escapism this season. But there's neither safety nor salvation in these contrived scenes.

Because our salvation didn't come in the guise of a God who only dressed to look the part of a man, and it wasn't wrought in the downy straw of an improvised bassinet. It came through the love of one who was not ashamed to become—if only for a season, and for our sake—one of the damned angels. And it was wrought on wood far harder and crueller and more precious than the wood of a manger. So may our Advent preparations help us to find the hidden crosses and stand on them, and learn anew that the Eternal became human so that humanity could inherit eternity, so that the groaning of the damned angels of earth could be transformed into the celestial harmonies of the Christmas angels of redemption who even now sweetly sing to us songs of divine love.

See you in Church!

Grace and peace,
Leighton

From the Wardens

Thank you for the support for Newark Neighbours with Toys and Food donations. There are a lot of locations in town receiving donations, but we did quite well!

We are mid-December and the days go by too fast. A very large thank you to those who contributed to our 13th month project to support the operations of St. Mark's. This year is our largest response, and it makes a major difference to our year end financials. Thank you!

The final edits to our parishioner directory have been made. Unfortunately, the publisher has had some difficulties with its ability to deliver the directory when expected early in the fall. With the final proof ready to print, we expect the directory will be delivered in January.

The Christmas tree in the church is up, decorated and looks beautiful thanks to a lot of work by the Altar Guild team.

This is the last wardens' letter of 2023. It will return on Jan. 5, 2024. Any urgent announcements will be sent separately if required.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe 2024.

Thank you for the generosity of those who have given to our 13th month request for donations. Also a reminder to parishioners that if you have not donated so far this year, December 31st is the deadline to receive a tax receipt.

A reminder to please consider supporting St. Mark's operations by donating to our 13th Month initiative.

Please know that giving an extra month's offering will be an immense help.

See you in church!

As always, a reminder to advise the office of anyone who requires assistance, including a phone call, food delivery or some companionship. Even a chat over the

fence!

Called to Life-Compelled to Love

Allan Magnacca
Andrea Douglas

ST MARK'S CHRISTMAS GIFT AND FOOD DRIVE

Thank you so much for your generous donations to Newark Neighbours!

The list of needy families in Niagara-on-the-Lake continues to grow, and the volunteers at Newark Neighbours greatly appreciate your help in providing some extra joy this Christmas. The toy basket was full when its contents were picked up, and donations brought in later were delivered to the Newark Neighbours new site in Virgil.

The food drive, focused on items for families' Christmas dinner, will continue until Monday, December 18th.

If you miss this deadline (for food or gifts), you can take them to Newark Neighbours at 1534 Niagara Stone Road in Virgil.

Thank you once again.

Parish Updates

In-Person Sunday Services

8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

On Duty this Week

December 17, 2023 - **Greeter(s)**- Allan Magnacca, Harriet Tunmer and Nancy Bongard

December 17, 2023- **Reader** - Jane DeMunnich

Intercessor - Jane DeMunnich

Altar Guild - Keith Bullen, Pat Kingdon and Mary Webster

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".

Do not fret if you wish to order Memorial Flowers for Christmas, and have not done so yet! There is still time! Donations for Memorial Flowers are being accepted until

Thursday December 21, 2023.

Please contact Erin in the parish office.



**December 24, 2023 Christmas Eve Services: 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.
December 25 2023 Christmas Day Service: 10:30 a.m.**

**The Men's Communion Breakfast will resume on Wednesday January 10, 2024 ,
and will continue on the first Wednesday of each month going forward. Watch for details
from Greg Walker to be posted here!**

Gary Burrough's Kitchen
Delicious items for sale include
**Lasagna, Chicken-Vol-Au-Vent and Pea Soup, Stewed Tomatoes
and
Cottage Pie**
****Pop into the office to get your meals****

SOUPS ARE AVAILABLE - INQUIRE IN OFFICE





St. Saviour's Anglican Church, Queenston,
presents

CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

with

THE NEWARK SINGERS

Conductor: Michael Tansley

Sunday December 17
at St. Saviour's 4 p.m.

Please join us to enjoy and participate in
the music of the season.

Freewill offering.
Proceeds to St. Saviour's

In the parish cycle of prayer, we pray for Allan Magnacca, Jamie and Virginia Mainprize and Peter and Janis Manning and their families.

We pray for the sick, especially remembering Margaret Stimson, Terry, Jan Brown, Lisa, Sharon, Dick, Bev Garrett, Jodey Porter, Joshua, Ben Buholtz, Maggie Hammerling, Gail and Murray Paton, Elizabeth Channing, Janis Manning and Donna Wybrew.

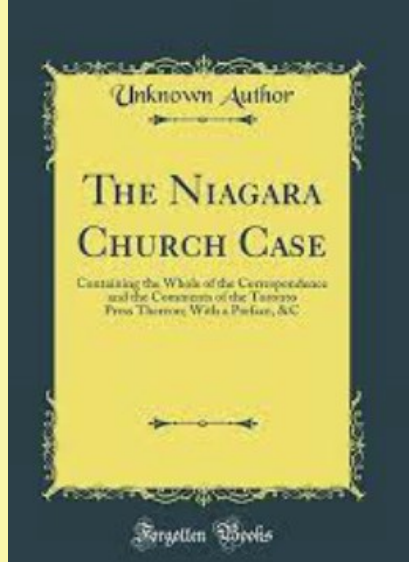
We pray for those shut in their homes, Fred Habermehl, Fred Dixon, Selina Appleby, Joan Draper, and Alexander Hood.

In the Cycle of Prayer for the Niagara Diocese we pray for St. Paul, Mount Forest, The Reverend Kevin Cull, Interim Priest-in-Charge, and the people of that parish.

In the Anglican-Lutheran Cycle of Prayer we pray for the members of the Secretary General and staff of the Anglican Communion Office and the General Secretary and staff of the Lutheran World Federation.

Did you know.....

... that Rev. McMurray was sent to St. Mark's to heal a congregation badly scarred by the scandalous behaviour of our second priest? This was known as the Niagara Church Case.



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

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 Thank you.

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



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