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## E-News from the St. Mark's Pews 244th Edition December 20th, 2024

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### From the Rector

A Yale theologian, William Muehl, told 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 — who was also the impresario — 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 her own circle, but the adjacent cross as well. The boys 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.*

Most of us try to soft-pedal the outrageousness of that affirmation by making Christmas an affair of nostalgia and sentimentality. Alas, the season's sentimental pieties and nostalgic longings only serve to veil the deepest truth of Christ's incarnation from us.

There's no doubt that it's a truth which clashes with all of the contrived tableaux of our religious escapism this season. But there's no stability or safety or salvation in those contrived scenes since our salvation wasn't wrought in the downy straw of an improvised basinet. 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 this Christmas season and beyond, may we 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.

Grace and Peace,  
Leighton

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**Friends,**

This is a reminder to complete and drop off your  
**ST. MARK'S 2025 PLEDGE FORM.**

Greeters will be happy to receive them after Sunday services, or you can drop them off at the office Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

You can also email your pledge form to [stmarks@cogeco.net](mailto:stmarks@cogeco.net).

Ideally, we would like to have all pledge forms in  
**before December 23, 2024, when the office closes for the holidays.**

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**This season, we invite you to embrace the spirit of giving and make a meaningful impact at St. Mark's. You can contribute to our wonderful parish by using the "My Christmas Offering" envelopes available in the pews. Your generosity can truly make a difference, and we encourage you to participate in this opportunity.**

**Together, let's share the gift of giving.**

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***The flowers in the church are given to the glory of God  
and in loving memory of***

**Betty and Phyllis**

from Allan Magnacca and family

**Elisabeth and Anthony Fischer**

from Megan and Rod McKee

**Peter Wylie**

From Eve Wylie and family

**Kathleen Drope, Mary and John Drope, Sarah Drope, and Irene Whyte**

from Kathy and Tim Taylor

**Mary Hazell**

from the Hazell family

**John Steel**

From Wendy Steel

**Ronald Gosling**

from James and Virginia Mainprize

**The Masters and Lees families**

from Dorothy and Beverley Lees

**Hilda Porter Russell**

from Ian Russell and Jo-Anne Hill

**Kelly M. James**

from Janet James

**Lynn Hill and Gary Hill**

From Jo-Anne Hill and Ian Russell

**Ian Bongard**

from his family

**JoAnn Walker and Jordan Walker**

from Will Walker

**Jack and Florence Bennett**

and

**Steve, Jack, and Alan Bennett**

From Candace Bennett Walker and Will Walker

**Lionel and Beverley Garrett**

and

**Liam Garrett**

and

**Morris and Erellyne Bachelor**

from Ted and Pam Garrett

**Murray and Elizabeth Lister**

from their daughter, Lynne Heaman

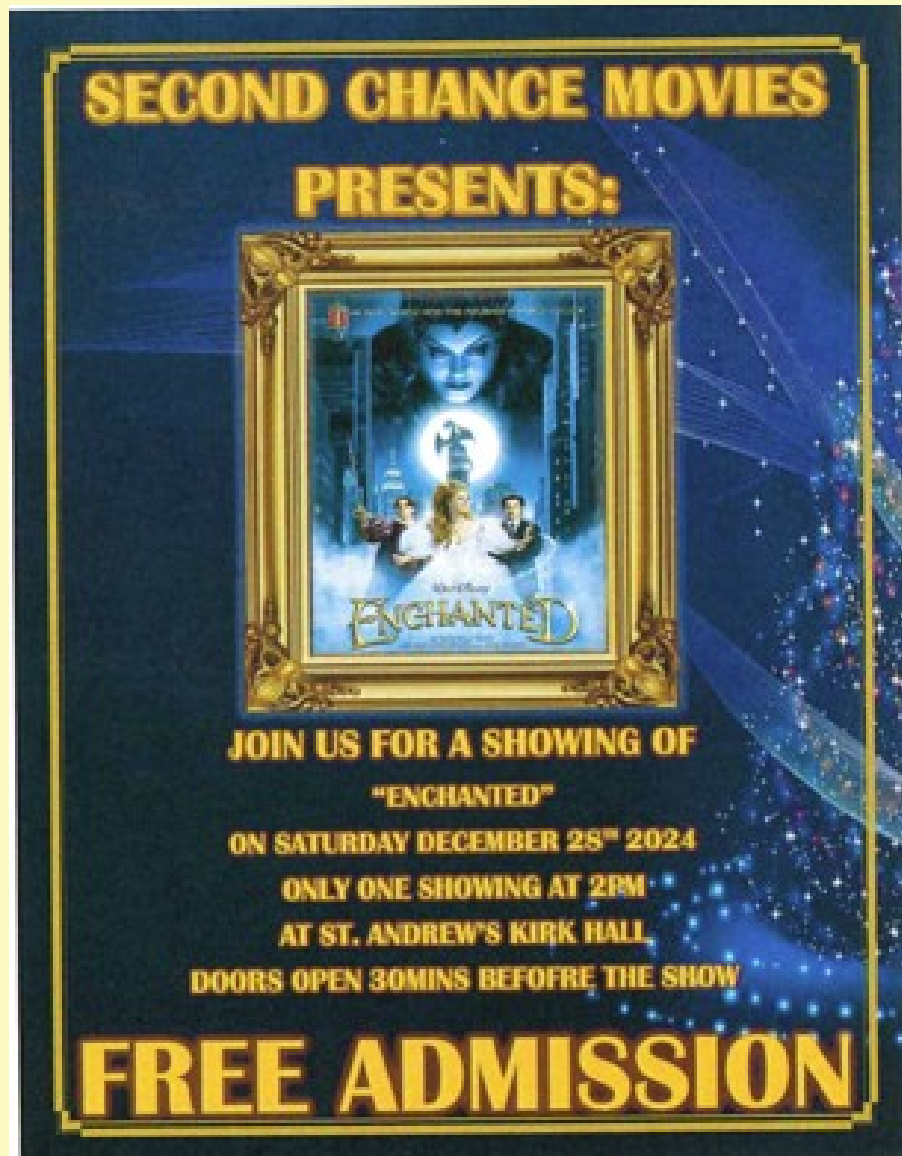
**Isabelle de Borchgrave**

from Rita Brown

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Experience the magic of film with St. Mark's very own **Steve Hinchliffe**, who is dedicated to organizing these fantastic movie events! If you're looking for a delightful way to unwind after the holiday hustle and bustle, why not treat yourself to a free movie day at St. Andrew's Kirk Hall?

It's the perfect opportunity to relax, enjoy great films, and connect with friends in your community. Don't miss out on this wonderful chance to escape and enjoy some quality entertainment—mark your calendars!

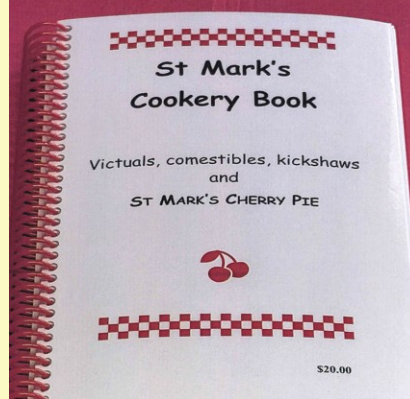


**Need a last-minute Hostess Gift or a stocking stuffer? Look no further!**

The **St. Mark's Cookery Book** would make a lovely gift. The **St. Mark's Cookery Book** is an ideal choice, priced at just \$20.00. With a collection of mouthwatering recipes—**featuring St. Mark's famous Cherry Pie**—it's a gift that will delight anyone.

**Don't wait!**

**Call the office now to order your copy today.**



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## **Parish Updates**

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

8:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:30 a.m. Sung Eucharist [Watch the live stream on YouTube](#)

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

**December 22nd - Greeter(s)** - Trudi Watson and Earle Waugh

**Reader** - Donna Belleville

**Intercessor** - Steve Hinchliffe

**Altar Guild** - Peggy Walker, Susan Baxter, and Diane Turner

**Server** - John Shaver

### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE- Tuesday, December 24th at 5 pm**

**Reader** - Jane De Munnich

**Intercessor**- Penny-Lynn Cookson

**Greeters** - Trudi Watson and Earle Waugh

**Servers** - Virginia Mainprize and John Shaver

### **CHRISTMAS MORNING SERVICE - Wednesday, December 25th at 10:30 am**

**Reader** - James Mainprize

**Intercessor** - Steve Hinchliffe

**Greeters** - Trudi Watson and Earle Waugh

**Servers** - Virginia Mainprize

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

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

### **Church Bells**

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

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

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

Click on this link to view our: [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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**Please note that the church office will be closed for Christmas  
December 24th-December 30th,  
reopening on December 31st.  
The office will be closed again on January 1st, New Year's Day,  
reopening on  
January 2, 2025.**

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**Prayer Cycles - We pray for:**

**In St. Mark's parish:** David and Valmai Elkins, Fred and Judy Evans, Brian Fiedler and Christy Chia, and Bob Gaines, and their families.

**In the Niagara Diocese:** The Dunn Parish, Christ Church & St. John the Evangelist, Dunnville, The Reverend Canon Richard Moorse, Priest-in-Charge, and the people of that parish.

**In the Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Cycle of Prayer:** The Rt. Rev. Christopher Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, and the staff of Indigenous Ministries; the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples; Dawn Maracle, Indigenous Justice Animator, Carmen Ramirez, Assistant to the National Bishop, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Peter Wall, Assistant to the National Bishop for Worship, and The Rev. Melissa Johnson, president of the Eastern District Executive Board of the Moravian Church Northern Province.

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*As we embrace this joyful season, may your Christmas overflow with peace, love, and cherished moments with your loved ones. May the spirit of Christmas fill your hearts with happiness and may you be blessed with good health in the New Year. May we all recognize the beauty that surrounds us and the love that binds us together. Let's approach this time with open hearts and uplifted spirits, celebrating the gift of*

*togetherness and the promise of new beginnings!*

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



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