



E-News from the St. Mark's Pews 247th Edition January 17th, 2025



From the Rector

Years ago, I officiated at the wedding of dear friends. It was followed by an extravagant reception with a fully-stocked open bar which almost everyone made good use of. A few weeks later, I went to dinner with the couple and they told me the staggering price of the bar bill. "Everyone drank premium liquor!" they said. "Well of course," I replied. "Who's going to drink Apothic Red when Petrus is available?"

On Sunday, we'll hear the familiar gospel story of the Wedding at Cana where Jesus turned several dozen gallons of water into the best wine imaginable causing the steward to say to the bridegroom, "Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now."

Conventional theology suggests that this is about the goodness and abundance of eternal life. Not for nothing does the story begin with the phrase *three days later*—an allusion to Jesus' being raised from the dead on the third day. Maybe I should just leave it at that, but I can't.

I can't because if the best wine is available right now—or at least the means to make it available are—why wait to enjoy it? Sure, people won't hold back when the best is freely and abundantly offered—as my friends learned. But isn't that the point of abundant hospitality? Aren't the good things in life to be enjoyed now?

That includes the Christian life. For too long the promise of new and unending life has been spoken of as something to be enjoyed after an earthy life of toil, uncertainty, and grief. But surely the point of Jesus' resurrection is that new and unending life begins *now* and can be enjoyed *now*.

I've often said that the point of being a Christian isn't to live in a such a way that we get to live with God when we die. The point of being a Christian is to make this world more godly *right now* through acts of surprising and abundance extravagance. And, God only knows, nothing is more needed in this world which has been all-but-emptied of compassion, generosity, and hope. Which is waiting to be filled with divine life.

In the gospel Mary said to the steward, "Do whatever he tells you." If we apply this to ourselves, we know that he's told us to live and love extravagantly, to give the best of ourselves for the sake of the world, to fill people up with hope, and joy, and purpose. To show them the best isn't yet to come—because it's already here: eternity's promise poured out upon us today.

Grace and Peace,
Leighton

From the Wardens

Happy New Year to everyone this very cold and snowy week in Niagara-on-the-Lake!

Parish Council held its first meeting of the year on January 16th. We all seem to be just catching our collective breath after a very active Christmas season. We are very pleased with the response to our Christmas Concert on December 22nd, when we welcomed an audience of 186! We hope to build on this success next year. It is a great opportunity to share our beautiful church and lovely music with the wider community at this special time of the year.

We have adopted a new method for requesting pastoral visits with the goal of making scheduling easier for those in need. While all are free to contact the rector directly, requests can also be made with Erin in the office who will schedule a visit.

As we look ahead to the spring and summer activities at St. Mark's, it is becoming apparent that we are facing a leadership crisis in relation to many of our activities.

Please consider whether you might be able to take on special responsibilities in relation to the Cherry Festival or in organizing social activities for the parish. Under consideration is a team approach to leading the Cherry Festival, instead of an individual chair. Please contact Andrea at adouglas@bell.net if you will help.

Despite the mail strike, we were able to distribute Stewardship packages to almost all our parishioners. Please, if you have not yet returned your pledge card, try to do so in the next week or so. There has been a good response so far and these will help with our budgeting process, which is presently underway.

The Vestry Meeting is scheduled for March 2nd, following the 10:30 a.m. service. Mark your calendars.

**Gene Anne Smith
Andrea Douglas
Wardens**

Friends,

This is a reminder to complete and drop off your
ST. MARK'S 2025 PLEDGE FORMS BY THE END OF JANUARY 2025

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.

DONATION ENVELOPES FOR 2025

The donation envelopes for 2025 are now available for collection. They are located in the church; please request assistance from a greeter to obtain yours following the service.

MEN'S COMMUNION BREAKFAST

Join us for the next Men's Communion Breakfast on

Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

This is not just another breakfast; it's a chance to connect, reflect, and build community.

We'll start the morning with **Holy Communion at 8 a.m.**, followed by a delicious breakfast
at

The Stagecoach Restaurant (45 Queen St., Niagara-on-the-Lake) around 8:45 a.m.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet our new colleague, Rod Tennyson, who is excited to join us. You can read more about Rod's impressive professional background here:

<https://engsci.utoronto.ca/former-engsci-chair-rod-tennyson-inducted-into-ean-hall-of-distinction/>

The Stagecoach Restaurant does not take reservations. To ensure we have a welcoming space for everyone, please R.S.V.P. Your presence will make this gathering even more special.

R.S.V.P. Greg Walker
905-262-6605
gregoryfwalker@gmail.com

St. Mark's is pleased to present

**General George Washington's Expense Account as Commander of the
American Continental Army
(1775-1783)**

presented by Dr. Wes Turner

**January 28th, 2025
2 pm
Addison Hall**

Join us for an engaging discussion led by Wes Turner, a dedicated member of St. Mark's Church and an acclaimed historian. With nine published books on the War of 1812 and the Life and Times of Upper Canada, Wes is sure to captivate you with his insights and stories.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with our community while enjoying delicious cookies and coffee. We invite you to participate and contribute to the conversation!

Please R.S.V.P. Dorothy Walker at 905-262-6605 or via email at
walkerdorothy2021@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!

**A little something to warm the cockles of your heart on this cold,
wintery day!**



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

January 19th - Greeter(s) - Steve Hinchliffe (8:30 a.m.) and Trudi Watson and Earle Waugh (10:30 a.m.)

Reader - Jane deMunnich

Intercessor - Penny-Lynn Cookson

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

Server - 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".

Prayer Cycles - We pray for:

In St. Mark's parish: Doug and Colleen Hunter, Gavin and Joyce James, Janet James, and Jeanne Jennings and their families.

In the Niagara Diocese: St. Alban, Beamsville, The Reverend Dr. Dan Tatarnic, Priest-in-Charge; The Reverend Mary Kimberley, Associate Priest; and the people of that parish.

In the Lutheran-Anglican-Moravian Cycle of Prayer: The Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, Director, and the staff of Faith, Worship, and Ministry; and Bishop Carla Blakely, the people and rostered ministers of the Eastern Synod; and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the ecumenical work and witness of our churches.



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