



Minister's Christmas Message 2019

As Christmas approaches many of us find that life goes into high gear and a flurry of activity begins; shopping, baking, cleaning, decorating, visits with friends and family, parties, pageants, concerts and gift giving and we cannot forget all the planning and preparation required for the Christmas Dinner. Christmas is a joyous occasion! As enjoyable and important all these things are however, they can also be a source of distraction from the true message and meaning of Christmas.

Christmas is about remembering and celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, whose birth heralded a message of peace on earth and good will for all humankind. Christmas is about sharing this wonderful message that God is with us and that the infant Jesus, the precious gift in a manger, would grow up to be our Saviour and Redeemer . Christmas is the season for hope, peace, joy and love.

As we once again remember the coming of the Christ Child, we invite you and your family to join us at the South Gate Church to celebrate the season and become heralds of God's love for us this Christmas.

Sunday December 1, 2019 - The First Sunday of Advent - The Candle of Hope

During our worship service, we will light the first candle of Advent, and we will celebrate the **Sacrament of Holy Communion**.

Sunday December 8, 2019 -The Second Sunday of Advent-The Candle of Peace

Sunday December 15, 2019 - The Third Sunday of Advent - The Candle of Joy

"**The Tradition of the Christmas Bell**"- during our worship service we will present our annual **Christmas Pageant**. The pageant will be followed by our annual **Congregational Christmas Party and Luncheon** downstairs in the Buchanan Room. Everyone is welcome to attend this time of festivity, food and fellowship.

Sunday December 22, 2019 - The Fourth Sunday of Advent - The Candle of Love

"**Sunshine Christmas**" - a Christmas Choral Celebration - come and listen to the music and the message of the Christmas Season presented by the South Gate Choir. There will also be an opportunity for everyone to sing a few familiar carols as we celebrate our Saviour's birth during our regular morning worship service at **10:00 am**.

Tuesday December 24, 2019 - FAMILY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Join us at **7:00 pm** for a time of worship and the celebration of the birth of Christ when we will light **the Christ Candle** and hear again the familiar, hope-filled words of the Christmas Story.

May God's eternal gift of Jesus, bless you and your loved ones this Christmas.

Yours in the service of Christ,

Rev. Charmain and Family

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

We welcome everyone to our Worship Service on Sunday morning at 10:00 am. We particularly welcome any visitors and ask you to please sign the guest book at the front entrance. There is a program for the children age four and up.

PRAYERBOX

The "Prayer Box" is located at the back of the church on the left side table. Place your prayer request(s) in the box and your request(s) will be picked up by our prayer captains, who will then pass it down to the members of our prayer chain. These people will say your prayer every day for a week. The prayer request can be kept confidential, and you do not have to sign your name to the request if you prefer to remain anonymous.

Requests can also be made to our prayer captains, Teresa Robson or Isie Purmal.

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Christmas Season is in full swing, just look at the stores. It is now time to buy a new toy, game or puzzle for the Toy Box. All new, unwrapped gifts will be taken to Neighbor to Neighbor for distribution to children who may not otherwise receive a gift at Christmas and will be happy to receive on—let's fill up the box!

P.S. Please remember donations of non-perishable food items for the Neighbour to Neighbour Food Box too. Thank you, from John Down

SUNDAY SCHOOL

For our Mission project this year the children and youth screen printed cloth bags with the 70th Anniversary logo. We sold them on Anniversary Sunday, October 27, 2019 at the WMS Soup Luncheon for \$10.00 each. These cloth bags are environmentally friendly. The money raised will go toward a project that the children and youth will choose from Presbyterian World Service and Development. We will announce the project once it has been chosen. Thank you to all those who purchased a bag,

We are encouraging our young people to participate in the Sunday morning worship service by leading the congregation in the reading of the Responsive Psalm once a month. We began this endeavour in September and will continue it on into the New Year.

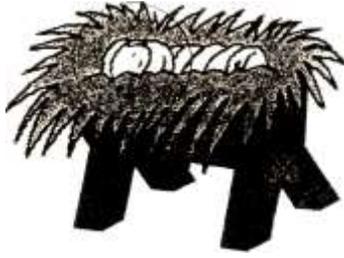
Throughout the fall we have been studying parables; the Sowing of the Seeds, the Widow's Mite and the Prodigal Son. We will tie these lessons in with the Christmas pageant.

The Advent Workshop was held on Sunday November 24, 2019 following the worship service. After a light lunch the children made Christmas cards to be distributed to members of the congregation who are unable to participate in church activities.

The Christmas pageant will be held on Sunday December 15, 2019 during the worship service and after the worship service there will be a Congregational Christmas Party downstairs. Lunch and treats will be served so please plan to attend.



"Through the eyes of our friends, we learn to see ourselves... through the love of our friends, we learn to love ourselves... through the caring of our friends, we learn what it means to be ourselves completely."



A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Tis the time in our Christian year
That we celebrate the birth of that baby dear
Of the star that shone in the night
That led the shepherds to the glorious sight
Of the Babe in the manger wrapped in swaddling bands
Safely cuddled in His mother's loving hands
Our Savior who came to free us from sin
Time to open our hearts and let Him come in
As we praise and worship the gift we are given
To our lord and father watching over us from His place in Heaven
MIP



Saturday December 7, 2019
8:30 - 11 am



The South Gate Christmas Country Market

Mark your calendars and join us

*Knitting/Crochet, Crafts, Wooden Toys, Fashions, Books, Bake
Table; Jams, Preserves & More*

AND

Community Breakfast 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Proceeds in support of The South Gate Church

SIMPLE WHITE ENVELOPE

It's just a small white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches our tree for the past 10 years or so. It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas - oh, not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it - the overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma - the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else. Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties, and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way. Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended.

Shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed the the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes. As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford.

Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat.

Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won, he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them." Mike loved kids - all kids - and he knew them, having coached little league football baseball, and lacrosse.

That's when the idea for his present came. That afternoon I bought shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years. For each Christmas, I followed the tradition - one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngster to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on. The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents. As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there.

You see, we lost Mike last year due to cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve I found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more. Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

May we all remember Christ who is the reason for the season, and the true Christmas spirit this year and always.

"When I look at the galaxies on a clear night-when I look at the incredible brilliance of creation, and think that this is what God is like, then instead of feeling intimidated and diminished by it, I am enlarged-I rejoice that I am part of it."

Madeleine L'Engle