



St. Luke's Anglican Church

Anglican Network In Canada

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Advent & Christmas, 2014

Dear St. Luke's Family and Friends,

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas" as the old song says. As another hymn says, *"Let every heart prepare Him room"*. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and as we look forward to His return as King of Glory, let us welcome Him into our hearts as Lord and Saviour and give ourselves fully to Him. In all the busyness of life I pray we all take time to reflect on the true meaning of this season and to be refreshed in His love.

Please mark your calendar! Here are some of St. Luke's Advent /Christmas activities:

Sun. Nov. 30, 8 & 10am	Advent begins; lighting of Advent Wreath
Sat. Dec. 6, 1pm	Ordination Service (Trudy Hardy) & Reception
Sun. Dec. 7, 8 & 10am	Healing Sunday at Regular Services
6:30pm	Contemporary Praise Service
Mon. Dec. 8, 6pm	Women's Dinner at Dineamics Restaurant
Thu. Dec. 18, 5:30pm	Christmas Carolling to shut-ins - meet at the church; refreshments afterwards - all welcome
Fri. Dec. 19 all day	Salvation Army Kettle Day – sign up at church
Sat. Dec. 20, 10am to noon	Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
Sun. Dec. 21, 10am	Christmas Pageant & Birthday Party for Jesus (there <u>will</u> be an 8am service this Sunday)
Christmas Eve, 4pm	Family Service, Carols & Communion
7:30pm	Service of Lessons & Carols, Communion
11pm	Candlelight Service & Communion with Carols
Christmas Day, 10am	Carols & Communion

I hope you can join us for many of these celebrations and events! Please note that we will again be holding **Advent mid-week services on Thursdays at 10:30am on Dec. 4, 11 & 18.** Note also the **ordination service here on Dec. 6 at 1pm when Trudy Hardy will be ordained a deacon, Lord willing, by Bishop Masters.** Trudy was with us at St. Luke's for 9 months as a student minister please pray for her.

It is encouraging to see all of the outreach projects we are involved in both locally and abroad e.g. our **'backpacks for the homeless'** this fall, **'Operation Christmas Child'** to help needy children have a better Christmas, support for the **'Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada' including using their Christmas cards** (more of these cards are available in the parish hall). We are also providing volunteers for the **Salvation Army Kettle Program and collecting money and food for the Salvation Army Christmas baskets.** Once again this year St. Luke's is a sponsor for the **free**

community Christmas dinners on Christmas Day at Wesley Community Church in Pembroke and Kelsey's Restaurant in Petawawa – all are welcome to these dinners. We are also excited about our **mission to our companion parish of Christ the Redeemer in Brazil Feb. 24 – Mar. 6 2015** – please pray for this trip and watch for more details.

2014 has been a busy, blessed, and at times challenging year for St. Luke's and I am sure for many of you. We will have full reports in time for our **Annual Vestry Meeting Sun. Feb. 22 2015**, but looking back now some of the highlights have included lots of wonderful worship services and seasons (e.g. Lent & Easter), great bible studies as we completed the E100 series and are now working through the Sermon on the Mount, awesome Alpha and 'Life Worth Living' courses, a great men's seminar and meetings, tremendous women's breakfasts, an outstanding Vacation Bible School, and much more! In 2014 we have also had many administrative issues to sort through, including the revision of our by-laws in order to comply with government rule changes for charities, and the implementation of our diocesan Plan to Protect policy – thanks to all who worked so hard on these projects. Thanks also to our Property Committee and Cleaning Teams who have been busy in keeping up and improving our building.

In 2014 Bishop Don Harvey retired as our diocesan bishop. He had fitting celebrations of his ministry at both St. Luke's when he visited us, and at our diocesan synod (annual meeting) in Ottawa. We have been greatly blessed by Bishop Don's ministry – thankfully he will continue to serve in a variety of ways throughout Canada and beyond e.g. he intends to accompany our team on our Brazil mission trip!

We are grateful for the ministry of our new diocesan bishop, Charlie Masters, who is a wonderful godly man. Bishop Charlie was with us as we celebrated our parish's 6th anniversary Nov. 15-16. While with us he outlined his **5 priorities for the Anglican Network in Canada: bold witness, biblical grounding, loving children and youth, being missional, and church planting**. We at St. Luke's will be engaging in prayer and long range planning around these priorities in 2015 – watch for more details! I am especially concerned about the priority to reach children and youth in this increasingly unchristian culture. We have had a tremendous children and youth ministry here at St. Luke's but it needs to grow – we have had several families move away in the last couple of years and we are undergoing some transitions in our youth program. Please pray!

You will find enclosed an offering envelope should you wish to use it as part of your Advent/Christmas thanksgiving. Speaking of finances, this fall **we are a bit behind in our annual operating income** and will need a surge in December to balance the budget. I am thrilled however that **we are able to make a substantial payment at the end of November to reduce our mortgage principal – this will save us thousands of dollars in interest! Thanks everyone for your generosity!** Watch the bulletin for exact figures.

Thank you all for your support in so many ways - your prayers, hard work, and financial gifts are all deeply appreciated. And please contact the church office if you have a pastoral need or any concern, especially over this season. I know Jane and Parish Council join me in wishing you and your loved ones and truly blessed Advent, Christmas and New Year. *Let every heart prepare Him room!*

Yours in the love of Jesus,