

• GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOOD NEWS TO ALL CREATION •



YPBC NEWS



YPBC | WOMEN'S RETREAT

SOUL CARE

STAYING FRESH
SEASONS OF LIFE



All women are warmly invited for a day of spiritual nourishment, warm fellowship and a hot lunch. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2018 | 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
THE COURTYARD MARRIOTT HOTEL
475 Forge Street, (approximately 1 block north of the College St. subway station)

\$60 Registration fee
Includes light refreshments and a full hot lunch.

REGISTER TODAY!
Registration forms available at the Centre Hall table at the Harbours and online at www.yorkminsterpark.com/grow/ypbc-women

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Sunday January 14th

FACILITATOR:

Dr. Janet Clark
Executive Pastor
United Methodist

Published by:

Yorkminster Park
Baptist Church

1585 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON
M4T 1Z9

www.yorkminsterpark.com

The Rev. Dr. J. Peter Holmes

Minister of the Congregation

The Rev. Dale Rose

Minister of Pastoral Care

Ms. Robyn Elliott

Director of Discipleship

Mr. William Maddox, B.Mus.,

FTCL, FCAM - *Organist and*

Director of Music

Ms. Kelly Dixon

Director of Children's Ministries

Mr. Brennan Rabbets

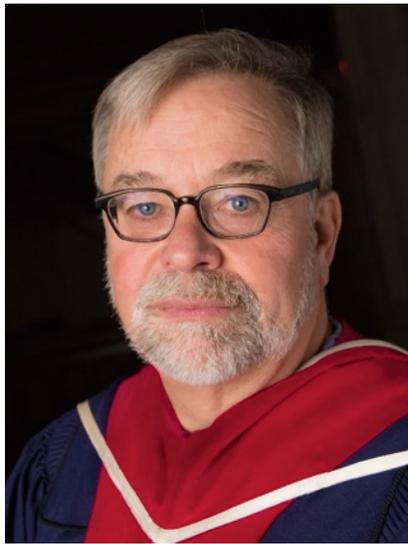
Director of Youth

The Rev. John Torrance

Minister Emeritus, Pastoral Care

The Rev. Dr. William A. Sturgess

Minister Emeritus, Pastoral Care



PETER'S PEN

Christmas is upon us and with it the opportunity to sing many of the familiar old carols and to gather again with family and friends around a tree or a fire and consider again the wondrous story of Christ's birth. It is a birthday we celebrate like no other, but Jesus was like no other. For God made himself known to us through this infant born in a stable and held by an innocent young mother - very young by our standards - who had no experience with children and was far from her mother and home in Nazareth. You can be sure the sanitary conditions were no better than the hospitality. The only thing greater than the risk was the love of God poured into this child. Herod's army would soon be after him, but nothing could stop the love of God for this world. This is the message of Christ from beginning to the end which is but a new beginning for us all. I hope that Christmas will bring you home to joy and peace and above all an awareness of the presence of Immanuel - God with us.

We come to Christmas after an exciting fall season at the church. The Lester Randall Preaching Fellowship was an enormous success and Remembrance Week was very special as well. Dr. Eric McGeer's (photo) Friday evening lecture on the Battle of Passchendaele took place on the centennial of the battle's conclusion and drew a crowd of over 150 people from the church and community. Following the lecture, Eric sold and autographed copies of his latest book, *Canada's Dream Will Be Of Them*. Afterwards he handed me an envelope containing all the proceeds from the sale of the books which he offered as a gift to the church. We owe Eric a deep debt of gratitude for the generous offering of his talent and time. Thank you, Eric.



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*On this Christmas,
may we, the people
of every race, nation and
religion, learn to love one
another and to forgive
and be forgiven.
Then the peace
of Christ will prevail.*

- Coretta Scott King

Comments and suggestions for future editions are welcome. Please send to: pilgrim.h@sympatico.ca

The next newsletter will be published in March. The deadline for submissions will be announced in the Church Calendar.

Paul R Hill

ALPHA

For ten weeks this fall I led one of the discussions at one of the Alpha's tables. This experience was profound for me. Four or five of the members of the group would have described themselves as skeptics before we began. At Alpha we ate our meals with the same people at the table each week allowing us to become well acquainted by the end. After dinner each week we watched a different video of about twenty-five minutes in length. The videos introduced us to key elements of the Christian faith. Following the video we discussed our reactions and

questions and concerns. And having started at 6 p.m. we usually tried to end by 8 p.m. This was such a wonderful experience that I can't wait to lead another group.

CHRISTMAS HIGHLIGHTS

We look forward to a full Christmas Season at Yorkminster Park.

Our children's nativity play which normally takes place on the Sunday prior to Christmas will take place this year on **Sunday the 17th** during the 11 a.m. service. The **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** will also be held on the 17th at 4:30 p.m.

We are delighted that **John McDermott** will be back on Thursday, December 21st to offer his Family Christmas Concert. This year he has chosen to offer half of the profits from the concert as a donation to the church. It is a generous gift from a man whose heart is as big as his voice. It will be a wonderful evening for all.

Christmas Eve is on a Sunday, so we will gather for morning worship at 11 a.m.

Bethlehem on Yonge will be held on the church grounds and feature the Stations of the Nativity with the characters and animals of the Christmas story including camels and sheep. It gets under way at 4 p.m. but arrive anytime up till 5 p.m. and plan to stay for music and hot chocolate in Cameron Hall.

We are pleased that our friend, the great Canadian actor, **R.H. Thomson** will be offering the readings at the beautiful **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** at 11 p.m. which includes the singing of the choir and the sharing of the flame from the Christ Candle. On **Christmas Day** a Communion service will be held at 11 a.m.

IONA LITURGIES

Perhaps you have heard mention over the years of the Iona Liturgies and wondered what it is. It is a worship service we hold at Yorkminster Park, normally on the first Sunday evening of the month at 7 p.m. The Iona Liturgies incorporate refreshing and creative prayers, litanies and responses written by a small creative team in

CELEBRATE WITH US

Advent & Christmas @ Yorkminster Park Baptist Church

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 – ADVENT I

11:00am Morning Worship
(The Sacrament of Holy Communion)
7:00pm Iona Liturgies with Celtic music

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 – ADVENT II

11:00am Morning Worship
4:30pm Carols by Candlelight

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

11:00am Service of Comfort and Hope

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 – ADVENT III

11:00am Morning Worship
4:30pm Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

7:00pm John McDermott Family Christmas

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE

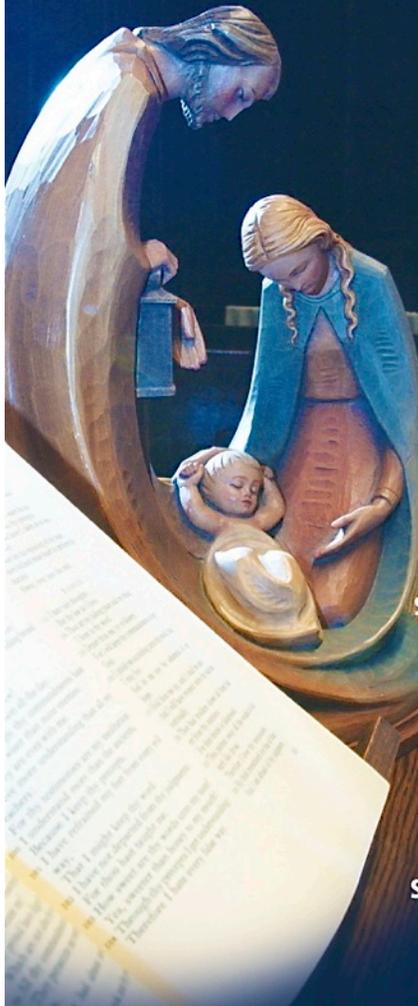
11:00am Morning Worship
4:00pm Bethlehem on Yonge Family Service
11:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS

11:00am Morning Worship
(The Sacrament of Holy Communion)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE

11:00am Morning Worship
11:15pm Watchnight Service



Glasgow, led by John Bell and Graham Maule under the guidance of the Iona Community.

We have offered a service based on these ecumenical liturgies from Scotland's Iona Community at Yorkminster Park since early 2002 when Ron Ferguson, a former leader of the Iona Community visited Yorkminster Park and led the first Iona service held here. Though we have been holding them ever since, it was not until our new hymn book arrived that we began to integrate the music of Iona into our Iona service. Since that time we have moved from a service with the music being led by the choir to a service where the music is led by a small team of Celtic musicians.

Eric Robertson, who is no stranger to Yorkminster Park, was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and began studying organ at Toronto's Royal Conservatory at the age of 15. He has given his life to the music of the church serving as Director of Music and Organist at three churches over the last 40 years. Eric is also a composer and producer and has won two Gemini awards and composed more than 60 scores for film and television. He has produced and played on recordings of many well known artists. In recent years Eric has participated in the life of Yorkminster Park and we are delighted that he has agreed to offer his skills as a pianist and arranger/producer of the music in the Iona service.



Eric's team of musicians at our Iona services includes two vocalists, his wife, Colleen and tenor, Stephen Ellison, and two instrumentalists, Anne Lindsay on the fiddle and Sharlene Wallace on the Celtic harp (*photo above*). Both Anne and Sharlene

are highly acclaimed musicians and it is a privilege for us to have them leading the music.

Anne Lindsay has established herself as one of the most engaging and versatile instrumentalists in Canada, adapting her unique violin/fiddle style to the eclectic sounds and musical languages of this country's rich cultural texture. She is an exuberant fireplug of a session-player-to-the-stars (Led Zeppelin, The Chieftains, Blue Rodeo, James Taylor, Roger Daltry) whose skills have graced many a stage around the world. Anne has played on hundreds of recordings and is a featured performer with the Jim Cuddy Band, The Skydiggers and John McDermott. She was the resident fiddler for the Toronto Maple Leafs and the stage production of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Canadian harpist and composer Sharlene Wallace is a diverse musician performing, recording and teaching on both Celtic and pedal harps. Winner of the Lyon & Healy International Pop & Jazz Lever Harp Competition (USA) and the Dinan Concours d'Improvisation de Rencontres International de Harp Celtique (Brittany), she has given concerts and workshops across Canada, the United States, France and Italy. Sharlene is part of the touring Christmas trio Harp & Holly. Sharlene's seven CDs express journeys of rhythm, spaciousness, the Canadian landscape, Celtic, Classical, South American and original music. Sharlene's most recent CD, *In Night's Deep Silence*, is a spacious, tranquil album for harp and bass (George Koller). Sharlene teaches both lever and pedal harps at York University, Wilfred Laurier University and the University of Guelph. Her own harp performance degree is from the University of Toronto where she studied with the eminent Judy Loman. Sharlene has also been guest soloist on both Celtic and pedal harps with orchestras in Kingston, Belleville, Timmins, Sarnia/Port Huron, Stratford, Oakville and Guelph. Sharlene is principal harpist with Kingston, Oakville and Guelph Symphonies.

We are grateful to this team of musicians for the rich reflective sound they bring to our Iona Liturgies and for the gift of their time and talents. I invite you to come to one of our upcoming Iona services and bring a friend or two along.

MUSINGS FROM THE MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE



“The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”

This is an old adage from the English language that has a ring of truth about it. It comes from the 19th century Scottish American poet named William Ross Wallace. He penned these words: “They

say that man is mighty, He governs land and sea, He wields a mighty sceptre, O'er lesser powers that be, But a mightier power and stronger, Man from his throne has hurled, For the hand that rocks the cradle, Is the hand that rules the world.”

As we enter the Advent and Christmas season, the image of a baby and cradle takes on a greater significance. One of our best-loved carols is “Away in a Manger,” also known as Luther’s Cradle Hymn. This is the time of the year when Protestant churches – both mainline and evangelical – focus on the character of Mary, the mother of Jesus. While our tradition would not worship or venerate her in the way of the Roman Catholic church, we would acknowledge her unique role in the Christmas story. Hers was a story of obedience to God’s will and faithfulness as a wife and mother. She was blessed of all women to be chosen as the human mother of God’s Messiah. Her influence in the life of her son was like that of any mother.

I think it is beneficial to meditate on the image of the cradle this Christmas season. We don’t see cradles much anymore, but they were once a staple in many homes. Mothers would rock their babies’ cradles with a spare foot while mending clothes or doing other chores associated with motherhood. In my first church, we had some wonderful skilled carpenters – men who could build anything from wooden boats to hand crafted pieces of furniture. One of them made a cradle for our first born child, as well as a little rocking horse. These gifts of love and labour were things we cherished for years. We use the word

cradle in a wider sense as well. We speak of the birthplace of something, such as “the cradle of civilization” or the “cradle of science.” A cradle, of course, is a small bed that rocks, usually prepared for a baby. But the word is also a verb. To cradle means “to place, rock or hold as in a cradle;” “to take care of in infancy;” or “to hold gently and protectively.” In the Christmas story, it is Mary who is very vulnerable as an unwed mother. We read of her “cradling” the Christ child: “She gave birth to her first born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:7)

There is a sense in which we can consider the cradling Spirit of God in our lives – the way God has made us secure; how he has cared for us and hedged us about with love and opportunity to grow. God’s “cradling care” was certainly seen throughout the nativity story. Joseph’s fears are allayed through a dream; Mary’s apprehension is calmed by the angel’s promise; a stable and manger is provided when the inn is full; and God saves the lives of this refugee family as they are forced to flee Herod’s wrath by travelling to Egypt. How have you experienced the “cradling of God” in your life? In what ways has God calmed your soul and gently rocked you in your times of sorrow and despair? I’m guessing that he has probably led many of us through challenging times. Perhaps his presence has been much like the words of the twenty third Psalm: “He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.” If that isn’t a cradling image, I don’t know what is!

As we begin our journey together through the season of Advent, let your imagination picture your soul being cradled by God. May the words of that old carol bring hope and peace to you this Christmas season:

*Once in royal David’s city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
In a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.*

*He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,*

*And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.*

Dale Rose
Minister of Pastoral Care

DISCIPLESHIP

Christmas Tears

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come... And heaven
and nature sing ...*

This is one of the churches most triumphant Christmas hymns.



A fitting finale to any concert, sending carolers out into the night full of anticipation and festivity. While the words are timelessly true, not everyone can resonate with the jubilant texture of this hymn. Because for many, the

clamorous celebration has a hollow and empty ring to it and only serves to accentuate the reality of loss and pain. Indeed, jubilant jingles are an affront, an insult even, to the cold darkness that so threatens to engulf the grief-stricken at Christmastime. But the oft neglected truth about Christmas is that pain, tears, loss are actually *at home* at Christmas. In fact, they *belong* with Christmas. You see, pain and suffering and shame *cradled* that first Christmas.

Even before the manger in Bethlehem, the ancient prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the Saviour would be “despised and rejected.” (Isa. 53) We’ve grown so used to this reading that perhaps its harsh cruelty is lost on us.

But think of those words: “Despised. Rejected.” They translate into lonely. Unwanted. Betrayed. Cast off.

We often forget or overlook the shame that Joseph would have had to endure when he made the decision – a culturally, religiously scandalous decision – to take Mary as his wife. In doing so he

was perceived as either admitting that he had fathered this child out of wedlock or, against all traditional wisdom, that he was embracing this adulteress – anathema in his culture – thereby casting aspersions on his family name and honour. The scandalous shadow of this decision would have haunted him throughout his entire life as he bore the sideways glances and sneers, the raised eyebrows and whispers.

Remember Simeon’s disturbing and ominously prophetic words to this young mother as she excitedly presented her newborn at the temple: “*and a sword will pierce your own soul, Mary.*” This young mom had no idea of the searing pain and gut-wrenching loss that she would one day be forced to endure. Her son, her innocent first-born child, would be violently tortured before her very eyes.

Two years after Jesus’ birth, when family life was finally in a groove, their lives are once again ruptured by an angel. This time it’s urgent. ‘Get up now, Joseph and GO! There’s no time to pack or prepare – leave everything, EVERYTHING, behind and flee into the cold and danger of night, run Joseph, run to Egypt.’ Egypt, this pit of spiritual darkness. Egypt, the land of their ancestral slavery and infanticide. Pagan Egypt, where they would be exiles and refugees, desperate for work, lodging, and community.

And, lest we forget, the merciless slaughter of innocent baby boys in Bethlehem. Infants ripped from their mothers’ arms and executed before their own eyes – like images from our media screens – helpless to save their own babies. Scripture says that there was “weeping and great mourning.”

An understatement, I’m sure. This was torturous, inhumane, unbearable pain and loss. Perhaps you know this kind of pain, where your insides feel as though they’re being torn apart.

This, this is the *real* Christmas story.

Shame, pain, loss, anguish, uncertainty, fear.

And tears. Relentless, drowning tears.

Yes of course, there’s joy, but it’s hidden, buried under all the pain.

Yes the light of the world came into the darkness, but it was *hidden*.

Yes, Christmas is a time of joy and celebration because we know the outcome of Christmas. We know the end of the story: a *“light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never been able to extinguish it.”*

For those who are grieving, you need not feel exempted from the season. Rather, your grief, your tears, your loss – they *belong* with Christmas.

Pain and suffering, remember, *cradled* that first Christmas even as it cradled the light and life of the world.

Maybe that’s what the hymn-writer means when he says, *“prepare him room”* – acknowledging the darkness, sitting in the pain, anticipating, longing for, the ongoing unbreaking of the inextinguishable light into our lives.

“For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!”

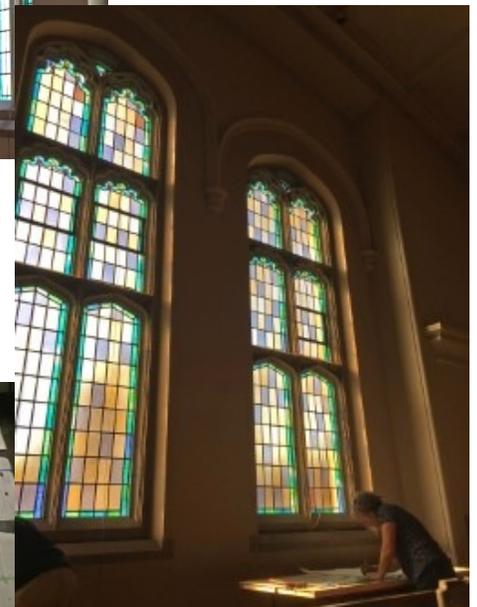


NEW STAINED GLASS WINDOW



The West window design is based on **Genesis 1:3, *Let there be light.*** . . The design phase is nearing completion and will be non-figurative. To see the design in progress (*provide link to artzone.ca*).

The photos below show the task of obtaining accurate measurements from which the glass will be manufactured.



One of Yorkminster Park’s founding families has made an extra-ordinary gift to YPBC. The children of Betty Howson want to honour their mother with stained glass in the West window. Betty was the daughter of E. Frank Wright, a founding member of our church as well as one of the purchasers of Camp Kwasind. Over the years the Wright family has enhanced our sanctuary with significant gifts: the south transept window, two clearstory windows and the pulpit. The new window is expected to be installed and dedicated next fall with no cost to the church.

YPBC WOMEN'S MINISTRIES...

**YPBC WOMEN'S RETREAT - SATURDAY,
JANUARY 27, 2018 - 9 am - 2 pm**

Courtyard Marriott Hotel - 475 Yonge Street
SOUL CARE - Staying Fresh in the Seasons of Life

FACILITATOR: DR. JANET CLARK

All women are warmly invited!

We are delighted to have Dr. Janet Clark, Senior Vice President and Academic Dean of Tyndale Seminary, as our theme speaker for this year's women's retreat. Janet has been reflecting recently on the care of our souls and we look forward to learning from her insights and experience as we seek to nourish our souls throughout life's changing circumstances. Her background

includes a breadth of experience as a missionary, professional counsellor, theological educator and executive administrator. She is a frequent conference and retreat speaker with a particular interest in mentoring women in leadership. Janet is passionate about helping people grow spiritually and equipping them for lives of faithful and effective

service. She is married to Blair and they have four young adult children and five grandchildren. She loves to read, cook and gather family and friends around her table. Janet also holds a BA and BSW from Mc Master University, a MSW from Wilfred Laurier and a PHD from the University of Toronto. We look forward prayerfully and with anticipation to a wonderful day together.

REGISTRATION:

Please find (bright green) registration forms with full details on the centre hall and narthex tables.

Registration Fee: \$60. Registration with full payment is due on Sunday January 14, 2018

Please note: No refunds due to hotel requirements.



YPBC | WOMEN'S RETREAT

SOUL CARE

STAYING FRESH IN THE SEASONS OF LIFE

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THE DOROTHY NEAL NEW INITIATIVES FUND (CANADIAN BAPTIST WOMEN OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC)

We are so grateful to have been able to donate half of the funds raised by the sale of poinsettias this fall to the *Dorothy Neal New Initiatives Fund* in partnership with Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec. This is a *Fund* that the YPBC Women have established in memory of Dorothy Neal's exemplary leadership among Baptist women. Dorothy was a committed and faithful member of YPBC and was married to Ralph. Her legacy of leadership continues to inspire and motivate us.

We are pleased to report that monies from this Fund have gone to support:

- A Peterborough church sponsoring Syrian refugees
- *Reignite South Africa* - for a maternity home and programme for teen girls
- *Beloved Women* - for translation and printing of their gospel booklets for muslim women
- *ReCess* - for a respite programme for disabled children and their families
- *Farmtown* - for an after school horse and counselling programme for teen girls in difficulty and identified by CAS, police and schools

These programmes generally receive a few thousand dollars from CBWOQ and are able to use this support to fund very effective ministries. Stories of these ministries have appeared in *live* magazine and can also be accessed on the CBWOQ website. CBWOQ leadership comments that this is “a lovely way to remember Dorothy” and they express their sincere thanks to all who contribute.

The YPBC Women are also very thankful for the members of YPBC who so generously support this initiative.

submitted by Jonanne Fenton

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 4:30PM

A traditional candlelight choral presentation featuring choirs and musicians of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church.

NINE LESSONS & CAROLS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 4:30PM

Following the historic tradition of King's College in Cambridge.

FREE ADMISSION. Doors open at 3:30 pm.

John McDermott Family Christmas

December 21, 7:00 pm

Tickets can be purchased at the church office,
online and at the door.

GENERAL ADMISSION: \$25

Online: \$26.74 at www.eventbrite.com

At the door: \$30.00

TRANSITIONS

Since the last newsletter there have been several milestones in the life of the church.

Birth

Charles James Onorio Rocca, *s of Adrian and Andrea Rocca*

Infant Dedications

Zoe Margaret Amanda Buck, *d of Monnette John-Buck and Jonathan Buck*

Harvey Martin Nicholas Cheang, *s of Meredith Scott and Wesley Cheang*

Deaths

George Gordon Sedgwick

William Slayter Clark

Joan Olive Rattray

Marjorie Sugden

CHRISTMAS VIGNETTES

Corrado's Christmas

It was Christmas of 1984. Thirty-two Junior Kindergarteners, one teacher, one teacher assistant, one parent volunteer, and Corrado the class bully came to YPBC on a field trip. The teacher hoped to instil the true spirit of Christmas in the children.



The sanctuary doors were closed when the group entered the narthex and filled the cloakroom with sound and energy and lots of winter wear. The children danced around with excitement, while Corrado surreptitiously pushed, tripped and taunted. The adults

lined the squirming mass into two rows; then, the central doors were opened.

All went still.

Hand in hand, the four-year-olds walked silently down the long red carpet in the high vaulted space. Their heads swivelled to take in the richly coloured glass, the two giant twinkling evergreens flanking row upon row of poinsettias leading up to the gilded Celtic cross.

The children sat on the chancel steps. Clearly they felt the surrounding grandeur and their own smallness. They hardly stirred as Rev Bill Sturgess told them a Christmas story. At its end, he asked if anyone had any questions.

The class bully was the only one bold enough to speak. "How did you make this church?"

Dr Sturgess was taken aback, but bravely launched into an abbreviated history of Bloor St Baptist, Yorkminster Baptist, the fire at Park Rd, and the creation of Yorkminster Park. Then he looked at the boy. "Have I answered your question?"

"No", whispered Corrado. "How did you make it so beautiful?"

submitted by Sue Ericsson

Peace at Christmas

What follows is an excerpt from a letter written by Martin Jurgeit to family and close friends on 24 December 2012. The Jurgeit family lived in East Prussia prior to WWII. Martin and his Mother became refugees attempting to escape from the Soviet Army in August 1944. Using available transport they spent the next 16 months traveling while avoiding battle zones. They traveled as far south as Dresden (they were there a week before the centre of the city centre was completely destroyed by bombs on 13 February 1945) and then all the way back north to Hameln in the northwest part of Germany. They finally reached their new home in Hameln on 24 December 1945. His father was forced to stay behind, was taken a prisoner of war by the Russians and miraculously escaped to return home in 1948.



..... in order to understand what it means to have peace one has to experience its absence. I will never forget the first Christmas after the end of WW II, December 24, 1945. To be able to celebrate the birth of our Saviour without the sound of bomber streams overhead, exploding artillery shells in the distance and the sight of cities aflame on the horizon was the closest thing to Heaven on earth, as I imagined it.

Yes, (*at times*) we lived in the ruins of cities that were 95% destroyed, had no electricity or sanitation and had few usable roads because of bomb craters. Many streets were impassable because of danger of collapsing burnt-out buildings. But there was peace, the silence of death and rubble to be sure. But to us who believed in a restored future and who worshipped the King of Kings, the fact that we were alive gave us hope for a better world.

In the little Baptist church in Hameln we sang the carol *Stille Nacht Heilige Nacht*, Silent Night! Holy Night! fervently and with dedication I have never again experienced. This carol poured light into the demonic darkness that had covered the earth for six years.

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright

Martin and Scarlette are members of YPBC and now live in Wasaga Beach

A Christmas With No Snow

There was always snow at Christmas! It was northwestern New Brunswick in my (*ed*) growing up years. In my memory there was only one exception to a White Christmas, that being the year 1952. As Christmas approached we were disappointed that not only there had been no snow but there was no forecast of snow. It had been cold and there had been skating on the ponds and nearby lake but we still hoped for snow.

Another reason for remembering that year was that it turned out to be the opposite of what Christmas is often portrayed to be; that families are together and everyone is happy. Some people don't have families and for others the family is broken. In still other instances there is a family situation which changes Christmas for everyone. And so it was that year for the Peters family. This family was known to us

because they lived in the community and the ages of the boys in the two families was almost the same. Freddie Peters, the same age as my oldest brother, was in the navy and stationed in the Halifax area. He and three others of his group were on their way home on Christmas Eve day when there was a terrible automobile accident and all of them were killed.

On Boxing Day there was a home visitation at the family home. Inside the lights on the Christmas tree were turned off, the presents still unopened were under the tree and there was the quiet of a grieving family. Outside the sun was shining on the snowless landscape; creating the beauty that the low sun angle brings to an early winter day.

For most in the community it was a Christmas without snow but for the Peters family a Christmas without joy.

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

December 10 will be the second anniversary of the arrival in Canada of our two sponsored refugees from the Central African Republic. We congratulate Charlene and Chancella on the progress they have made improving their English, getting used to Canada (and Canadians), graduating from High School (for Chancella), pursuing studies at Glendon College (Charlene), and Seneca (Chancella), preparing for employment and becoming independent. We have all been enriched by having them participate in the life of the church and I know I speak for their many friends when I say that we are proud of how far they have come. Please wish them well when you next see them and please keep suggesting employment opportunities for them to pursue.



Our church has an ongoing commitment to refugee sponsorship and the response from the congregation has been truly fantastic. The following sponsorships are underway but still in early stages, with timing impossible to predict:

- A Pakistani family of four, persecuted because of their faith, taking refuge in Thailand (to be funded);
- A Syrian family of five, seeking refuge from the war in Syria, living in Lebanon in very difficult circumstances (mostly funded by Project Hope, a fund of the Catholic Church, but funds still required);
- Two Syrian families (of 3 and 4 members). both related to a family living in Toronto, seeking refuge from the war in Syria, living in Lebanon in very difficult circumstances (mostly funded by a grant from a Foundation, but funds still required); and
- Two young Eritrean adults, related to members of our congregation, who are in refugee camps in Ethiopia, persecuted because of their faith (paperwork being prepared).

We believe that the Syrian families could be with us in about one year (if their applications are approved) but the timing for the Pakistani family and Eritreans is not known.

We have an incredible opportunity to minister to these families and to make a huge difference in their lives as they try to escape persecution and war. Your continued prayer and financial support are needed to bring them to safety. Thank you for supporting this ministry.

Michael Wills

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YORKMINSTER PARK GALLERY

**Jan 13-Feb 15, reception: Sun, Jan 14 –
Outside the Lines - Ann Bald-Bloom, new
acrylics on canvas which evoke a world of
symbolic still life and landscape.**



**Feb 17-Mar 28, reception: Sun, Feb 18
– *Linear Landscapes* - Heidi R
Burkhardt,
A transposition of Nature in linocut and
woodcut prints.**

**Mar 30-Apr 26, reception: Sun Apr 8 –
Making Time - Victoria Cowan – a series
acknowledging time in the making of art and
in the shared creative moment.**

