

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



YPBC NEWS

December 2021



Published by:

Yorkminster Park
Baptist Church

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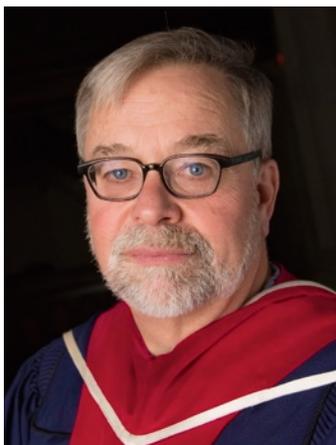
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PETER'S PEN

In September we started an online Bible study on Wednesday evenings called Lost in Translation in which we have been looking at phrases from our everyday language that

come from the earliest translations of the Bible into the English language. We chose about 90 such phrases and have found others along the way as we have looked at five or six each week. Among other things we have considered what the phrase means to us today and what it meant originally and then tried to discern where the good news is and how God is continuing to speak into our world today through the common phrase.

Each week has also featured a different leader and it has been encouraging and inspiring to see the depth of Biblical insight among

so many leaders in our church. And not just the leaders! Along the way we have also had thoughtful and discerning comments and questions from those in the group, although with upwards of seventy in attendance each week we are not able to hear from everyone. Nonetheless I keep getting asked who is this person or that person and they are asking about people because they have been so blessed by their participation. Like me they are finding it all so encouraging. We are discovering along the way that God is speaking to us afresh not simply through common phrases but through the common folk of our own community.

And then there are those from outside too. For example when Rob Inman recently led our study his three sisters were present Mary from Grimsby, Pat from Parry Sound and Margot from Nelson, B.C. However, they are not just there for their brother as they have been with us on a number of Wednesday evenings. The pandemic has forced us to take our Life Groups and Bible Studies online and in

In this issue:

	Page
From Peter's Pen	2
Christmas and Advent	3
Pastoral Care and Disciple.....	4
Transitions	4
Family Ministry	5
Parish Nurse	8
YPBC Women's Ministries	11
Carols By ... and ... Carols	12
Library News	13
Mandatory Vaccination	14
Lost in Translation-Bible Stu..	14
Gift of Kindness, at	15
Yorkminster Park Gallery	17

The Cover - a Christmas Greeting Post Card, December 1924, from a family collection.



Comments and suggestions for future editions are welcome. Please send to:

pilgrim.h@sympatico.ca

The next newsletter will be published in March 2022.

Paul R Hill

doing so we have been able to welcome so many people from beyond the city limits. Mary Welby of Thunder Bay, the daughter of the late Guy and Ethel Staples, has also been with us each week. One member of our church came into the group one week and said, "I have to interrupt before we start and say 'hello' to my cousins from New Brunswick who I see are with us tonight." We have also had visits from Americans Milton Fletcher and Amos Jones who are also worshipping with us Sunday by Sunday.

And there are others we have only met in recent months though many of them have been worshipped with us for some time. And then there is Ray Kibler III. Ray had sent me several encouraging emails through the years after watching our service online, but it wasn't till I was flipping through the three pages of participants that his name jumped off the screen at me. I had read his lovely notes, but had never seen his face or heard his voice. Ray has two doctorates and has pastored Lutheran churches in the US and now lives in Claremont, California where a disability confines him to his apartment. But his passion for Christ and for the unity of the church are contagious and he has been a blessing to us all fall. On the first Saturday of Advent, Ray offered an inspiring reflection in our Walking Together online Bible Study. If you missed it, please subscribe at:

<https://www.yorkminsterpark.com/grow/weekday-devotional.php>

Week after week we have met people in the church for the first time and others from around the world and in the midst we have sensed the presence of Christ.

The study starts up again on January 12 and you are more than welcome to join us.

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlcuyuqDMsGdyPS-mHh2sQpalo_9e37G6H

The whole notion of the Word of God speaking through phrases we had long since taken for granted has helped prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas. For at Christmas the Word of God enters our world not through a well-worn phrase, but through the Living and Incarnate Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. God has entered the worn out places of this world through the dark cold nights of winter to see us through to his eternal new day.

As we draw closer to Christmas may we be ever aware of the presence of Christ in our midst. Have a truly blessed Christmas!

In Christ,
Peter Holmes

SAVE THE DATE FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS - IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

We have a number of special services and events over the Advent and Christmas season. Services and events are both ONLINE and IN-PERSON unless indicated otherwise.

**In-person seating will be limited for Carols by Candlelight and Nine Lessons and Carols. We encourage you to click the links below to reserve your space or call 416-922-1167.*

Advent I - Sunday Nov. 27
11 a.m. Worship Service

Advent II - Sunday, Dec. 5
11 a.m. Worship Service Communion
4 p.m. Iona Liturgy

Friday, Dec. 10
8 p.m. CITY CAROL SING - ONLINE ONLY >

Advent III - Sunday Dec. 12
11 a.m. Worship Service
4:30 p.m. Carols by Candlelight - *RESERVE>

Saturday, Dec. 18
11 a.m. Service of Comfort and Hope - IN PERSON ONLY

Advent IV - Sunday, Dec. 19
11 a.m. Family Christmas Sunday Service
4:30 p.m. Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols - *RESERVE>

Christmas Eve -Friday, Dec. 24
4 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service
11 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - IN-PERSON ONLY

Christmas Day - Saturday, Dec. 25
11 a.m. Christmas Day Communion - IN PERSON ONLY

Christmas Sunday - Dec. 26
11 a.m. Worship Service

New Year's Eve - Friday, Dec. 31
11:15 p.m. Watch Night Service - IN PERSON ONLY



FROM THE MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE AND DISCIPLESHIP



The season of Advent and Christmas is a beautiful time of year. For most of us, our memories around this time are complicated; happy and sad memories uneasily blending together because it seems we are conditioned, against all experience to the contrary, to believe that in this season we must be happy. When we are not it can throw us off. We can sometimes treat sorrow and sadness like Mary and Joseph were treated long ago, not really wanting to give them room at Christmas, not wanting them to be in the way, but wander they will until they are given a place to rest.

My grandmother on my mother's side was Ukrainian. We were doubly blessed in our family at both Christmas and Easter because we celebrated everything twice. Even as we did so, there was a tradition we had of the empty chair. Our dining room table was just large enough to fit twelve if we had two people at each end but before we sat, my grandmother taught us to remember the empty chair, the space left empty for all those we had loved and lost. When I looked at the chair I could see many faces, aunts and uncles, my grandfather and finally one day, when I looked at the empty chair, I could see my grandmother too. By giving sadness a place at the table we were better able to also welcome joy; that gift that only God can give that is so much greater than happiness. Joy that makes us smile with delight at the memory of someone, even as we wish they were still with us.

Jesus did not come into this world because everything was going very well and he wanted to join in with all the singing and dancing and feasting, even though we know he was very fond of

celebrating too. Jesus came because there was a great emptiness in the world that only he could fill. What a gift we have in Jesus. For every empty space in our heart, he is there, ready to fill us with his peace, his comfort, his hope, and when we are ready for it, his joy also.

At Yorkminster Park we have a wonderful tradition. Placed in the middle of all our Advent services, for those who are remembering an empty chair, whether it be the loss of a loved one or another major transition in life, we have *The Service of Comfort and Hope*. This year it will take place on Saturday December the 18th at 11 am and all are welcome. It is a time when we recall that Jesus has promised to each of us that when we come to him with our burdens, he will give us rest.

Mary and Joseph found a place just in time for Mary to birth for all the world the greatest gift we will, each of us, ever have this Christmas, our Lord and Saviour Jesus. He is ever ready to come to us, ever ready to birth in us renewed hope, ever ready to give us his loving compassion, his loving comfort. With thankful hearts this season, let us make room if we have not yet done so for Jesus, our Lord Emmanuel, add a chair for him too, and welcome him to be a part of our lives.

TRANSITIONS

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

Births

Amelia Marion Rose Watson, *dau of Claire and Morgan Watson*

Grace Sunyul Delaney, *son of Scott and Jaimie Delaney*

Deaths

John Duncan Bark

Samir Edward Marcos

Marilyn Kerr



Merry Christmas!! One of our favourite times of year is the season of Advent. A time that we as followers of Jesus prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ' birth and await for His 2nd coming. Our Family Ministries theme over December is focusing on Worship, LOVE, Giving and Sharing the Good News of Jesus. When we look at the Christmas story, we read how the shepherds **worshiped** and glorified God for what they had seen and heard about the birth of the Messiah.

We can give thanks to God for showing us His boundless **love**...for He sent us the greatest gift of all...Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. We can look at the Maji and how they travelled from afar to bow down and worship Jesus our King and **give** gifts to show their adoration. We can also look at how the shepherds were



Family Ministry collage highlighting children and youth artwork

the first 'Good News' **sharers** as they immediately told others about the birth of Christ.

May this season be enriched with our full worship to God, our LOVE for all and how we give of our time and gifts. May it also be a time for us to introduce others to Jesus, the best gift ever!

Sundays – Online and In-person!



Our method is different, but our mission is the same. Every Sunday morning at YPBC we are gathering with children and youth for in-person and online worship and ministry.

Tuesday ZOOMS

- **6:30–7:15pm – Family Ministries!!** We invite ALL ages to join Heather & Leticia to share life, God’s Word and pray for one another.
- **7:30–8:30pm – Youth Night!!** Join in the fun as we gather with youth and leaders for games, questions, loads of laughs and engage in some fun activities.

Friday Youth Night (In-person at church). One Friday a month from 7–9pm our Youth enjoy gathering for fun, fellowship and special events. Last month, youth purchased thick socks and wrote Christmas cards to give to the guests for the Out of the Cold Missions. On Friday, December 17th youth will celebrate Jesus’ birthday with a Christmas party.

FAITH AT HOME MINISTRIES: We encourage families to gather together in their home any time in their week to view our **Family ministry email** that is sent out every Friday. The email includes teaching, worship and craft videos that relate to our weekly theme along with other faith resources and discussion questions. When we gather with families and youth for our zoom times, we go deeper with the lesson through further teaching, discussion, activities and prayer to help support all of the above. Practicing your faith in the home as a family helps model, support and build your faith development and to further grow in your relationship with Jesus. On **Sunday, November 28th** we gave out **Advent Family Ministry Packets** for children and parents to engage in faith practices at home.

Sun. Dec. 5 Advent 2 – Family Christmas Mission Project!
See flyer for details



Sun. Dec. 19 Advent 4 – Family Christmas Sunday!
For part of the service, we will engage in the Christmas story in an inter-active way and our DOXA band will participate with a special Christmas worship song.

Fri. Dec. 24 @4pm – Join us for our ONLINE Christmas Eve Family Service!
Worship with us as we celebrate Christ' birth.

In faith,
Heather Mackey, Director of Family Ministries –
hmackey@yorkminsterpark.com
Leticia, Limgenco, Children's Ministry Associate –
cmassociate@yorkminsterpark.com
Lutzen Riedstra, Youth Ministry Associate –
lriedstra@yorkminsterpark.com



**For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6**

NURSES NOTES BY LILY



Reflections of "The Congregational Check-in Report, Fall 2020"

Some Lessons Learned

"Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere."

Chinese Proverb

One question posed to our congregation was the following:

Can you please tell us the most important lessons you have learned?

When asked which is the greatest commandment, Jesus replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour

as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt 22:37-40)

Another question to the congregation was the following:

What message would you like to give to others in our community?

Below are selected scriptures and words of encouragement, hope and wisdom that have provided comfort to many throughout these times of uncertainty, and have particularly been recognized by you, the congregants.

Words of Scripture

Psalm 121:2

"My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Despite the challenges Covid-19 presented, these are lessons most commonly learned:

The importance of communication to maintain relationships with our loved ones

Being good neighbours

Learning new and creative ways of communicating with friends and family (such as virtual conference calls)

To have empathy for others

To accept things as they are

A new-found appreciation for nature and our surroundings

To have patience

The importance of having religious faith and a church community during this time

"Perseverance" tells us of the many lessons there are to be learned. We are grateful to him for allowing us to share his poems amongst everyone.

*Perseverance put to a test
By deadly virus
Front-line workers we have the best
Little time for them to rest
Putting their lives at risk for us
Lessons to be learned
Like staying informed
Difficulties still to be faced
Feels like we are in a race
Faltering along the way
Hoping for a better day
Staying calm to persevere
Showing we are able to endure
God gives us strength
Solving problems at length
Determination it takes for us
To end this severe crisis
Resolutely we try our best
To defeat this dangerous virus
More obstacles we can expect
Leading forward step by step
Soon there will be celebration
Grateful too for perseverance*

Re-Opening

On behalf of **Health and Wellness**, we would like to acknowledge Mr. Al Livy for his dedication and commitment to leading the Re-Opening Task Force here at YPBC and his entire committee and others who have helped in any way. It is through this committee and all our volunteers and staff that we have been able to reopen our doors, safely and fairly. The Committee informed us that beginning on December 18th the church will require proof of full vaccination and ID of all who enter the building. The decision was made after careful and prayerful consideration in good faith believing it is the best way to continue to do our best to ensure the safety of all who enter. Authorized medical exemptions are accepted, but need to be presented to parishnurse@yorkminsterpark.com.

PRE-REGISTRATION AVAILABLE

Come to the Yorkminster Park Centre entrance and provide proof of vaccination along with ID, at which time your name will be placed on a master list. This will hasten your entry into the church. Members of the committee will be available at the to assist people in pre-registering on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and before & after church in the

Narthex on Sundays. Proof of vaccination can be downloaded at: covid19.ontariohealth.ca

We will continue to follow most of the same COVID-19 Protocols which were used successfully when we opened in the fall of 2020, including wearing masks at all times, and social distancing however, congregational singing is now allowed - you must continue to wear your mask, and we are able to celebrate the Lord's Supper as part of our Morning Worship Service - in a slightly different manner. Rather than distributing the elements in the traditional way, upon arrival worshippers will be given the bread and cup in a sealed package which they will be invited to open, eat, and drink at the appropriate time in the service.

We are happy that our children and youth have returned to worship in-person. There is a HYBRID model for children & youth:

- 11:00am begin worship with all in the service
- 11:15am after children/family prayer, children/youth and their leaders will go to Cameron Hall for their DOXA bible study time and join others via zoom
- Wear masks & social distance

A Thought for These Times

*"While life's dark maze I tread
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide;
Bid darkness trun to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
from Thee aside."*

"My Faith Looks Up to Thee", Ray Palmer

Closing Prayer

A Children's Christmas Prayer

*"There is more to Christmas than candlelight and cheer
Its the spirit of sweet friendship That brightens all the year."*

Author Unknown

Blessings for a Safe and a Joyful Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful New Year

Lily Cugliari-Kobayashi, RN

FROM THE YPBC WOMEN'S EXECUTIVE ...

CONNECTING THROUGH PRAYER - COURAGEOUS LIFE



Recognizing that life can be challenging for women on many fronts, Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Women began 70 years ago to connect women around the world in order to bring encouragement and strength by standing together. BWA Women offers a supportive community of women in 156 countries who are building into lives through connections and resourcing so we can become *courageous* women who love God deeply and are living out who God has designed us to be from the beginning of creation. As women thrive, the world benefits.

The BWA Women's World Day of Prayer on the first Monday of every November, is a special time for standing in solidarity with our sisters across the globe and provides a unique opportunity to pray for each other in over 80 languages. This is a time to discover and experience what a massive sisterhood we are part of as we stand with each other in prayer, a beautiful time of celebrating our diversity and our unity as Baptist women within seven continental Unions come together around the throne of God to hold each other up to His loving arms. The Baptist Women of North America, as the North American branch of the BWA Women's Department and the Union to which we as Canadian Baptist women belong, encourages women from 17 member organizations across Canada and the United States.

Courageous Life was the underlying and connecting theme for this year's Day of Prayer and to guide our praying and thinking, three Bible studies were offered by Baptist women from Australia, Malawi and Tobago, each one reflecting on the verse of their choice from Hebrews 13:5b-6, Deuteronomy 31:6 or Esther 4:12-17; 5:1-6.

In the Hebrews passage, God assures us that he'll never let us down nor leave us so that we can boldly claim :

**God is there, ready to help;
I'm fearless no matter what.
Who or what can get to me?**

(The Message)

In Deuteronomy, Moses at the age of 120, is exhorting His people to be strong and courageous and to have no fear or dread because of *them* (enemy nations),

...because it is the Lord God who goes with you and will not fail nor forsake you.

And in the story of Esther, Queen Esther is placed in a royal position to assist in the delivery of God's divine plan for His people. Her divine moment comes when she courageously responds to Mordecai's urging to appeal to the king even though it was against the law to approach him without his invitation. Esther was willing to die to save her people.

The bold and daring words common to all of these scripture passages declare a courage that comes only because the Lord is at our side and will never leave nor forsake us. In all three studies, *courage* is assumed to mean the ability to push through fear, not the absence of fear - to do something that frightens us or to appropriate the power to act in the face of hurt and grief. Fear can rob us of the courage necessary to do what we know is right. It can keep us from doing the will of God. 1 Timothy 2:7, a verse also referenced, reminds us that God has not given us a spirit of fear, cowardice or timidity but of power, love and sound mind. Acknowledging the pandemic that has changed the way we do things as well as recognizing the enduring needs and deeply concerning issues in our relationships and in our world, we are assured from God's word that with His help we can gather the courage to forge forward to face the changes and challenges that make life difficult and create fear, while not allowing fear to prevent us. We continue to be called on to love and reach out to the vulnerable, the sick, the suffering and the poor in this difficult time - to uplift each other, be with each other and to pray for and

strengthen each other, empowered by God himself who is the creator and perfecter of our lives. And one person can make a difference as the story of Esther shows us. Esther's fearless faith in God made a difference - it resulted in her life being spared and so were the people of God! The apostle Paul reminds us in his letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 6, that courageous living requires us to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power - to stand firm - to dress well for the battles we face - to be prayerful and faith filled and to fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel to a world in great need. *The Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid.*

It is of note that the YPBC Women's current mission statement also references the story of Esther where we affirm that *for such a time as this*, as women with a passion for serving God, we invite and welcome all women into our community and encourage women to discover their full potential in Christ as we live and serve under the influence of God's Spirit. God has given *us* a spirit of power, love and sound mind, not one of timidity and calls us to an uncommon courage as *extra ordinary* women of God. In the Introduction of her book, *SHE, Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry*, Karoline Lewis encourages us with her understanding of power:

To claim power from within is to be grounded in the absolute truth of who you are. The key before all keys is to tell the truth the about yourself... Power that is acknowledged as coming from the place of truth about one's self is truly the kind of power that makes a difference ...true power comes from identity and authenticity.

Courageously and authentically living out of our truest identity as God's own beloved daughters, enlivened and empowered by His Spirit and His help, we are emboldened to respond to the challenge that is as fresh today as it was some years ago when Janet Clark, our Women's Retreat speaker, issued it to us:

What would we be doing if we weren't afraid?

The courage we need to live - to be visionary - to minister, is reflected

in the following *Prayer for Courage* that was included in the November 2021, BWA Women's Day of Prayer:

**Dear God give me courage.
Give me courage to speak out,
To stand up for the right
To stand with those who are vulnerable
To stand up for those who need encouragement
Even as I need theirs.
Make me a courageous woman who is empowered
by your Spirit
To do what you would have me to do
To be who you made me to be.
Give me the courage to admit my failings where I
am weak
And the courage to ask forgiveness when I have
wronged.
Give me courage to follow you even when voices
around me - within me
Say I'm not enough or it can't be done by me.
I need your courage to change and to grow.
I need your courage to thrive
Because it is only in thriving that the world will
see YOU, Your love your grace, your strength,
your power, your glory.
And I want that, Lord Jesus. Do it in me, Do it
through me,
Because the world needs you.
It is in Jesus' name I pray.**

submitted by Jonanne Fenton on behalf of YPBC Women's Ministries



JOIN US ONLINE AND IN-PERSON

Carols by Candlelight
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 4:30 PM
Carol arrangements and original compositions by David Willcocks, John Rutter, Randall Thompson, Geoffrey Bush and Malcom Sargent.

Nine Lessons & Carols
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 4:30 PM
Carols by Mark Sirett, Healey Willan, Philip Ledger, Edgar Pettman, Herbert Howells and William Walton.

Featuring: The Soloists and Section Leads of Yorkminster Park Baptist Church Choir, William Maddox, conductor, Sharon L. Beckstead, organist

LIBRARY NEWS, DECEMBER 2021

This fall the Christian Education Board provided money for the John Gladstone Library to purchase new books. Here is a list of the new titles:

Bridges, Jerry. *The pursuit of holiness with study guide*. NavPress, 2016.

Collier, Winn. *A Burning In My Bones: The Authorized Biography Of Eugene H. Peterson, Translator Of The Message*. Crown Publishing Group, 2021.

Crossan, John Dominic. *How to read the Bible and still be a Christian: struggling with Divine violence from Genesis through Revelation*. HarperCollins, 2016.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. *Study Guide for Conversations on Medical Assistance in Dying and The Call to Faithfully Journey with those who are Dying: An ELCIC Resolution*. [2015].

Good, Michelle. *Five little Indians: a novel*. HarperCollins, 2020.

Guite, Malcolm. *Word in the Wilderness: A poem a day for Lent and Easter*. Canterbury Press Norwich, 2014.

Holmes, Jasmine L. *Mother To Son: Letters to a black boy on identity and hope*. IV Press, 2020.

Keller, Timothy. *How to Find God. 3-Book Boxed Set: On Birth; On Marriage; On Death*. Penguin, 2020.

Miller, Paul and Powlison, David. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*, 2nd Edition. NavPress, 2017.

Ortberg, John. *If You Want To Walk On Water, You've Got To Get Out Of The Boat*. Zondervan, 2014.

Qureshi, Nabeel. *No God but One: Allah or Jesus?: A Former Muslim Investigates the Evidence for Islam and Christianity*. Zondervan, 2016.

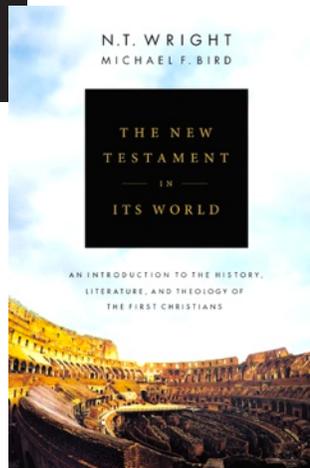
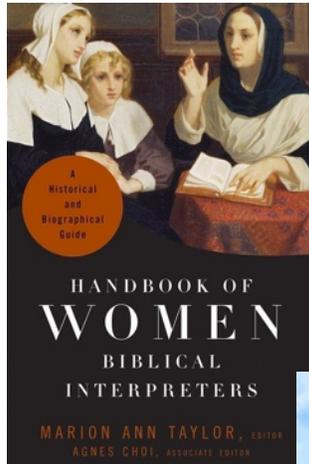
Stanley, Andy. *Irresistible: Reclaiming The New That Jesus Unleashed For The World*. HarperChristian, 2018.

Swoboda, A. J. *Subversive Sabbath: The Surprising Power of Rest in a Nonstop World*. Baker, 2018.

Taylor, Marion Ann and Choi, Agnes. *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters*. Baker Publishing, 2018.

Williams, Rowan. *Candles in the Dark: Faith, Hope and Love in a Time of Pandemic*. SPCK, 2020.

Wright, N.T. and Bird, Michael F. *The New Testament in its world – an introduction to the history, literature and theology of the first Christians*. Zondervan Academic, 2019.



These books will be available for borrowing as of January 1st.

You can do this in various ways.

➤ Via computer or mobile app

○ Go to www.librarything.com or download the free LibraryThing app

○ Sign in at the right hand side of the homepage. Name: YPBlib and Password: JnGbib

○ Click on the cat icon at the right end of the top brown navigation bar of the opening page

○ You are now in the catalogue where you can browse, borrow and put holds on books

➤ By phone

○ Phone the church and leave a message on the library extension

➤ By email

○ Email library@yorkminsterpark.com and make your request.

If anyone would like to review one or more of these books for a future newsletter, please email library@yorkminsterpark.com

submitted by Katherine Laundry

OUT OF THE COLD

by Hazel



Out of the Cold was something I had always heard about during the winter and holiday seasons. We hear

announcements about less fortunate people and how we should donate to them. As a child with no idea how to help and no money to donate, the most I could do was hold the cans of food my mom had purchased and place them in a box. Then that was the end of it. I wouldn't think about the people who would receive the food and socks or why they needed them.

In more recent years, I've given more thought to these people. How and why should I help? Yorkminster Park has given me opportunities to learn and serve. A few of our youth nights included serving others and learning about the Out of the Cold program. We helped serve meals and were able to interact with new people. I heard from other volunteers about how these people had experienced rough times, so it could be difficult to be in a happy mood. It made me realise that simple interactions with them are more important than I had previously assumed. The first night I volunteered, I was especially nervous about the possible scenarios that could come up, but they soon became forgotten. I was able to see how friendly the people were. They were familiar and comfortable with the others, which made me feel welcome as well. The experience allowed me to gain a better understanding of homeless people and see them in a new light, rather than any preconceived or stereotypical ideas I had about them.

After serving the people in the Out of the Cold program, I was able to think of them more emotionally rather than as

random people I would donate to but never meet. At a recent youth gathering, we collected socks for the homeless and wrote Christmas greeting cards for them. I continued to think of how to spread kindness, especially for people that have constant struggles and need extra love during the cold holiday season. The Bible verse Proverbs 3:27 came to mind. It says, "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them." We are all able to make a difference in people's lives. Sometimes I can be blind to the simple ways I can help someone, which prevents me from making a difference. Remembering the love God constantly gives to me helps me remember how he is also constantly giving love to the people around me. He sees the value in everyone so I should as well. I learned that through big and little acts, I can make a change in a person's life.

(Hazel is a member of DOXA, YPBC Youth Ministries)

Mandatory Vaccination at YPBC

With the busy Christmas season in mind, the Yorkminster Park Reopening Committee informed us that beginning December 18th the church will require proof of full vaccination and ID of all who enter the building.

The decision was made after prayerful consideration in good faith believing it is the best way to continue to do our best to ensure the safety of all who enter. Authorized medical exemptions are accepted, but need to be presented to parishnurse@yorkminsterpark.com.

PRE-REGISTRATION AVAILABLE: Come to the Yorkminster Park Centre entrance and provide proof of vaccination along with ID, at which time your name will be placed on a master list. This will hasten your entry into the church. Members of the committee will be available at the to assist people in pre-registering on **Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and before & after church in the Narthex on Sundays.**



PROOF OF VACCINATION CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT: <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca>

TROUBLE DOWNLOADING YOUR VACCINE CERTIFICATE?

If you are having trouble for whatever reason, you can get a copy emailed to you or a paper copy in the regular mail. Call 1-833-943-3900 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. any day of the week. You will need to have your health card ready.

ONLINE WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Lost in Translation

September to January 2021/22 7 p.m. | on Zoom

Lost in Translation features 14 leaders from the YP family who will take turns leading us in a study of Biblical phrases that are commonly used in our English language. Register online, or by email at office@yorkminsterpark.com



Wed. Jan. 12 - MULTIPLE WITNESS
Leader: MARY HAN

- Baptism of fire
- A house divided against itself cannot stand
- Fall by the wayside
- Move mountains
- Millstone around your neck

For more details visit www.yorkminsterpark.com

THE GIFT OF KINDNESS, AT CHRISTMASTIME AND ALWAYS



Outside, the twilight was soft and purple-pink on that bitterly cold December 14th in 2009. *Inside*, we were creating as warm and peaceful an ambiance as possible. Classical music from CBC radio wafted down the hall into the living room.

The Christmas tree

lights—the only illumination required—bathed the space in a golden glow. All this to lovingly say goodbye to our darling 13-year-old Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier, Angus (photo, High Park). I did my best to carry on for the sake of Christmas, but on the *inside*, I was a mess. Embarrassingly so.

In those days I faithfully walked 5K through High Park every Saturday with Cindy—a dear friend who, like Angus, was strong on intuition and loyalty. Knowing that I was grieving, on the Saturday following the 14th, Cindy declared that *she* was selecting the route for our walk, and that *my* job was to play along. What was she up to? I could tell it was *something!* I surrendered. Off we went into the High Park *neighbourhood*, rather than High Park proper. “Do you want to know where we’re going?” “No,” I replied. A Christmastime adventure on a bright, sunny [but still bitterly cold] Saturday was just the thing to lift my sprits.

We arrived at the wrought-iron door of a grand home on High Park Avenue. The mystery continued. We knocked and waited.

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

The door opened, and what do you think came bounding out from behind his master’s legs (Cindy’s sister was the “master,” as it turned out)?! A 10-year-old Wheaten named Connor that *we* were going to take with us on our walk! God bless Cindy’s

thoughtful, kind heart. She’d arranged a play date with a *Wheaten*, “just for me!” (The line “Just for me!” declared as a indulgent celebration, always makes me think of that scene from the Christmas movie, *Home Alone*, when Kevin McCallister—that rambunctious eight-year-old with a penchant for clever, elaborate traps for protecting himself from the robbers—orders a pizza they way *he* likes it best, but never gets when his family orders... “A cheese pizza, *just for me!*”)

Connor looked amazingly like Angus, and behaved like him, too. If it weren’t for his slightly larger frame, he could’ve been Angus’ doppelgänger! After choking back tears, quelling the lump in my throat and lavishing that little guy with a few cuddles and coos, away we went—with me, of course, at the other end of the lead.

Connor and I *flew* down the avenue leaving Cindy in

our salty dust. *And I mean that almost literally.* I felt so light, like my legs were airborne, with my body parallel to the sidewalk! And there was lots of salt on the sidewalk that had deteriorated to dust, so, indeed, for that part, we actually did literally leave Cindy in our dust! Connor

was in glee to run, run, run! And *I?* As hard as it was keeping up, I was in utter bliss submitting to his “puppy” energy. I was chilled on the way to Connor’s house, but from our departure onward I was aglow with warmth. So was Cindy, knowing that she was the conduit for this joyous moment that we were *all* experiencing.

Romans 12:15

“Rejoice with those who rejoice;”

I felt my cup runneth over for that entire walk. It was a wondrous healing collection of moments all strung together, suspended in time. Made all the better because it was Christmas. I had no idea how much I needed that therapeutic experience that day, nor how much that simple gift of a friend’s thoughtfulness would mean to me then and forevermore. It gave me back my Angus *and* my Christmas spirit. I’ll always remember that serendipitous *earthly* Christmas gift

as one of my all-time favourites. Freezing cold, take-your-breath-away day and all.

Here are three lessons that I gleaned from this personal tale of “Christmas Past.” (I wonder what your take-aways might be?):

1. It’s easier than we may think, to be of *simple yet profound* service to another if we pause (no, not *paws!*) ;), look, listen and then empathize with that other’s pain or troubles. Although we can’t always meet all of the needs of others, *if we care enough*, the key is to open our hearts to thoughtfully identify what actions and supports we *can* lend, however simple or humble, to help see that person through their crisis.

In the case of “Cindy, Connor and me,” Cindy whole-heartedly journeyed that scripture *extra mile* on our friendship bond by identifying something important to me and acting upon it. Without realizing, I *needed* to love up, and make a fuss of, a beloved Wheaten one last time. Cindy assessed that—and delivered.

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

2. When you’re the “passenger,” you don’t always have to know where the “Driver” is taking you until you get there. Trust God. Have faith. On that December morning I trusted the process and had faith that Cindy was taking me somewhere pleasing. I “Let go and let God.” When in the position of wanting or having to trust and exercise faith in a respected friend, family member, colleague, neighbour, etc.—especially through this *second* pandemic-times Advent season—practice extended patience with that other person’s methods and motivations before concluding that they’re steering you astray. That extra stretch of patience may help you “stay calm and carry on.”

Psalm 40:1

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

3. If there’s to be a giver, *someone* has to receive; so the receiver is a giver, too. You may *try* to give, but sometimes the other resists receiving. But when

they *do* accept your offering (whether a tangible gift or your earnest demonstration of going the extra mile with help or kindness) *that* acceptance of your giving creates a positive reward for you/the *giver*, too. *Receiving* gracefully, with a grateful heart, at Christmastime or any time, is also a kind of giving worth practicing. It is the *gift* of accepting another’s efforts. Let someone *give* of themselves to *you*, as well as you to them. And when they do give to you, say a heartfelt, “thank you,” and pay it forward.

Matthew 2:10-11

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

... and we *know* the Gift that the Magi, and all those that have followed since, received from our Lord, in return...

As faithful followers of Christ, especially at His time/*Christmastime*, we owe it to *Him*, to be worthy of *His* Christmas gift to us. The *very* best gift of all.

... What can I give him?

Poor as I am, if I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I would do my part.

But what *I* can I give him? Give him my heart. Give him my heart

(From *In the Bleak Midwinter*, by Gustav Holst and Christina Rossetti)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

A blessed and Merry Christmas to you and yours...

Respectfully submitted by Nina Spencer

Nina is a (Virtual & In-Person) Keynote Speaker, Speaker Coach, Speaker Book Coach and Book Project Manager, Voiceover Artist, and Bestselling Author of *Getting Passion Out of Your Profession*, and *A Time to Creep, A Time to Soar*.

YP GALLERY

We look forward to the day when YP Gallery will be open. Until then, here is an update from Nelson Cheng who was slated to launch our 14th season.

It is a long time since my last update! I hope you are staying safe and keeping well as we transition back to normal life.

It's taken some time to get my art going again but I have big news to share. I have officially moved into a proper studio space! Getting a studio space has been a dream of mine for years. As fun as it was painting from home, I really needed a proper professional space. It's been about five years in the making: it's hard to believe it all started as a hobby, from re-fashioning an old cigar box, into a 'pochade' box. I'm excited to see what the next five years will bring.

On that front, I have been busy painting and the studio is filling up with new work. The latest pieces are a continued exploration of cityspace compositions, as well as some still life from my everyday. Not sure I have purged the subject of landscape out of my system yet, maybe I never will: but I'm exploring some ideas that have been brewing.

In other news, I will be exhibiting in person at The Artist Project 2022. Yes, it is finally back!! The tentative show dates are April 21-24 2022 at the Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place. Fingers crossed! I look forward to reconnecting with you and finally showing my work again!

Have a safe and happy holiday! - Nelson Cheng

