

St. Thomas Anglican Church
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The Church of St. Thomas seeks to live by the power of the Holy Spirit and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in creative and Christian-like relationships with God, our Christian brothers and sisters and our neighbours throughout the world.

Winter 2015 - 2016

INCARNATION AS GOD'S WAY OF OVERCOMING EVIL

According to our Christian faith, God is a God who is *with us* – who is Emmanuel – and who is coming to be *with us* not like a tyrant, controlling, terrible and a revengeful monster, but God is coming to us like an innocent infant, offering a sign of peace, hope, joy and love to all. God is coming to us as a seemingly powerless baby with the cooperation of a seemingly insignificant young maiden from the Middle East. Yes, this is *how* God wants to appear among us and this is *how* God wants to overcome *all evil* that is to be found *within us* as well as *outside of us*. Our limited human minds will always be speechless before the mystery of the Incarnation whereby the Eternal Logos, the Divine Wisdom and Love of God has become flesh in a powerless human baby in order that we “may become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4).

What might be even more puzzling to our human mind is that God wants to accomplish the mystery of Incarnation *with* the cooperation of Mary, an unmarried teenage girl. “How can this be?” Mary was asking the angel, and we echo Mary’s question: “How is that possible?”

Indeed, how is it possible for God to become a human being intending to “deliver us from evil” through the mysteries of incarnation, suffering and death? How is it possible for God to overcome the darkness of the shadow of death by becoming one of us? These are just some of those big questions which not only Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the magi had to face, but all the people who have followed and who want to follow Jesus as the Way to God also need to wonder and pray about.

On the other hand, God’s question and invitation to all of us who are open and intend to believe in the Mystery of Incarnation seems to be whether we are willing to cooperate with God to overcome the evil that we experience both around us and sometimes even within us? Are we willing and ready to surrender to the divine power of the Most High, the All-Creative Breath of God, so that God’s healing presence can be manifest *in, through, and among* us? Are we willing to let God do what only God can do and what God desires to do *for us and with us*?

Let us ponder these questions in our hearts as we are preparing to celebrate Christmas, the Birthday of our Lord, Jesus the Christ, the Incarnate Love of God and the Prince of Peace.

May you have a blessed time of Advent and a very Merry Christmas!

The Rev. Sandor Borbely



Our VISIONING Journey

By John Woollett

In October we started our St. Thomas Visioning Exercise. Our theme is one of a continuing spiritual and Christian service journey. Our objective is to reimagine and enhance the ways that our Saint Thomas community can grow and become more vibrant.

Reverend Sandor got us started and has guided us on a series of continuing group discussions. Our initial focus was on identifying our strengths and the obstacles that confront us. We also discussed what we could do to support our personal journeys, expand our church congregation and serve the broader community.

Excellent progress has been made. We've developed a rich set of over thirty suggested spiritual and secular activities that will help us reach our goals. More than enough to get us started and to keep us busy with worthwhile work for some time. The suggested activities have been grouped into four main areas: Building our Spiritual Strength; Expanding our Outreach Missions; Serving our Saint Thomas' Community; and, Serving our Broader Community. Suggestions include starting education groups such as a science and faith program, adding more meditational sessions, expanding our music ministry, initiating an interfaith lecture series, further enhancing our outreach and community programs and many more.

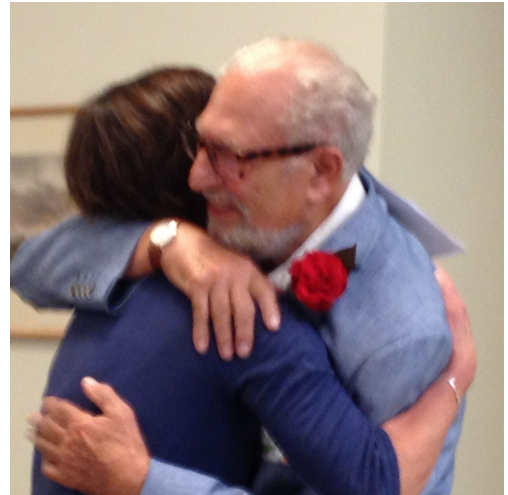
Over the next few weeks we will all be preparing for and celebrating Christmas. In early 2016 we'll be attending the annual Vestry Meeting. During this period we'll also have the opportunity to think about which of these many ideas and suggested activities will work best for us, both as individuals and as a congregation. We can then focus on how we, as individuals and groups, will contribute to bringing the first few of our ideas to life creating a renewed and strong environment as we move forward in 2016.

A complete list of our suggested activities can be yours by contacting John at: jwoollett.ca@gmail.com.
Printed copies are also available at the Parish Hall.

On Sunday, September 13 we celebrated Geoff Mulholland's retirement as organist at St. Thomas. Here are some scenes from the gathering afterwards.



Special thanks to Ted Bigelow and Jan Cumming for their kind words of appreciation to Geoff. And thanks to John Potts and Russ Strathdee for celebrating with us. They have spent many years performing with Geoff in the Fig Leaf Jazz Band. Sjaak Breg arranged and led a sing-a-long. And there was cake!



Outreach at St. Thomas

By Davina Doorly

At St. Thomas we reach out to our community by supporting the Busby Street Van and the Out of the Cold Program. This program seeks to involve our neighbours and friends as well.

Judy Carson thought of the Busby Street Van when her friend June had extra wool and knitted up some hats and scarves! These were dropped off to the Busby Street Van. The Van helps out people in need all over Barrie. Our thoughts turned to the Van when many loaves of freshly made sandwiches not used for the Thomas's Tea Room were given to the Van for their clients.



We will add a Sunday sandwich-making day to our efforts, beginning **Sunday December 13th**. This is an opportunity to either donate a toonie, help prepare the sandwiches during coffee time, or both!

The “Out of the Cold” program operates from November to April. Hot evening meals are prepared and served at different churches in Barrie to homeless men and women. We are part of a team that provides a Sunday meal once a month. In November Elaine Bigelow with her

team, Gail Raikes, Suzanne Robillard, Sue Benjafield and Tassia Bell provided a meal for 30 clients.

Our next dates are Sundays – **December 13, January 10, February 7, March 6 and April 3**. Please consider joining us for one of those dates by contacting me at 705-722-6818. The team sets the menu and either cooks it together in the parish hall kitchen or in individual homes.

Our muffin making will take place on Sundays – **January 17, February 21 (not in March) and April 2**. The muffins are given to the Busby Street Van for distribution around Barrie. We meet at the parish hall at 2:00pm, produce as many healthy muffins as possible and plan to be finished by 4:00pm. Everyone is invited to share in this wonderful afternoon activity.

Thank you all for considering offering your time and energy to this vital ministry.

A note from Ted Bigelow

Friends,

Now, when many Churches are closing or amalgamating, I am proud and encouraged by the creative energy St. Thomas is undertaking to revitalize our Church ministry.

Led by John Woollett, we the congregation, have compiled a list of about 30 initiatives which will guide us as we move forward. The planning process is already underway.

We are very fortunate to benefit from the guidance of Rev. Sandor and the support of Emi. Their ministry is both spiritually enriching and thought provoking, and provides a very stimulating opportunity too by which we can re-examine our beliefs and personal growth.

Above all – this is an opportunity for each member of the congregation to contribute his/her energy and talents from a wide spectrum of choices in a positive and constructive process; one, which we expect will benefit each of us and our community.

I look forward to continuing in this process with you.

And a note from Julie MacLeod

This is the 'Victory Tree' located near the corner of Line 9 and Old Barrie Road.

It was planted in 1918 to celebrate the ending to WW1. I have spent many many hours visiting this tree, for inspiration and sometimes for consolation...it's very spiritual.

Sadly, on Friday November 6th it came down in that 10 minute Wind Storm !! I guess I'm fortunate in that I always made time to admire it and have copious photos to remember it by, still...a sad image and a barren landscape now.



ALTAR GUILD

We will be decorating the church for Christmas on Wednesday, December 23, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome to come and help. If you would like to have flowers placed in the church for Christmas in memory of loved ones, or you would like to contribute towards the flowers, please call Marilyn Forbes at 705-722-7829 or marilynn_forbes@bell.net.

We also need more volunteers for the Altar Guild. If you are interested, please speak to Marilyn Forbes. Each month, we take turns preparing for communion, cleaning up following communion, changing the frontals and hangings as the church season dictates, and the arranging of flowers for all church services. Training is provided.



We had several entertaining times this past fall. On October 24th we enjoyed the Celtic and traditional sounds of the group **Somerset**.



And on November 1st we were led in worship by the delightful group **Trinity Unplugged**, from Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora.

Stewardship

By Susan Woods

Most of us were taught at a young age that it is unseemly to speak about money! It was considered rude – my grandmother called it “vulgar”. These days it seems we are well-versed in what everything costs, but think much less about the value of things.

So, rather than money, let’s talk about value. What do we value? Why do we value it? For me, value determines where I put my time and attention. It’s where I experience happiness. It’s where I find hope and community; where I feel blessed.

I would ask us to consider two questions. How do we express value through our financial support? How do we decide what is an appropriate level of that support?

Most of us are routinely asked to support with our treasure charitable causes that interest or motivate us. It is important as citizens that we do our utmost to help medical, social, educational and other institutions to provide their vital services, which we truly value. But I believe our loyalty to our church home presents a higher priority.

The Anglican Church suggests that each family should carefully consider giving 2% of their annual income to the church. I believe this could be raised in the case of some of us of a certain age who have paid off our mortgages, educated our children and live in relative comfort. We have carefully planned our retirement and should consider giving a greater percentage of our annual income to what we value most.

Another way of looking at the “how much” question is to link our sense of value to our vision for the church. If we value opportunities to worship God among friends in an historic and charming rural setting; if we value supporting members like Kelly in her ministry Restoring Dignity and Hope; if we value being challenged and sustained weekly by intelligent and thoughtful sermons; if we value the caring friendships, old and new, that are sustained by our fellowship together on Sundays, if we value our collective and individual efforts to reach out to those less fortunate, for instance through Out of the Cold, the Busby Centre and the Garden of Eatin’, then I think we can begin to put a number on that value.

Or, think about comparing something else you value with what you currently donate to the ministry of St. Thomas. For instance, your entertainment budget: can we make the case that your budget for St. Thomas should at least equal what you spend on movies, restaurants, TV packages, sports events (you name it) each month? It’s a question of what you value.

We are at an important place in the history of St. Thomas. We have been given the opportunity of having with us a talented, dedicated, highly educated priest, who along with his energetic and loving wife, have brought new life to this old place. I can see a bright future of new growth here at St. Thomas and I believe everyone in this place can too.

We are fortunate to experience the leadership of Rev. Sandor and John Woollett as we participate in a Visioning exercise. We are focusing on our future as a congregation, discerning who we want to be and what we want to accomplish.

In this exercise we will be defining what is of value to us as a congregation. Our sense of responsibility requires us to step up confidently and recognize the value we find in our church community and support it with our best efforts – financially, through our attendance and active participation, with love and with God’s help.



The Blessing of the Animals included a pet bunny, and several dogs of various sizes.



The annual Artisan's Tour included these attractive signs and hangings. This was the 19th Tour and the Thomas's Tearoom is proud to be a part of it.

Upcoming Dates to REMEMBER

December 20	Service of Lessons and Carols at the 10:30 Service Caroling in the Village starting at 6:45pm at Parish Hall
December 23	Quiet Christmas service at 7:30pm
December 24	Christmas Eve Family service at 5:00pm Candlelight Communion service at 10:00 pm
December 25	Christmas Day service. Eucharist & meditation at 5:00pm
January 22 – February 26	Science and Faith series. Parish Hall at 7:30pm
February 9	Pancake Supper in Parish Hall from 5:00 to 7:00 pm
February 14	Annual Vestry meeting following 10:30 service in Parish Hall
March 17	St. Patrick's Day celebration (more to come!)

**Please consult the St. Thomas website for further and current information.
www.stthomasshantybay.com or phone the church at 705-722-7111.**