



Glory to God in the highest!

December 2009

Dear friends,

Most of us wouldn't pick up a novel, or sit through a two-hour movie, if we already knew how it was going to end. And when someone gives away the ending to a good story, most of us don't like it one bit! But each Christmas, we hear the familiar story once again, knowing exactly what's going to happen. In fact, most of us could recount the details without even cracking open the Bible.

So if we know how it ends, why do we bother with it again? I think it's because in telling and hearing the story again each year, we enter once more into the mystery which is at the heart of our faith – that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to become like one of us. The familiar words, images and characters of Bethlehem help to immerse us in a story which defines who we are, what we believe, and how we understand the world. It's not that we're waiting for Jesus to be born again this December 25th. That happened two thousand years ago. But in retelling the story, we make it come alive once again. Its re-creation is meant to rekindle our faith and remind us of our own participation in the story.

The 17th century German mystic, Angelus Silesius, wrote, "Christ could be born a thousand times in Galilee, but all in vain if he is not born in me." That, I believe, is the heart of the Christmas Gospel. Our life as followers of Jesus is lived out by each one of us being 'pregnant with God'. The Greeks referred to Mary as "theotokos" – the bearer of God. But in fact, we are all meant to be bearers of God – ones who bring forth the kingdom of justice, peace, mercy and love, which is embodied in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

I look forward to seeing you in church this season as we celebrate together. Please flip this page to see the full list of our Advent and Christmas services. May the peace of the Christ-child be with you and those you love, and may the Christmas Gospel once again enlighten your heart and fill you with joy. Merry Christmas!

Kevin+

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday, December 6 (Advent 2/St. Nicholas' Day)	8:30am 10:30am	Holy Eucharist Sung Eucharist & Wreath Lighting
Sunday, December 13 (Advent 3)	8:30am 10:30am	Holy Eucharist Sung Eucharist & Wreath Lighting
Sunday, December 20 (Advent 4)	8:30am 10:30am 7:00pm	Holy Eucharist Sung Eucharist & Wreath Lighting Service of Lessons & Carols (Reception follows)
Thursday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)	4:00pm 7:00pm 11:00pm	Family Eucharist Family Eucharist with Pageant Traditional Eucharist with Carols
Friday, December 25 (Christmas Day)	10:30am	Sung Eucharist with Carols
Sunday, December 27 (Christmas 1)	8:30am 10:30am	Holy Eucharist "Christmas in Story & Song"
Wednesday, December 30	10:00am	Holy Eucharist & New Year's Prayers
Sunday, January 3, 2010 (The Epiphany of the Lord)	8:30am 10:30am	Holy Eucharist Sung Eucharist

Nick's News

Church of St. Nicholas Birch Cliff, 1512 Kingston Road, Scarborough, M1N 1R7 (416) 691-0449

Theatre bus trips a success

But wait to see what we have in store for 2010!

In 2009, we had a total of five bus trips, each one to a different theatre. Each trip included lunch, dinner and a show.

Each of the theatre trips was completely sold out, but we still need lots of support from the people of St. Nick's.

Our most recent trip was on Nov. 26, when we travelled to St. Jacob's to see *Two Pianos, Four Hands*.

In 2010, we have some other very exciting trips coming up and they will be an extension of the *Two Pianos, Four Hands* theme:

One is the life and times of **Father Kevin**, with **Brad Pitt** in the starring role. It is titled, *One Golfer, 148 Strokes*.

Another is the **Malcolm Moffat** biography, starring **Tom Sellick**. This one is titled, *One Man, 337 Unruly Nose Hairs*.

The final one is the life and times of **Shawn Carter**, starring **Tom Cruise**. This one is titled, *One Policeman, So Many Tim Horton's Outlets*.

Tips of the Hat

Lots of kudos to go around...

- Our ministry team, musical directors, choir, servers, chalice bearers, sacristans, sidespeople, greeters, readers, intercessors, and altar guild members, for making our worship services so meaningful.
- **Malcolm Moffat** and those who work with him to keep our building and property in good repair, especially **Reg McRae, Dieter Billinger, John Hodder, Brian Jones** and **George Sczepanski**.
- Everyone who helped prepare the Rectory for rental.
- **Angela McCulloch** and the Church School children and coordinators for organizing the "Collect Coins for Free the Children" project.
- Everyone who has assisted with funeral receptions and **Joan Alkerton** and **Pauline Glasgow** for coordinating the newly-formed Receptions Committee.
- Our hosts for "**Anglicans Open Their Doors**" who gave tours of the Church, provided refreshments, created a brochure for our guests, taught brass rubbings and painted faces, plus those who participated in the rousing hymn sing.
- **Dieter Billinger** for being our sound man at the annual Blessing of Animals service, and **Global Pet Foods** for the pet treats.

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Outreach Committee News

Two chances to make a Christmas difference

By Deb Chapman

Pastoral Associate

As the Christmas season approaches, the Outreach Committee invites all to consider supporting two important programs that we will be sponsoring again this year.

Birchmount Bluffs Neighborhood Centre (BBNC) is once again holding its Share Christmas Program. This important initiative involves providing Christmas hampers for families in need in our community. BBNC has 350 families registered this year, 50 more than last year, a sure sign that things are really difficult for many during this current climate of financial hardship.

For many years, St. Nick's has generously supported this program by donating toys, clothing, health care products and food. This year the focus is on **"food, food, and more food!"** to quote the project manager. Corporate sponsors are donating toys, but what BBNC really needs from us are quality food items such as:

- Nutritious cereals - both hot and cold
- Tinned fruit - all varieties
- Rice - all varieties
- Coffee, both ground and instant
- Tea
- Cooking Oils, vegetable and olive oil
- Powdered milk
- Flour, sugar and other baking items

There is a collection hamper set up in the East Transept of the Church to receive the donations. Please give as you are able, but with generous and caring hearts.

Another way we can make a difference is by supporting the third annual amazing Christmas Feast, a joint partnership with Wimpy's, BBNC, and

ourselves. This partnership involves a hot turkey dinner with all the trimmings, served across the street at Wimpy's Restaurant. It is followed by a sumptuous dessert buffet complete with fresh fruit, coffee, tea and hot chocolate served here at St. Nick's.

There will also be a visit from Santa and gifts for the children. This year, there will be something special from our Church School children who will reach out to help the children who visit us and let them know we care. There are many opportunities to help:

- Donate desserts. What has worked well in the past has been individual desserts, such as squares, cookies, tarts (rather than pies), cupcakes, loaf cakes, muffins, etc. Nothing is too much, as we use this opportunity to send home with our visitors goodies to enjoy during the Christmas season!
- Donate fresh fruit. All varieties are welcome and again this is an opportunity to provide some nutritious fresh items for our visitors to take home and enjoy.
- Donate Christmas wrapping items (bags are really handy!)...ribbons, bows, tags etc.
- Donate your time...We need helpers to set-up, clean-up, serve and do kitchen duty. We need helpers to visit with our guests and make them feel welcomed...We need helpers to wrap the toys—two workshops are scheduled, so mark your calendars...Saturday, Dec. 19 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and Monday Dec. 21 from 9 a.m. until we're done. We also need Elves to help Santa.

These two opportunities are a way for us to witness Christian love to those who are in need in our community.

It is a time when God's grace can abound both in the hearts of those who are in need and in our own hearts. We truly can make a difference, furthering God's kingdom in the world. ■

Wardens' Report

2009 was a busy year at St. Nicholas. It is almost over and we are preparing once again for the beginning of a new church year with Advent and the Christmas season upon us.

During the year, we provided regular verbal updates after Sunday services on our progress in achieving the property and financial objectives we set at the 2009 Vestry Meeting. Our primary goals were to update the church heating system, to establish a more systematic parish offerings program and to break even for the year financially. We are pleased to report we are on track to achieve these goals.

Recently a capital campaign was launched to pay for the updated heating system and a number of other capital improvements. The two flat roofs on the Church need repair. One of the roofs is over the Memorial Room and the other is over the Manderley door. The office and kitchen also need to be upgraded. Our goal for the campaign is to raise \$100,000 over close to a two year period. We wish to acknowledge and thank **Charlie Cutts** and **Brian Jones** for their leadership of this campaign.

Our faith community is, however, about much more than the bricks and mortar of our church building. We are blessed at St. Nicho as by the inspirational leadership we receive from **Father Kevin** and the ministry team. Their leadership empowers and equips us all to serve the Lord and live the Gospel. The Churchwardens thank our ministry leaders and all parishioners for the time, talent and treasure each of you devote to our parish life.

Wishing you and your families a blessed Christmas season.

Joan Wilson – Rector's Warden

Doug Goss – People's Warden

Brian Todd – Deputy Warden

Mark Trumpour – Deputy Warden

More Tips of the Hat

Continued from Page 1

- The hard-working crews who participated in the Spring and Fall Clean-ups and **Edith Diggins** for organizing their lunch.
- **Owen Ewers**, for organizing another season of the mighty St. Nick's Knights softball team.
- **Lynda Cottenden** for helping in the Parish Office during **Janet Baron's** absences.
- Our clergy and **Sonia Halloran** and **Jo-Anne Billinger** for representing St. Nick's at Diocesan Synods.
- **Deb Chapman** and all those who helped out with the Third Annual Vacation Bible Camp. It was another tremendous success!
- Everyone who kindly donated books, helped sort them and assisted with the annual St. Nick's Book Sale.
- **Joan and Bill Alkerton** for hosting another year of successful bus trips.
- The members of the **2009 Bazaar Committee** and all those you contributed to making our major fundraiser a phenomenal success. The Bazaar just keeps getting better and more successful with each passing year.
- **Linda Leslie** and **Marcia Parum** for organizing our participation in the Operation Christmas Child program.
- **Karen Inseibacher** for once again coordinating our Faithworks campaign.
- The **Social Committee** for organizing our St. Nicholas' Patronal Festival dinner and other fun events throughout the year. ■

Poetry Corner

By Joan Clarke

Days are getting shorter once more
Greens and red decorate each store,
Christmas Carols now fill the air
Anticipation, everywhere.

Little children with eyes aglow
Eagerly waiting for the snow,
To build the snowmen in the yard
While adults sign each Christmas card.

The Christmas Story told once more
Just as it has from days of yore.
Of angels and shepherds nearby
And that shining Star in the sky.

A time when families gather near
The Christmas Season almost here.
May you and yours enjoy the day
And through the year, the warm glow stay.

The Year in Review

Lots of kudos to go around...

Well, 2009 certainly was a busy year here at St. Nick's. Here are some of the highlights of the past 12 months:

Dec. 10, 2008: The wildly popular Dance of the Elves has to be cancelled after the participants, due to bloating after dinner, are rushed to the hospital because their tights cut off their circulation.

Jan. 22, 2009: Already hopelessly out of the playoff picture, the Toronto Maple Leafs look to get on the winning track by challenging the St. Nick's Church School to a road hockey game. St. Nick's wins 7-2 with **Marilyn Stoye** picking up a hat trick. After the game a disconsolate Leaf goalie Vesa

Toskala attempts to flag down a cab, but it drives between his legs.

Feb. 12: The annual Valentine's Day Dance and Games Night is a wonderful one for **Deb Chapman**, who wins enough chips to purchase Robinson Hall and turn it into a swinging discotheque.

Feb. 20: Thursday night choir practice is conducted in total darkness when **Janet Baron** hits a particularly high note and knocks out every single light bulb in the building.

March 14: At the age of just three months, **Gareth McLean** digs the entire congregation out of a blizzard, then grows a beard before qualifying for the Canadian weightlifting team.

April 20: The annual rummage sale is a roaring success, due in large part to an exorbitant amount paid for **Charlie Cutts'** collection of leisure suits from the 1970s.

May 18: The annual spring clean up ends in near tragedy when **Brian Todd** narrowly escapes losing several fingers while using a chainsaw. "If I had lost those fingers, I would have had to use my toes to count the collection," Todd said afterward.

June 10: The annual Farmer's Market at St. Nick's opens for another year and **Father Kevin** celebrates the occasion by eating a 14-pound gourd. (There, got it right this year.)

July 25: The St. Nick's baseball team wins in dramatic fashion in the bottom of the ninth inning, thanks to a mammoth 600-foot home run by **Gareth McLean** who is now seven months old and stands 6-foot-4 and weighs 207 pounds.

Aug. 19: The annual Blessing of the Animals takes an unusual turn when **Doug Goss's** gerbil turns up after stealing a Vespa from the Beaches dealership and driving himself to the proceedings.

Sept. 12: The annual St. Nick's Golf Tournament is rife with cheating, so much so that two teams report they actually got a hole in zero.

Nov. 7: The annual St. Nick's Christmas Bazaar ends badly when a stampede of hungry customers demands more of those swirly pink sandwiches with the cream cheese and the pickle in the middle after they run out. Who knew?