

RECTOR'S REFLECTION

During the Christmas season, we have heard the story of Jesus' birth several times and from the perspectives of three Gospels: Luke, John, and Matthew. We read of the shepherds who heard the glad tidings of the angels on Christmas Eve, "For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." We heard the mystery of the Word made flesh who made his dwelling place among mortals. Today, as we mark the Epiphany of the Lord, we hear of the account of the Magi from the East who came to search for the baby Jesus so they could present him with gifts and worship him. The stories are familiar, we have heard them many times before and they serve to shape our faith.

We have been reminded, though, that it is too easy to forget the true meaning of the Christmas story if we focus in too narrowly on the baby in the manger and allow ourselves only to engage in baby worship. I have mentioned in passing before today and we have read today of the slaughter of the innocents, proof that Christmas is not all shiny baubles and tinsel. Even the carols we have been singing the last week and a half have reminded us that the story of Jesus is an arc that spans from his birth in Bethlehem to his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. We must never forget that the gift of salvation that was born in a manger was a most costly gift, costlier even than the exotic gifts of the Magi.

In the same vein, as the Christmas story is so familiar to us, it becomes something that we possess, rather than something that possesses us. It becomes a part of our fabric and it defines who we are. It is good to be so intimate with the story of our faith, but there is also danger in this familiarity. When we become too familiar with something, it can lose its power to guide us. More dangerous yet, when it becomes something with which we are comfortable, it is all too easy for us to think that it belongs to us, and to us alone. Nowhere does this become more evident than when Christians whine about the loss of Christian privilege in society, especially around this holy season when we decry what we perceive to be oppressively politically correct seasonal greetings and the absence of Christian symbols in the public sphere. I cringe at the hypocrisy of many who fight adamantly to "keep the Christ in Christmas" by forcing people to say "Merry Christmas" and setting up nativity scenes in public buildings but who fail to live up to the teachings of Jesus to feed the hungry, tend the sick, and bring liberty to the oppressed.

Epiphany recalls us to the true meaning of Christmas. Jesus was born into a world where sin, evil, and human brokenness abounded. His very birth brought a stark example of this in Herod's wanton murder of all children two years and younger in order to guard his position. But it was into this world that God was born in human form in order to show us a different way. Into darkness God shone light. Into despair God poured hope. Into the deathly ways of the world God gave life.

And this light, hope, and life were given not only for those who had the inside track, but for the whole world. The journey of the Magi from the East shows us that the salvation that God promises in Jesus is not just for the people into whom Jesus was born but even for those who were outside the clan, the nation, the empire. The good news of God in Christ is not just for insiders but even for those on the fringes; not just for the powerful but for the powerless and the poor, too.

As the Christmas season closes, it is my prayer that we will be able to see past the familiar things of Christmas into the scandalous hope of the birth of Jesus. As we bring our gifts to worship him, let us also share him as a gift of light, hope, and light, to the poor, the needy, the oppressed; indeed, to the whole world.



THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF TYENDINAGA

To be a Spirit-filled and life-giving place where strangers become friends and friends become disciples.

SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday 4 January 2015 The Epiphany of the Lord

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

9:30 a.m.

Jan-Mar and Jul-Sep—All Saints' Church, 1295 Ridge Rd
Apr-Jun and Oct-Dec—Christ Church, 52 South Church Ln

PARISH PRIEST

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Mission Statement

Our mission, for the glory of God in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to:

- Celebrate all that God has done for us through worship and witness with others.
- Respond to our call to be disciples of Christ by sharing our faith, rooted in the Word of God, with others and encouraging others to become followers of Christ through word and action.
- Practice good stewardship of our human, financial and environmental resources, working to ensure that all of God's Creation is viable for future generations.
- Grow ourselves and others by reaching out to our communities, following Jesus' example of generous caring, giving, and welcoming.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Food Bank Donations—We gather non-perishable food items on the first Sunday of each month and donate them to the Food Resource Centre. The FRC is experiencing a significant increase in the number of families it serves so this is a material way we can help our neighbours. The Food Bank Sunday is Sun 4 Jan.

Parish Council—The next meeting of Parish Council is Wed 7 Jan at 7:00 p.m. at the QAPC.

Annual Meeting of Vestry—Sun 1 Feb. We will have a potluck lunch immediately after the service (please bring a dish to share plus your feast basket with plates, utensils etc) and then begin the Vestry meeting as we're finishing lunch. Reports from Wardens etc are due to Brad or Elsie by Thu 15 Jan.

A New Ministry! Under the leadership of Pam Detlor and Pat Brant, the parish is providing adult mentors for students at Quinte Mohawk School in the literacy program. If you are interested in knowing more about this important outreach to young people in our community, please speak to Pam or Pat. Volunteers are always welcome. The program takes place Tue and Thu mornings at QMS.

Ministry to Residents of the Friendly Manor—Did you know that Brad visits the Friendly Manor on the fourth Thursday of every month for a worship service and pastoral visits? In addition to the new ministry at Quinte Mohawk School, we would like to expand our visitation ministry at the Friendly Manor so that there would be assistance for those who need help turning pages in the song book, more contact with visitors etc. If you are interested in this ministry, please speak to Brad. (The time is flexible if need be.)

2015 Canadian Church Calendars—There are still some calendars available at the back of the church for \$6.00. Please place your money in the box beside the calendars.

Rectory Rental—The rectory is available for rental on a weekly basis as a cottage for tourists, fishermen, etc (and may be rented for shorter periods in the off season). Check out the website at cottagesincanada.com/bayofquinterectorycottage and please tell your friends who might need a place to stay! We are not looking for long-term tenants.

PRAYERS THIS WEEK

Anglican Communion

The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury
Diocese of Lagos (Nigeria)
The Rt. Rev'd James Odedeji
The Rt. Rev'd Abebayo Akinde

Diocese of Ontario

The Rt Rev'd Michael Oulton
Christ the Redeemer, Rockport
The Rev. Christine Downey

Companions

St Ann's Episcopal Church, Amsterdam, the Very Rev'd Neal Longe
HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, the Rev'd Canon Denis Mulliner

Parish of Tyendinaga

Clergy

Pray for the families of: Margaret Anderson; Tim Anderson,
Jim & Ardeth Armstrong; Harry & Brenda Asselstine; Jim Barefoot

READINGS FOR SUNDAY 11 JANUARY

Genesis 1:1-5
Acts 19:1-7

Psalms 29
Mark 1:4-11

Stewardship Reflection

The Rt Rev'd Michael Pollesel

This gospel story tells us that Jesus didn't come to earth to be the exclusive property of a select group of people. His arrival was made known to all peoples. Some, those who were "on the fringes," so to speak, went to great lengths to get to know him. As a faithful steward, to what lengths am I willing to go in order to get to know Jesus?

Financial Report

Weekly Need:	\$2,972
Last week's Offering:	<u>\$2,805</u>
Shortfall last week	\$ 167

Based on the 2014 budget and the number of identifiable givers, the following is what is required of each giver in order to meet our needs:

Weekly: \$42 Monthly: \$184