

The Parish of St. Peter (Upper Gullies)

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“You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.” Matthew 16-18

Christmas Message

“She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands **of cloth, and laid him in a manger.**”(Luke 2:7) That was 2000 years ago — a birth that changed the world. It’s a birth that is eulogized in scripture, art, poetry, song and theology. And we are in church tonight because of that birth.

Jesus’ crib was the feeding bin of animals, but he had the most important thing that any child needs. Mary may have been only 14 or 15, but she believed her child was the most important person in the world. Joseph may not have been his real father, but he risked his life to protect Jesus from the cruel hatred of Herod. Surely, this helped Jesus learn how to turn the other cheek and reach out with respect and love to people his culture often despised.

“**There was no place for them in the inn.**” There’s not much room for many children born tonight in refugee camps and homes threatened by terrorism. Many of them will not live to grow up. But some will experience sparks of kindness in the rubble and turmoil of their lives and become advocates for peace and justice.

Sometimes you may feel as if *there is no place* for you where you work or even among the people you call your family. As you reflect on the meaning of Christmas, may you feel encouraged by the love and grace of God that is at the heart of Christmas. God doesn’t promise any of us a life without disappointments and loss. But God does promise to be a light in the darkness, a spring in the desert and a companion who walks with us in difficult times.

This is faith. This is what Jesus came to offer people. This is what the church has to offer you today. This is God’s gift to you. Accept it. Nurture it. And like Jesus, may you find in it the strength and courage you need to be a loving and giving person. **Merry Christmas.**

Yours in Christ,



7:00pm Book of Alternative Services 10:00pm Book of Common Prayer:

LECTIONARY: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96 (BAS p834; BCP p453); Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

COLLECT Eternal God, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. As we have known the revelation of that light on earth, bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS Source of light and gladness, accept all we offer on this joyful feast. May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours; for he is Lord now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION Father of all, tonight you have united earth and heaven in sending your Son to take our human nature. May we who have tasted heavenly things share in the life of his eternal kingdom. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMNS FOR 7:00 & 10:00 PM SERVICE

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| Opening:(#138) | Hark! The Herald Angels Sing |
| Advent Candle Lighting: | Jesus Bids Us Shine |
| Gradual: | 7:00pm The Little Drummer Boy (Choir Anthem) 10:00pm O Holy Night (Solo by Greg Warford) |
| Offering: | 7:00pm (#135) Shepherds in the Field Abiding 10:00pm (#140) It Came upon the Midnight Clear |
| Communion: | 7:00pm Selections by the Choir 10:00 pm Special Music |
| Closing: | (#119) Silent Night (Candlelight) |
| Choral Benediction: | I am Walking a Path of love |

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The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Reader 1: During each Sunday of Advent we light a new candle on the Advent Wreath. Each candle represents a special signpost on the highway that God calls us to walk through life. All four candles are lit this evening and the banners are hung above the altar. They are the signs of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Reader 2: Once upon a time the angel Gabriel visited a young woman named Mary. He told her that she was going to have a baby who would be called the Son of God.

Reader 1: Mary wondered what this would mean, but she decided to answer, "Yes!" She said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

Reader 2: Today we celebrate the birthday of Mary's baby and listen again to the Christmas story. We give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth reminds us of the wonder of life and the promise of God.

Reader 1: We recall that when Jesus was a baby, the Holy Family became refugees in Egypt because they were not safe in their own country. Many children today are refugees and others do not feel safe in their own homes.

Reader 2: Let us begin our Christmas Celebration by lighting the white candle in the centre of the Advent Wreath for Jesus' birthday and for all children who do not feel safe in their homes tonight. As we light this candle we sing "Jesus Bids Us Shine." (*The candle is lit.*)

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A candle is burning, a candle of peace,
a candle to signal that conflict must cease;
for Jesus is coming to show us the way,
a message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a candle of joy,
a candle to welcome brave Mary's boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.

A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point to heaven above.
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

We honour Messiah with Christ candle's flame,
our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim.
O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this night,
as God comes among us, the Christian's true light.

Announcements and Reminders

Lighting of the Memorial Candle

Celebrant: In his inspirational gospel St. John says that Jesus is a light that "shines in the darkness, and the darkness (does) not overcome it." (John 1:5) Tonight we light this candle in the name of Jesus Christ and in memory of all those we name in our Memorial Bulletin tonight. Let us pray.

Gracious and loving God, we light this candle in the name of Jesus and in memory of our Loved Ones who have departed this life and now rest in your eternal presence. We thank you, who marvellously creates each one of us as your child, for all that was good in them. We pray that everything in them which was great will mean much to us and that their faith and values will continue to live on in our hearts and minds, and in our respect and love for one another. As light dispels darkness, we pray that your Holy Spirit will transform any sadness and disappointment we feel because of their physical absence into a joy and peace that will support us each day of our lives. We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Christmas Memorials The list of people who have given a special donation in memory of a departed loved one this Christmas and/or to help provide the Christmas bulletins is a long one. Much care has been given to making sure that all names are accurately recorded in the special Memorial Bulletin prepared for Christmas. We hope there are few errors or omissions. We thank you in advance for being kind in the way you make this known to us and a list of these errors or omissions will be provided later. You are invited to read through the list of names and say a special prayer especially for every name that you recognize. A Memorial Candle is being lit during the service and placed on the altar in memory of all Departed Loved Ones. **May the souls of the departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.**

Holy Baptism Two dates have been set for Holy Baptism - **10:30 on December 31st** and **January 14th**. It has been the practice at St. Peter's to have a Baptism

Service on the third Sunday of each month when there are children to be baptized. However, with the challenge re scheduling when we consider the variety of work schedules of people who work offshore or in another part of the world, it is not practical to adhere to this schedule. Instead, the monthly baptism date is set when the first family desiring to have a child baptized in a particular month contacts the parish priest. When that date is not convenient for a family, we hope to be able to schedule the next monthly baptism to fit the schedule of that family.

CBS/Paradise Interfaith Food Bank Sharing Tree Although the Food Bank has completed the Christmas Hamper program for this year, Because the demand has been high it may have had to use some of its funds it had budgeted to purchase food in the weeks following Christmas. **Therefore, we are leaving the envelopes on the Food Bank Sharing Tree and inviting anyone who has not given to date to take one of the envelopes and make a special donation for that purpose.** Please make sure that your name and envelope number or address is on the envelope you are using and if you are paying by cheque, make it payable to St. Peter's Church. This is important because we want to make sure that your contribution is included in your income tax receipt that the church will be sending near the end of January. St. Peter's Food Bank representatives are Jim and Betty Howell - 834-9673. Thank you for your continued support.

Year End Reminders Individuals and groups preparing reports for the Parish Annual Report are asked to please try to have their reports provided to the parish office before the end of January. **Also the deadline for receiving donations that may be included in the 2017 income tax receipt is December 31st. If giving by cheque and you want it included on your 2017 income tax receipt, make sure it is dated no later than December 31, 2016.**

THANK YOU As the year comes to an end and the wardens, Vestry and parish staff begin preparing the yearend reports, we are reminded daily of how generous the members of this parish are in providing their time and resources to make this church an effective one. We want to thank all the volunteers who give of their time and energy for the work of the church, those who pray for the parish, those who pleasantly provide a helping hand when asked, and everyone who gives financially to support the work of St. Peter's Church.

Thank You Fellowship Band A very sincere thank you goes out to all the members of St. Peter's Fellowship Band who performed their Christmas Concert last Sunday evening in the parish hall. We are also very grateful to the special guests who took time from their busy schedules to come and perform for us.

Last, but not least, the full house enjoyed an outstanding visit from **THE MUMMERS**. Everyone's efforts are truly appreciated and we look forward to your next appearance.

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| Diocesan Bishop: | The Right Reverend Dr. Geoffrey Peddle |
| Rector: | The Reverend Jean Smith (On Leave) |
| Interim Administrator | The Reverend Irving Letto |
| Parish Deacon: | The Reverend Dr. Bonnie Morgan (On Leave) |
| Organist/Choir Director (Interim) | Andrea Powell |
| Parish Wardens | Ralph Drover |
| Robert Hilliard | |
| Office Administrator: | Jack Morgan |

Worship Service Today – December 24, 2017

| ON DUTY | Today: December 24, 2017 | | | Next Sunday: December 31, 2017 | |
|---------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| | 4:00 PM | 7:00 PM | 10:00 PM | 8:30 AM | 10:30 AM |
| Sides-Persons: | S. Morgan S. Parsons G. Morgan K. Morgan G. Coates G. Taylor | D. Morgan A. LeMoine D. Pretty N. Andrews G. Halley M. Anthony C. Button | D. Bishop W. Bishop K. Pack G. Pack K. Scott B. Scott A. Spracklin D. Scott | A Morgan D. Morgan | B. Howell S. Baird, T. Baird R. Hilliard J. White J. Howell R. Drover G. Hiscock |
| Eucharist Assistant | Annette Stone | Annie Scott | Emily Pretty | Amy Anthony | Dennis Morgan |
| Servers' Guild: | M. Greenslade | | | | M. Greenslade |
| Altar Guild | Barbara E, Carmel H, Karen W, Betty M, Elaine M. | | | BAPTISM TODAY: Margaret M, Joan L, Annette L, Brenda L, Joyce D. | |



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

