



THE ST. JAMES EPISTLE

The Cathedral Church of St. James

December 2009

The Dean's Corner

All right, time to be honest. Does the approaching Christmas season fill your heart with joy, or does it bring a sense of impending doom! Are you looking forward to holiday cheer shared with loved ones, or are you wondering how you are going to manage all the shopping, the gift-giving, the cooking, the housekeeping, the traveling, the extra activities.....?

As I've been looking ahead through December, my attention has been caught by something called the "Advent Conspiracy". No, it's not the latest Dan Brown thriller about a se-

live a little differently this December - to make some small but powerful changes in the way we prepare for Christ at Christmas.

The movement has a website, adventconspiracy.org, and you can see some of their suggestions there. One powerful slogan they've adopted is "Give Presence". Those two words point out how our extra efforts at this season can actually take us away from each other - leaving us too tired or overscheduled to spend meaningful time with family, and with friends new or old.

The conspirators also want us to take a look at the way we often spend, without thinking, on stuff that means nothing to the giver or the recipient. That may be something worth talking over in your home, or your workplace. It's not about saving money though - instead, think about how to direct our energies and our resources to something more in keeping with the coming of Jesus.

What could we do that would change the world, in the ways that Mary foresaw would happen when

her son was born: lifting up the lowly, feeding the hungry? (The "Conspiracy" has already built 300 wells by simply agreeing to buy one less present, and redirecting those funds to clean water projects.)

But the central theme of the Advent Conspiracy is to give ourselves more opportunity to enter into the story that we tell at this time of year, the story of Jesus' coming into the world. That isn't a story measured in shopping days - it's been going on for over 2000 years. In our lives though, it's time to go back to how it all started, and to discover ourselves waiting and longing for Jesus to show up once more.

I'm inviting you to be part of the conspiracy of waiting. Pray. Worship. Be present to God, give presence to one another. Make space for some quiet time. Read something reflective - pick up an Advent book in church. Then, let your longing for something new shape what you do with the rest of the season, so that your celebration becomes part of how God enters our world and changes human lives for good.

Blessings
Iain ✠

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cret plot by high-level clergy to abolish carol singing before the 24th! It's an invitation to Christians to

Address Label



Children and Youth interested in participating in the Sunday School Pageant—be sure to be in Sunday School for the next few Sundays while preparations and rehearsals are taking place. The pageant will be at the 10:30 service on December 13

The ACW will hold its Christmas meeting as well as the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, December 3 in the Fire-side Room at 6pm. Dinner will be take-out Chinese from TJ's served in the Fire-side Room with refreshments followed by the meeting. Please let Janet McIntosh 624-3767 know if you are coming, she will be ordering a set menu depending on the numbers and the bill will be divided evenly. Deadline for confirming is December 2.

Christmas Lessons and Carols are at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 13. If you play an instrument or sing, you are welcome to be part of the music at this service—please speak to Iain not later than December 8. Extra choir members also welcome - come to rehearsal Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m!



St. Paul's United Church will be hosting their Blue Christmas Service at 7:00 pm. on Thursday, December 17.

St James ACW Mitten Tree is at the back of church. Donations of mitts, gloves, scarves, toques etc will be accepted for adornment of the tree until Dec 3 and then donated to a worthwhile organization. Items may be handmade or store bought in new or like-new condition.

Annual Community Service of Remembrance, a time to remember loved ones and to acknowledge grief and loss. This service will be held at Athabasca Hall at 2:00 pm. on December 12.

The building committee will be holding a planning meeting on December 3, at 7:00 p.m. in the lower hall, this is not just for the men, everyone is welcome.

Counting our blessings—living our thanks.

Our three-week stewardship program concluded on November 15. The congregation had been challenged to look at the many blessings received in this life and were reminded that these blessings come from God. We were asked to grow spiritually by contributing a portion of our income as a commitment to Jesus Christ to live our thanks. This challenge was to be

met through prayer and reflection on the question: "What is God calling me to give?"

After discussions with God, 45% of the congregation returned pledge cards, meeting the challenge by increasing their pledges over last year's giving. This pledged amount has increased our total annual giving by

2%, bringing us to just over \$163,000.

This amount can now be budgeted for next year's use by the church. Thanks to all who participated in the Stewardship program.

Submitted by David Cambridge
Stewardship program chairperson.



Growing with God's Grace

The rector and vestry are exploring the potential for growth at St James' in the coming years. We are establishing a steering group which would gather resources, identify issues, communicate with the congregation, pray (!), and shape a vision for parish growth. The group would work together during 2010 and build towards a parish event late in the year. If you are interested in serving on this group, please speak to Iain or to the wardens, Dave Cameron and Sue Bowling.

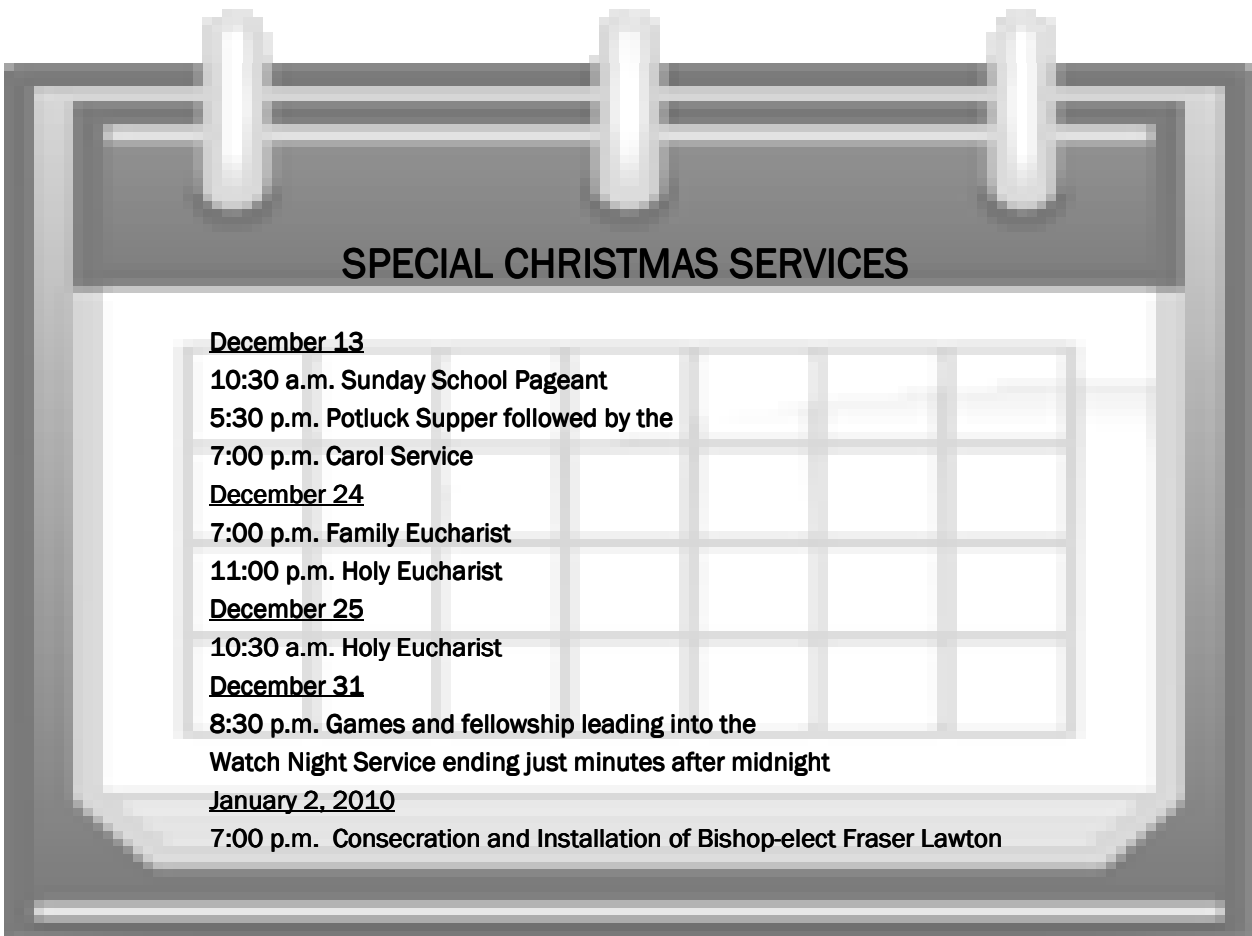
Light up St. James!

'Light up St. James' a project to make St James inviting and noticeable, to capture and enjoy this wonderful season and the spirit of Christmas and to share it with Peace River.

The building committee proposes that we get a lot more lights glowing on the building and the grounds this Christmas. Individuals, families or groups (eg. Sunday school, ACW, Men's Breakfast group) could sponsor a project or decorate to whatever degree they are comfortable with. Some of the ways this could happen are as follows:

- There are about 14 evergreen trees on the property, if you would like to 'adopt a tree' you would decorate it with your own lights and decorations.
- Sponsoring one or more strings of outdoor lights to outline the buildings.
- Stained glass windows could be lit from the inside by running white lights around each pane, these could be sponsored or purchased by individuals.

The members of the building committee would be willing to assist with installing lights or other decorations. The building committee would like to hear if you have any other ideas for brightening up the place. **In order to keep our electrical bills to a minimum all purchased, borrowed or sponsored lights must be LED.**



The Cathedral Church of St. James

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Year end offerings

Just a note to let everyone know that in order to receive a tax receipt for the 2009 year, St. James must receive any offerings by **noon on Thursday, December 31, 2009**. Thanks for your cooperation and contact me if you have any questions. Inez Melin, Envelope Secretary 780.624.8459



A Prayer for the Mission of St. James Parish

God, we thank you for making us members of Christ's body in this community and for the gifts we have received for ministry.

Bless us with the confidence, strength and patience to discover your will, to see Christ in all people, and to nurture each other as we grow in faith and service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Contact List:

Organist, Marion Weber

Anglican Church Women (ACW) Chairperson, Janet McIntosh

Altar Guild, Chairperson, Gloria Umbach

Sunday School, Laura Munch, Wanda Laurin, Victoria Luke, Joan Veidt

Readers, Ted Umbach & Brenda Sawchuk

Property Committee, Dave Cameron, Geoff Milligan, Brad Lewin, Ming Cambridge, Craig Melin, Dave Cambridge, Jeff Lougheed

Newcomer Ministry, Susan Bowling

Mission & Outreach, Kim Marceau

St. James Soup Kitchen Volunteer Co-ordinator, Rose Gish

Envelope Secretary, Inez Melin

Administrative Assistant, Priscilla Cameron

Website design and coding, Michael Brown

Vestry:

Dean and Rector, Iain Luke 624-4433

Rectors Warden, David Cameron 624-4999

Peoples Warden, Susan Bowling 322-3990

Treasurer, Leslie Mann 624-5543

Secretary, Priscilla Cameron 624-4999

Vestry Members: David Cambridge 624-4459

Kyle Cambridge 624-8488

Bill Gish 624-9659

Jeff Lougheed 624-2413

Sheila Lougheed 624-2413

Craig Melin 624-8459

Glen Olson 624-3629

Justin Raymond 624-5771

