

MESSAGE FROM ST. JOHN'S CHURCH



Newsletter for December 2022

Rev. Daniel's Message

Advent

Happy New Year! As we begin the season of Advent, we begin a new year in the Christian cycle of liturgical seasons and feast days. Advent, as you know, is a preparation for the coming of Jesus as Saviour. In this part of the world, it is a time of growing cold and increasing darkness – yet we light candles each week, representing Hope, Peace, Joy and Love – insisting that these are also present in our world, and will also increase as the Kingdom of God, begun with the birth of Jesus, continues to unfold among us.

In John 8:12, Jesus says “I am the light of the world”. This is the light that “shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” as the Christmas morning gospel reading says. Yet in Matthew 5:14, Jesus says to his followers “You are the light of the world.” We ourselves can only be light in the darkness if we are reflecting **the light: Jesus Christ.**

How do we do this? I'd like to suggest a few ways.

Worship

Hope is the first light that appears on our Advent wreath. It is the candle that burns throughout the whole season, for without hope, we cease to seek for any other light. Keeping hope alive can be difficult in the midst of a world of collective and personal suffering, where so much evil is done by people to one another. That is why worship is so important. It is not about flattering God's ego by making time for church. God doesn't need our worship...but we do. We need to gather regularly with other people of faith, so we don't feel alone in ours. We need to hear the stories of scripture and reflect on them to know God is still speaking to us and that our lives are also part of the divine story. We need to ask forgiveness, receive the assurance of pardon, make our offering and receive far more back than we have given – the presence of Our Lord himself in Holy Communion. *Worshipping keeps our Hope alive.* Let Advent be a time for you to return to worshipping regularly with the church. Our livestream is always available for those who cannot physically be present.

Prayer

Peace is the second light. Peace is not the absence of conflict or trials but the ability to remain centred and present even in the midst of them. We may not be able to gather for worship each day, but we can each take time to pray and to read scripture every day. Prayer doesn't have to be formal, just a few moments of quiet, giving thanks to God for our blessings, turning over to God our worries and fears, seeking God's guidance and assurance through the Word, and in the still, small voice that speaks to our own hearts. Let Advent be a season of renewed commitment to daily prayer, that Peace may shine in our own personal darkness, and allow us to be a peaceful presence to someone else in theirs.

Invite

Joy is the third light. It is rose coloured (*pink* for the less fancy among us) to set it apart from the others. It reminds us that we are now more than halfway to Christmas. Our Lord draws near. It is time to prepare for celebrating! And while we can always celebrate by ourselves, it's much more joyous to share the celebration with others. Is there someone you could invite to share in the seasonal celebrations with you? Invite them to church. Invite them to our Lessons & Carols service on the 18th, or one of our Advent Vespers services. Ask a friend if they have anywhere to go at Christmas and invite them to one of our Christmas Eve or Christmas Morning Eucharist. Is there a neighbour, a parishioner or relative you know will be alone over this season that you could invite to your home for a meal? Let Advent be a season of welcoming and including others in our joy.

Share

Love is the fourth light. Like the glow in the east just before sunrise, it heralds the approach of Christmas. Love is not just a feeling, but an action. Love reaches out to others to comfort, to encourage, to help. The Father showed his love for us by giving us his Son. Jesus demonstrated this same love by giving his own life. What has God given us that we can also give freely to another? There are many worthy charities vying for our resources at this time of year, but perhaps there is someone you know, a family you have contact with, who could use your direct assistance. A gift card, a home cooked meal, clothing, help with shoveling snow or other work around the home, the offer to look after children for an evening to give the parents a needed break...there are many ways to share your time, skills and resources. Let Advent be a time to ask God how you can help. God will surely provide the right opportunity.

Ten Years

Finally, as I write this, I am conscious that I have now been at St. John's Dixie for **ten years**. I came for the first time on the Reign of Christ, the last Sunday of November, in 2012, to fill in for Fr. Steven who had caught chicken pox from his children. I assisted him throughout Christmas that year and in January was asked to become a full-time part of staff.

The commitment and determination to see our church thrive by both longtime members and enthusiastic newcomers, gives me *hope*. The continuation of our round of worship, bible study and prayer, even throughout the pandemic, has provided *peace*. The laughter we share, even in worship, along with the compassion I see being shared among you, brings me *joy*. Thank you, St. John's for all the *love*. Thank you, Lord, for our church.

Masking

We have made the decision to reinstate a mask mandate for those attending church services or other events in the building. Our decision is based on the high number of people becoming infected with Covid, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus infection) and influenza, which is overwhelming hospitals, especially children's units. None of us enjoy wearing a mask during worship but we know that masking is one of the most effective ways of limiting transmission of viruses. We are obligated as Christians to do what we can to protect one another and those vulnerable people who have contact with our parishioners.

Masks must be worn correctly, covering the mouth and nose. While we do have masks available for those who may have forgotten or lost their mask, we ask people not to take masks from the church as "extras" to have on hand. We cannot provide masks to everyone so we ask you to only take one if you do not have one. Our greeters will remind those not wearing masks that they must do so to remain in the service.

It is most likely that this mask mandate will last through Christmas and into the New Year. If you are unwell we ask that you stay home and worship with us via livestream.

Envelopes 2023

We will not be distributing parishioner envelopes this year. We have found the cost of the envelopes and the waste that they create is not worth the expense. We are encouraging everyone to consider again joining our (PAR) Preauthorized Payment program. You may also send in your offerings by e-transfer to church@stjohnsdixie.com. For those that would like to continue with envelopes we will have blue generic envelopes available in various places in the church and parish hall. Feel free to pick up what you need. We will continue to use envelope numbers for accounting purposes and will apply your offering to those numbers. Ensure you write your name and/ or envelope number (if you know it) on the envelope so the contents can be added to your offering total for tax receipts

Volunteer Meetings

We will be holding training sessions with each of these volunteer groups. This will be an opportunity to ask questions or find out if this is something you could do for your church.

Greeters/ Sidespeople met on **Sunday, November 27, at 11:30 a.m.** in the church.

Readers will meet on **Sunday, December 4th at 11:30 a.m.** in the church.

Layreaders will meet on **Sunday, December 11th at 11:30 a.m.** in the church and those interested in **Serving** (carrying the cross, torches, Gospel book and assisting at the altar) will meet on **Sunday, December 18th at 11:30am** in the church.

If you are in these ministries or want to learn more about the expectations & duties of these roles, please join Fr. Daniel at 11:30 a.m. on the appropriate Sunday in the church.

*Please note: “Readers” read the lessons at the lectern during the service. “Layreaders” are commissioned to help lead the service (parts of the Eucharist and officiating Morning Prayer)

Discretionary Fund For Christmas

If you can contribute to Fr. Daniel’s discretionary fund it would be greatly appreciated. It helps to make Christmas a little merrier for those who are less fortunate. You may make your donation in cash or gift cards, please mark your donation with your envelope number so it can be applied to your tax receipt.

SERVICE INFORMATION:

Advent Vespers

We will be holding Advent Vespers onsite this year. These services will be held on **Wednesdays: November 30th, December 7th, 14th and 21st at 7:00 p.m.** in the church. These services are a time of quiet reflection helping us to prepare for the celebration of Christmas. They will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person and available on our YouTube Channel.

Christmas Lessons and Carols with Pageant

Sunday, December 18th (4th Sunday of Advent), 10am service will be our Lessons and Carols service. Bring family and friends to hear the story_of the Nativity, told in nine readings, with carols sung by choir and congregation, and scenes enacted by the children of our Church School.

Christmas Week: Dec 24- Jan 2

Christmas Eve at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Both services will be a candlelight Eucharist with choir. The 7:30 pm service will include a children's program and the assembly of the crèche.

Christmas Day at 10am we will hold a Eucharist with a soloist.

New Year's Day – Sunday, Jan 1st we will have only one service at 10am. It will be a Eucharist with Fr. Daniel presiding. There will be no 8 a.m. Communion service on this Sunday. Let's begin 2023 worshipping together as one congregation.

Between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, the office will be closed. There will be no other services or meetings at the church this week.

Christmas Eve Helpers

We are currently looking for a couple of people to assist Janice with our Children's Program on Christmas Eve at the 7:30 p.m. serve. If you are interested, please speak with Janice Kretchman directly or email her at janice.kretchman@stjohnsdixie.com

Children's Advent and Christmas Videos

Janice has been preparing videos to be shared each Sunday of Advent and on Christmas Day. While they are intended for children, adults are welcome to enjoy them as well. They are available on our website at www.stjohnsdixie.org.

EVENTS INFORMATION:

Christmas Dinner

Due to the mask mandate, the Christmas Dinner proposed for this year has been cancelled. It is our sincere hope and prayer that we will be able to gather for fellowship events again in the new year. An Easter Dinner may be planned for the spring.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Mississauga Food Bank

On the first Sunday of each month, we are collecting for either the Open Door or the Mississauga Food Bank. Each month we alternate between the two. **December is Mississauga Food Bank Month.**

We are currently collecting food items for the Mississauga Food Bank. Please make sure that food is not expired as the food bank can not accept expired food items. Delivery will be on the week of December 4th.

Flower Listing for 2023

We are accepting requests for memorial flowers for the upcoming calendar year. If there is a specific date on which you would like to have the memorial flower placed in honour of someone or a special occasion, please contact the church office by phone at 905-277-0462 or by email at church@stjohnsdixie.com. Please note: the flowers are delivered by a local florist. We cannot guarantee specific flowers or colours. The cost for the memorial flowers is \$50.00.

Holidays

The office will be closed between Christmas Day and January 3rd. We will be monitoring the phone messages. Please feel free to leave a message in the case of an emergency and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Regular business hours will resume on the Tuesday January 3rd.

Beginning in 2023

St. John's Auxiliary

We look forward to beginning a new Auxiliary Group for St. John's, co-led by Jean McQuaid and Rosemary Birch. We had started plans for this group in 2019 before the pandemic put everything on pause. This group is open to anyone of any gender who would like to be part of a group dedicated to serving the needs of our parish. If you're interested you are invited to attend an initial meeting on Saturday, January 21 at 10:30am to discuss and share ideas, and to make new friends! More information will be provided as we approach our launch date.

Centre for Spiritual Growth

Fr. Daniel is currently in discussion with members of the Centre for Spiritual Growth, a ministry begun by Wendy Passmore, to those seeking faith community outside the traditional forms of "Sunday worship" about developing opportunities at St John's for contemplative prayer, meditation, alternative worship and educational workshops on spirituality. There is a deep hunger for community and faith formation among those who do not feel fully nourished by or welcome in more established forms of "church". We are looking at ways of providing space and opportunity for such people to be ministered to at St John's. We plan to announce new programs of this ministry in January.

Mississauga Services for Seniors

St. John's is pleased to partner with the Mississauga Service for Seniors, to offer them space in the Church Parish Hall to hold events. Starting on January 3rd, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 1:30 p.m. weekly events will be held in the Parish Hall. They do require a membership to their organization to participate in the events. The membership fee is \$20.00 and can be paid at the church office. Some of the planned things at the church are games and cards, yoga, chair exercises, Writer's craft, Health and Wellness, Story Telling, Movie Day and Craft Group. Full details will be available closer to the date. A calendar of events has been posted in the Parish Hall. We have also packages about joining the organization available at the church for pick up.

LINKS TO PROGRAMING ABOVE:

St. Johns Church website

www.stjohnsdixie.com

YouTube Sunday School link:

<https://bit.ly/3ah5XpW>

Online Coffee Hour Zoom Link: Zoom Meeting at 11:30 a.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83962667012?pwd=UGljbnZ2WUIMaVlzNlRtU0Q5SmxxZz09>

Meeting ID: 839 6266 7012

Passcode: 112233

Online Bible Study Zoom Link: (Zoom Meeting only Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82570649568>

Online Prayer Group – Thursday at 10 a.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86710167010>

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***Sabbath Day: I am not available Mondays**



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If you would like to receive this Newsletter by email, please call 905-277-0462 or email church@stjohnsdixie.com