

The Diviner

2011 Advent Issue

Church of St. John the Divine, 301 Main Street, North Bay, Ontario P1B 1B3



I HATE TO ASK YOU NICE FOLKS TO MOVE, BUT THE INN'S MARKETING DEPARTMENT FIGURES THAT IT WILL ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THIS TREE GETS BETTER RECOGNITION THAN YOUR SON.

Our primary purpose as the Church of St. John the Divine in downtown North Bay is to be a welcoming, nurturing and worshipping community which demonstrates by word and deed the love of Jesus Christ for all creation

Happy New Year!

A Message from the Rector



A NEW YEAR IS A TIME for New Beginnings. On Advent Sunday the church once again begins the cycle of the Church Year. With Advent we wait for God to be with us—the God who is above and beyond the heavens comes nearer to us than we are to ourselves, and this is the miracle of the Birthday of Jesus the Christ.

In one of my favourite Advent hymns, “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry,” we sing: “Prepare we in our hearts a home, / where such a mighty guest may come” (*Common Praise*, #103). In our waiting for God to dwell among us we do not wait passively. Considering that we do much every year to vigorously prepare the outward trappings of a festive Christmas celebration, how much the more must we actively “prepare ... in our hearts a home” for our Lord?

We eagerly wait with joyful expectation, preparing within ourselves a place “where such a mighty guest may come.”

The cry of John the Baptizer was a call to repentance in view of the fact that the Kingdom of God was near. This is how John envisioned how we must prepare to welcome God, who comes nearer to us than we are to ourselves. As we enter a new Christian year, we ought not simply enter it with trite “New Year’s resolutions” that we may or may not be willing to keep; but, rather, we must resolve to lead a new life—we must, as a church, repent of our past blindness and commit to moving forward into the future, seeing only with the eyes of our faith.

I am repenting of my blindness. Who’s with me? ✧

The Rev. Fr. Andrew Nussey

A beautiful take-off on 1 Corinthians 13

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the spouse.

Love is kind, though harried and tired.

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust.

But giving the gift of love will endure.

The Wit and Wisdom of the Principal Claus

It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing only because you can only do a little. Do what you can.

If you can imagine it, you can achieve it; if you can dream it, you can become it.

Sign on small church "Things are bad everywhere—we work on Sundays"

Come to church this Sunday—get a faith lift!

God risks all the time. He takes one series of hair-raising risks after another with us.

A vicar had a notice put on his church notice board: "IF YOU ARE TIRED OF SIN COME IN"

Underneath someone had written: "IF NOT CALL 264-77654"

Moderation is the only thing that you can't get too much of!

Those who agree with us may not be right, but we admire their astuteness

"A professional is someone who will do their best work even when they don't like it" (Alistair Cooke)

The mind is like a T.V. set—when it goes blank, it's a good idea to turn off the sound

Church Signs

First Christian Church: Visitors Welcome. Members Expected.

You give God the credit. Now give God the cash!

Walmart is not the only "saving" place.

Sign on a parking spot in the church lot: Pastor's Spot. You park: You preach.

➤ Churchwarden's Report

Pamela Handley



WELL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5TH turned out to be a beautifully sunny day for our Annual Bazaar and Luncheon when 257 showed up for lunch. The ample supply of food, donated by our congregation, was superbly organized by the kitchen ladies and which in turn was served by the tea room ladies. Literally hundreds of other visitors toured the building to discover the many tables prepared for them: baking, preserves and deli items, jewellery, antiques and treasures, books, knitting and beautiful little Christmas trees were soon snapped up. Many sincere thanks to all the ladies and gentlemen involved—in so many, many ways—for once again making this annual event such a success. And sincere thanks to the group of university students who joined in and helped, wherever needed, during the first couple of very busy hours. Over \$4,000 was raised once again to help with our church's operating expenses.

St. John's continues to be a busy church here in downtown North Bay, as one can see from our weekly bulletin which seems to be growing by leaps and bounds. It was also in evidence the 5th Sunday of the month when 97 people packed the pews to participate in Sung Matins. Knowing the words, which are ingrained in most of us from childhood, makes it easier for the

choir to tackle the not-so-familiar melodies as we glued our eyes on Kayla Krasnor, our new Choir Mistress, for direction.

St. John's once again staged the wonderful Remembrance Day service where tribute was paid to all those who gave their lives so we may experience freedom. So many uniforms were in evidence—Army, Navy and Air Force—and the cadets did themselves proud as they read the prayers of their individual services. Many thanks to Colin Thacker for once again organizing this heart-pounding tribute.

We were delighted to worship on the evening of Sunday, November 6th when we observed the Feast of All Souls. The Near North Voices Chamber Choir visited St. John's to help celebrate "a special service of Solemn Evensong and Sung Eucharist" which 100 people attended. It truly was a splendid, worshipful service.

As you have seen in our bulletin, the special Advent Lessons and Carols are going to take place on Sunday morning, November 27th rather than in the evening. We think this will be an excellent change making it possible for more people to attend. Advent is a time of waiting, preparing and looking forward to the birth of the blessed babe Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. May each of us prepare in our hearts room for the Lord of the Universe to dwell with us and in us. ✕

**"How can God stoop lower than to come and dwell with a poor humble soul?
Which is more than if he had said, such a one should dwell with him;
for a beggar to live at court is not so much as the king to dwell with him in his cottage."**

- William Gurnall

➤ Book Review: *The Pope's War*

Stephen Kitzul



I AM READING AN AMAZING BOOK

by the Episcopal Priest Matthew Fox, titled *The Pope's War*, which offers a provocative look at how the 'devastation of the past two papacies can be a blessing in disguise to reinvent Christianity for a third millennium.' Seeking to establish a new pedagogy for learning spirituality, Dominican Matthew Fox founded the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality in the 1980's. This open and ecumenical educational facility was closed down by the Pope in 1988. In 1991, after being expelled from the Dominican Order, he was welcomed into the Anglican Communion by Bishop William Swing of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California. Rather than disband his extraordinary ecumenical faculty, Fox started the University of Creation Spirituality.

Much of what Fox says in his book applies as well to the worldwide Anglican Communion, and to us here in Algoma. Not to say that we have had the same extent of horrible ongoing scandals and extreme conservatism and legalism as has the Church of Rome—but we do share in the devastation brought on. What Fox says, however, in his book gives hope and encouragement to the Church, the People of God, who seek for justice, integrity, wholeness, openness, inclusiveness, fairness and honesty. Our National Church here in Canada has been on such a course for some time now.

Fox stands with the late theologian Bernard Haring: "We stand not under naked legalism, but rather under the rule of grace. This must be felt in all of our pastoral work." Fox states (pg 35): 'Despite a certain trend towards conservatism in parts of the church

and society, I am convinced that we have moved into a new era that will be determined by people who live by their own conscience and are particularly qualified to act as discerning members of community and society.' He echoes that in the New Testament are found the basic virtues or character of the disciples of Christ. These are to be ongoing thanksgiving for what the Lord has done. 'It was not obedience to an external law but to Jesus' mission to make manifest the liberating power of love for the Father and trust in him' (cf. Phil 2:5-11). "Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus." Fox continues that it is not a good sign if Christians are scrupulous about the very words of many laws, yet fail to show fidelity to the great law of compassion and mercy proclaimed by Jesus Christ in life and death.

Towards the end of his book, Fox decries the current state of Liturgy: 'Modern forms of worship emphasize words – words on a page, words in a sermon, words read from the lectern, words read from the prayer book. Words, words, words! Text, text, text! ... Postmodern forms of prayer will put less emphasis on text and more on context, less emphasis on words from a book and more emphasis on "every creature as a word of God." It will be more democratic ... more universal, or catholic. Worship will include body, not exclude it. It will include dance, not shun it. (It will) use postmodern language and art forms to elicit the sacred.'

Matthew Fox develops an exciting solid statement of faith and the practice of faith, spirituality, and fidelity to God. ✠

Matthew Fox, [The Pope's War - Why Ratzinger's Secret Crusade Has Imperiled The Church And How It Can Be Saved](#), 278 pp; Sterling Ethos, New York. 2011. ISBN 978-1-4027-8629-7

➤ Outreach: *In the Community and the World*

Pamela Handley, Interim Chair



THIS COMMITTEE WAS DELIGHTED TO HOST a recent Linger Lunch for the St. John's congregation. This was a wonderful opportunity for our group to share with everyone just what it is we do throughout the year. It was also a great time of good food and fellowship before setting off on Sunday afternoon activities or a quiet time at home.

Speaking of which, did you check out the photo of Chuck Walkey on his Dial-A-Ride poster in the Parish Hall? It is worth having a look!

This committee continues to visit shut-ins and those in hospital. If you know of someone who you think might like to have a visit, please let Father Andrew or myself know. This is so important so please do not hesitate to phone the office at 705-472-6070.

The same goes for The Telephone Ministry—if you know of someone who would appreciate a phone call, please contact Bernice Cleator.

Prayer List—please contact Christine Whatmore for this important ministry.

Just a reminder: Donations to Mary Sherwood's Mission in Madagascar are gratefully received the 3rd Sunday on

the month—and don't forget, they can be included in your regular envelope which would entitle you to a tax receipt. Just indicated how much you would like to donate to the orphanage and street missions.

Also another reminder: The 4th Sunday of the month is when donations of non-perishable food items are gratefully received, taken to the altar and then distributed from St. John's Food Shelves every Wednesday morning by Donna Sakaluk and her band of volunteers in the Parish Hall.

Danielle Barlow was taking orders for PWRD Christmas Cards at the recent Bazaar.

Operation Christmas Child Boxes are due Nov. 27: please see Dave Johnson.

We hope to deliver cookies, kindly made by the congregation, to shut-ins once again closer to Christmas. So please get those Christmas Cookie recipes out—the ones with no nuts—and watch for more information in the weekly bulletin.

If you feel called upon to help with any of the above ministries, please contact Pam Handley, Interim Chair. ✕

More Church Signs

JESUS SAVES

[Then, as you drove closer, you could read:]

He Sets the Captives Free

[Then, closer still, you could read:]

Joe Bob Bail Bonds 555-2345

When you were born, your mother brought you here.
When you were married, your partner brought you here.

When you die, the undertaker will bring you here.

Why not try coming on your own, sometime?

In a church parking lot in St. Catharine's, Ontario:
"A welcoming Faith Community"
Church parking at your own risk

Scientific research has shown that:

Every Human Being Needs:

- * 4 hugs per day to merely survive
- * 8 hugs per day to maintain oneself at a particular emotional level
- * 12 hugs per day to grow

*A hug can be in any form: total body contact,
a kind word, a touch, a smile.*

➤ Greetings: *From the Funks*

Barbara & Stephen Kitzul

WE BRING YOU GREETINGS from our former Interim Rod Funk and his wife Temple. We recently travelled to Mentor Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland a mere 766 km away, to visit Rod and Temple for a few days.

Both are looking just great, and are healthy, happy and, as ever, so gracious. They bought a lovely, one-level ranch-style house across the street from their parish church, Advent Lutheran. Mind you, to no surprise to you or I, Rod has accepted an Interim posting at a church—over 50 miles away! He is also training the Confirmation Class of 14 teenagers there, and of course, the meetings. As well, he is teaching Bible Studies at a couple of places, and doing pastoral work at his own Church, Advent. Temple very wisely chooses to walk across the street on Sundays and worship there.

We were treated so well during our week-long sojourn, just like family. Rod gets up early and does 40 minutes on a treadmill, then goes grocery shopping, and takes a walk, comes home, and sets the breakfast table just in time for the rest of us to get out of bed. No, I am not going to tell you what time that was. Just suffice it to remember that Barb, Temple and I are retired!



Rod loves microbreweries, and hosted us at several. Such good beer! Such good food! Such fun! We got to experience the First Tapping of a famous Christmas Beer, attended by News Media, celebrities and just plain old fold at this downtown Cleveland Microbrewery Restaurant.

One of our side-trips was a visit to Breckenridge Village, a very large series of

houses and apartments for senior assisted living. Rod served as Chaplain for several years at this Presbyterian-operated centre.

Breckenridge's mission is to provide older adults with caring and quality services toward the enhancement

of physical, mental and spiritual well-being consistent with the Christian Gospel. While Chaplain, he designed a set of five large stained-glass windows for the chapel, each themed window having 6 sections. They are beautiful and impressive.

On our final morning after a breakfast of Cabbage Rolls (there's a story there!), we bid adieu to Rod and Temple, and had a prayer in their front yard. The Funks want you each to know that they love you, miss you, and pray unceasingly for you. Their house is always open for a visit. ✖

➤ Recycling News: *Bottles and Cans*

Total collected since 1995: \$27,484.64

I am still collecting beer and soft drink bottles and cans and wine and liquor bottles. Scrap metal like aluminum, copper and brass are fetching a good price so please let me know if you have anything to donate. If you want to participate but find bringing the bottles in too much effort, you can call Christine and she will come and get them. - *Christine Whatmore*

➤ Postage Stamps

We collect all used postage stamps for the Canadian Bible Society and would appreciate your used stamps, preferably clipped rather than torn. A box is available in the narthex. The Bible Society uses our donations to give Bibles away all over the world and our help is appreciated. Thanks is given to Chuck Walkey for volunteering to help in this ministry. - *Christine Whatmore*

➤ Pageant

On Sunday, December 11 at 4:00 p.m. the parishioners of St. John's of all ages will witness to the true meaning of Christmas. During the pageant we will all have the opportunity to bring our gifts to Baby Jesus. These gifts are as varied as the talents of His people. We may bring the gift of a performance—whether of music, recitation or dance. We can also bring a non-perishable food item to be distributed to the less-fortunate of His flock. Warm clothing items may be given to be distributed to needy folks. And after all this gift-giving we will go to the hall and share a feast of pot-luck goodies.

➤ Some Advent Customs

Advent means “arrival” and it is the name Christians give to the four weeks leading up to Christmas.

In homes and churches people set out special candle holders or Advent wreaths. These hold four candles. One candle is lit the fourth Sunday before Christmas, two candles the Third Sunday, and so on, until all the candles are lit. Some families sing Advent carols and eat Advent treats while the candles burn.

Many churches hold special candlelit Advent carol processions.

The German custom of giving children Advent calendars helps the days pass until Christmas. The calendars have 24 little doors: one is opened each day from December 1st until Christmas Eve. In Canada, Advent calendars with a chocolate behind each door are especially popular, but sometimes it is hard to resist opening all the doors at once!

The last Sunday before Advent is called “Stir-up Sunday” by many people of British descent. This is the traditional day to stir up the Christmas plum pudding and cook it. Some families stir a coin or a ring into the pudding mixture. Whoever finds the prize is supposed to have good fortune or be the

next to marry. The name “Stir-up Sunday” comes from the Collect for that day in the Anglican Prayer Book which begins “Stir up we beseech thee O Lord, the hearts of thy faithful people...” Perhaps these words reminded everyone of how soon those puddings would be needed, and they rushed home to stir them up right after church!

An old Acadian belief in eastern Canada is that Advent is a good time to predict the weather. A cold Advent, they say, means a mild winter. But if the weather is still mild during Advent, watch out! We'll have a long hard winter.

A tradition in the Claus household involved a strip of felt with 24 candies and a bell on the bottom and this poem on top:

***The weeks before Christmas
is the longest time of the year,
Seems like old Santa never will appear.
Eat a candy every day and surely you can tell,
Santa will be here by the time you ring the bell.***

This candy strip along with the Advent Calendar reduced greatly the number of times the kids asked “How many days till Christmas?”

- *Compiled by Larry Claus*

➤ Time for a Faith Lift

*Taken from Newsnotes of
The Sisters of St. John the Divine*



Have we lost our identity as children of God?

“I give you praise, Lord of heaven and earth for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike.” - Luke 10:21

How much I want to say to you as Jesus said, “Become like children” (Matthew 18:3). Many of us have become so serious and intense, so filled with preoccupations about the future of the world and the church, so burdened by our loneliness and isolation, that our hearts are veiled by a dark sadness, preventing us from exuding the peace and joy of God’s children. You know as well as I that when our words are full of warnings, our eyes full of fears, our bodies filled with unfulfilled needs and our actions filled with distrust, we cannot ever expect to create around us a community that shines as a light in the darkness...Yes, indeed many of us have lost touch with the identity as children of God.

Lord, help me this Advent to lay aside my burdensome preoccupations and to open my heart in a childlike prayer to your Holy Spirit.

I know where I am called to live

“The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack...Even when I walk through a dark valley, I fear no harm for you are at my side; your rod and staff give me courage” - From Psalm 23

I see a lot of suffering in people’s faces, but I see also a simple human goodness underlying all the disillusionments of an ever-changing life. I keep thinking of innocence, and I sense that beyond all my own darkness there is innocence too...I carry God’s innocence in me. Before I am sinful, I am innocent; before I participate in the evil of the world, I am touched with goodness. I realize...that I have to claim that innocence in

me. It belongs to my deepest self. It is given to me by God my Creator; it is reclaimed for me by Jesus my Redeemer...

I know that I am called to live at the place of innocence: the place where Jesus chose to live. There He made His home and asks me to make mine. In that place I am loved and well held. There I do not have to be afraid. And from there I can forgive and heal and make things new...I can simply be where I am, listening, seeing, touching in the very moment, always sure that I am not alone but with Him who called me to live as God’s child.

Lord, help me this Advent to see and appreciate the goodness and innocence in others....and in myself as well.

Society doesn’t help us break through to God

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like the wise man who builds his house upon a rock.” - Matthew 7:24

We modern Westerners are so busy with ourselves, so preoccupied with the question of whether we do justice to our own selves, that the experience of the “transcendent” becomes practically impossible. In the way of thinking that involves talking, discussing, analyzing and criticizing, in which one opinion asks the other for attention, in which belief is replaced more and more by an endless list of conceptions, opinions, visions and ideas which whirl around as paper boats in a sea...in this way of thinking there is scarcely room for the Spirit who speaks whenever we are silent and who comes in whenever we have emptied ourselves. Instead of making ourselves susceptible to the experience of the transcendent God we, busy about many things, begin to seek after the small flighty sensations brought about by artificial stimulation of the senses.

Lord, I confess that much of my daily life is absorbed either in self-centered concerns or in flighty sensations. Help me this Advent to open my heart so that I may know love and serve you better.

**We must keep tuned into
what leads us closer to God**

“Wait for the Lord, take courage; be stouthearted, wait for the Lord!” - Psalm 27:14

If we do not wait patiently in expectation for God’s coming in glory, we start wandering around, going from one little sensation to another. Our lives get stuffed with newspaper items, television stories and gossip. Then our minds lose the discipline of discerning between what leads us closer to God and what doesn’t, and our hearts lose their spiritual sensitivity.

Without waiting for the second coming of Christ, we will stagnate and become tempted to indulge in whatever gives us a moments pleasure...but when we have the Lord to look forward to, we can already experience Him in the waiting.

Do I try to live an “Advent awareness” that God is always ready to come to me with His saving power? What am I doing in my daily life to increase that awareness? What things must I cut out because they are moving me away from God?

Spiritual maturity means daring to ask for help

“The Lord will be gracious to you when you cry out; as soon as He hears He will answer you. He will give you the bread you need and the water for which you thirst.” - Isaiah 30:19-20

I feel within me a strong desire to live my life on my own. In fact, my society praises the self-made people who are in control of their destinies, set their own goals, fulfill their own aspirations and build their own kingdoms. It is very hard for me to truly believe that spiritual maturity is a willingness to let others guide me and “lead me even where I would rather not go” (John 21:18). And still, every time I am willing to break out of my false needs for self-sufficiency and dare to ask for help, a new community emerges, a fellowship of the weak, strong in the trust that together we can be a people of hope in a broken world...

To receive help, support, guidance, affections and care may well be a greater call than that of giving all these things because in receiving I reveal the gift of the givers and a new life together can begin.

Am I trying to be too self-sufficient? Have I made an idol out of gaining control? Am I refusing to ask for help when I really need it? What can I do within my family or parish to increase healthy giving and receiving?

A blessed Advent and Christmas to all!

Celebrating the Birthday of Christ

O Come, Let us Worship!

Saturday, December 24 — 4 PM (Children’s Service)

Saturday, December 24 — 7 PM (Eucharist, BCP)

Saturday, December 24 — 11 PM (Eucharist, BAS)

Sunday, December 25 — 10 AM (Eucharist, BAS)

Parish Contacts

Last updated: November 2011

CHURCH OFFICE: 705.472.6070

PARISH HALL: 705.472.2667

PARISH WEBSITE: <http://www.stjohndivine.ca/>

Rector: The Rev. Andrew Nussey
Honorary Assistant: The Rev. Grant Churcher
Churchwarden: Ed Carberry
Churchwarden: Pamela Handley
Deputy Churchwarden: Phyllis Macdonald
Parish Advisory Council: Heather Murray
Treasurer: Allan Morrison
Finance Committee: Doug Hughes
Envelope Secretary: Marg van Toen
Interim Choir Director: Kayla Krasnor
Interim Organist: Margaret Butler
Worship & Education: George Cleator
Building Committee: Dave Johnson
Sunday School: George Cleator
Men's Group: Irvine Dyck
Chancel Guild: Deanna Ferguson
Greeters: Eunice Saari
Sidespersons: Heather Murray
Coffee Hour & Receptions: Dave & Barbara Johnson
ACW: Margaret Butler
Bliss Gilmor: Mike Burke
Outreach: Pamela Handley
- Camp Temiskaming: Dave Johnson
- Dial-a-Ride: Chuck Walkey
- PWRDF: Danielle Benoiton
- The Diviner: Larry Claus
- Pastoral Visitors: Pamela Handley
- Food Shelves: Donna Sakaluk
- Prayer List: Christine Whatmore
- Telephone Ministry: Bernice Cleator
- Operation Christmas Child: Dave Johnson

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

- 1 Corinthians 12. 12