

St. Mary Magdalene Church

Picton Ontario



Christmas 2020



○ Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining,

This is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.

A thrill of Hope, the weary world rejoices,

For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

St. Mary Magdalene Milestones

Anniversary

Bill and Myrna Kidnew – 60th Anniversary



Wedding

Nolan Prinzen and Daphnée André-Morin



St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church

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Our Rector's Message

The Source of Our Hope

This has been a year like no other in living memory, and under the shadow of COVID this Christmas will be different and challenging. But the Christmas message of hope is undimmed.



We have many things around us that encourage us to hope things will be better. Our parish family has held together well and supported one another through the pandemic. The church has been open since September, and the livestream recording of our services has been greatly appreciated by those who are cautious about returning to a group setting just yet. And the news about vaccines is very positive.

All those are instances of good news, but there is truly profound Good News that underlies them all, and Christmas is the time to hear it and celebrate it. Once again this Christmas we will hear with the shepherds the angel proclaim *"Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."*

That *is* good news of great joy, reassuring and insisting that God has not forgotten us, even if there have been times this year when we feared he might have. God has sent a Saviour to set things to rights, and those who oppose his justice and prefer darkness will not prevail. The sign of hope is not what we might have expected. We might have expected God to send a King in the form of a military commander to take charge, or perhaps an avenging angel wielding a fiery sword. But God sent a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. God came as one of us, to break the bonds of darkness and love us into the people we were meant to be.

That is the source of our hope. The knowledge that God did not abandon us to our fate can guide our thoughts. The love of God experienced in Jesus can fill our hearts. That will inspire us with hope for a better tomorrow, and help us bear the challenges of life, and even the pandemic. I look forward to celebrating that hope with you this Christmas.

Yours faithfully, *Charles*



In 2018 Charles and Joan decided to pass on the Morris family nativity scene to their grandsons to share the Christmas story with another generation. Their new one, pictured here, is the beginning of new memories of sharing the good news.

Joy Shall Come - Advent at St. MM

The word *Advent*, derived from the Latin word *adventus* means 'coming', and is celebrated as a time of expectation for Christ's birth at Christmas and for his long-anticipated Second Coming. Going back as far as the 5th century, it is marked today with special readings, hymns and prayers.

Beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, many churches mark the season with an Advent wreath. The circle of evergreen is a reminder that God is the Alpha and Omega without beginning or end and also of the hope we have in God for renewal and eternal life. The candles are symbols of the light of God coming to the world through the birth of Jesus. The four outer candles represent a period of waiting and the most common themes of these candles are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. At St. Mary Magdalene, the colours are blue (some churches use purple) and pink. The blue candles are lit on the first two and fourth Sundays and the pink for Joy candle on the third Sunday. The centre white candle, known as the Christ Candle, is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Our Advent wreath was donated to the Church in loving memory of June Whitehouse.



Christian churches and families use the Advent Season to prepare spiritually for the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas, the true meaning of Christmas.

HOPE is a star that shines in the night
Leading us on to the bright morning light.

PEACE is a ribbon that circles the earth
Giving a promise of safety and worth.

JOY is a song that welcomes the dawn
Telling the world that the Saviour is born.

LOVE is a flame that burns in our heart
Jesus is come and will never depart.

*When God is a child there's joy in our song
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
And none shall be afraid.*

Written by Brian Wren, 1989

What Gives You Hope?

Kathy Condie confesses that she is “a CBC radio fan...the radio is on all day. I love the morning show called *The Current* with Matt Galloway, a gifted interviewer who is able to manage even the most difficult discussions. He will often finish the conversation by asking “**What gives you hope?**”” Several of our parishioners share what gives them hope:



Young people around the world have courage and convictions that astound me in their strength and give me hope.

Julie Miller Right now the entire world is united in the Covid-19 battle. Never before has any single issue been the focus of absolutely everyone. It proves it can be done ... we need to take the same effort into the climate change fight.

I have been pleasantly surprised by the courtesy and respect shown by so many people while dealing with the restrictions of the pandemic. It gives me hope to think that this positive attitude might continue to be part of our new normal once the crisis is over.



John Brett

Surprisingly, hope can be found in the comparison between the mind numbing, endless days of the 1918



Herb Stone

Pandemic and the uncertainties of today's COVID-19.

In 1918, isolation from family and society was certainly more brutal in the absence of the technologies we now take for granted.

Comparatively, we can call family and friends anytime we choose. Radio and television help lighten the effects of isolation and many of us have digital access to movies, concerts and lectures. We can virtually visit museums and art galleries.

The Hope for better times ahead connects positively to the steady progress of science working toward a vaccine. The Pandemic of 1918 was arguably far more deadly and disruptive than today's Covid. Yet, the world survived and we will too!

At this time of year the Christmas lights fill me with hope that brighter days are coming. Seeing my grandchildren learn things we taught their parents, and watching them make them their own in new ways fills me with hope for their generation. Seeing people come back to church even with all the restrictions of masks and staying apart and not singing speaks to a depth of faith that fills me with hope for the mission of the church. *Charles Morris*

My Favourite Christmas Carol?

A favourite time for many of us is the beautiful service we celebrate at St. Mary Magdalene on Christmas Eve. This year our service will be held as usual but without our usual carol sing. To celebrate Christmas this year, what will you be singing at your home?

My father was a good Socialist and enjoyed belting out "The Workers' Flag [is deepest red/Dyed with the blood of martyrs shed]", which is sung to the well-known tune of "O Tannenbaum". I was puzzled but impressed as a small child visiting Ogilvie's department store in Ottawa to hear what I thought was the music of "The Workers' Flag" being played over the loudspeakers. I also (under the influence of a little book called *Five Promises to You, about the United Nations*) thought that a couple of lines in "O Little Town of Bethlehem" – "The hopes and fears of all the years/Are met in thee tonight" – referred to the founding of the UN. But, misunderstandings apart, the Christmas hymns I have always most enjoyed singing are "Joy to the World" and "O Come All Ye Faithful" – maybe it's the trio of repeated lines that start soft and then get loud. – **Elizabeth Cowan**



My favourite Christmas Carol is probably "In the Bleak Midwinter". I like it to be unaccompanied and candlelit. I love the music and really like the words in the last verse: "Yet what can I give Him? / Give my Heart." A close runner up is "The Huron Carol" – "Twas in the moon of wintertime." Setting the nativity story in the local context was a stroke of genius and so unusual at the mid-17th century. Another is "Lo, How a Rose". I love the image of the Virgin Mary as the rose. How about "O Little Town of Bethlehem"? I just like it! My Dad's mother used to play it on her piano in her New York apartment when I was very young and we would sing along. I also have a fondness for Sunday school kids singing "The Little Drummer Boy." – **Helen Cluett**



What a Tough Question!

Every memory I have of Christmas is music, starting as a child and right up to today. I come from a family of musicians. Every Christmas was filled with music. Each family had a piano and my Uncle Don would bring his sax, my grandfather King would bring his violin, and we would all bring our voices. I started singing in the senior choir when I was 11 and my brother and I played in the handbell choir every Christmas Eve. As adults we continued to enjoy music at every family gathering and even though our lives drew us farther apart physically, when we were able to get together, we always shared in music. This year we plan to make the best of it no matter where we are. Christmas music always brings a smile and, more times as we get older, a tear as well – a tear of memory, joy and a few new tears of hope and love. Our world is hurting now, and song, even in our own hearts, is a good way to heal. One of our favourites is “O Holy Night”. I love singing this one with Roanna. We figured out the harmonies while walking our dog Kurt in the forest. But I have to say, and while certainly not a carol, my personal fave is “Santa Baby”! - **Penny Kitchen**



Every choir I have been involved with has sung “Silent Night” on recordings or in concert. I have had the privilege to sing it in French, German and English, accompanied or a capella. It is, to me, truly inspiring. – **John Brett**



Joan and I enjoy a number of Christmas music CDs, including one by our own Janine Dudding. Sometimes we just listen, and sometimes we sing along. And sometimes Joan plays carols on the piano. This year we have two new things to look forward to: The Diocese’s online Service of Lessons and Carols and a Christmas Eve program which will air on our local 99.3 County Radio station (see details elsewhere) – **Charles Morris**





Carol and Jack Lashley's Nativity Display



Many years ago, when we lived in South Africa, we purchased our wooden nativity scene, probably carved out of local South African wood! We moved to Canada in 1982 and have been using this Nativity Scene every Christmas since then! It has become very precious to us! At Christmas we read a story of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus to our grandchildren, Owen, Reid and Layla, pointing out where each figure of the Nativity story fits in!

Bob and June Mason



Andrew Innes' and Don Watson's 'Simple Crèche'



Jay Crockford & Kathy Condie



We acquired this Nativity at Christmas 2018 when we went to Quebec's Eastern Townships near Magog. We visited The Abbaye-De-St-Benoit-Du-Lac where we purchased this lovely olive wood Nativity Scene made in Bethlehem,

Loraine and David Gilbert

Our Willowtree Nativity Scene was obtained at the Community Care Thrift Shop here in Picton. We were very delighted to obtain it. It was sold on a bid auction and we were fortunate to have the right bid. We really like the Willowtree Figurines and we have a number of them around our home.

Loraine and David Gilbert



Charles's daughter and grandsons with the family crèche

As a child, each December I helped my mother set up the nativity scene, a fixture in her home every Advent and Christmas until my first daughter was born. At that point she gave the family crèche, as she called it, to me. Every Advent afterwards I set it up with my own children each one taking a turn placing a figure, so it looked a little different every year. My oldest daughter has two boys, and when the second one was born I gave her my family nativity scene so that she could carry on the custom begun by her grandmother. *Charles Morris*



Jay Crockford & Kathy Condie



Marie Connor's Music Box Nativity

The Stories Behind our Nativity Scenes

Each year our original well-worn nativity scene was brought out for the Christmas season. At that time we had a Sunday school where the priest would engage in conversation for a few minutes with the children before they went to their special room. One week the



conversation centered around the nativity and what sort of animals would be included. After naming the usual occupants, one small boy insisted that no Christmas scene would be complete without a frog. The routine was to place all the scene's characters on gold sprayed wire shelves along the church window ledges and the priest would lead the little ones to the appropriate shelf, hand down to them the correct figures for that week's appearance – first the animals (after all, the stable was their home), then Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, and so on. Every year the little chap would carefully transfer the frog to its proper place in the stable. Correct animal husbandry was not a priority as I seem to recall that the size of the frog landed somewhere between that of the sheep and the donkey. However, as the years passed the children grew and drifted off to other Sunday pursuits, and the Sunday school ceased. The crèche is now used during the afternoon Christmas service where there are children in attendance who can enjoy the little figures.



Meanwhile, for years as Helen and I were decorating the church for Christmas we would discuss how nice it would be to have a larger nativity scene as a focal point that could be visible from most parts of the church. However, we could not find anything

remotely appealing – until one day several years ago while visiting the Icon church store in Belleville to purchase communion supplies a clerk mentioned that the store was closing business and they were selling off all their inventory. To our amazement, sitting on the floor in the corner was a beautiful selection of nativity figurines – exactly what we were trying to find. We immediately purchased them and with the help of the store clerks

boxed them up, pushed them into the car and sped back to St. Mary Magdalene. Now we had our treasure but, how to display it? So we called in the construction specialists, and Brian Pinkerton and Michael Smith designed and built our lovely stable, complete with tiny hay racks. Our beautiful nativity scene was complete. We hope you will enjoy it for many Christmas seasons to come.

Helen Pinkerton and Nell Kottick



Stewardship in the Time of Pandemic

What do we think of when we hear the word “**stewardship**”? We asked this question at the last meeting of our Parish Advisory Council and the first response was “money”. In fact for many of us, this is our first thought; stewardship is equal to money... the Church and its finances.

I recently attended an on-line seminar provided by the Diocese and led by Rev. Trish Miller. ***We were challenged to think about stewardship in a different light - as our response to what we have received from God - a response to God's grace.*** Biblical references help us understand this:

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. (1 Peter 4:10)

As we enter the 10th month of the pandemic, many people have expressed concern about coping through a long, dark winter. How should we respond as good stewards of God's grace? How do we continue to reach out to support each other, to stay connected and to care?

There are many current activities underway at St. Mary Magdalene:

- * In person Sunday Services that are live streamed and archived
- * Weekly Bible study via ZOOM; Tuesday Meditation group in Church
- * Phone calls to check in on each other
- * Assistance with groceries and transportation to medical appointments
- * Copies of the services are printed and delivered to parishioners
- * *The Vine* Newsletter

Perhaps you have other ideas to help us stay connected while we remain mostly apart? Please share your thoughts with a Warden or any member of Parish Advisory Council.

We are a community drawn together by faith and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring light into the darkness.

Kathy Condie

St. MM's Bakers Share their Squares

Dreaming of plates brimming with delightful treats at our usually annual Christmas Tea, Bake Sale and More? Several of our talented bakers share Squares Recipes for you to bake this Christmas season.

STAINED GLASS SQUARES

Cream 1 cup soft butter or margarine, 1 cup white sugar, 1 tsp. vanilla and 2 eggs. Stir in 2 cups flour and 1 cup chopped nuts. Spread 2/3 of this mixture in a 9"x13" pan. Spread 1- 19 oz. can cherry pie filling over. Drop remaining batter over pie, spreading slightly with knife. Filling will not be completely covered. Bake 45 minutes at 325. You may need to broil it. Hint: Top large squares with ice cream for dessert.

FESTIVE SLICE

Marie Connor suggests giving ordinary date squares a Christmas twist by adding almond extract to the crust and topping ingredients and replacing the date filling with mincemeat.

CHRISTMAS QUICK TRICKS

*Chopped glace cherries or drizzled melted chocolate chips transform a plain cookie or square into a Christmas treat

* Ditto a sprinkling of white sugar coloured with food dye or try crushed candy cane.



LEMON SQUARES

*This recipe for lemon squares was given to **Nell Kottick** at her first year at St. Mary Magdalene by **Marjorie Pearsall**, a long time parishioner. She was always one of the first ones to volunteer for food donations and was the initiator of our food bank contributions.*

CRUST:

1-1/2 cups graham crumbs
1/2 cup melted butter
1/3 cup brown sugar, packed
3/4 cup flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder

FILLING:

1 tin Eagle Brand milk
1/2 cup lemon juice

Mix the crust ingredients and hold 1/2 cup for topping. In an 8"x8" pan, pat down crust gently, saving 1/2 cup. Mix condensed milk and lemon juice. Pour over crust and sprinkle reserved crumbs on top. Bake in 350 degree oven for 20 minutes.

RASPBERRY COCONUT BARS

Traditionally at Christmas **Pauline Smith** makes lots of cookies but not many squares. "We do enjoy a variety of squares throughout the rest of the year," she notes. This square with a touch of Christmas colour is a family favourite.

BASE:

1/2 cup butter

1 Tbsp. sugar

1 egg beaten

1 cup flour

1 tsp. baking powder

Dash of salt

TOPPING:

Butter the size of a walnut

¾ cup sugar

1 egg

1 ½ cups coconut



Mix base and spread in square pan. Cover with Raspberry Jam. Mix topping and spread over jam. Bake at 350 for 25-30 minutes until golden.



This Nativity Scene came from St Bartholomew's Anglican Church in the Cabbagetown area of Toronto where we grew up. I attended this church and was an altar boy for a few years. In fact I was told that as a small child I was in one of the live Nativity Scenes at St Bartholomew's.

Of course I don't remember the incident as I was too young. I do remember the dear and faithful Sister Theresa who ran a small shop in the church basement where my sister Margaret purchased this Nativity Scene for us many years ago. – *David Gilbert*

A Page from our History ...

1977 – "Children of the congregation gathered in a barn at the farm of David Kettlewell, Black River, for a carol service just prior to Christmas. The group stood in the area of the stalls or sat on bales of hay with a pony, sheep and chickens milling about. In the midst of the assembly was a montage of the manger scene: Mrs. Jane Greatrex and her infant son James represented Mary and the baby Jesus. Eric Kane accompanied the singing with his psaltery (a harp-like stringed instrument)."

- From 'A Goodly Heritage' by A. R. Capon



Maxine

A Q & A about Christmas at St. Mary Magdalene



Charles



How will we be celebrating the Christmas season at St. Mary Magdalene in this unusual time?



I will focus on all the things we can do. We will offer a revamped Christmas Eve Family Service at 4:00 pm respecting COVID protocols. We will have our Candlelight Christmas Eve Service as always. We won't sing, but Michael Goodwin will play some carols before the service. Only 50 people can be in the church, but there is no limit to the number that can join us via livestream, both Christmas Eve at 7:30 p.m. and Christmas Morning at 10:00 a.m.



How can we share the Christmas season with our fellow parishioners?



Come to church if you can. Have and use an Advent Wreath in your home. Share Christmas lights on your home if you can, and let the magic of lights all around town lift your heart. And stay in touch, by phone, by card, by email, contact the people you can't see so often in person.



Are there any special musical community events that will be of interest to our parishioners?



The Diocese is producing an online Service of Lessons and Carols on the afternoon of December 20th. Michael Goodwin led a quartet which we recorded as our contribution to this service. And 14 different churches here in the County have worked together to produce a Christmas Eve program of Christmas readings and music which will air on our local 99.3 County Radio station. We have contributed music and reading to this production, airing at 8:00 pm Christmas Eve. You will miss that broadcast if you are coming to church for our 7:30 service, but it is intended to be an uplifting experience for the many who can't be in church this year. It will repeat at noon on Christmas Day, so I hope members of our parish will have a chance to hear it!

● From the St. MM Bulletin Board ●



Thank you to Lita Field for volunteering to look after the Memorial Flowers and to Joan McBride for her many years of service.

Next time, the Parish Advisory Committee hopes Charles says SMILE for the photo!



Thanks to Lorraine Hyatt, Peter Mason and Michael Korn for stepping up to assist with the live streaming of services.

St. MM's WIFI



Live streaming of services meant we had to add to the church's internet power. Our U of T music student Roanna Kitchen has been able to continue her studies remotely during the pandemic by using the church's internet and St. MM's fabulous acoustics.



Just when you think you're done! About the same time as the church roof was completed in June, shingles started flying off the Parish Hall! Fortunately, because of the wonderful generosity of an anonymous donor, and members of our congregation for the first project we have the funds for this new undertaking. Thank you all!

If we keep Christ
in our hearts



Christmas has no end

The History of Nativity Scenes

Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223 at Greccio, central Italy, in an attempt to place the emphasis of Christmas upon the worship of Christ. The nativity scene created by Francis was staged in a cave, a living one with humans and animals cast in the Biblical roles. Such reenactment pantomimes became hugely popular and spread throughout Christendom. Within a hundred years every church in Italy was expected to have a nativity scene at Christmastime. Eventually, statues replaced human and animal participants, By the end of the 19th century nativity scenes became popular beyond Catholic settings, and many versions in various sizes and made of various materials, such as terracotta, paper, wood, cloth and wax, were marketed, often with a backdrop setting of a stable. Distinctive nativity scenes and traditions have been created around the world and are displayed during the Christmas season in churches, homes, shopping malls, and other venues, and occasionally on public lands and in public buildings. - *Wikipedia and other online sources*



St. Francis of Assisi



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Photos kindly shared by our parish photographers.

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year