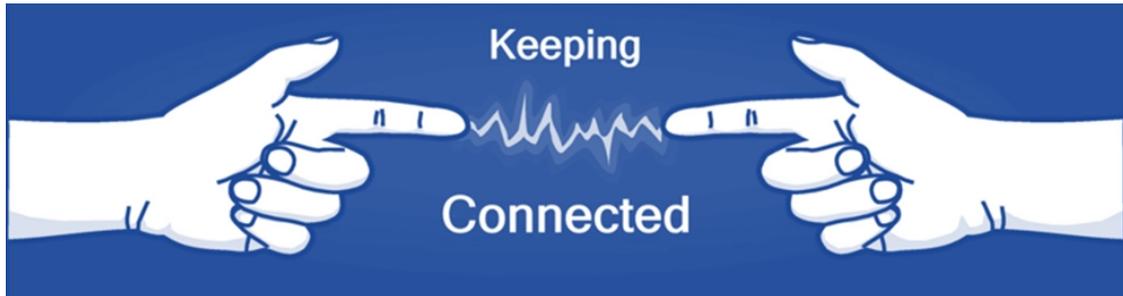


[View this email in your browser](#)



For
**Christmas Eve, Christmas Day
and Sunday December 27 2020**



CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

Come Emmanuel, Come!

See us on the [WWW](#) - [Facebook](#) - [YouTube](#)



Sadly **Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in-person worship services have been cancelled** due to public health concerns. Everyone who pre-registered has been informed by telephone.



Christmas 2020 at St Paul's

Christmas Eve (Wednesday, December 23): 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Day (Friday, December 25): 9:30 a.m.

Pre-registration for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services closes at noon on December 21.

SUNDAY IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICES ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

Community Christmas Dinner Update

To ensure that the dinner gets to the people who need it, the date and pick-up window have been moved to December 23. We are so grateful to everyone who has given so generously of their time and gifts to make this event a reality in these challenging times.



The Community Christmas Dinner was recently featured in the *Almonte-Carleton Place Canadian Gazette*. You can read the article [HERE](#) on the Inside the Ottawa Valley web site.

Lessons and Carols available [HERE](#).

If you are missing being in Church and hearing Christmas music at our services, the Anglican Church of Canada has put together a beautiful virtual service of Lessons & Carols from across Canada.



Christmas Cards

Over the next few days, we will be delivering Christmas cards to all of our members. This is a special project we have undertaken this year as an outreach activity to our members during the pandemic.

Many thanks to Eric Hammond for leading this project and donating the cards. And thank you to his nieces who addressed all the cards.

A Message from Rev. Jonathon A God Who Cares

This has been a challenging year for everyone - for some us more than others. Our lives have been severely disrupted in so many ways by the coronavirus pandemic. Some of us have had friends or loved ones who have become ill or who have died from this terrible virus. Some of us have been laid off from work or have had our retirement saving affected. All of us have had to make modifications to our daily lives, including how we function as a church community. We see, hear, and read disturbing news each day about how the pandemic is not just affecting us but people all over our world.



It is natural in such times to ask questions like "Where is God when we need Him?" or "Why did God allow something like this to happen?" Unfortunately there are no easy answers to these questions. I firmly believe that the pandemic was not sent by God as some sort of punishment or as some sort of test. I also firmly believe that God is not sitting idly by watching this unfold while we suffer.

Some world religions believe in an impersonal God who is dispassionate and removed from our world. The popular Bette Midler song "From A Distance" is representative of this kind of thinking. Its a beautiful song, and while the lyrics do have some positive messages about peace and harmony, the overall message of the song is that God is far removed and simply watches event in our world unfold "from a distance".

By contrast, Christians believe in a personal and a loving God who watches over us and cares for us. This has been demonstrated over and over again in the Bible - both in the Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament. Christmas is about the incarnation - a term which comes from Latin and literally means taking on flesh or embodiment.

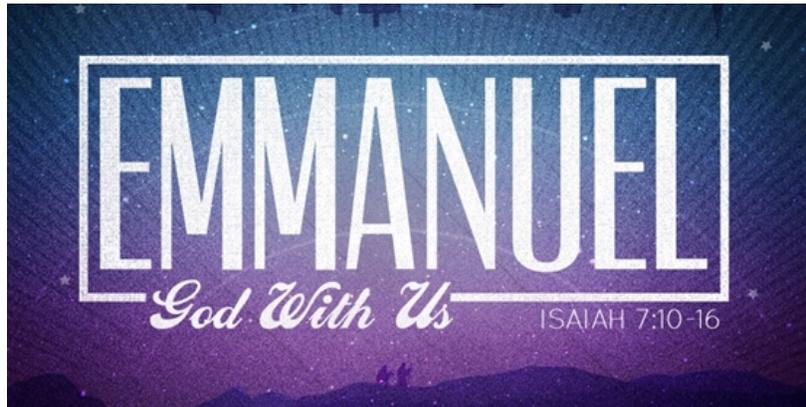
We believe that God became a human being in Jesus Christ, while at the same time retaining His full divinity. The theological concept that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine at the same time is known as a "hypostatic union". (File that away for the next time you want to impress someone at a party or are playing trivia). It can be difficult to wrap our minds around, but it is a central tenet of our faith.

From a practical view, what this means is that God cares enough about us to have become a human being. He didn't just stay in heaven and watch us "from a distance". He rolled up His sleeves, so to speak, and was not afraid to get involved in our world and our lives - with all the inconvenience, the pain, and suffering that human life involves. In fact, we believe that He even suffered and died for us so that we could be reconciled with Him and with each other, and so that we could live forever in eternity.

What we have learned from the Bible and what Christian theology teaches is that God doesn't make our pain magically go away. Personally, there are days when I think it would be nice if God had some sort of magic wand that He could wave and suddenly make all our problems disappear, but that is not the way He has chosen to work. Instead He chooses to suffer with us, to bring us through our problems, and to give us the promise of a better future. Sometimes things get better for us in this world but sometimes we have to wait for eternity for that to take place.

The Jewish people had a Hebrew name for the Messiah, a name that was applied to Jesus. That name is "Emmanuel" which means "God is with us".

He is with us and has promised to never leave us. Knowing this can bring us hope and peace during a very difficult year. What more could we ask for at Christmas?



I Will Light Candles This Christmas

I will light candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

Howard Thurman

From The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations, by

A Different Kind of Christmas Pageant! Bethlehemian Rhapsody

Here's a Christmas-flavoured version of the Queen classic, Bohemian Rhapsody, put together by the puppet team at Fairfax Church of Christ.

The lyrics, written by Mark Brady, provide a brilliant take on the Christmas story. The soundtrack sounds great.

Production values are nothing like The Muppets, being an amateur group no doubt put together by an all age cast. You will love it!

If you enjoy puppet theatre and/or if you love Queen, take a look - click on the image of angels below - And enjoy!

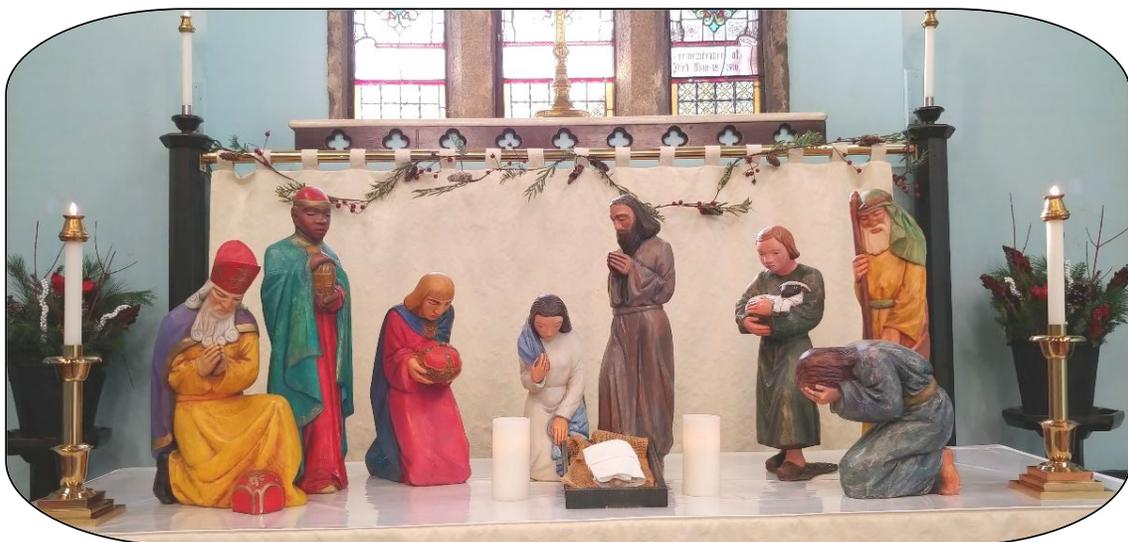


Note: Turn on the subtitles in YouTube to get the full effect of how clever this is. You can find the closed captions/subtitles icon at the bottom of the YouTube screen. It

looks like this (but smaller)



Keeping Connected will not be issued between Christmas and New Year. Wishing you a holy and joyful Christmas. See you next year!



The figures which make up St Paul's crèche have been an integral part of our Christmas celebrations for many years. They were donated in December 1974 by the artist **Doris McCarthy**, thanks to the efforts of the late Madeleine Moir, a long-time friend of the artist and member of St. Paul's. Doris

was well known for her painting of landscapes from Newfoundland, to the Rocky Mountains, to the Arctic.

The figures were restored recently thanks to the generous donation from Madeleine Moir's estate and the combined efforts of Ann Bird and Bob Bassett.

Let the Stable Still Astonish!

by Leslie Leyland Fields

Let the stable still astonish:

Straw-dirt floor, dull eyes,

Dusty flanks of donkeys, oxen;

Crumbling, crooked walls;

No bed to carry that pain,

And then, the child, rag-wrapped laid to cry

In a trough.

Who would have chosen this?

Who would have said:

"Yes, Let the God of Heaven and Earth be born in this place."

Who but the same God

Who stands in the darker, fouler rooms of our hearts

And says,

"Yes, let the God of Heaven and Earth be born in **THIS place.**"

READINGS

**Click on a reading to see the text from the
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) on the Bible Gateway**

December 24 and 25 (Christmas Eve and Christmas Day)

- **First reading:** [Isaiah 52:7-10](#)
- **Psalm:** [Psalm 98](#)
- **Second reading:** [Hebrews 1:1-4](#)
- **Gospel:** [John 1:1-14](#)

December 27 (Christmas 1)

- **First reading:** [Isaiah 61:10-62:3](#)
- **Psalm:** [Psalm 148](#)
- **Second reading:** [Galatians 4:4-7](#)
- **Gospel:** [Luke 2:22-40](#)

January 3 (Christmas 2)

- **First reading:** [Jeremiah 31:7-14](#)

- **Psalm:** [Psalm 147:12-20](#)
 - **Second reading:** [Ephesians 1:3-14](#)
 - **Gospel:** [John 1: 10-18](#)
-



Your prayers are requested for the peace of Jerusalem and peace throughout the world

In the World. Pray for Christian leaders world-wide and for the work of the ecumenical movement: His Holiness Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome; His All Holiness Archbishop Bartholomew of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch; The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches; Bishop Ivan M Abrahams, General Secretary World Methodist Council; The Reverend Chris Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

In our Companion Diocese, the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, we pray for Redeemer Church, Amman, Jordan and we pray for Church of the Holy Family, Raineih, Israel.

Pray for our mission partners, Pastors Max and Raquel Candi, and for their work at the Vidas Mission in Ayacucho, Peru.

In Canada. Pray for Director Joe Vecsi and the staff of Communications and Information Resources; Director Hannah Goschy and the staff of Financial Management and Administration at the national church.

In our Diocese. Pray for the Rt. Rev. Shane Parker, our bishop and Michael Bird, our assisting bishop; For the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ our Saviour

In Our Community. We ask God's blessing on local faith communities and on their ministries and, we pray for the people and leaders of this town of Almonte and the surrounding communities that the Lord will help us contribute to its well-being. We pray volunteers and clients of our local satellite Food Bank, the Almonte Food Cupboard, providing food security support to local area people.

In Our Parish. We pray for Jonathon, our priest, for ourselves and for each other. We remember those who are missing loved ones at this time, asking for God's comfort and peace.

We ask for God's blessing on our members Ann Ladouceur, Lorraine Lee, Karen Luyendyk, Linda MacDonald. Peter and Winnie MacNeill, and Bev Madden.

We remember our neighbors, especially Assad, Alsit, Lana and Elias.



Copyright © 2020 St Paul's Anglican Church - Almonte, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

