

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:00 pm Children's Eucharist and Blessing of Crèche
5:30 pm Contemporary Eucharist (Volunteer Choir)
7:00 pm *Christmas Eucharist at Christ Church Chapel, Drayton*
7:00 pm Choral Eucharist (Parish Choir)
10:00 pm Choral Eucharist (Parish Choir)

Message from Interim Rector

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. John's;



On December 24 we will read again that the angels in heaven burst through the thin veil between heaven and earth to announce the birth of God's son: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those He favours." God 'favoured' human beings by his visible, mortal presence on earth.

The baby Jesus grew up to give more love than we can fully embrace. We can be uplifted by God's love for us and strengthened by knowing we will never be alone. When we know that we have been brought into a loving relationship with God by Jesus we can experience true peace. The shepherds ran to see the child and "returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen." The story is so familiar to us that the awesomeness of what God has done gets lost in the busyness of our preparations to celebrate Jesus' birth. Can we sit quietly and let the peace of God's presence penetrate to the core of our anxieties? Can we consider what "glorifying and praising God" looks like in 2017?

In 1948, some rabbis were discussing what religious freedoms Christians would have when Israel became a state. One rabbi became legendary when he noted that Christians could not be stopped from telling the good news of Jesus because that is what Christianity is all about. To glorify God is to reveal God in our lives and interactions with others.

Mission centers in Britain called 'minsters' sprang up when ordinary Christians could not keep the wonderful news of Jesus to themselves. The names Westminster and Yorkminster remind us of this heritage. Over the centuries Anglican Christianity became more private and inward looking. The news of the incarnation of God is not for us alone.

It has five months since it has been my privilege to serve the congregation of St. John, the Evangelist. I have been inspired by your commitment to serve God by reaching out to and caring for those who need assistance. I have been uplifted by worshiping with you. A new rector will join you on January 1. Paul Walker will become part of this Holy community. Don't "hide your light under a bushel." Invite others to participate in the Advent and Christmas services and to meet Paul when he arrives.

May our praise this season glorify God to be a blessing for all who need peace in their lives.

A blessed Christmas to you,

Barbara

The Rev. Dr. Barbara Sykes



Message from Rector Emeritus

Dear Friends,

The Christmas story is a revelatory event. God's entry into human history, His taking flesh and dwelling amongst us, has meaning and purpose beyond our deepest thoughts. Just consider: He was born in a manger, in a stable, smelling of straw and animals, not in a palace or in regal splendor. He was born a gentle babe, powerless, in his mother Mary's arms. He was born in rustic poverty with no hint of worldly power and glory – rough and ragged shepherds were his first visitors. Yes, He was born to bring love and mercy where there had been oppression and fear. But He did so, not by might and political prowess, but by gentleness and humility. He taught us the true meaning of hospitality – the love of the stranger – by befriending the outcast, sinners, tax collectors, and aliens alike. He invited the poor, the halt and the blind, and those who could never reciprocate, to His table. He didn't just send money to the needy, He welcomed them to sup with Him. Finally, He was unjustly and cruelly crucified for all our sakes and covered our sin and guilt with His righteousness.

St. Paul put the Christmas message as well as anyone: "wherefore, receive ye one another, as Christ also **received** us, to the Glory of God".

Merry Christmas, Robert

Treasurer's Update- When considering your weekly offerings, please keep in mind general parish expenses. These include (among other things) payroll, utilities, telephone, caretaking and maintenance, office expenses and insurance. Actual general offerings trail budgeted general offerings by \$42,054 as of Dec 10, 2017. At this point in 2016, actual general offerings trailed budget by \$46,603. Pre-Authorized Payment plans help to ensure a consistent offering stream throughout the year to help us meet Parish expenses and also present an opportunity for the Parish to avoid significant bank fees. If you are considering enrolling for a Pre-Authorized Payment plan or if you would like to update an existing plan, please ask for the forms at the Parish Centre. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS EVE

4:00 pm	Family Eucharist and Blessing of Crèche (Youth Choir)
5:30 pm	Contemporary Eucharist (BAS) (Volunteer Choir)
7:00 pm	<i>Christmas Eucharist Christ Church Chapel, Drayton</i>
7:00 pm	Choral Eucharist (BCP) (Parish Choir)
10:00 pm	Choral Eucharist (BCP) (Parish Choir)

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 AM	Choral Eucharist (BCP) (Parish Choir members)
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Sunday, January 14

11:00 am	Lessons & Carols for Epiphany (Parish Choir)
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