



STARBUCK UNITED CHURCH CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2020

P.O. Box 66 Starbuck, Manitoba R0G 2P0

<http://www.meridian-pastoral-charge.ca/starbuck>



Minitster's Message

"Hope is a star that shines in the night, leading us on till the morning is bright. 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."

The first verse of 'Hope is a Star' (Voices United 7) for me captures one of the essential aspects of Advent and our lives as Christians: **hope**. The Christian virtue of hope is more than optimism or wishful thinking. It is rooted in the Hebrew concept of hope which is more akin to expectation or even certainty; just as we know with almost 100% certainty the sun will rise tomorrow, our hope as Christians is that we believe the Kingdom of God on earth will come in its fullness. The preparations of Advent to celebrate the birth of the Jesus at Christmas form us to be a people that work unceasingly to bring about the birth of Christ in our world today. Our hope empowers us all to be midwives of peace, joy, and love.

Jewish thought recognizes two kinds of hope. One is a hope that things will get better, even when we know it may not come to pass as we wish. This is called in Hebrew *tikvah*, and it may be identified as that which springs eternal in the human heart, the natural capacity to anticipate a better future.

The other kind of hope is a yearning for the better life that we know with certainty the future does hold for all humankind. This is called *tocheles*. The belief in the coming of the messianic era belongs to that latter kind of hope. Down through the ages, Judaism looked forward to the coming of the messianic era, a time of the fulfillment of humanity's desires for peace and harmony on earth. An era which we believe began at Jesus' birth 2000 years ago and continues to grow today; an era which requires our participation and work to enable it to flourish.

So there are two kinds of hope, with one built on the other. The first is as natural and as integral to human functioning as our heart and lungs; the other is a transcendent vision, essential to our faith, but requires some work on our part. To learn and grow in our faith, to prepare: this is the work of Advent. Hope is more than a feeling or an abstract idea; it is a tangible part of the structure of all creation. As the Psalmist (59:17) says: "I will sing of your kindness in the morning." God has created a world of day and night. Night symbolizes darkness, pain, destruction, exile. Morning is a time of light, healing, restoration and redemption. In Judaism, each calendar day begins with night, at sunset. Every 24-hour period consists of a night followed by a day. In Jewish thought, nothing is accidental. God created the day to follow the night to teach us that there is always something good to look forward to, something to live for. No matter how bad the night, the sun always rises. God has imbued each one of us with a sensitivity to the possibilities that every single day carries with it. We know there is always hope, no matter how dark the night.

As I write this, there are now two Covid-19 vaccines which appear to be 95% effective. The light at the end of this dark pandemic is starting to shine brighter. We still do not know what is in store for us this Christmas in terms of get-togethers and celebrations but I hope and pray that the current crisis we are in ends soon. I also hope that when some semblance of normality returns to our lives, we don't forget the lessons we've learned from this pandemic: that we're all in this together, that so many people are essential to keep our communities going, and our need to be connected, to be part of community and the tremendous power we have to help each other and make life better for many. This Advent, may our hope console us, guide us and inspire us to build an ever-more Christ-like community.

Rev. James debeer



Christ in Christmas-Advent Scripture Journey



1st Sunday of Advent:

God will be born to us—*Isaiah 9:2-6*

Creation—*Genesis 1:26-31*

Tuesday: The Fall—*Genesis 3:1-24*

Wednesday: The promise of Redemption—*Genesis 3:15* (Many images depicting Mary show her standing on a snake, implying the ‘undoing’ of the Fall and humanity’s redemption in Jesus)

Thursday: A prophet will come—*Deuteronomy 18:15-19*

Friday: A young woman with child—*Isaiah 7:10-14*

Saturday: A righteous judge—*Isaiah 11:1-5*

2nd Sunday of Advent: The birth of Jesus—*Matthew 1:19-25*

Monday: A saviour and deliverer—*Isaiah 19:19-25*

Tuesday: the Sovereign Lord comes—*Isaiah 40:9-11*

Wednesday: Behold my chosen one—*Isaiah 42:1-4*

Thursday: A servant brings salvation—*Isaiah 49:1-7*

Friday: A man of sorrows—*Isaiah 53:1-12*

Saturday: God’s Spirit is upon him—*Isaiah 61:1-3*

3rd Sunday of Advent: The Shepherds & The Angles—*Luke 2:8-20*

Monday: A righteous branch—*Jeremiah 23:5-6*

Tuesday: A ruler over Israel—*Micah 5:2*

Wednesday: Your king is coming—*Zechariah 9:9-10*

Thursday: The Messenger is sent—*Malachi 3*

Friday: The birth of John is foretold—*Luke 1:1-25*

Saturday: The announcement to Mary—*Luke 1:26-38*

4th Sunday of Advent: The Visit of the Magi—*Matthew 2:1-12*

Monday: Elizabeth and Mary—*Luke 1:39-56*

Tuesday: The birth of Jesus—*Luke 1:57-80*

Wednesday: Presentation in the temple—*Luke 2:21-38*

Thursday: The pre-eminent Christ—*Colossians 1:15-23*

Friday: Worthy is the lamb—*Revelation 5:1-14*

Saturday: New heaven and a new earth—*Revelation 21:1-7*

Christmas Eve: Celebrating the Birth of Jesus—*Luke 1:67-69*





Chair's Message

At the time of writing this it is easy to get caught up in all the negative news which seems to be unending. It is important to remember that Advent is a season of patient waiting and hope.

We know that this is an Advent season unlike any we have experienced but even in these times there is room for gratitude and time to appreciate what we have .

We should all try to celebrate Advent and the Birth of Christ however we are able. The sacrifices we are asked to make now pale in comparison to what has been asked of previous generations. There is the famous example of the Christmas cease fire in WW 1 to emphasize the special nature of the season and also the hardships suffered in the past. If we are unable to meet in person then let us all think of each other, try to keep in touch and hope for better things to come.

If it is allowed the Lutheran church will have an outdoor service of approximately 15 minutes at 8p.m. On Christmas Eve which we are welcome to attend. Again, this will depend on the restrictions in place at the time. Our own plans are yet to be formed depending on what happens in the meantime.

The needs of the less fortunate are still utmost in our thoughts and I would remind you of the work of Knox United and other like minded charities.

Personally I wish each of you a safe and happy Advent Season and truly hope that next year we can return to something more usual.

Best Wishes to all!

Margaret.



White Gift

We are unable to organize White Gift donations this year. If you wish to donate to a charity of your choice, feel free. Below is a list of whom we have donated to in the past:

Knox United Church 400 Edmonton St. Wpg. MB R38 2M2M

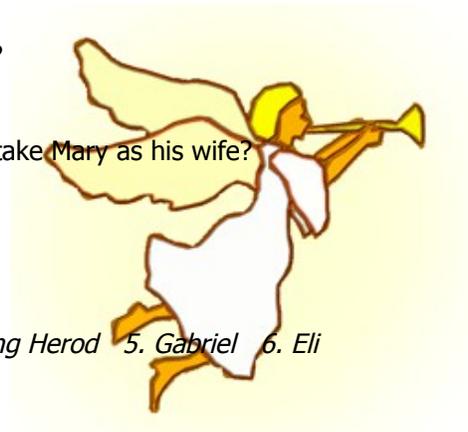
One Just City 365 McGee Winnipeg, R3G 3M5

Willow Place Shelter (formally Osborne House) email pamh@willowplace.ca



CHRISTMAS STORY QUIZ

1. In which city was Jesus born?
2. Why was Jesus a very special baby?
3. Who wanted to kill the baby Jesus?
4. In which gospels can you find the Nativity story?
5. Which archangel appeared to Joseph to inform him to "not fear" to take Mary as his wife?
6. What was the name of Jesus' earthly grandfather?
7. In which gospel are the Wise Men mentioned?
8. In which gospel do the shepherds appear?



ANSWERS

2. He was the son of God 7. Matthew 4. Matthew and Luke 3. King Herod 5. Gabriel 6. Eli
8. Luke 1. Bethlehem





Congregant's Christmas Wishes

Love and best wishes to everyone during this very difficult holiday season. Merry Christmas and wishes for a happy and healthy New Year. Be well, stay safe. God Bless Ellie

Thinking and missing all of you especially during the Christmas season! Mum will come out and spend time with Larry and me. Have a safe and joyous Christmas.
Love Diane

"Wishing everyone warm and friendly wishes for peace, kindness and good health."

Janis McMorran

Wishing all of our Starbuck family a safe and blessed Christmas.

Love, Linda and Zolt Virag

