

John Black Memorial United Church

Christmas Newsletter 2018



CHRISTMAS AT JOHN BLACK

Dec. 1: Christmas Tea
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Join us for a tea, crafts, baking and a children's Xmas shop.

Dec. 3, 10, 17: Christmas Book Study, 7 p.m.
 We look at the book *The First Christmas*.

Dec. 5: Blue Christmas, 7 p.m.
 A time of quiet reflection, support and healing as we approach the sometimes "too joyful" Christmas season.

Dec. 9: White Gift Sunday
 We welcome non-perishable foods or financial gifts for the Christmas Cheer Board.

Dec. 20: Christmas Wave, 7:30 a.m.
 Bring some coffee and a smile and join us for our seventh annual Christmas Wave.

Christmas Eve Family Service, 5:30 p.m.
 The Christmas story is told with and for children and their grown-ups.

And in our community... Christmas Eve Late Services

Immanuel: 7 p.m.
 Gordon-King: 7 p.m.
 Grey Street: 7 p.m.
 North Kildonan: 7 p.m.
 Birds Hill United: 7:30 p.m.
 Immanuel: 9 p.m.



WELCOMING THE SEASON

Advent is a time to welcome the season of hope, peace, joy, and love as we await the birth of the Christ child.

This Advent, I invite you each evening, to focus on these four blessings and think about how they have touched your life on any particular day.

We celebrate hope in our lives as we anticipate the coming of the Christ Child into a world desperate for hope. We celebrate the hope that shines like a star in the dark night sky to lead us forward as a people searching for new possibilities in our lives and in our world.

We long for peace, an inner peace to calm our spirits and assure us that no matter what happens, God is with us and we are not alone. We search for peace in our world, a peace that enables us to reach out to a broken world.

We embrace the joy of a child, a giddiness and glee, as we anticipate the excitement of the season. We revel in the joy of our Christian faith that is central to all we do and that enables us to reach out to others and share our abundance with joy in our hearts.



Advent is a season of every emotion under Heaven.

As Advent approaches, our hearts begin to soften through a love born to us as a baby fast asleep in the hay. A love that gives without counting the cost, a love that is compassion, peaceful, full of grace, and a love that endures all things.

Advent is a season of every emotion under Heaven. This is a time of family and of memories and traditions that are lived out in hope, peace, joy, and love together.

It is a time to be mindful of those who find this season difficult and to embrace them with a wonderful love that might lift their spirits.

May this be a special Advent season as we focus daily on our experience of God reaching out to us in the spirit of hope, peace, joy, and love so that we might do the same.

Merry Christmas! Peace and Goodwill to all!

Rev. Laurie Howard





Twice a year, quilters gather at John Black to make quilts that are then sent to the Mennonite Central Committee for distribution to wherever they are needed. This fall, 13 participants from the age of 8 to 90 spent November 3 sewing six beautiful quilts. We appreciate their gift of time and talent on behalf of the church!

- Photos by Larry Lobay

December is Super Month for house groups

Hello John Black family! As has happened for the last few years, December is super month for house groups. That means that no one house group is responsible for the support of worship in December—we all are!

Shortly there will be sheets in the Narthex for you to sign to indicate when and how you are able to support both Sunday worship and Christmas Eve worship (this year at 5:30 p.m.) Please take a moment to consider your plans for the Advent season, and sign up for a task that fits with your plans. It is a busy time for everyone, but if you are coming to church anyway...

As always, thank you in advance for your time and your talents. It's the most wonderful time of the year!

On the calendar at John Black United...

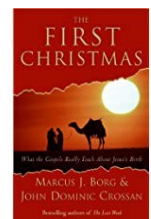
A Christmas Tea, Crafts, Bake Sale and Children's Christmas Room happens at John Black United Church on Saturday, Dec. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join us for a bake and craft sale, silent auction and a delicious luncheon. Invite your friends, relatives, neighbours and little ones who can shop in the children's Christmas room. Treat someone special to a lovely day.

Help is always needed. Sign-up sheets are in the narthex. Donations of new items for the silent auction can be dropped off at the church between 9 a.m. and noon and 1-4 p.m. weekdays.

Sobeys/Safeway Gift Cards will be available until December 2, with delivery on December 9. This is a great fundraiser as the church benefits from your purchase and you get the total value of the card. The cards also make great Christmas gifts and would be an ideal donation for our silent auction at the Christmas tea. If you're unable to attend church but would like to order gift cards, please contact Ken Bradshaw at ken-bradshaw@hotmail.com, or phone 204-669-1586.

Christmas book study: In *The First Christmas*, two of today's top Jesus scholars, Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, join forces to show how history has biased our reading of the nativity story as it appears in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Their book helps us to see this well-known narrative afresh by answering the question, "What do these stories mean?" in the context of both the first century and the 21st century. They successfully show that the Christmas story, read in its original context, is far richer and more challenging than people imagine.



Everyone is invited to explore this topic more during a Christmas book study at John Black. Rev. Laurie will be leading the discussion on three Monday evenings in December: Dec. 3, 10 and 17 at 7 p.m. Because this book must be ordered, please register for the book study in advance by signing up in the narthex, phoning the office at 204-661-2579 or emailing jblackuc@mymts.net



JIGGN welcomes Bird's Hill United to group

JIGGN—the group of lay people who met in the spring of 2017 to coordinate summer services—still meets to share ongoing activities and to coordinate study groups and special services (e.g. in Advent and Lent).

The original four churches—John Black, Immanuel, Gordon-King and Grey Street—were later joined by North Kildonan and just recently by Bird's Hill United. As a result, we are now BJIGGN and when possible we have clergy attend meetings.

All are invited to the pre-Advent potluck dinner at Immanuel on Saturday, Dec. 1 from 5 to 7 p.m. Numbers are required for set up so please sign the poster in the narthex by Nov. 28.

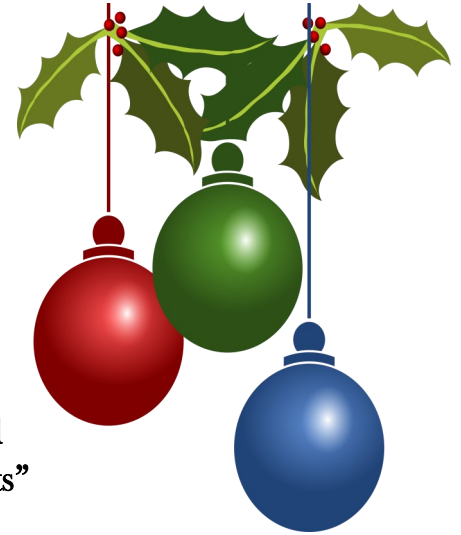
On December 30, Rev. Laurie will be taking a well-deserved rest and the Worship Interest Group will be organizing a service of worship that will involve much carol-singing. Following the service, we will enjoy everyone's leftover Christmas baking! We're calling it "Tunes and Tidbits."

**Saturday, Dec. 1
5-7 p.m.**

**Immanuel United
Pre-Advent
Potluck Dinner**

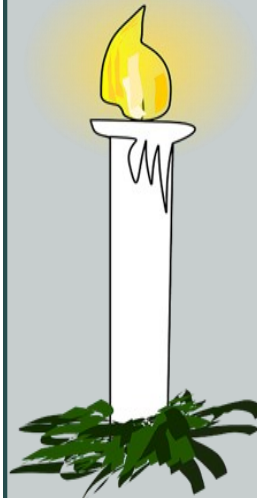
**Sunday, Dec. 30
10:30 a.m.**

**John Black United
"Tunes and Tidbits"**



"Little Bo Pipe" and her flock remind JB members that financial donations are still needed to meet the cost of repairs to our boiler and to the elevator. We are getting closer to our goal of raising \$19,176—\$15,065 for the boiler and \$4,111 for the elevator. Ba...ba...ba...

An Invitation ... Blue Christmas Service Wednesday, Dec. 5, 7 p.m.



The "Blue Christmas" tradition honours the feeling many people have that the Christmas season is not an easy one to get through. Although the joyful carols play throughout the malls and public places, loss, anxiety, life transitions and painful past experiences can make what is lifted up as a time of good cheer into a time of angst.

Blue Christmas acknowledges the sadness we all feel at times but offers, as well, a gentle word of hope and healing. It will be a time of quiet reflection and fellowship.

This is an open invitation; please feel free to invite others. Everyone is welcome. Refreshments will be served.

May God's peace be with you this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

The Pastoral Care Team

Getting to know our new minister, Rev. Laurie Howard

We wanted to get to know Rev. Laurie a little bit better, so we asked her some questions. She graciously replied.

Where did you grow up? Winnipeg in Garden City and moved to Fort Rouge after high school.

Where did you receive your training to be a minister? The University of Winnipeg and then the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax.

Where was your last posting as a minister? Lyons Memorial United Church in Gore Bay, Manitoulin Island, Ontario; before that Jamaica and Theodore, Sask.

What was your most favourite previous job? I have loved all my jobs but most recently: Creative Retirement Manitoba where I was the Schools Program Manager.

Do you have siblings? I had three but sadly lost a brother two years ago. I am still blessed with an older brother and a younger sister.

What about a life partner? Deceased.

Do you have children? Four: 2 boys, 2 girls...one in Calgary, one in the Caribbean and two in Winnipeg.

Grandchildren? Five...three grandsons (18, 19 and 22) in Calgary, and two granddaughters in Niverville—a 3-year-old and the other is 4 months.

Favourite activity with the grandkids? Ziplining, but enjoy anything and everything except karaoke.

Your favourite colour? Blue

Favourite food? Sushi

Favourite movie? I'm a Libra. I cannot pick one.

Favourite book? Too many to choose from.

Pets? Smokey Bud, Soda, Kaiser, Silver, and Evey...all dogs.



Hobbies? Painting, felting, pretty much any crafts, reading, watching movies.

Would you bungee jump? Absolutely!

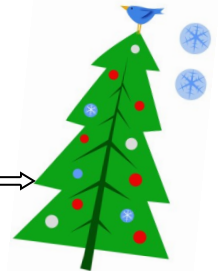
Sports? Go Jets Go!

Music? An eclectic mix but not a huge fan of country.

Favourite smells? Christmas trees!!!!

Favourite Bible character? Vashti

Anything else? I am well travelled and love adventures!



Preparing for Advent at John Black United

The season of Advent, the beginning of the church year, begins on December 2.

With the season comes the changing of banners, decorated spaces, Christmas trees, and the stable.

If you are approached to be part of the telling of the nativity story your participation would be appreciated.

As has become tradition, hardy souls will greet morning commuters with a friendly wave on Thursday, December 20 between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. Costumes are available at the church for anyone who comes out.



Christmas Wave 2017

The Christmas Eve service/pageant is December 24 at 5:30 p.m. Any children who would like to be part of the story can choose and wear a costume—no

practise necessary. It is always fun!

Throughout the season there will be opportunities to share our wealth as we contribute non-perishable food and gifts to the Christmas Cheer Board on White Gift Sunday, December 9. Toiletries, mitts, socks, and hats are an ongoing need at West Broadway and can also be brought on White Gift Sunday.

The December 30 service at John Black is being co-ordinated by the Worship Interest Group and will be an opportunity to enjoy singing the music of the season. Please join us.