

John Black Memorial United Church

Christmas Newsletter 2019

CHRISTMAS AT JOHN BLACK

Nov. 30: Messy Christmas, 10-11:30 a.m.

Sign up and bring your kids and grandkids to Robertson Hall for food, fun, Christmas crafts and songs.

Dec. 7: Christmas Tea, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Enjoy a light lunch with family and friends. Check out the silent auction, baking, craft sale, children's shopping room, and more!

Dec. 8: White Gift Sunday & Children's Christmas Pageant 10:30 a.m.

We welcome gifts of non-perishable food items, warm hats, mitts or socks, gifts for children, teens and adults. All are gratefully received and will be delivered to the Christmas Cheer Board.

Dec. 11: Blue Christmas, 7 p.m. A time of quiet reflection, support and healing as we approach the sometimes "too joyful" Christmas season.

Dec. 23 Christmas Wave, 7:30 a.m. It's a tradition! Join angels, shepherds and kings who extend a friendly wave to commuters. Then come inside for a hot drink before packing treat bags to be given to children on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve Family Service, 5:30 p.m. Experience the wonder of Christmas!

Please note: there will not be a late Christmas Eve Service at John Black United Church.

BABY JESUS REMINDS US THAT WE ARE HUMAN

I love Christmas! I am like a kid in a candy shop. I get giddy with the anticipation of that magical day when all things appear to be bright and beautiful and I get a feeling that anything is possible.

Amidst the clamor of family, the glitter and glitz, the garlands and greenery, the chocolates and festivities, the greeting cards and gifts, the movies and music, decorated trees and stockings hung...there is a tickling fullness in my heart that bursts out of my being as pure joy.

But on Christmas Eve, as I await the clatter of reindeer hooves on my roof, I will sip on a hot beverage and sit back and forget about all the Christmas hustle and bustle. This is my secret, magical moment to be grateful for the gifts of the star and the stable. For without them, the season is far from



complete for me.

If there is no Christ in Christmas, then we have totally missed the profound miracle of a baby

God comes to us with great hope, peace, joy and love in the Advent season.

born in a smelly stable and laid to rest in a feeding trough. God comes to us with great hope, peace, joy, and love in the Advent season; a tradition born of a story told long ago and far away.

The excitement and anticipation are only a full experience of the promise and presence of God in our lives when we feel that familiar tug on our heart strings on that silent night.

Emotions are on high alert and are triggered maybe by the ringing of a distant bell, the singing of a familiar carol, a loved one in the nativity play, or perhaps a whisper from an angel that is so deep and rich and

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CHRISTMAS IS A TIME TO SEE THE GOODNESS AROUND US

Christmas is special. Christmas is family. Christmas is joy. Christmas is unique.

No matter how old I get, Christmas will always be special. Kids make Christmas special. I feel like a kid at Christmas and that is okay. It is special in our homes and at John Black Church. I love Christmas.

What does Christmas mean to us at John Black and what should it mean?

We're often told that Christmas is stressful for some and lonely for others and too much of a spending frenzy for many. Christmas is also a time when we look beyond ourselves and when we want only the best for those closest to us and for all who are in need in our world.

It is also a time to hear again the familiar story of the birth of Jesus Christ...a time when we long for peace on earth and goodwill among all people.

But Christmas is more than simply the celebration of the birth of a baby. The story takes us beyond the glitter and the tinsel and the lights to something much deeper.

Christmas is a time for looking to see goodness and beauty in those around us; to look at tragedy and see the stories of kindness and compassion that carry with them hope; to look at the violence and see the efforts made to change these patterns and see in them signals of hope for a safer world; to look at our environment and see the beauty that is there and to hear the call

for alternatives as signals of hope for our planet.

wish you and yours a joyous Christmas season.

On behalf of all the members of our Leadership Team, I

*Ross Wedlake, Chair
Leadership Team*

A word from WIG...

The Worship Interest Group (WIG) asks you to make note of dates and times of activities through Advent and for the Christmas Eve service listed on the front page of the newsletter. We especially encourage you to join us for the now traditional WAVE on December 23 at 7:30 a.m. as we greet commuters on their way to work.

We are also invited to join our TBJGGN friends at any of their services if their times are more convenient; check the bulletin board. Traditionally Immanuel United has had a potluck supper the Saturday before Advent begins—this year November 30. To make it less onerous on them we are all asked to help with food, set-up, cleanup, and preparing the craft activity. Please check the sheets in the Narthex and sign up today.

Thank you to those who signed up at the Opportunity Fair to assist with small tasks that make worship services flow more smoothly. There are still opportunities for you to participate.

Some examples of tasks left are assisting Rev. Laurie with skits (adults or youth); helping to hang banners and parameters, or helping to form a new banner group to augment our existing collection; helping with funeral receptions or greeting the bereaved family before the service; or joining the Pastoral Care Team in leading a twice-yearly service at Concordia Place, or making a friendly phone call to a shut-in.

There are many ways we can care for one another, enhance our worship time, and celebrate our separate but complementary gifts with our larger church family. From the Worship Interest Group blessings for Advent and Christmas and please join us for carols, cookies, and fellowship at our regular Sunday service on December 29 at 10:30 a.m.

Laurie's message continued...

bright and beautiful that deep in our hearts we know undeniably that God is with us.

The baby Jesus reminds us that we are human, frail at times and courageous at others. We are but a small blip in history and Jesus calls us to make a difference in this place and this time, humbly and boldly.

Let us continue our work in the mission of Christ and do so with great love in our hearts and joy in our souls as we recognize how very precious life is. We are all of God and blessed with an unconditional love that never ceases to surprise us again and again.

May this season be filled with family and friends, good health and good food, and most of all the rich blessings of that Holy night as we sing out with gravitas, "Joy to the World, the Lord is come."



A very Merry Christmas and a blessed new year to all.

Rev. Laurie

Can you help? *The Christmas Tea planners need your help! Items for the silent auction, donations of baking and crafts, and the gift of your time would be appreciated. Volunteers are needed for setup and takedown, to help in the kitchen, the children's gift shop, at the silent auction and baking table, and in the Christmas garage sale area. Call Donna Fabbri at 204-338-2922 if you can help.*



Photos by Wanda McConnell

Piper Evan Maydaniuk added solemnity to the Remembrance Day service on November 10...The bi-annual quilt workshop on November 2 produced 12 beautiful quilts; 11 were sent to the Mennonite Central Committee.



Photo by Larry Lobay

Opportunities abound to be involved

We are all used to seeing the easels set up in the Narthex, covered with papers listing tasks that can be completed to help with a meal, a celebration, with Super Month, Market Day, etc.

But as you learned during October, Stewardship Month, there are many jobs to be done that never get listed on those sheets. Many of those are the tasks completed by Interest Groups. When Interest Groups were formed during the restructuring of our governing body at John Black, the idea was that people who had like interests would come together to form an Interest Group.

Under the old committee system, members were only able to be part of a committee for a defined length of time, after which they had to leave that group. Many chose to join another committee, but often it was because they wanted to help in some way, even if it couldn't be the way their hearts chose.

As a result of moving to Interest Groups, many people have been part of a particular Interest Group since it began, because that is what their hearts choose.

However, even the most dedicated of Interest Group members can use some help at some times. At the Opportunity Fair, held the end of October, you had the opportunity to view and select some of the tasks regularly carried out by members of the Interest Groups. Thank you for what you did select.

If you were not able to be at the Opportunity Fair, or if you find that you could choose another task, please take a look at the newly created OPPORTUNITY BOARD, located right beside the elevator.

When you find a task you could manage, take the slip, let the coordinator (whose name is on the slip) know that you are willing to take on that task, and when the time comes, do the job!

"Many hands make light work" – well, I am not sure how light the work becomes, but it is true that working together is more fun. Together we will keep John Black Memorial United Church a vibrant place.

-Brenda Wedlake

HOSPITALITY

Humility is essential
Observe the needs of others
Service with a smile
Patience with everyone
Initiative is appreciated
Teamwork makes it happen
Appreciation and gratitude
Loving kindness is key
Inquire into needs
Trusting relationships
You are the source of hospitality!

A look at information shared at the Refugee Soup Supper ...

(Held November 13 at John Black)

Mission of Sponsorship

Under the guidelines of the United Church of Canada, which is the official Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) for this undertaking of sponsorship, and in recognition of the requirements of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we accept responsibility for the settlement of newcomers entrusted to us.

Matthew 19:26

With God all things are possible.

- In all the preparation for our newcomers, there are some important life lessons for us as welcoming sponsors.
- Life we see as normal is very different than the life our new friends have experienced. Even among the five persons, the privilege of education was not given to each.
- Just as we are proud to be Canadians, our newcomers may also have grown up with a pride in many aspects of their homeland, Afghanistan. As grateful as they will be to be accepted as newcomers in Canada, they probably still will dream of Afghanistan, as it was before the ravages of war changed their lives forever.

We are responsible, first and foremost, for establishing a home which finds the basic needs of the newcomers being met. We want to ensure that all five persons have a place to live, that they are able to dress according to weather conditions, and that they are well nourished.

The lifestyle we enjoy (and take for granted) may be very different from the one we will soon be providing for our newcomers. We are encouraged by government agencies to provide the necessities (and to do that well) but not to provide lavishly.

Newcomers may have a much different perspective on what "needs" are for daily living. They may very well teach us about good stewardship of our resources and the ethos of not being wasteful with what we have.

For additional information please call Mary Bradshaw at 204-669-1586.

To ensure the well-being of our newcomers, we are entrusted to assure that their medical needs are met, including their physical, emotional, and positive mental health; that they quickly become familiar with matters of personal safety; of careful hygiene; and of good sanitation practices in their new home country.

In addition to caring for those aspects of life which are seen as caring for basic needs, there are ways we can show newcomers that we care for them as new Canadians.

Interaction with "old" Canadians is a positive way for us to model good citizenship, to assist in teaching new life skills (like riding a bus, learning to swim, attending English classes, accompanying newcomers to appointments), and to show Canadian hospitality and friendship.

As much as it is our mandate to make newcomers feel they belong in Canada, there is the gentle reminder that they bring with them a familiar culture and language. By acknowledging and embracing their ways as well as teaching them ours, we are showing that Canada is truly a country where diversity is welcomed. Given that opportunity—as we hope soon will be the case—may we indeed be

*Welcoming
to
Newcomers*

We wait with open hearts as the process of bringing our newcomers to Winnipeg unfolds.