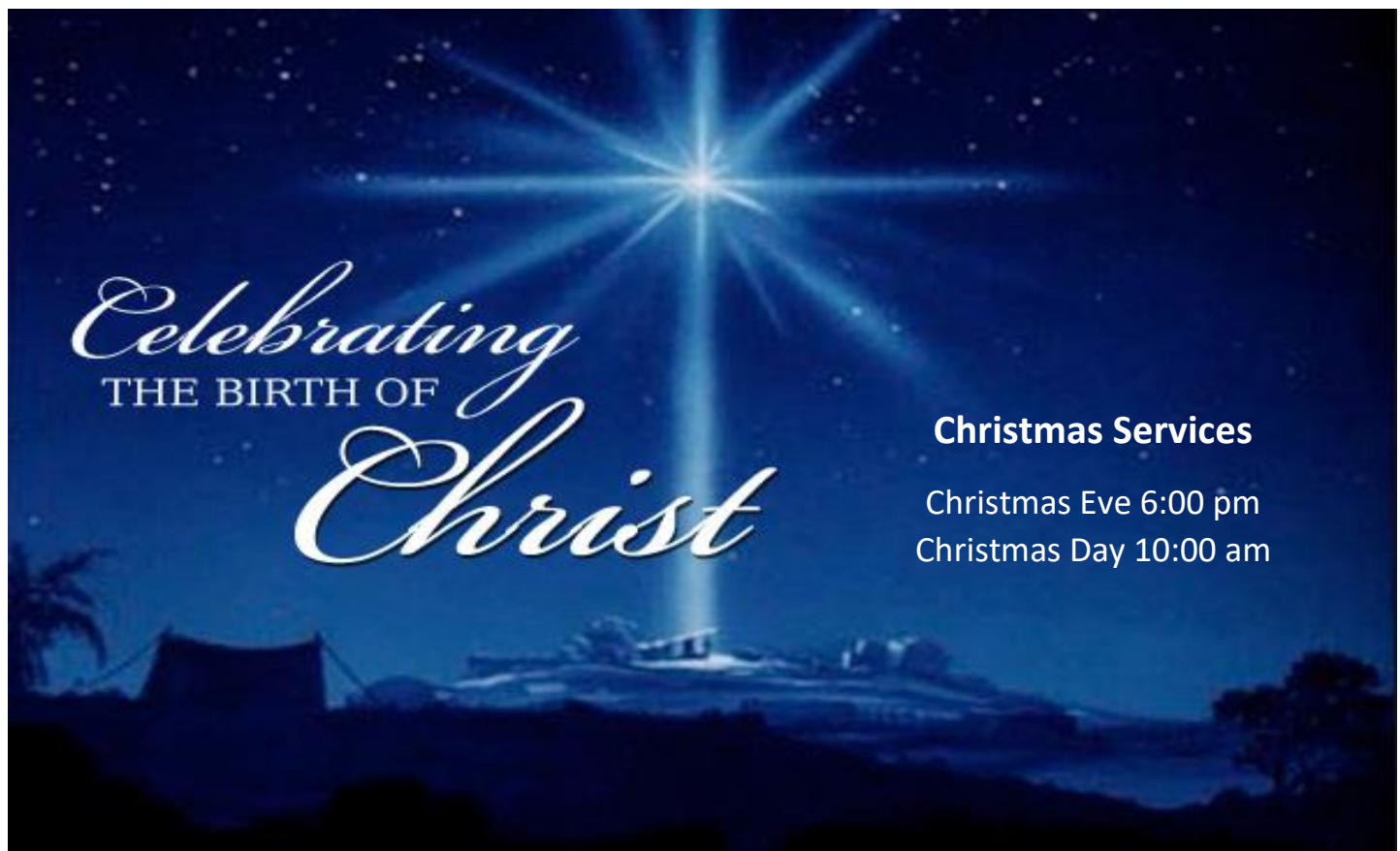




News Around the Flock

The Church of the Good Shepherd
Anglican Parish of Lancaster

Christmas 2024 Newsletter



Christmas Services

Christmas Eve 6:00 pm
Christmas Day 10:00 am

Phone: (506)635-8145 (Office open Tue-Fri 9-Noon)

Email: goodshep@nb.sympatico.ca

facebook "Church of the Good Shepherd, Saint John, NB"

Website: www.goodshepherdsj.ca



We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) and Mi'kmaq Peoples.



Advent and Christmas 2024

Dear members of Good Shepherd church ~

Advent points us back to the fact that Jesus came first in great humility and then forwards to the fact that he will come again in great majesty to judge the living and the dead. Our response is to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. The light that shatters the darkness is the paschal light we will celebrate at Easter, that brilliant light of Christ's resurrection!

Christmas tells us that God gave us his only begotten Son who took on our human form, becoming like one of us. As followers of Christ, we know the joy of rebirth as God's children by adoption and grace, and the daily renewal of the Holy Spirit.

No wonder this time of the year has such an incredible spirit. It can be no other way. When the Creator of the universe has given so grandly, so generously, so magnificently of his heart to this world, how can it not have such a dramatic impact on his creation?

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory,
glory as of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.**

John 1:14 [ESVUK]



A blessed remaining Advent and a truly Happy Christmas to all!

In the joy of God's great gift,

Keith

Fr Keith Joyce

Interim Priest-in-charge

Our Dearly Departed

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. Amen

D. Ernestine Smith, October 12

Merritt Logan, November 1



LIFT

Our Lift group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm in the Small Hall. Our October meeting was cancelled as we attended the memorial service of our own, Elaine Geary, and hosted a reception following the service.



In November we once again prepared mini-Candy Canes, 200 to be handed out by Santas helpers on Saint John West Parade Day, and 300 for St. Rose School turkey prepared at our church by their Parents Advisory team.

Unfortunately, weather cancelled the parade, so we redirected those candy canes to our Harbour View High lunch program for several weeks!



In December we held a fundraiser, the Cool Chicks and Ugly Doclings Christmas Concert. This year we served complimentary hot apple cider and homemade cookies at the preconcert reception which was a welcome and enjoyable addition to this festive event!

We shared seasonal fellowship at our December meeting as we prepared Christmas Cards to accompany our Christmas baskets.



Music



The Hand Bell Choir has decided not to practice for the rest of Dec 2024. They hope to start up again in the middle of January. Practice is on Monday nights, 6:45 pm to approximately 8:15pm. They are looking for new members and you do not need to read music - everyone is welcome! Call Lynn Adams for more information 506-635-8474

The choir practicing for the **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** which they performed for us on White Gift Sunday.





The Warmth of Christmas

Words by Roger Kendal

1. Round the tavern fires a gentle warmth is flowing.
Round the tavern lamps a welcome light is glowing.
But outside it's bleak, where icy snow is drifting,
And a deep dark grips all the freezing land.

2. Through the gloomy streets a couple plods - so weary,
Faint from miles of toil on paths they found so dreary.
Hoping for a bed on which to lay the boy child,
But there is no room, the only roof a stall.

3. In a manger mean the holy babe lies sleeping,
While the ox and ass their gentle watch are keeping.
But from that bare stall flows warmth that's deep and
lasting,
With a loving hope to light up all the world.

4. Round the tavern fires a numbing cold is seeping.
Round the tavern lamps the smothering dark is
creeping.
But outside it's warm, where shepherds kneel adoring.
And the heav'ns shine bright, alive with angels'
praise.

Submitted By: David Mitchell



Worship

The joy and calling of Confirmation

Confirmation is always a great joy. It's a time, with the bishop, when a young person, usually though not always, confirms for himself or herself, their personal commitment to Christ. That commitment had been entered into in promise at their baptism by their parents and Godparents, and now they are taking it on for themselves. Their commitment to Jesus Christ is now their own, and now publicly declared and celebrated. And so, it was a great joy to have the confirmation of Rudolph Stephen and Ralph Stephen this past November 3rd, with Archbishop Edwards presiding, confirming, and preaching at our morning worship on that Sunday. May God continue to bless them and grow them in their life in Christ.

Yet Confirmation is not an end in itself. For Rudolph and Ralph, and for all who are ever confirmed, it is a significant step in their growth in their faith in Jesus Christ. Each person confirmed is to grow in faith for as long as they live. And so, for the church, for us of this Good Shepherd church, it is important that we keep on praying for them to be strengthened in their faith in Christ, and in their living out what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes there are adults who have been baptised but never confirmed. It is more than a good thing for them to get confirmed at whatever age. Confirmation is not only for young people! Anyone in that situation please do speak to me if you would like to explore this opportunity for yourself.



Let us remember, therefore, one of the Confirmation prayers as we continue to pray for those confirmed: "Defend, O Lord, your servants with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours forever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until they come to your everlasting kingdom. Amen."

Fr Keith Joyce



Very well done

It was a delight to have a special recognition of Margaret-Ann Reid's long service as a Layreader. Margaret-Ann had started as a Layreader in 1977 at St Jude's, continuing then at St George's before carrying on at Good Shepherd upon St George's closing.

So, it was lovely that she could attend worship on November 3 and receive a certificate from Archbishop Edwards recognising her as Layreader Emerita in appreciation for her long and dedicated service.



Now, from us all at Church of the Good Shepherd, our congratulations and thanks go to Margaret-Ann for her many years of ministry as a Layreader.

Fr Keith Joyce

We will remember.....



On November 10 we observed the Act of Remembrance for those of our congregation and so many others who gave their lives in wars to date, along with those who were injured and those who suffered the psychological damage that often is experienced by those who have seen the horrors of war. We also gratefully acknowledged our veterans and those now serving in Canada's armed forces. And we remembered all innocent victims - adults, children, and infants - of every conflict.

October was **Clergy Appreciation Month**, so we took the opportunity, to once again acknowledge how grateful we are to have Fr Keith and his wife Elinor with us during this time between incumbents.



On the **third week of Advent, we celebrated with the Festival of Nine Carols and Lessons.**

Many thanks to David Mitchell, Organist and Choir Director, our choir and soloists and the readers that lead us through this beautiful service.



Livya helped her sister, Livna and her brother Livin light the candles on the Advent wreath.

A brief history of this service

(excerpted from the web site of King's College, Cambridge, England)

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held on Christmas eve 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had been just appointed the Dean of King's, after experience as an army chaplain which had convinced him that the Church of England needed more imaginative worship. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons, and from that date the service has always begun with the hymn 'Once in Royal David's city'. Yet, wherever the service is heard and however it is adapted, whether the music is provided by choir or congregation, the pattern and strength of the service, as Dean Miller-White pointed out, derive from the lessons and not the music. 'The main theme is the development of the loving purposes of God...' seen 'through the windows and words of the Bible.'



The service was first broadcast in 1928/and, with the exception of 1930, has been broadcast annually, even during the Second World war, when the ancient glass (and also all the heat!) had been removed from the Chapel and the name of the Kings could not be broadcast for security reasons. Sometime in the early 1930's the BBC began broadcasting the service on overseas programmes. It is estimated that there are millions of listeners worldwide, including those to Radio Four in the United Kingdom. In recent years it has become the practice to broadcast a digital recording o Christmas Day on Radio Three, and since 1963 a shorter service has been filmed periodically for television.

It was also **White Gift Sunday**, a time when the generous donations of food and gifts are gathered and given blessing.

The tradition of White Gift Sunday has its roots in a small Methodist church in Ohio in 1904. What began as a humble way to reflect on the love and devotion of the giver and not the value of the gift has grown into today's white gift services in many churches across several denominations.

The story is told that a minister's wife initiated the idea to solve the problem of inequity of gifts given at the Sunday School Christmas party. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, the focus shifted to bringing gifts to Jesus that could in turn be shared with people around the world who did not have much. All the gifts would come wrapped in plain white paper, so that no one would know which was an expensive gift and which was a more modest one. No one would feel ashamed of their gift, and everyone would share in the joy of giving to others.

Poverty remains part of many communities today and Churches still play a vital role not only in making someone's Christmas with simple gifts but also declaring that unseen needs are not forgotten.



*Please join us for Christmas Services.
Christmas Eve 6pm, Christmas Day 10am.*



Sunday School



Sunday School has been running every Sunday since the beginning of September. There has been an average of 2-5 kids each week. Our weekly lessons have been about embracing our Christianity. Lessons we have done include, Noah's Ark, Jesus Heals, Days of Creation and many more. For the month of December, we will focus on learning about the birth of Jesus and the creation of Christmas. To make the season even more special, we will be making fun Christmas crafts that align with our lessons. We hope to see more children joining us in Sunday School.

Altar Guild

The altar guild met on October 30 with 8 members present, as well as Father Keith. We chose Saturday November 30 as our Christmas clean up day.

To help members more easily identify the different items used in the altar set up, the shelves will be labeled, and photos of the items will be placed in a binder.



Father Keith provided instruction on the new Lavobo bowl and towel he is now using.

The towel and bowl are used by the Presider to wash his hands before beginning the Consecration.



Hospitality

The men served up a delicious Hamburger Soup at our October luncheon as we celebrated the confirmation of Rudolph and Ralph.



There will be no lunch in December as we will take a short break for Christmas. We will resume on January 19, 2025. (This editor has heard that a delicious chili may be on the menu 😊)



Come one, Come all!

Our **Annual General Meeting** will take place at our luncheon in February, February 23, and our traditional bagged lunch will be provided.



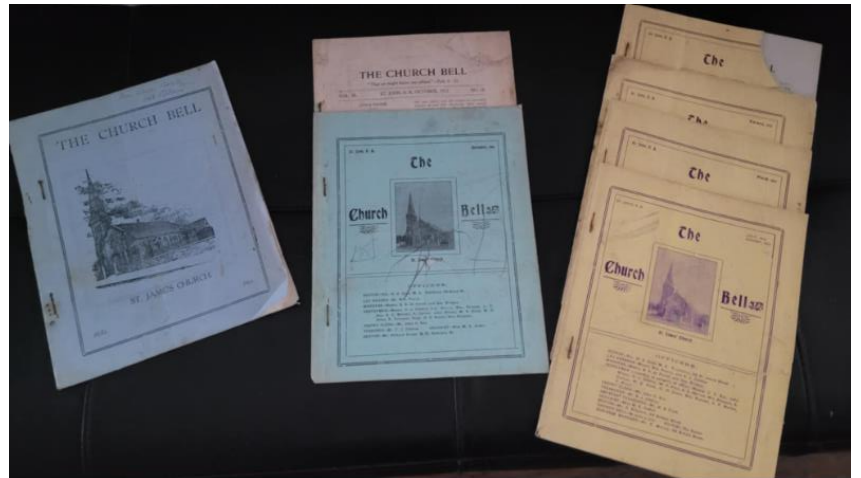
Communication



During one of our cleanups of the church we found these treasures.

Good Shepherd Newsletters from 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936 & 1937 and newsletters from St. James Church, 'The Church Bell', 1911, 1912 and 1913.

Interesting to note - we face the same concerns as they did in 1937. They noted dwindling church attendance and poor Sunday School attendance. (Though the Sunday School population at the time was slightly over 300.... A little bit higher than our current attendance rates.)



Please remember the visitor's pamphlet, which gives a bit of information on the service. We are entering into the Holiday season when people are travelling to visit family and friends. These are available the table in the Narthex. You do not need to be a greeter or vestry member to hand these out.

Annual Report

Please have your submissions for the Annual Report to Lori (goodshep@nb.sympatico.ca) at the office no later than January 24, 2025.



Mission Projects Update

The **Shepherd's Cupboard** is in good standing thanks to your donations of food. Monetary donations are also welcomed as we purchase milk, eggs and bread when we make a delivery. We are looking for others to join in helping in the delivery of groceries and perhaps offer a bit of outreach ministry when doing so. Thank you for your continued support of this mission.

We continue to support Hillcrests **Caring Closet** by delivering clothes dropped off in the Narthex. Please pray for those who provide and those who use this ministry.



Thanks to your generosity we were recently able to send the **West Side Food Bank** a cheque for \$1,461.15. Please consider dropping some change into the can in the narthex as you head into church. They are always grateful for our donations.



The Harbourview High School Brown Bag Lunch program has been running for over a year now. With a strong group of volunteers, we have been able to lift the spirits of 50 students on a weekly basis. Your contribution to this mission, whether it be volunteering to make the lunches or delivering them, providing monetary support or keeping this mission, volunteers and students in your prayers, has been invaluable.

When It's More Than a Gift Card for a Simple Meal

- ♥ When the student receiving it needs multiple assurances that the gift card is valid, and he won't be embarrassed trying to use it because any gift card he has ever received has already been used or never validated. The student is in awe that someone found him worthy of a "real" gift card.
- ♥ When the student receiving it has never made their own purchase anywhere and is delighted for the first time ever, to choose, purchase and enjoy a meal in a restaurant. That gift card has given that student a sense of independence, confidence and empowerment.
- ♥ When the gift cards are handed out to several students from different grades who don't know each other and they decide, on the spot, to go as a group to enjoy a meal together. The gift cards and subsequent meal forged a bond between students who might never have met otherwise.



Last winter our parish provided Harbourview High School with gift cards to assist students who might go hungry without access to the school lunch program over the March Break. These reactions were recently shared with us by the school's resource coordinator. We believed we were helping to feed empty bellies but, as much of what we do in the Lord's name is, it was so much more!



Christmas Baskets - 2024

There have been significant changes to the Christmas Exchange program in Saint John. As a long-standing participant of the Exchange, we voted to invest in a computer system which allows real-time registrations validation - almost nullifying duplicate registrations throughout the city. In the past, manual registrations from all participating organization were sent one person to review, compare, report and resolve duplicate registrations - a daunting task which involved many hours of work and service delays. With the new system in place, along with shared logo, messaging, and "in person" registrations, duplications are identified in real time and resources can be distributed equitably city wide.



Other changes included the Salvation Army decision to provide toys for children ages 0-13. They will not be providing any Christmas meals so they can use their resources to fill the gap left by the closure of the Empty Stocking Fund. We decided to provide pajamas and a book or stuffed animal for the children that registered with us since their parents can "shop" for appropriate toys at the Salvation Army.

Here at the Good Shepherd, we commit to providing groceries for 30 families. **Thank You** to all who have provided food donations, and monetary donations to this outreach program,

A **BIG THANK YOU** to our neighbours, the Urban Line Dance group who collected \$756 for our Christmas Basket Campaign. We even received snowsuits, scarves and mitten from various members. THANK YOU!



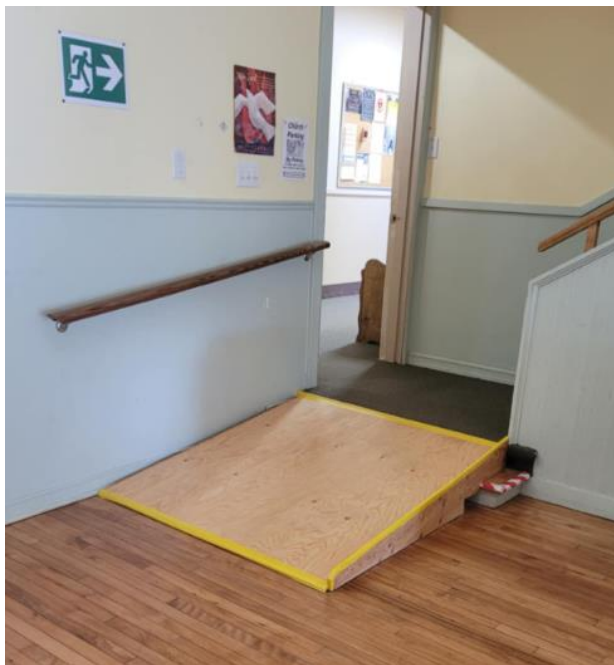


Our **Seafarers Mission** Boat will make an appearance in January. We know that donations are needed and welcomed throughout the year. Here is a list of suggestions for items that are appreciated by seafarers.

Seafarer's Mission



Suggestions - Hats, scarves, gloves or mitts, socks, wrapped hard candy (no chocolate), soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, shaving foam, razors, deodorant, lip balm, playing cards, puzzle books, pens, writing paper, postcards.



Building and Maintenance Update

Over the last couple of weeks, a ramp has been installed in the small hall. This will allow easier access for those with mobility issues.



FINANCE UPDATE

Financial results for the end of Oct. are currently showing as unfavourable to both our 2024 budget as well as the 2023 YTD actuals. We are currently showing a loss of \$14,371 versus our budgeted loss of \$6,179.

YTD offerings are 5.3% below budget. As reported in the last newsletter, also contributing to our unfavourable results is the fact that we are over budget in a number of areas, including Church Repairs, Printing costs, Furnace Repairs, and Natural Gas.

As we also reported in the last newsletter, on the plus side, we've received unanticipated rental income from a couple of sources. Rental income is currently tracking 31.6% over budget.

Our current forecast is to end the year with a loss of \$12,208, which is slightly improved from the last forecast, but still well below our original budgeted loss of \$4,385.

	<i>Jan - Oct</i> 2024	<i>Jan - Oct</i> 2023	<i>Jan - Dec Forecast</i> 2024	<i>Jan - Dec</i> 2023
Offerings	109,418	112,360	138,509	145,359
Rents	16,600	12,700	18,990	14,100
Interest	2,210	2,210	4,420	4,420
Misc Income	-	-	-	-
Total Income	128,228	127,270	161,919	163,879
Salaries	69,377	65,013	86,288	77,675
Church Bldg & Office	48,263	40,002	57,840	44,583
Rectory	2,443	2,851	3,027	2,945
Worship & Programs	1,901	945	2,235	1,557
Shared Ministry	20,615	20,856	24,737	25,027
Total Expenses	142,599	129,667	174,127	151,787
YTD Surplus/(Loss)	(14,371)	(2,397)	(12,208)	12,091



In Other News.....



139th Session of Synod November 2, 2024

Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour.

- Romans 15: 2

We had the pleasure of representing our parish at the 139th Session of Synod held at Christ Church Cathedral. One of the highlights of any Synod is the Bishop's Charge which can be found at: <https://nb.anglican.ca/synod/sessions/pages/past-synod-sessions>.

The Archbishop reminded us of the importance of the Marks of Mission

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers.
- To respond to human need by loving service.
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

He then spoke on what he believes to be our priorities:

- Our Cathedral
- Discipleship and formation
- Re-shaping ministry on the ground
- New styles of ministry
- Sharing resources

After the Charge each archdeaconry presented a summary of how they were being community for their communities. There was an impressive number of ways in which this occurs around the diocese.

After lunch we celebrated Eucharist and then conducted the business portion of the meeting as well as choosing delegates for General and Provincial Synods. Following closing prayers, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15pm.

Synod delegates: Beverly Janes and Susan Jack



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 24th Christmas Eve Service 6:00 pm
December 25th Christmas Day Service 10:00 am

January 28th Monthly Luncheon
Annual Meeting & Luncheon - February 25



Fr Keith, Wardens, and Vestry
of the Church of the Good Shepherd
Wish You a Merry Christmas
and a
Blessed New Year!

Christmas Hope for All

*May each one know the blessing of the incarnate Son of God,
Jesus Christ, Immanuel – “God with us”, in our lives, our hopes and in all we do,
this upcoming Christmas season and all the days of our lives- now and throughout
all of eternity.*