

News for Scattered Pews

December 2024



Val's Voice

It's been quite the ride this last month or so, with the break-in at the church adding to the uncertain vibe.

As Vestry met last week and Carey opened by asking us to share how we are feeling in the midst of it all, it was good to hear the thoughts of our Vestry members. "Fine," said one. "It doesn't affect my Christmas at all. Christmas isn't about everything being easy; it is about Christ, the Messiah, come to give hope to the world." Another mentioned how good it was to hear Rev. Helen say at the end of the service immediately after the break-in that we need to remember "if someone stole from the church they did so because they needed to. Times are tough, and they needed what they found. Remember they are human!" Someone else noted "It isn't like the stuff was ours, after all (their point being that it belongs to God). What the church has doesn't belong to us."

I'll be honest and say that I was glad to hear the wisdom of these leaders (especially in the midst of my last week bout of Covid) because it is all wearing on me. I was glad to hear their words, and even more glad to hear the agreement when each of these words of trust were spoken, to see the feeling of grounded-ness on all the faces looking back at me on Zoom. It reminds me of what I think we all realize: on days when any of us are weary, that is when the faith and wisdom of others in God's community matters the most. God comes to us, after all, not only in the bread and wine of Christ's table, in prayer, and in the movement of the Spirit in our hearts, but also in the hands and feet and wisdom of God's own people acting and speaking in accord with God's intent.

The reality is that Advent is the time of year when, in days of uncertainty and nights of longing, what we hear is the promise of God for that new world on its way. God's goodness is ever-present, but during this time of long nights, we do ache for the time when the light of that new world arrives. We long for the healing of the nations and an end to the callousness of war. We long for food and shelter for those without.

We long for an end to the worry that niggles away at all of us, at least some of the time. Some of these problems are things we can have a hand in solving; we know God's mercy calls also for us to act with mercy and demand it of our world. But I suspect that some of the problems of our broken world - war as an example - may be things for which prayer is our only way to assist.

But whether solutions are ours to provide or not this season of the year, pausing to consider which ways we long for a better world, and imagining how God's reign among us might look are ways that God shapes us as people. They change our hopes, create our prayers, improve our actions.

Considering God's vision for the world is definitely some of the work we are called towards as God's people. In the end our prayers and imaginings, shaped by God, will also shape the world. This Advent, let's lean into noticing and imagining the world as God imagined it, Mary sang it, and Christ brings it into being each day.

One more thing - on a more personal note. After much thought, I have requested Vestry to allow me to work $\frac{3}{4}$ time starting right after Christmas. Vestry agreed, although the specifics of what it will look like need to be determined, as I will not be working fulltime for $\frac{3}{4}$ time pay. The reasons are my own. I have been conscious through most of this year that there are other things I want to do as a person. I want to be able to spend time being creative - knitting, or whatever. I also want to be able to spend more time with my dad. I look forward to this change and the greater freedom it will afford. For me, it is part of imagining the world as God imagined it... an Advent project.

All for now. Peace to you all,

Val



Church Break-in

An update on the recent unfortunate event.

Sometime between the evening of November 11 and the morning of the 12th, our church was broken into. A number of windows were broken, and most of the spaces in the building were accessed. Various electronics were taken: the laptop we use for Zoom, the TV from the downstairs hall, and a number of other needed items. One Sunday's offering and a number of blank cheques were stolen.

Our bank was advised of the stolen cheques, a report was sent to the Winnipeg Police Service and updated as needed, and a claim was made with our insurance company. The outside locks and the administrator's office lock have been changed, and we are reviewing our alarm system.

Vestry Notes from November 26

Rev. Val requested that her working hours be reduced from fulltime to .75 as of the new year, and Vestry agreed. As a result, there will be a need for volunteers to take on some of her tasks. More information to come as Val and Vestry determine where help will be needed.

Finances are a continuing concern, and Vestry is gathering information about costs and other requirements for staying in the building or selling and renting space elsewhere.

We are very conscious of the range of feelings around this issue, and our hope is that the parish will pull together. Please share your thoughts and questions with Val or any Vestry member. This is not meant to divide the family but to make us stronger.

There have been some suggestions for fund-raising activities we could do in 2025, such as concerts or dinner fundraisers, that might improve our situation. As well, to consider staying in the building, more volunteers will be needed for ongoing building maintenance.

Vestry hopes to have a plan of action ready sometime in 2025. Your prayers and patience are appreciated.

And while finances were a major focus for Vestry, there were other things to report on as well:

Movie Club met at the home of Carey and Debra in November, and will get together December 14 to watch a Christmas-themed movie. Contact Carey for details.

A **Bible Study** group has been meeting online every Monday, and hopes to resume in the new year.

Christian Meditation continues to meet on Zoom on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.

Youth Group (grades 7-12) completed the study of a musical version of Jonah in November. They will have a Christmas Party on December 6. Thanks to Ben for leading!

Our next **parish educational presentation** will be on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID), coming in early 2025. Watch for the date.

The 2025 Anglican Church of Canada **calendars** were all sold. Unfortunately, some of the money was taken during the break-in.

A reminder, in case you are unsure, that **offerings (regular or one-time donations) can be made by:**

- e-transfer to stmary@mts.net
- cash or cheque (payable to St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church), or
- automatic monthly withdrawal from your bank account (forms are available outside the church office door).

Please be sure the church office has your full name and current address to allow us to send a charitable tax receipt at year-end. For more info please email stmary@mts.net or speak to a Vestry member.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:
January 18-25, 2025

The Parish of St. Mary Magdalene is on Treaty 1 territory.

3 St. Vital Road, Winnipeg MB R2M 1Z2
stmarymagdalene.wpg.org

Phone: 204-253-0555 (church office) 204-930-7253 (Val's cell)
Email: stmary@mymts.net



Our annual **Christmas Bingo** started December 1 but you can still join in. Words are emailed daily, but if you don't have a computer you can receive them via a phone call. Contact Caroline at colagbuji@yahoo.com to 'sign up'.

Poinsettias will be delivered to the church on December 15. Please make sure you have paid for poinsettias you ordered by December 8.

Christmas Giving programs this year:

- Part of our Christmas giving is purchasing grocery gift cards to assist folks in need, both people connected to the parish and to Pimicikimak Wellness Centre (1JustCity). Deadline for donations is December 15.
- Donations of mitts, scarves, and hats will be collected to go on a Christmas tree outside.
- The Christmas Special Offering be divided 2/3 to help cover parish expenses and 1/3 split equally between St. Amant Foundation and Fort Whyte Farms.
- See page 2 for the various ways you can donate and remember to identify which program you want your donation applied to.

Advent Soup and Prayer – December 11 and December 18

Enjoy the beauty and calm of Advent with a lovely mid-week musical setting of Evening Prayer. (Anyone willing to make a pot of soup or provide bread or buns, please sign up on the sheet in the upper hall.)

5:30 pm Soup and bread – simple and hearty!

6:30 - 6:55 pm Holden Evening Prayer Service

Christmas Eve Services

- Christmas Pageant, Eucharist and Tea 2 pm
- Candlelight Eucharist 8 pm

St. Mary Magdalene Church Calendar

December 2024		January 2025	
1 Sun	1st Sunday of Advent Eucharist 10:30 am	5 Sun	2nd Sunday of Christmas / Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am
8 Sun	2nd Sunday of Advent Eucharist 10:30 am	12 Sun	Baptism of the Lord Eucharist 10:30 am
11 Wed	Advent Soup and Prayer 5:30 pm	14 Tue	Vista Park Lodge 2:15 pm
15 Sun	3rd Sunday of Advent Eucharist 10:30 am	19 Sun	2nd Sunday after the Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am
17 Tue	Vista Park Lodge 2:15 pm	26 Sun	3rd Sunday after the Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am ACF 7 pm
17 Tue	Vestry Meeting 7 pm (Val's house)	28 Tue	Vestry Meeting 7 pm
18 Wed	Advent Soup and Prayer 5:30 pm		
22 Sun	4th Sunday of Advent Eucharist 10:30 am		
24 Tue	Christmas Eve Christmas Pageant, Eucharist & Tea 2 pm Candlelight Eucharist 8 pm		
25 Wed	Christmas Day ACF Service & Gathering 10:30 am		
29 Sun	1st Sunday of Christmas Eucharist 10:30 am		

ACF = Asian Christian Fellowship service in Urdu

Weekly Activities

Choir Practice	Sundays 9 am	Contact: Nancy
Christian Meditation	Thursdays 7:30 pm (online)	Contact: Barbara B
Movie Club	Saturdays – monthly	Contact: Carey