

Sudbury Manitoulin Deanery Newsletter

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CHRISTMAS 2017

Christmas Message from Archdeacon Glen Miller

I am approaching my first anniversary of becoming the Archdeacon of this wonderful Deanery and so this is my first Christmas message to you all. I am filled with thanksgiving as I have gotten to know the congregations in a different way because I have heard and seen such encouraging stories of ministry being offered in creative ways within some challenging circumstances. As I meet with people from outside our Communion I hear stories of the difference Anglican congregations are making in their neighbourhoods and I am filled with pride. As the pastor of two small congregations I am well aware of the challenges that we all face as we respond to God's call on our lives so I am so thankful to God for the evidence that I see all around me of people who, out of their love for Jesus and their fellow human beings, continue to offer hope and love and welcome to those they encounter. It is my hope that over the next few weeks that the busyness of the preparations for the Christmas celebration will not take away from the joy of God's love demonstrated in the life of Jesus our

Saviour. I have included a few thoughts below based on some thinking I have been doing regarding a verse from a part of Luke's Gospel.

"Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28)

On the first Sunday of Advent the verse above can be used as the opening sentence as our congregations gather for worship. The section of Luke's Gospel in which the verse is found contains a description of the life of the nation of Israel during a time of tremendous upheaval. Jesus was quoted as describing a time to come when there would be signs in the heavens, distress among nations, people fainting with fear and foreboding and the return of the Son of Man. It may seem like a strange message in the midst of our society's focus on Christmas but as I look around and listen to conversations I find it very appropriate. In the lives of people I know and love there is distress and turmoil. There is fear and foreboding in our congregations. There is a temptation to hide away from all that is going on or wish for the 'better days of the past'. Instead Jesus urges his hearers at that moment to "Stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near". This

instruction from Jesus challenges us to remember where our hope comes from. In its essence our hope comes from the fact that a good and loving Creator has provided a way for the perfection of His Creation will be restored. God's Messiah, the Son of Man, has been shown to be the agent of that restoration and makes it possible for fallen human beings to be adopted into the Covenant family so that we may participate in that new Creation. Thus we do not need to cower in fear over the changes that are taking place. Instead we are to stand up and raise our heads. This is not an easy thing to do unless we put our focus on the hope that is set before us rather than on the circumstances. This is the advice given in the letter to the Hebrews remember. "Looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2) No matter what we are going through, no matter how bad it seems, we have a Saviour looking out for us who will bring us to that place which God has destined for us. "STAND UP AND RAISE YOUR HEADS"

May God's grace and peace be with you all and may you all experience God's love over the next few weeks.

Deanery Report November 2017

Wooden sailing vessels are some of the most beautiful craft to sail. I remember sailing on an old, refurbished 65-footer, twin mast ship on Lake Ontario when I was in my 20's. I was managing a busy service station in Toronto's city core at Edward and Bay. The Owner of the vessel was the CEO of the corporation I worked for. There were about 20 of us aboard the vessel as we headed out from the Toronto Yacht Club into the open waters of Lake Ontario. "All hands-on deck!" was the cry as the sails were

hoisted & with a few gulps of air the great ship began to heave out of the water & make way as she sliced through the four-foot waves; it was a spectacular voyage.

The ship had such beautiful lines & workmanship the likes I've never seen before. Thick hemp ropes & large wooden pulleys, wood plank decking, ornate hand carved woodwork adorned her every part; she was a work of art & stood out amongst the white fiberglass sailing boats with their aluminum masts that bobbed up & down like children's toys in the waters of the yacht club harbor & docks; they had no chance of competing against the beauty of the ole wooden ship.

Old churches are like old ships. They stand out amongst the rest. Cathedral ceilings, beautiful stain glass windows, hand carved ornate altars, fonts, lecterns, & prayer desks; they are majestic & unique buildings; they were built to the glory of God. But ... like the beautiful old wooden ships of the past, they require lots of maintenance and upkeep. Unlike the sterile, white-walled, flat ceiling buildings of the today's architecture & design that require a bit of paint from time to time, our old church buildings need to be updated & retrofitted. The old windows are defenseless against the driving cold air of our winters; the furnaces are inefficient, roof shingles begin to curl, old carpets hold the dampness, hydro panels are just slightly better than nob & tube wiring. In short, the old churches need lots of care & maintenance which requires lots of money & time.

Over the past few years, many our congregations have worked hard to refurbish their buildings. New roofing, furnaces, flooring, kitchens, windows & decor are the main components that have been replaced & updated. These were all expensive projects requiring thousands of dollars & hundreds of man hours but many of the churches are now "spit and polished" & ready to sail into the future.

Our building inspections of all the Deanery churches is now complete for 2017. Gilles, Tom & I are delighted to report that most of the buildings

are now updated in good condition. And although there are still components requiring replacement in some of the buildings, it appears that we are all weathering the storm in these turbulent times. The buildings are warm & welcoming; there's no bowls on the pews to collect the dripping water. This is all good for the moral of the people & the welcoming on the Seeker. It's a fresh start which lifts the spirits of the congregation in these changing times; & that's a good thing.

So, we thank everyone for their hard work & contributions; it's a testimony to your resolve to keep the ship sailing for the glory of God. And may God continue to bless our voyages! Please remember to send in a Property Matters Request Form when you're updating & renovating.

In the vineyard with you all, warm regards,

Doug Prebble, R.D.

Merry Christmas and may God bless all your celebrations and worship events in your Parishes and families. This is our first edition of the Sudbury-Manitoulin Deanery Newsletter, previously known as the Deanery Digest for which we thank Marion Collinson for her diligent work over the years.

Your Deanery Council wanted to get this out to you before Christmas and so there may be some information you may wish to have added to the next edition. If you wish to be taken off our contact list, just send an email to David Stamp or Tom Linck at the email address in header. We will gladly add Parish events, special events and worship times.

Dave Stamp, Council Secretary

Tom Linck, Lay Steward and Communications Coordinator