December 2023

ADVENT 2023
WESTMINSTER CHIMES

Saint James Westminster Church
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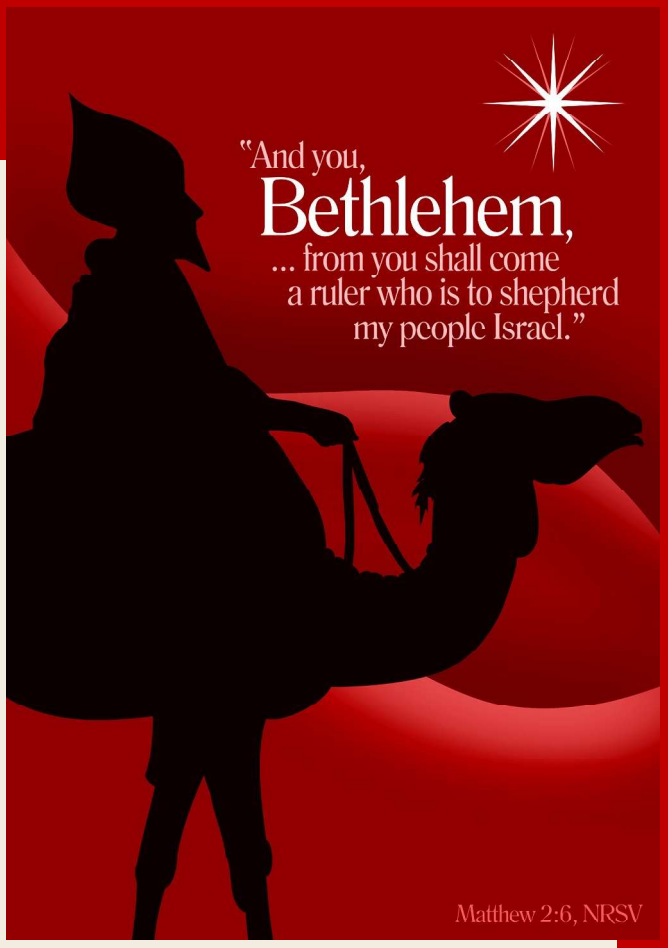

From the Rector's Desk

Grace and peace to you in this sacred season of Advent.

As we approach the beginning of the church year, we are reminded of the profound significance of this time — a season of anticipation, preparation, and hope. Advent invites us to journey together in reflection and expectation, to open our hearts to the transformative power of Christ's coming.

This year, the themes of light and darkness are especially poignant. The days grow shorter, and we find ourselves in the quiet embrace of winter's darkness. Yet, in the midst of this, we eagerly anticipate the arrival of the Light of the World, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The beauty of Advent lies in its recognition that new beginnings often emerge from the depths of darkness. In the natural world, the longest night gives birth to the lengthening days. Similarly, our spiritual lives may find renewal and rebirth in the moments of deepest introspection.

As we light the Advent candles, each flame dispels a bit more darkness, symbolizing the love, hope, joy, and peace we have in Christ to illuminate our lives. In these moments of collective worship, we affirm our commitment to be bearers of this light in our community and beyond.

The darkness we may encounter — be it in our personal struggles, global uncertainties, or societal challenges — is met with the promise that the Light of Christ will overcome it often in ways we cannot yet fully imagine. Advent is a season of profound hope, as we eagerly anticipate the dawn of a new beginning brought forth by the Christ-child.

Let us use this sacred time to reflect on our own journeys, recognizing the places within us that are in need of Christ's transformative light.

May we, like the Magi, be guided by the light of the star toward new beginnings, seeking Christ in the midst of our everyday lives.

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Together, let us be mindful of those for whom this season may bring darkness — those who grieve, those who are lonely, those who are oppressed. As a community, may we be a beacon of light, extending Christ's love and compassion to all.

May this Advent season be a time of deep spiritual preparation, a season of reflection, and a joyful anticipation of the new beginnings that Christ's presence brings. May the light of Christ shine brightly in our hearts, our homes, and our community.

In Christ's love, peace, joy, and hope,
Fr. Michael Bruce

Advent and Christmas at St. James

♦ Sunday, December 10, 9:30am	Meet in the Middle coffee and crafts
♦ Sunday, December, 17 at 4:00pm	Christmas Lessons & Carols
♦ Sunday morning, December 24 at 10:00am	ONE SERVICE
♦ Christmas Eve, December 24 at 4:00 p.m.	Family Christmas and Holy Communion
♦ Christmas Eve, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.	Christmas Jazz Mass
♦ Christmas Eve, December 24 at 10:00 p.m.	Solemn Choral Eucharist
♦ Christmas Day, December 25 at 10:00 a.m.	BAS Holy Communion with Hymns
♦ Christmas I, December 31st at 8:30 and 10:30	Regular Sunday schedule

Indwell Advent Series

Advent is here! Indwell has again developed (with the assistance of five pastor friends) a series of **five Advent devotionals.**

Sign up now at indwell.ca/advent to have the devotionals conveniently delivered into your inbox ahead of each Sunday of Advent.

Children Facing East

It is snowing
I hold out my hand.
Stick out my tongue
And catch Your words.
In laughter.
And wonder.

Poems by Dave Read

A match flares up.
A vision is seen.
Then the darkness, deeper.
So it is with all who see
And do nothing.

Hold the vision in hope.
Lift the hands in faith.
Love is the narrow gate.
The path.
In patience. In peace.

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

Prayer Unites

(AFP Canada)

On the third Monday of each month for one hour beginning at 1pm Eastern time from September through June, the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer has a gathering on Zoom called Let Us Pray. Each month has a different speaker. Recent speakers include Archbishop Linda Nichols about her prayer life, the Rev Matt Martin on chaplaincy and talking to young adults, our director Paul Feheley on Christianity in the Middle East and most recently the Reverend Monique Stone speaking about Julian of Norwich.

The next gathering, Singing in the Season, is on December 18th and features reflections about the executive's seasonal music choices. The link to the Zoom gatherings is found below.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84453751334

Zoom Meeting ID: 844 5375 1334

The presentations can also be found on our website anglicanprayer.org along with our quarterly newsletters and other prayer resources. Please join us!

Libi Clifford, parish member and treasurer of AFP (Canada)

Toonies for Turkeys

We are collecting financial donations for the Christmas hampers distributed by Church of the Epiphany. Please drop your gifts in the designated box in the church. If you wish to be receipted for cash donations, please use an envelope and include your name and address.

If you wish to write a cheque, please make it out to "Church of the Epiphany" with "Food Bank" in the memo. We will pass your cheques and cash on to the Epiphany food bank and you will receive your receipt from Church of the Epiphany. Thank you!

Church of the Epiphany Food Cupboard

For many years, there has been a small grocery cart inside the Bruce St. entrance where parishioners can place groceries for donation. These are given to the Food Cupboard at Church of the Epiphany, our closest Anglican neighbour. Recently the Parish Council designated funds for donation to the cupboard for the purchase of gift cards and extra grocery supplies.

If you or someone you know needs this service, please contact the Rev Teresa Corrigan 519-671-0577 or Butch Stevenson the cupboard supervisor 519-615-9106 (text or phone) at Church of the Epiphany. They operate by appointment only in order to provide privacy.

A few tips for donating to any food bank:

Money in any form is always good. If you wish to be receipted for cash donations, please use an envelope and include your name, address & a memo "Church of the Epiphany—Food Bank". **If you wish to write a cheque, please make it out to "Church of the Epiphany" with "Food Bank" in the memo.** You will receive your receipt from Church of the Epiphany.

Think combinations—pasta and sauce, hot or cold cereal with shelf stable milk (Teresa said not almond or oat milk), beans and stock to make soup, cake mix and icing, pancake mix and syrup

Think protein—canned meats or fish, smooth peanut butter, canned beans, hearty soups and stews

Think snacks—unsalted nuts, granola bars, pudding cups, fruit or applesauce cups

Think grocery and household basics—canola or olive oil, spices (pepper, Italian seasoning, cumin, cinnamon), canned vegetables, boxed potatoes, toilet paper, detergent, toiletries

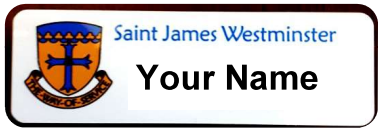
Think healthy-choice low salt or low sugar alternatives if available.

Help us love our neighbours! *Libi Clifford*

Help build community!

Get to know the names of fellow parishioners! Permanent, magnetic-backed name tags can be ordered at a cost of $20 each by seeing Jennifer Meister at the table in the Great Hall following the 10:30 service or by contacting Jennifer Meister at jmeiste@uwo.ca or 519-282-4435.

Orders must be in by December 18.



An Invitation for St. James Children: Please join us as we celebrate Advent!

Hey Sunday School!

We are looking forward to creating an Advent Journey mural in the Parish Hall. Each week we will add to our mural, which will tell of the wonderful news of the birth of Jesus. We are hoping your willing hands will come to help us each week as we add to the mural. See you during Sunday school, beginning December 3rd. Also, on December 10th join the church family as we "Meet In the Middle" to enjoy breakfast together. Yum!

Meet in the Middle Advent Breakfast December 10, 9:30 a.m.—Parish Hall

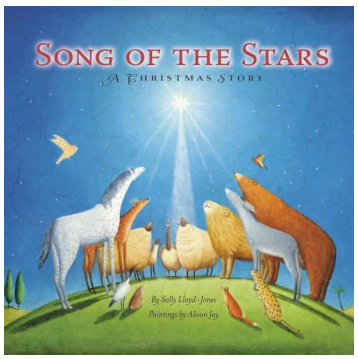
Everyone from both our Sunday services is invited to come together to catch up with one another, and share food and fellowship!

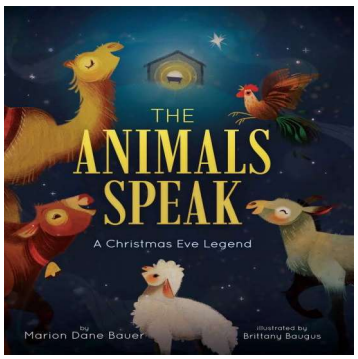
Shine a Light!

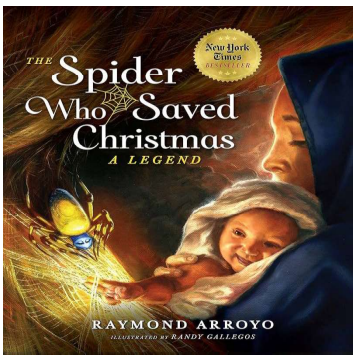
All ages are invited to visit our creativity table at our Meet in the Middle Advent Breakfast on Dec 10, at 9:30 a.m.

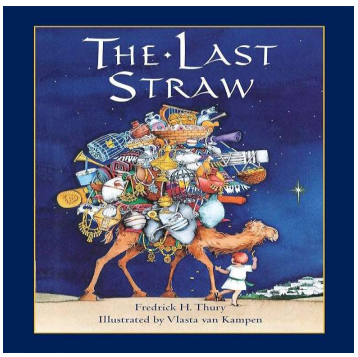
Make a lantern for a special place in your home – a glowing sign of hospitality and a symbol of the growing, glowing light of Christ as we journey with him and to him on a cold dark night in Bethlehem… and beyond! Decorate a star to hang on your tree and another to give away. For more information, contact gerryadam@diohuron.org

Recommended Christmas stories









Here are a few books to share with the young ones in your life.
Most can be found on Amazon.ca or perhaps in your local library!

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS FROM CAMP HURON

PRAYERS FOR A NEW YEAR FILLED WITH HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE

See you next summer!
Registrations will open
February 24, 2024.

www.camphuron.ca

Indwell Donation Matching 2023

We have recently heard that a generous London family has pledged $350,000 in matching funds for this year's London Indwell Campaign! That means that every dollar given to create new supportive housing in London between now and the end of the year will be matched, doubling the impact you can make.

The matching fund comes at a great time as Indwell completes the pre-construction clean out of the War Memorial Children's Hospital. They will be submitting their building permit before the end of the year, and are seeking federal and provincial funding. They hope to begin construction in the new year, creating 42 supportive and affordable apartment homes. Gifts for Indwell can be made through the church. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

As you plan your end-of-year giving, please include Indwell, It's easy to give:

- Online – https://indwell.ca/donate/
- By phone – call me at 519-286-1390 x364.
- By mail – send cheques made to Indwell, note "London construction" in the memo line and send to: Indwell, 1430 Main Street East, Hamilton, ON L8K 1C3.

Thank you for caring,
Julie Ryan

Indwell

Christmas Flower Donations

If you would like to remember or give thanks for a loved one by donating toward the **Christmas flowers in the Church**, please contact the office by Sunday, December 17th. Please let us know who the donation is being made by

and in whose memory or honour the donation is being made. Cheques or cash should be made out to "St. James Westminster" with "Altar Guild - Christmas Flowers" in the memo or place the donation and form in an envelope that states "Altar Guild - Christmas Flowers".

THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG

How our best-loved worship songs were written.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Better than a postcard from the Holy Land

Phillips Brooks, an Episcopal priest in Philadelphia in the 1860s, ministered to Union soldiers during the Civil War. After the war, Brooks was exhausted. His parish, Church of the Holy Trinity, granted him a year's leave of absence.

Traveling to Europe, Brooks arrived in the Holy Land just before Christmas 1865. He and his party journeyed for two hours on horseback to see Bethlehem, ending with a five-hour worship service in the Church of the Nativity.

That night, with Jesus' birthplace fresh in his mind, Brooks wrote a poem.

Three years later, he gave the poem to his organist to set to music. The night before the Christmas service, Lewis H. Redner jotted down a melody, scribbling in the harmony the next morning. For the next decade, the children of Holy Trinity sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem" every Christmas before its popularity spread among Christians worldwide.

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light:
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift was given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today,
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

—Phillips Brooks

Adapted from *Christmas Songs Made in America*, © 1999 Albert J. Menendez and Shirley C. Menendez. Used by permission of the publisher, Cumberland House, Nashville, Tennessee.

Article from Christian Reader November/December 2000

Christmas Gift Cards

FundScrip – Purchase gift cards to stores you already shop at, and a percentage is donated to our fundraising campaign. Available each week after the 10:30 service in the Parish Hall.

You can also special order cards at the table or email judyshendavid@msn.com

Deadline for Christmas Gift Card Orders is this Sunday, December 3rd.

150th Anniversary Merchandise

Order Sunday in the Parish Hall! Shirts, hoodies & mugs to celebrate this great occasion in our church history! Proceeds will go to the youth programs & spaces in the church including future nursery space for all of our newest members.

Order Deadline - this Sunday, December 3rd.

St. James Westminster 150th Anniversary

God bless you this Advent Season!