



The Parish Broadside - St Peter's Anglican Church



Lent / Easter 2008

www.stpeterfredericton.nb.ca

What's Happening This Lent?

Rector's Report on 2007

by

the Rev Dr R N Hebb

St Peter's News

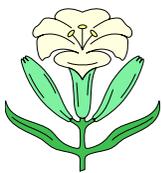
The Parish has just come through the busy Christmas/Epiphany Season. Christmas was a busy but spiritually encouraging time again this year. Attendance at the Children's Creche service was strong and energetic - so good to see all the young families out. The services on Christmas day and the three days following, while not strongly supported, did provide those who came with quiet time for reflection and contemplation. This is an opportunity and a tradition which we will continue.

The popular Cathedral Puppeteers visited St Peter's on January 20. They were as popular as ever and we look forward to their return again next year. Fr Hebb wonders who enjoys them more - the adults or the children! This year the puppets spoke about God's love as shown in His creation of the world. In quizzing the children at Sunday School the week after, Fr Hebb is pleased to report that the children did very well on the 'pick-up' of the message presented. Indeed, two very young Sunday School members were especially excited an entire week later by the message the puppets presented.

January 20th was a very busy day indeed for our Parish for as well as the puppets it was also congregational pot luck and annual meeting day. A time of fellowship and food was enjoyed before we settled down to the business side of Parish life. The Wardens,' Rector's and PWRDF reports are all found in this edition.

January 20th also saw the beginning of the pre-Lenten season of the Church's year. With Easter being so very early in 2008 there was only one Sunday after Epiphany instead of the possible six. Indeed, 2008 witnesses the earliest date for Easter in the seventy year span from 1950 to 2020. As Easter is a moveable observation based upon the lunar calendar it can move around within a 28 day span. As for its calculation, it is always the first Sunday after the first full moon in Spring. This year the full moon falls on March 21st and so Easter comes just two days later on March 23. Very early indeed.

Easter Flowers



Those wishing to place Flowers in God's House to beautify it for our celebration of Christ's Resurrection please speak with Maria Matthews by Palm Sunday (March 16). Thank You!

Lent, while beginning early on February 6, will be observed as usual with worship again this year. A service of Holy Communion at Ste Anne's Court 3:30 p.m. and at St Peter's at 7 p.m. will mark the start of this holy season. Ash Wednesday is also one of only two fast days for Canadian Anglicans.



Lenten Studies this year will be held Sunday afternoons at the Parish hall. This year we will be considering Christian Church Architecture. Subtitled, "Why do we worship in churches and not in barns?" the series will consider what factors are involved in building Christian worship sites. That a Christian church is different from a Jewish synagogue or a Muslim Mosque, the nature, extent and reasons for these differences are not often consciously thought about. It is the intention of this year's Lenten Study to consider what is distinctive about Christian worship sites.

Each week we will begin with a talk on general principles and then switch to particular examples. Week one will consider ancient non-Christian worship sites as well as early Christian sites. The following week we will investigate the spirit and devotion which produced the great European cathedrals and the last week we will consider church building in the New World, especially in early New Brunswick. Each week we will view a 20 minute portion of the excellent video, "Cathedral" by David Macauley on the construction of the great cathedrals. All are welcome to attend one or all three sessions.

March 9th is the date set for this year's Lenten Meditations and Music service. This unique and ever growing in popularity service is a special combination of Scripture and music presented by our organist and choir to aid us all in our Lenten journeys and devotions. I encourage you to set the time aside and to invite a friend to this very special service. There truly is nothing quite like it available in the area.

This past year has been another year of both stability and challenge at St Peter's Anglican Church in Fredericton. January began with four deaths, followed later in the year by two more. February witnessed four baptisms on one Sunday and the year concluded with one more baptism. In October, Bishop Miller was here for the confirmation of four bright young parishioners on a beautiful autumn day. Average Sunday attendance declined somewhat to 61.9 souls down from 62.78 in 2005. [The 2006 statistic is skewed due to the fact that Christmas Eve was on a Sunday thus increasing attendance artificially and significantly.]

On the broader perspective, June witnessed the dreaded meeting of General Synod. On the highly contentious and divisive issue of same-sex unions, the Synod in its wisdom, deemed such unions not contrary to core or creedal doctrine. They did not however tell us what the difference is between creedal and non-creedal doctrine, if one is more important than another and why this is so, or what places one matter in the creed and other matters, which appear just as Biblical, not in the creed. Furthermore, the synod narrowly rejected, by a margin of only two bishops' votes, a motion to allow individual synods and bishops to proceed with the blessing of same sex unions in their own dioceses. The inconsistencies between these two positions are too lengthy to enter upon in this space. One matter seems certain, in less than three years, in 2010, the forces promoting explicit blessing of same-sex marriage will win a majority of votes at the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. It is necessary for all Anglicans to bear this in mind and to think through its implications for themselves, their parishes and the future of the Anglican Church as we know it.

On a positive parish front as well as the baptisms and confirmations, this past fall witnessed increased Sunday School enrollment and average attendance. Weekly Parish Bible Study at Ste Anne's Court has achieved new weekly and average attendance levels. It is not uncommon to have fifteen or more people in attendance and this represents a very healthy blend of residents and parishioners. Parish hall usage has increased and the ACW had a very good year of engagements and caterings. Attendance at Lenten, Advent and Christmas Carols and Lessons has again been strong.

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While attendance at the adult Christmas eve services has declined in recent years, attendance at the 4 p.m. Children's Creche service continues markedly strong, enthusiastic and diverse. Also, let us not forget that we have new couples and new families in our pews – we welcome them and are heartened by their presence at our worship! Despite these numerous real and encouraging signs, challenges do exist and persist.

As for attendance, I continue to be concerned and discouraged by the extent of the summer slump - individuals and families who are regular for eight or so months going cold-turkey for three or more months in the summer. This is destructive of spiritual discipline, sets a poor example for children and other Christians and has a telling effect on parish finances. Not that we are about finances – we are not, but what it means is that when people are back, their absence, in part, forces us to talk more about money troubles than is healthy or uplifting. This can all have a downward spiraling effect.

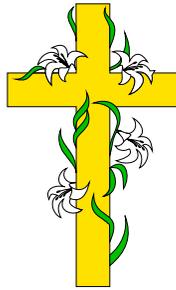
The other serious challenge, by no means unique to St Peter's, is the continuing financial strain. This past December we began the last month of the year in the worst financial position in memory, down thousands from where we have usually been. But for the significant contributions of a handful of individuals and families, we would have ended the year seriously in debt. Thanks to this select generosity, we have roughly broken even. Everyone needs to be clear that the Parish of St Peter lives on a year to year basis only. To end a year seriously in arrears to the diocese and potentially to several business and barely able to pay a minister, threatens the parish's ability to continue. What is to be done?

Last year I floated the concept, already adopted elsewhere, of establishing an arms length Trust. Such a trust would be independent of the parish and the diocese as a legally independent entity but its purpose for existence would be to support the ministry, not the fabric, of St Peter's parish. It would be run separately and independently of the parish with its own board. Another idea has been to petition the bishop respecting the expansion of our parish. If there were more churches in our parish there would be more potential funding sources to ensure our and their continued existence as worshipping Anglicans. This would in practice mean more work for the Rector and also less time spent at St Peter's. On Sunday mornings it would involve severing for good his relation with the Sunday School in order to travel elsewhere to conduct services.

St Peter's would benefit but at a price. This meeting is a time to discuss these potential avenues of reaction to our ever deepening fiscal challenges.

Finally, I wish to thank all who have worshipped, prayed and worked to make this past year a faithful one at St Peter's Parish Fredericton. May we continue to implore His mercy as we seek to increase in that Grace which is our only sure strength and hope now and for eternity.

In His Mercy,
Rev Dr Ross N Hebb



Easter Services 2008

Sunday March 23

8 a.m. Holy Communion

11 a.m. Choral Eucharist

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Warden's Report on 2007

Rev Hebb/Congregation of St. Peter's:

It was a quiet year for the warden. There was not too many meetings to attend and no new renovations to the church hall.

Most of the work, time and money were spent on the rectory after the former tenants moved in June. The new tenants seem to have settled in quite well.

The church yard once again was well maintained. The only thing new this year was the beautiful floor installed at the front of the church.

Submitted,
Audrey Kelly
Mary Christie

Lenten Studies at St Peter's, 2008

This year's Lenten Studies will examine the topic of Christian Church architecture. That churches are built differently than synagogues and mosques is obvious, why this is so is not so well understood. What considerations have Christians made in designing their worship spaces? What was done in the early Christian centuries to the year 1000? How and why were the great medieval Cathedrals built?

What has been the thought behind wooden churches in the New World, especially in New Brunswick before and after Bishop Medley? These and many related matters will be touched upon. The excellent DVD entitled, *Cathedral*, by David Macauley will be viewed in 20 minute installments at each session. As well, helpful downloads from the Internet will aid us in viewing and appreciating Cathedral design and beauty.

All sessions are one hour in length and commence at 2:30 p.m. on Feb 10, 17 and 24. Coffee and light snacks will be served. Sessions will be held in St Peter's Parish Hall 2385 Woodstock Road. If in doubt of a session being held due to weather please call the parish office at - 454-8752. In the event of a postponement sessions will be bumped ahead one week (excluding March 2, we will jump that date, for Fr Hebb will be out of country).

PWRDF Report

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund came into existence in 1958 as a result of the Springhill Mine Disaster. Anglicans and other Canadians responded with assistance for the stricken families of the miners. Since its beginnings, the agency has become the Anglican Church's organization for sustainable development, relief, refugees and global justice.

The mission of PWRDF is a response by Canadian Anglicans to the Gospel call to bear witness to God's healing love in a broken world. Inspired by the visions of a spirit-filled community of hope, PWRDF walks together with partners in Canada and overseas to share in the creation of a more just and peaceful world. In joy and struggle, the Primate's Fund engages in development work, responds to emergencies, works to protect refugees, and educates and advocates for change.

The PWRDF Agency believes in the theology of action, in response to God's call, which strives to make a positive impact in a world of suffering. Envelopes can be found in our church entry and your donations will be put to God's work in poverty situations and troubled places around the world. "Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building." Romans 14:19

Bob Matthews/ PWRDF rep