



# The Parish Broadside - St Peter's Anglican Church

Lent / Easter 2009

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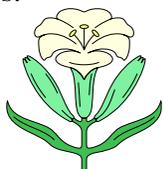


## What's been happening?

While the winter breezes have blown and the snow has fallen, spiritual life has continued on at St. Peter's. January 25 witnessed our ever popular annual visit by the Cathedral puppets. Their presentation on God's love was enjoyed by both young and old. While it is certainly true that the young anticipate the puppets' arrival more, Fr Hebb wonders whether the older members of St Peter's enjoy the actual presentation more than the children. The puppets were one of the events marking the re-commencement of Sunday School for the winter season. Sadly, storms and the challenge of getting *back in the groove* on Sunday mornings has impacted negatively on our Sunday Schools' attendance. We hope for better days after the March Break!

The week before the puppets arrived the Parish held its annual meeting. Attendance was not any larger than recent years but the matters discussed were a concern for all who value the spiritual life and presence of St Peter's Parish. Randall Haslett made a timely presentation on *Planned Giving*, that is on means, other than weekly offerings in support of the Parish's life. Besides the obvious bequests in wills he spoke of annuities, life insurance policies and gifts of stocks or bonds in support of the Parish's continued existence.

More recently our Annual Shrove Tuesday Supper was a great success. Despite the very large storm the day before, we were able to shovel out just in time for our annual pancake, ham and bean meal. Contributions beforehand, workers, volunteers and eaters were all in good supply! As a consequence, we have begun Lent with full bellies. Fr Hebb hopes that folks will dig in to the spiritual opportunities offered, at least as well as they have engaged the eating opportunities.



## Easter Flowers

If you wish to place Flowers in church for our celebration of Christ's Resurrection please speak with Maria Matthews by Palm Sunday (April 5). Thank You!

## What's Happening This Lent?

Lent began this year on Feb 25 and was marked by many worship opportunities. Fr Hebb conducted Ash Wednesday services at Pine Grove Nursing Home, Ste Anne's Court and of course, at St Peter's itself in the evening at 7 p.m. Weekly Sunday services, ongoing Wednesday midweeks, regular Tuesday afternoon Bible Studies as well as the special Sunday afternoon Lenten Studies round out the opportunities for worship, study and prayer offered this Lent.

As well, March 29<sup>th</sup> 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.

As for Easter itself, it falls this year on April 12. The celebration of our Lord's victory over sin and death would be a wonderful time for all those who worshiped with us on Christmas Eve to return to the pews of St Peter's. The fuller Gospel message of what the babe came to accomplish for us is only realized at Easter. What an appropriate time to worship and adore our risen and victorious Savior! Let us all endeavor to make this a reality for ourselves and encourage and invite others to do the same!



A Message from YOUR Vestry: Re: St. Peter's Contributions: Here at St Peter's, as elsewhere, there is the need to increase our weekly giving so as to remain economically viable. To that end, Vestry members have accepted the challenge and each member has agreed to increase their personal giving by 10% each week. We would invite and encourage you to join us in this undertaking. St. Peter's has played a central role in the lives of parishioners for more than 170 years. Our ability to continue with our joint Ministry hinges on our capacity to meet mounting operating expenses and a growing capital budget. Thank you for your consideration of this important request and please feel free to discuss this in greater detail with the Wardens; Bob Matthews and Mary Christie, any Vestry member or Fr. Hebb.

## Rector's Report on 2008

by

the Rev Dr R N Hebb

On Sunday, December 28, the last regularly scheduled weekly service was held at St James Anglican Church in Conquerall Mills, Nova Scotia. This is the church of my ancestors and the church in which I was baptized. This was the church I attended for the first 17 years of my life. St James had been built in the rural farming community on Nova Scotia's South Shore in 1856. Over one hundred and fifty years of worship and witness has come to a sad end. Decades of declining attendance and finances sealed St James' fate. Weekly attendance had been below ten souls per service for years. In the closing months of 2008 some folks did object to the closure but their concern did not move them to attend any more regularly than in the past. Talk is cheap. As any child can tell you; the example set by action, or the lack of action, speaks more clearly and loudly than any complaint or speech. The message of St James' demise is clear — attend it or lose it. The fate of the local church rests squarely in the hands of the laity who belong to it and to those who live in the immediate area.

This past year at St Peter's Anglican Church in Fredericton has been a critical one. Average Sunday attendance fell significantly. In 2007 it stood at 61.9. In 2008 it fell to a shocking 54.6 — a full 7 person per week decline. In 2005 the weekly average was 62.78. Deaths do not account for this statistic — only three people died and all three had been unwell in recent years and thus unable to attend. Their passing did not affect this statistic. A comparison of 8 a.m. attendance to 11 a.m. attendance reveals that 8 a.m. numbers dropped only slightly from 12.88 per Sunday average in 2007 to 12.52 in 2008. The decline is almost wholly attributable to those who attended 11 a.m. worship. What is more, the decline has a most

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pronounced seasonality to it. Despite the bad winter weather, 1025 people attended worship in the first four months of 2008. The following four months, the summer months, saw this figure fall to a mere 825 worshippers. Few vacations begin in May or June. Finally, it must be stressed that the decline from 2007 to 2008 is in people who do attend St Peter's. These figures reveal our own behaviour.

The news however, is not all bad. There were three deaths but four baptisms and two weddings. Midweek services continue to be attended. Our Sunday School continues to be comparatively healthy. There are five youth in Fr Hebb's pre-Confirmation Class. Parish Bible Studies at Ste Anne's Court persist in witnessing overall high attendance. We have also been working to help ourselves. Last fall we had our first foray into the area of pro-active recruitment with the "Back to Church Sunday." I feel that this was a positive and an eye-opening experience and I hope that it can be repeated again at least once, if not twice, in 2009. Those who invited someone learned of the courage required to do so and of the challenge involved in actually getting them out to worship. I feel this helps the laity learn first hand the challenges faced by the clergy in recent decades and the concerted, long-term effort required to bring about meaningful change.

As well as concerted efforts to invite people back to church in 2009, there will also be the yearly Lenten Studies, this year focusing on Bishop's Medley last decades and his Charges to clergy and laity. The Choir and organist will again lead us in Lenten as well as Advent services of reflection and meditation. St Michael's Youth Conference will again welcome the youth of our parish to that unique Christian challenge and experience. We will again offer in-parish Youth Evenings. And obviously and most importantly we will continue to seek to know and to love the One who so loves us through worship and service, Writ and prayer, and especially forgiveness received and given.

Before I close I would be amiss if I did not thank the entire Parish for your support and prayers

during my recent illness. Thank you and God Bless you for your love in action. Special mention must be made of Sandra who continued the bulletins for the weeks of my absence as well as Bob Matthews for his continued work behind the scenes. Thanks also goes to the choir and organist for conducting the parish's annual service at Pine Grove Nursing Home on the second Sunday in December. Thanks too to the Sunday school teachers for running the Christmas Program on the same day without any assistance from the rector.

The challenges of 2009 lie before us. May we individually, and collectively, implore the throne of mercy for the grace to be faithful and true in His worship and in service.

In Christ,

Rev Dr R N Hebb



**Good Friday Services**

11 a.m. Litany & Holy Communion

9 p.m. Compline BCP p. 722-728

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**Choir Report**

St Peter's has a very active music programme, designed to provide choral and organ music for the 11 a.m. service, monthly Evensong, as well as other liturgical celebrations at Ash Wednesday, Tenebrae, and Good Friday. The Choir also provides Lessons and Carols services at Advent, Christmas and Lent. We participate in Parish outreach with visits to Pine Grove and King's Landing. A wide variety of musical styles are represented in the choral programme, though at its core are works from the Anglican musical tradition, in weekly use of Anglican chant to twentieth century anthems. The choir routinely learns 20 to 40 new pieces of music each year.

As always, I would like to personally thank the members of the choir for their continued energy, enthusiasm, and commitment, and the Vestry for its ongoing support.

Sandra Gereau/ Organist and Choir Director.

**Lenten Studies at St Peter's 2009**



This year's Lenten Studies at St Peter's is a continuation of those offered in Lent of 2007. Having begun an examination of Bishop John Medley's era at that time, we will this Lent continue our study and examine the life of the Church of England in Colonial New Brunswick from 1868 to 1892.

The wealth of information found in Bishop Medley's Charges to his clergy and extant sermons will be employed as the lens through which we view the issues, debates and spirit of the Church in that dynamic and evolving era. Church construction, mission expansion, economic upturns and depressions, Synod establishment, poverty, Evangelicals, High Churchmen as well as the self-styled 'Broad' churchmen will all be touched upon. As well, the changes in the Church made possible and brought forward by advances in transportation technology within our nation and across the globe will be noted. Easier travel helped forward moves towards trans-colonial synodical governance which in the year after Medley's death issued in the first General Synod of the church in the Dominion of Canada. As well, Medley's life spanned the period which witnessed a growing sense of Anglican identity across national boundaries. This self-consciousness was crucial to the creation of the emerging Anglican Communion. One of the first manifestations of this new reality were the Lambeth Conferences of Bishops. Medley of Fredericton attended the second and third such gatherings of Anglican bishops from across the globe in 1878 and 1888, respectively.

All sessions are one hour in length and commence at 2:30 p.m. Coffee and 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 and listen for the relevant message - 454-8752.





