



St. Paul's Journal

Advent - Christmas 2010

*From the
Rector*



On Waiting for Christmas; On waiting for Christ

This issue of *St. Paul's Journal* is being released on the Fourth Sunday of Advent this year; Advent is reaching its end and our waiting is almost, but not quite, complete.

What are Christians meant to be doing while they recall the waiting of our ancestors in the faith; waiting for the Messiah? What are Christians meant to be doing while they wait for Christ to come to them in the daily circumstances of their own lives? And what are Christians meant to be doing while they await Christ's coming with the kingdom of God, with complete justice for all and the restoration of the beauty of creation?

We need to back up just a bit to notice the origins of the word. The English word 'Evangel', or Well, waiting in the Scriptures was never a matter of sitting on one's hands; it was never meant to be a restless period of boredom. What did the great reformer Martin Luther once say? He said if he knew Christ was coming tomorrow, he'd still plant an apple tree today! What could be more hopeful than planting something while we wait?

As I look around the parish at the end of this year, I can see all kinds of signs of all kinds of things being planted, of seeds being scattered. I see hearts being lifted up and voices singing out in worship in

spite of the grind of daily life and the worries that beset us all. I observe the unfolding restoration of our historical edifice for us, true, but for folks we don't even know but who will join us in worship and work in the coming few years. Our outreach ministries are flourishing in spite of the impossibility of a clean, cold 'return on investment' demanded of many endeavours in our world today. I see committees meeting with no guarantees of easy solutions, flowers being arranged though they won't last forever, the sick being cared for with no promise of reward...and all sorts of folks, from young to 'mature' putting their arts (in faith) out in public view on the pages of this issue of *St. Paul's Journal*. And there are so more seeds being sown in our parish as we wait for Christ to come to us.

What could be better than to do what Luther did; to plant more apple trees? Waiting for Christians is an active, fruitful hoping for what we confess to be true. What a way to wait for Christmas—all year long!

Paul Friesen

Beyond the Chancel Steps: Thoughts on Christmas Traditions and Symbols by the Director of our Chancel Guild

Have you ever wondered how much Christ there is in Christmas? Fifty years ago, Frances Spencer was asked to decorate her church in Danville, Virginia. Rather than just making it beautiful with manufactured decorations, she decided she wanted to create decorations to reflect her Christian faith.

She looked to early Christian symbols and created Chrismons or Christ Monograms. This type of decoration represents Christ, Christianity, biblical

and theological concepts. They include crowns, crosses, doves, butterflies, angels, shepherd's crooks, fish, anchors, trefoils, and many types of stars. Most Chrismons are white and/or gold. White in keeping with the liturgical colour for Christmas and gold symbolic of the colour of kings and the majesty of God. She promoted her idea through several books and assigned the copyright to the name Chrismon to her church. Today, thanks to her thoughtfulness and creativity, many other churches and homes have Chrismons and even Chrismon Trees.

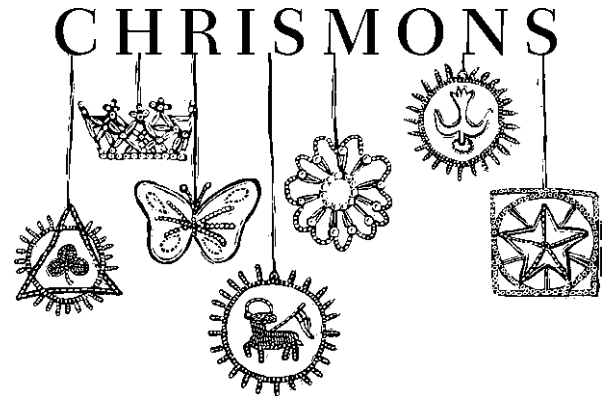
We have a collection of Chrismons on our family's tree that date back to 1976. Our sons, in the Chrismon tradition started by Mrs. Spencer, began creating Chrismons in Sunday School and continued to do so each of the years we lived in Tennessee. It was an annual project for the children throughout Advent and was tied into their lessons. You may not have created something similar but how many Chrismon symbols do you put on the tree in your home?

A couple of years ago, inspired by the Tennessee experience and Mrs. Spencer's example, the Chancel Guild introduced Chrismons into the Christmas decorations at St. Paul's. Two types of Star were added when the greening was put in. Combined with pine and bows, gold stars annually adorn the ends of the pews up the centre aisle. Evergreens, which have been used since ancient times to symbolize life, were chosen to frame the stars. The five-pointed star used represents the star followed by the magi; the six-pointed star, called the Creator's Star or Star of David, symbolizes the six days of creation. Hopefully these few Chrismons help worshippers at St. Paul's observe, in a small way, the Christ in Christmas.

Such symbols have come down to us from the early days of Christianity. Like many of us today, many early Christians were not really artists but could create symbols. Some early Christians felt that any kind of art would possibly encourage people to worship graven images. However, over time, leaders sensed art was needed to develop identity and would help people who couldn't read or write to understand the ideas and principles of

Christianity. Thus in the midst of the hesitancy whether or not to use art in churches, Christians created symbols. Symbols evolved, were accepted, and have contributed to our understanding of principles and concepts of Christianity. Today, many of the symbols are used in secular environments but when we understand the Christian symbolism it can help one put the Christ in Christmas at church and in our homes. Help to make the celebration of Christ's birth more than The Holiday Season, a season when we can be overwhelmed by commercial images and secular practices.

Margaret Bateman Ellison



Fresh Expressions: Great Church – Growing Church

On October 22nd and 23, 2010, Father Paul, Max Moulton and I had the pleasure of attending a workshop, given by Nick Brotherhood from the Wycliffe Institute of Evangelism, called "Great Church – Growing Church". As many as twenty parishes from Nova Scotia and PEI were represented there, and we began with a discussion of the reality that our society is in a period of transition from a Christendom culture to a non-Christendom culture; in the process of a shift not just from church-centred to non-church-centred, but to a **church-avoiding** culture. Many cultural and social groups have replaced church in the lives of many, which has

resulted in Sunday morning hockey practice (and the like) serving as the community that church once provided for the majority of people. It is clear to me when I consider the state of the world today that the lives of most are not centred on God. Consumerism is rampant - the family has gone from being a unit of production to a unit of consumption! People know what they want, and for most, it isn't to go to church, let alone to find a relationship with God. Spirituality of the self has usurped the Godliness of community.

Important questions were raised. If it is not the same as it was before, what is the purpose of church? What does it mean to be a follower of Christ in 2010? Let's consider the idea that if people were inspired by the people who are inspired by Christ, maybe they'd want to be a part of a church! Discipleship is a reciprocal relationship with God, and this is what we want to share, with everyone. We realized through our discussion that our way of doing church, as much as we love it and are comfortable with it, does not appeal to the masses, nor is it proving to be an effective bridge to God for most people. We began to speak of church – but not as we know it.

Methods of growing church have traditionally included two main approaches: the attractional method, where we invite people to join in church, and the engaged method, where we reach outside our church in some way, inviting people to join in church. Nick Brotherwood spoke of the emerging method, where we go outside the church to find new members, but we then stay out there and cultivate what we find – a “fresh expression” of church. It is important to note that this is not meant to be at the expense of the existing church, church as we know it – we want **both** the old **and** the new church rather than **either** the old **or** the new church. This idea reminded me that the most important thing in our changing society is spreading God's word, and this does not *necessarily* involve filling the church building as it exists now.

The evolution of these fresh expressions of church was outlined in terms of the process below, which I will explain a bit further by sharing some of the exercises in which we participated.

LISTENING
LOVING AND SERVING
BUILDING COMMUNITY
EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP
CHURCH TAKING SHAPE
DO IT AGAIN!

This process is underpinned by prayer, ongoing listening and relationship with the wider church.

We did a meaningful exercise in which each group had to choose from a variety of stereotypical characters, ranging from a Muslim on a prayer mat to a forty-something outdoorsman to a school-aged girl to a teenaged boy. We then had to think about the needs that our chosen person might have – for example: self-esteem, acceptance, happiness, employment, information, childcare and space for spiritual encounter and experience. We were then asked to think about how local Christians (members of OUR church!) might go about meeting those needs – details like who, when and where, what would it cost, and what problems might be encountered. From here, we can then start to think about what a church might look like for this particular type of person. We were shown video examples of existing “fresh expressions” which included everything from a youth church that grew from a bunch of skateboarders trespassing on church property, to young adults meeting in a meditative, candlelit space for coffee, discussion, worship and prayer. The bottom line is the creation of a non-threatening, relevant experience for people where they can feel comfortable learning about God and Jesus through education, scripture, and an exploration of everything from liturgy to music to prayer – *new expressions of church*.

Nick Brotherwood shared that the main challenges with these types of initiatives are an unwillingness to try because of a fear of failure, negative parish attitudes about change, preconceived notions of “how church is supposed to be” and a lack of leadership, time and energy. I'm sure that Father Paul and Max would be as interested as I am to hear your thoughts about the idea of “fresh expressions” of our church! If you're interested in finding out

more, check out the following links:
<http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk>
<http://www.missionshapedministry.org>
<http://www.sharetheguide.org>

*Yours in Christ,
 Lindsay Elford*

St. Paul's Restoration Project: A Note from our Parish Property Chair

Most readers of the St. Paul's Journal will have noticed that the church building restoration project, 50% funded by a Parks Canada Cost-sharing Agreement, is well underway. In fact, at the end of November exterior painting was about 95% complete, while the re-shingling of the roof was also close to completion. Rotten wood has been replaced in a number of areas, most noticeably in the replacement of one of the exterior doors facing Argyle Street.

The natural gas furnaces, which were installed earlier this year, have been running successfully. However, while the heat distribution has markedly increased, we recognise that the noise created by the fans on the Barrington Street side of the church is unacceptably loud. We have requested Metro Burner Services to find a way to lower the fan speed and, thus, reduce the sound level. We are hopeful that this problem will soon be resolved.

Three major parts of the project still remain to be carried out, one of which is the installation of the cold air return system. This should commence within the next few weeks and may entail some minor disruption as holes are cut into the floor at the rear of the church to allow the insertion of new return air grilles. Ample notice will be given prior to this work being carried out.

Next, the windows in the bell tower and the north face of the building will be replaced. The existing windows are in a very fragile state, with some having suffered serious damage. We have worked with both Parks Canada and the Heritage Program staff of the Halifax Regional Municipality to ensure that the replacement windows meet their criteria.

The final, and most complicated, aspect of the project will be the replacement of the roof drainage system. Video inspection of the drains leading to Barrington Street from both the north and south ends of the church showed that the existing pipes are totally root-bound and irreparable. It has been decided, therefore, to replace these pipes by one larger (8") pipe, into which all the rain water draining from the roof on both the east and west sides (the latter to be accommodated by a new 6" pipe installed beneath the church to replace the existing pipe in the same location) will be directed. A trench, leading from our property down to the storm sewers on Barrington Street, will have to be cut into which the new pipe will be laid. While this aspect of the project was not included in our original submission to them, Parks Canada have recognised the necessity for this work and have given their consent on the understanding that it will be carried out within the approved budget.

As per the agreement with Parks Canada, 'before and after' photos were taken wherever it was necessary to replace rotten or damaged material. Copies of these photos will be deposited with St. Paul's Archives.

*Bill Lord
 Property Chair*

Christmas 2010

Friday, 24 December

4:00 p.m. Family Nativity Service
 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist

Saturday, 25 December

10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Eucharist

Sunday, 26 December

10:00 a.m. Eucharist

*Christ
 Is Coming!*

The Provenance of Our Queen Anne Communion Plate

Photo by John McKay

Until July 2010, knowledge of the origin of our Queen Anne Communion Plate was based on assumptions. Attempting to explain the presence of the Silver in Nova Scotia, historians assumed that Queen Anne had given the Garrison Chapel in the Fort at Annapolis Royal the gift of two flagons, a chalice, a paten and an alms receiver, for use in the celebration of Holy Communion. A more recent assumption was that the Queen gave her gift to the people of Annapolis Royal.

In August 1759, the Governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, ordered the removal of the Plate from the Fort and its transport to Halifax. For more than a century it has been assumed that he presented the Plate to the newly incorporated Church of St. Paul. Today we assume we are using the same Silver taken from storage in the Fort.

In the past year, it has been claimed that Lawrence acted illegally in taking the Silver, another assumption which reveals ignorance of the powers and duties of a Royal Governor, a man who receives his Commission from the King, the Head of the Church, the Defender of the Faith.

Three hundred years after the capture of Port Royal in 1710, we know that the Fort's tiny garrison was British,

English-speaking, Church of England, loyal to their Queen. Outside the Fort, the much larger population was Acadian, French-speaking, Roman Catholic, loyal to the King of France. It makes no sense that Queen Anne gave Communion Plate, either to the Garrison Chapel in the Fort or to the Acadians living outside it.

Discarding this unsatisfactory “provenance”, I contacted a Canadian friend living in London whom I knew to be a superb researcher. In July 2010, Laurie Harris presented her findings. She has given St. Paul's months of her time and research skills to discover the real provenance of our Queen Anne Silver.

At the National Archives, Kew, London, she examined the records of the Lord Chamberlain's office, and his Jewel House. She found a system controlling gifts of Plate, and the issuing of “Chapel Plate for the Plantations” to the Governors of the Colonies.

If the Queen had given Communion Plate to the Annapolis Garrison Chapel, the Lord Chamberlain's office would have in their records a warrant documenting what was given, and the inscription to be engraved on each piece. As an example, look at the warrant issued when the Queen decided to give Communion Plate to her two “Indian Chappells” in North America.

These are to signifie her Ma'ties Pleasure that you provide and deliver to Coll.l Nicholson for each of the two Chappells of the Indians in America one Silver Challice, a Patten & a small flagon with her Maj.ties Arms engraved & superscribed The gift of her Maj.ty Anne by the Grace of God of Great Brittain France & Ireland and her Plantations in North America Queen to her Indian Chapple of the Onondanyns not exceeding the value of Sixty Pounds each and for so doing this shall be your Warr.t given under my hand this 10th day of Aprrill 1712 in the eleventh year of her Maj.ties Reign”

signed: Shrewsbury

Reference: LC5/109 Volume I, The National Archives, Kew, UK by permission TNA

Transcription: copyright L. Harris 2010

The Jewel House executed the Warrant and eventually Her Majesty's Indian Chapels received their Communion Plate. Each piece of the two Sets is engraved according to the instructions of the Warrant, as you can see in a photograph of their Silver on the website of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal of the Mohawks, Tyendinaga, Ontario.

No such Warrant exists for a gift of Silver to the Garrison Chapel at Annapolis Royal. No Communion Plate exists with an engraving on each piece stating that the Silver is the gift of Queen Anne to her Chapel in the Fort.

In 1720 the Lord Chamberlain issued a Warrant to the Master of the Jewel House:

“These are to signifie his Majesty's Pleasure that you provide and deliver to the order of Coll. Phillips Governor of Anapolis Royall two little Flaggons, one Challice a Patent and a Receiver to take the Offerings in, for the use of his Majesty's Chappell there not exceeding the value of Eighty Pounds. And for so doing this shall be your Warrant Given under my hand this 14th Day of May 1720 in the Sixth Year of his Majesty's Reign”

signed: Holles Newcastle.

Reference: LC5/109 page 247, TNA, Kew, by permission TNA

On the same page as the Warrant is an Indenture stating that the Silver must accompany a present or future Governor should that Governor change his place of residence.

Laurie Harris notes, “...no other Warrant in this Warrant Book for Church Plate is warranted with a proviso. The Treasury clearly understood the precarious foothold that the English had...and could also foresee that the regiment and/or the Governor of that territory might in the future be based elsewhere.” Folio One, Section 11, footnote 2.

Governor Richard Phillips arrived in April 1720, but in all the length of his governorship he lived in the province less than five years. He was recalled to England in 1731, leaving to others in the garrison the responsibility of the Silver warranted to him.

Governor Charles Lawrence, dealing with other events – the deportation of the Acadians, the settling of the

Planters on Acadian lands, the battle for Louisbourg, the taking of Quebec, the first Legislative Assembly - did not retrieve the Silver from storage at the Fort until August 1759. Perhaps he received a stiffly-worded dispatch from the Lord Chamberlain reminding him to recover His Majesty's property. Much as he may have wished to present the Silver to his Governor's Chapel, St. Paul's, Lawrence knew that the Silver was not warranted to him. It was his duty to return it to the Jewel House, and that is what it appears he did. Perhaps he entrusted this valuable cargo to one of His Majesty's Ships of the Royal Navy for safe delivery to the Lord Chamberlain and his officials in the Jewel House.

Lawrence died in October 1760 before receiving Silver specifically warranted to him as Governor. His successor, Henry Ellis, was warranted but the Silver was not shipped to Nova Scotia, because Ellis never left London.

Tired of the lack of fitting Communion Plate in his church, the Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice, Jonathan Belcher, wrote on January 14, 1762 to the Reverend Dr. Bancroft, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London:

"...Permit me, Sir, under your favour further to represent to the Society, that the Church at Halifax, has not yet partaken of the Bounty in Plate, Books and the Church Ornaments usually bestowed on Churches in the other Colonies. If this Gift is, or may be procured, thro' the recommendations of the Society, the favor to the Parishioners of Halifax would be most gratefully received."

Reference: SPG Correspondence Received B25, Part One, Folio 15, Rhodes House, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK Permission USPG, London.

Belcher's letter produced results. Montagu Wilmot, the next Governor, was warranted to receive Silver on 4 November 1763.

Communion Plate warranted to Wilmot was probably shipped to Halifax during 1764. It is unlikely that it was the same Silver warranted to Governor Richard Phillips in 1720.

From the stock of Plate in the Jewel House the Master or one of his officers chose for St. Paul's Halifax two flagons, (not a pair) a chalice, an alms receiver, and a paten. We are fortunate that the vessels the Jewel House selected were made of almost pure silver, known as Britannia silver, used by silversmiths between 1697 and 1719. The four pieces St. Paul's holds bear the maker's mark of Queen Anne's royal silversmith, Francis Garthorne. One flagon and the alms receiver hold Queen Anne's second arms, and the Court Q, the date letter showing that they were made in 1711-1712. A partially erased 'A' can be seen under the royal cipher 'G' for King George, who succeeded Anne in 1714. The second flagon and the chalice bear only Garthorne's mark, and the arms of George I, or II, or III, with the royal cipher G and R on either side of the arms.

Where is the paten? It's missing. Either it was stolen, or it was so badly damaged that it was melted down along with "old silver" owned by the church. To supply the needs of the larger congregation, two sterling silver patens and a large chalice, date-letter 1819, were acquired by St. Paul's in the 1830s. These vessels supplement the chalice and flagons issued by the Jewel House.

"In an unbroken sequence" as Laurie Harris writes, successive Governors of Nova Scotia from Wilmot to Parr were warranted by the Lord Chamberlain to receive Silver for use in St. Paul's, their Governor's Chapel.

Governor Parr was the last Governor warranted. The Jewel House closed in 1782 in a time of austerity after Britain's defeat in the American Revolutionary War. The Plate became the property of St. Paul's, no longer the Governor's responsibility but ours, to use in our celebration of Holy Communion.

Many, many thanks to Laurie Harris for researching, and providing copies of the documents proving the real provenance of our Queen Anne Communion Plate.

by Tinker McKay (copyright 2010)

Friends of St. Paul's

Advent has come. We have been enjoying such lovely weather this year. With the leaves still on many of the trees, it seemed that Advent made a sudden appearance. We are still "green" and "snowless" but our thoughts are still very much on Advent and its wonderful meaning rather than on temperature changes.

We celebrated Advent Sunday with a special 4:00 p.m. Evensong which is always very well supported. Our morning service was at 10:00 a.m., followed by a Pot Luck Lunch which is always enjoyed by the young people.

We were very pleased to hear from a friend of many years ago who had returned to Toronto. John Cogger was a wonderful parishioner who assumed many duties within St. Paul's even "standing guard" at Halloween. He likes to keep in touch with friends that he made while here. Thank you, John, for thinking of us and our best wishes in your retirement.

We look forward to our glorious celebration of Christmas with the uplifting music and the message of the birth of our Saviour.

St. Paul's looks so beautiful with the red, white and green displayed so meaningfully in the areas of worship and in memory of family and friends and to the glory of God at the birth of His Son.

The original meaning, in English, is Christ's Mass as stated by a former parishioner and Bible student, the late Margaret Rolf.

Our Christmas wish for you all is in the little poem sent by a faithful Calgary friend.

God bless and our wish for a healthy and happy Christmastide.

Dot Kelly

A Christmas Wish

I wish you the joy of Christmas,
The season's sweet repose.
I wish you the peace of Christmas
To mark the old year's close.
I wish you the hope of Christmas
To cheer you on your way.
And a heart of faith and gladness
To greet each coming day.

Author unknown

Submitted by Jean Gould

***Did You Know?***

The candy cane is a symbol of the humble roots of Christianity, the shepherd's crook or "J" for Jesus

- ❖ The hardness in remembrance that the Church was founded on solid rock.
- ❖ The peppermint flavour, like hyssop, signifies purification and sacrifice.
- ❖ The stripes, red signifies Christ's blood and white Christ's sinless purity.

Martin Luther is credited with being the first person to decorate his home with a Christmas tree.

- ❖ Evergreen symbolized immortality.

- ❖ In ancient days, after Christmas festivities in Germany and other northern cultures, tree branches were stripped and the trunk decorated as the May Pole on May 1.
- ❖ The largest piece of the tree trunk was kept to be the Yule log the next Christmas.

As recently as the 1800s the Yule log was as much a part of the pre-Christmas tradition as putting up an evergreen tree is in the 21st. Century.

- ❖ It was the foundation of holiday fires.
- ❖ Charcoal from its fire was kept under family beds all year to protect the house from being struck by lightning.
- ❖ The name Yule stems from the Middle English *yollen* meaning to cry aloud and was used for Anglo-Saxon shouts in celebration of the winter solstice and that nights were becoming shorter.

Christmas evergreen wreaths symbolize the never ending love of God.

- ❖ The circular shape of the wreath shows the continuance of God's unchanging nature.
- ❖ Romans held evergreens as a symbol of peace, joy, and victory.
- ❖ Early Christians displayed evergreens to indicate Christ had entered the home.

Before 1880 there were no manufactured Christmas tree ornaments.

- ❖ Gilded nuts, cookies in various shapes were hidden in the Christmas tree.
- ❖ Marzipan candies in the shape of fruit and vegetables were hung on tree branches.
- ❖ Egg shell nests were filled with candies and nestled into tree branches.
- ❖ On Twelfth Night children were allowed to shake the tree and gather the sweets.

St. Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first crèche in Italy in 1223.

- ❖ He used real animals and people to depict the Saviour's birth.
- ❖ Since that re-enactment many styles have been created and served to bring together faith and art.
- ❖ Crèches can be found around the world and are called by many names: France - *creche*, Italy - *Presepio*, Spain - *Nacimiento*, Germany - *Krippe*, Britain - *Crib*, North America - *creche* or *manager*.

Adapted from: *APUMC - Christmas Season Traditions and Symbols* (apmethodist.org/advent/advent-traditions.htm)

Margaret Bateman Ellison

Pencil Strokes

A bird swooped down from the sky and landed on a branch.

"There, see that bird? Quickly, before it flies away, just do a quick sketch," instructed Nicole.

Elizabeth nodded as her pencil flew across the page.

It was a dream come true: drawing lessons from the famous artist, Nicole Lewis. It had only been a few weeks earlier that things had started to happen, and that she had learned that Nicole was willing to give her drawing lessons.

That day had started out like a regular one. Elizabeth went to school and listened to teachers

drone on while she sat in classrooms with straight rows of desks and walls covered with faded paint, vacant of anything except for the clock. At lunch, her best friend Katelyn found her outside, leaning against an old oak tree, sketching a patch of wild flowers that had sprouted amid the grass.

"Elizabeth, you're such a good artist!" exclaimed Katelyn. "You should really try to convince your mom to let you take lessons again."

Elizabeth just nodded. She knew that her mother would love to be able to let her take drawing lessons again, but right now, their budget was too tight. Her father had passed away a couple of years earlier, leaving only her and her mother.

However, that afternoon when she walked into her kitchen, with its brightly painted walls and neatly organized counters, her mother excitedly handed her an envelope with her name on it.

When she opened it, she found a note inside that said:

I've registered you in an eight week course in drawing and sketching. You start on Tuesday. Love, Mom.

Elizabeth gasped and then threw her arms around her mother. "Thank you so much, Mom. This really means a lot to me."

"I know, honey," replied her mother with a small smile. "I only wish that we were able to afford to let you have more art lessons."

For the next couple of days, Elizabeth was so full of anticipation for her lessons that she could barely concentrate on anything else. She purchased new drawing pencils and sketch pads, and every day at lunch, Katelyn found her outside, absorbed in the strokes her pencil made as it flew across the page. There were only a few more days left to wait when she got the call from the hospital.

Elizabeth was in school when she found out that her mother had broken her leg. She rushed to the hospital. When she arrived, out of breath and full of anxiety, a nurse quickly tried to calm her down. Her mother was fine, except that her full-length cast would have to stay on for six weeks. The nurse informed Elizabeth that the hospital was willing to keep her mother there for a week until she was feeling better and so that they could arrange some things before her mother went home.

When she walked into her mother's room, Elizabeth was struck by how bare the walls were. They were painted a pale yellow and were completely empty. She resolved to bring some drawings to decorate the walls. Elizabeth and her mother decided that she would stay with Katelyn for a week. Elizabeth also insisted that they use the money for her drawing lessons to help cover some of the expenses. Her mother tried to refuse her offer, but Elizabeth was very persistent and finally her mother accepted it.

"Thank you very much, honey. I know that this must have been very hard for you."

Elizabeth just gave her mother a hug.

The next day when Elizabeth went to the hospital after school, her mother introduced her to Grace Bower, the elderly woman she now shared a room with. They talked for a bit and then Elizabeth reached into her bag and handed her mother the sketch of the patch of wildflowers that she had been working on, as well as a few sketches of some birds.

"Thank you, honey," said her mother with a smile. "Why don't you put them up on the wall? Grace, you don't mind, do you?"

"Oh, not at all, my daughter is an artist as well. I'm sure that she'd love to take a look at these drawings herself. They are positively amazing."

The next day when Elizabeth arrived at the hospital, someone else was in the room with Grace and her mother. She was looking at Elizabeth's drawings and had her back to the door, so Elizabeth couldn't see her face, only the wavy brown hair pulled back into a high ponytail falling on a fashionable black trench coat. Grace explained that this was her daughter, the artist, who had wanted to meet Elizabeth because she had been so impressed by her drawings.

As the woman turned around, Elizabeth instantly recognized the dark brown eyes, the high cheekbones, and the arching eyebrows.

"Nicole Lewis!" she gasped. Nicole Lewis was a famous artist who specialized in drawing.

Nicole laughed and echoed her mother's praise.

"You have a natural talent," complimented Nicole.

She also mentioned that Elizabeth's mother had told her about the drawing lessons.

"I'd be willing to give you drawing lessons for a year," offered Nicole. "I think that it would be a wonderful experience for both of us."

Elizabeth's mouth dropped open and she gasped in disbelief at this gift.

"W-w- well, s-s-sure!" she stuttered. "I'd love to!"

It was definitely a dream come true. Drawing lessons with Nicole were everything she'd hoped they'd be. She loved the few hours where she was

able just to lose herself in her work, only resurfacing to hear Nicole's comments.

Suddenly the bird flew away.

"Let's see what you did," said Nicole peering over Elizabeth's shoulder. "Very good. You were able to capture a lot in the short amount of time. Like I said, you have a natural talent!"

Elizabeth glanced down at the bird that had emerged from the paper and then up at the bird flying in the sky, and she smiled.

Anya Friesen

The Backyard

The Andersons are moving out! Mollie was so excited she could hardly contain her joy. As she watched, posed at her kitchen window, she knew she had to tell the others. As soon as the moving van was finally gone, she raced out her front door, across the street and up three houses to a small white home. Knock, knock, she tapped on the door. "Hello?" answered a lady with long black hair.

"Hi Mrs. Connors, can Callie come play?" said Mollie. Mrs. Connors smiled and went to get her. A little black haired girl came running out the door.

"Are they gone? Are they gone?" Callie asked.

"Yes! Let's go get Eva!" Mollie replied. Mollie and Callie ran six houses down the street and went up the steps of a green house with a blue door. Before they even reached the top step, a girl with short blonde hair in pigtails flew out the door. Together all three of them ran as fast as they could to the last house at the bottom of their street. They stood in awe looking up at the large four-floored mansion. Mollie signalled to the others to follow her and together they climbed up and over a tall white fence. They dashed around to the back of the house, knowing exactly where to go. The three eight-year old girls looked around. They saw a big, green forest, a small pond off to one side and to the other? The tallest tree imaginable with a yellow, wooden tree house perched at the top.

"There it is." Eva sighed. They had all been waiting for the day when the elderly Andersons moved out of this house with the best backyard imaginable. As they walked towards the tree, they reminisced about the good old times they used to have there. They used to play at this mini park in the abandoned house's backyard all the time. Sadly though, someone bought the land and the house, and they couldn't play there anymore. "Look!" said Eva, climbing up the ladder and peering into the tree house, "The chairs are still here!" She crawled inside, with Callie and Mollie following her.

"Let's play a game!" suggested Mollie.

"Can I be the princess?" asked Callie.

"Only if I can be the dragon!" roared Eva, chasing Mollie and Callie out down the tree, and into the forest. They played, chased each other and played some more. They only left their wonderful little paradise when Mollie's dad came to get them for supper.

Weeks passed, and the three little girls were having the times of their lives. They played – and invented – many new games, they created new memories and they rarely spent any time away from the backyard. No attention was given to the "For Sale" sign in the yard, or to all the people coming and going, and getting tours around the house. The real estate agent eventually came and told them that they could only play there if it wasn't on a day when there was a tour. On those days they sat across the street, watching all the people, wondering who would be their neighbours. Would it be the young couple with the three loud dogs? Or maybe the mean-looking man who told them off for staring at the house. "I hope the family has kids!" exclaimed Mollie. "Then we could play all day with them!"

"But no boys! Boys are too rough, and don't like to play make-believe games." said Eva. The other girls silently agreed. A few more weeks came and went, all the while they were waiting, waiting to see who would be their neighbours, and more importantly, waiting to see if they would ever get to play in their blissful little playground ever again. The day when they found out came too soon, in their opinion. It was a rainy Thursday morning, and Mollie, Callie

and Eva ran to the house dressed in rain boots and raincoats. They stopped dead when they noticed a very old, very dirty car drive up. Out stepped an old man with paper-white hair and a face that had so many wrinkles that it looked as though someone had taken it, crumpled it up and then tried to smooth it out, but failed. Next, out stepped an old lady with hair just as white, and skin just as wrinkled. She noticed the girls and waved joyfully at them, then hurriedly followed the man into the house. Plucking up as much courage as they had, the three girls walked up to the front door, and knocked.

"Hello?" It was the little old lady at the door. When she saw them, she immediately invited them in for cookies (amidst many boxes) and for a chat. Just when they were about to leave, Mrs. Lockwood called to them, saying "You girls will come and visit again, won't you?"

Eva, not missing the opportunity said "Can we play in your backyard? Please?" Mollie, Callie and Eva held their breath for one quite long suspense-filled moment.

"Of course! There's an old tree house back there that you might have fun in." Mrs. Lockwood replied. And with that, the three girls felt as though a heavy weight had been lifted from their shoulders.

Claire Bennet

A Very Different Christmas

In December 2009, the Dobbin family (our daughter Penny, husband David, daughters Gillian, age 16, and Heather, age 12) and the Day family (Bill and I) flew to Africa for Christmas. Penny organized the whole trip with a safari company, and off we all went, packing binoculars, flashlights, wash 'n dry underwear and safari clothes - along with the ubiquitous Tilley Hats ... oh!, and sunscreen, bug repellent and a whole pincushion of shots courtesy of Isobel (Napier) MacPherson!

We flew from New York in a huge 300+ seat plane to London, then on to Johannesburg, where we transferred to a 100-seat Air Botswana plane for our

flight to Maun in Botswana. We were met and identified in Maun by a charming young man in bush shirt and shorts, who showed us where the boarding gate was, met us the other side, ferried us in golf carts to the 12-seat bush plane, and then turned out to be our pilot! Quite a transition in air transport!

We took off over the Okavanga Delta, which is part of the Kalahari Desert - one of the only (due to tectonic plate movement) landlocked deltas in the world. We flew low enough to see the paths made by animals all over the place, and could see elephants like dots beside water holes.

Our first Safari Camp, Little Vumbura, was situated on an island in one of the delta's rivers, and at night we could hear the hippos coming out of the water to graze behind our tent-walled cabins. On safari trips, we saw prides of lions lolling around in the heat of the day, a cheetah so full from a recent kill that he could hardly move, elephants and wild dogs, wildebeests and zebras, great moving forests of giraffes that would peer at you over the tops of the acacia trees, ostriches, baboons, wart hogs, hyenas, jackals and many different kinds of antelopes ... a positive cornucopia of creatures, all in their native habitat, free, wild and unconfined. It was magical. There were flocks of birds, an extensive arboretum of different acacia bushes and trees, and flowers to delight the eye. It was as though we had unwittingly strayed into the Garden of Eden, where the lion lay down with the lamb - an illusion of course as any antelope will tell you, but the feeling was so vivid, and the revelation of Africa so striking, that it made one marvel at the reality of God's amazing creation, so different from the northern world we recognize.

We moved on to a second camp, Chitabe, for Christmas. Not on an island, but more evidently part of the Kalahari, sand everywhere, all life supported by the vegetation that grew out of this sandy ground. The Land Rover tracks from the airport were deeply rutted, with curves and turns carved out of the soft ground.

The staff at Chitabe, like those at Little Vumbura, were all local Botswanans, proud of their country, enjoying their jobs, and happy smiling ambassadors

of their people. They loved singing, and would sing the daily dinner menu in Batswana, then translate it for us. A unique experience!

Chitabe was equally amazing ... wonderful animals, amazing scenery, and almost all the animals at both camps seemed to have babies or young ones with them. There is nothing more enchanting than seeing a tiny elephant emerging from between the knees of a herd of Mamas and Aunties, who are alert to any danger to their baby. We actually got chased by a herd of defensive matronly elephants, and let me tell you, it's quite heart stopping as they thunder towards you, trunks and ears flapping and trumpeting - to compete with the roar of the accelerating Land Rover. Now that was one experience I don't want to repeat!

Christmas Day was really like any other safari day - no noticeable recognition of its significance. I suppose these camps have all-comers on safari; Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists and others, so they do not single out any religious holy days. However, we did have Christmas dinner after our day's safari! And we did introduce a little bit of Jesus to our camp! Before we left, Maggie Duinker asked me to see if I could learn an African song for the Music Team so, at Little Vumbura, one of the African ladies taught me one, called "Alfa Le Omega" (or, as we heard it sung after Christmas at St. Paul's 9:00 am service, "Jeso, Jeso Ke Ena"). I was delighted to find that the staff at Chitabe knew it as well. On Christmas Eve, round the camp fire, there were a few attempts at carols, but they tended to be trumped by 'Frosty the Snowman' and other jingles or folk songs. But on Christmas Day, at dinner, the staff, the Days and the Dobbins sang "Alfa Le Omega", and "Ndi Jesu" a Swahili hymn, which I taught them, and another Botswanan hymn which we did not know, but hummed along as far as we were able.

A very different Christmas, but one where the verse from Genesis "Let the earth bring forth living creatures, according to their various kinds...." was, to northern eyes, made manifest; where we saw so many baby animals, miraculous little creatures, loved and cared for by their various parents, as was that human baby, Jesus, millenia ago, and where a little

bit of Christ Mass flowered in the velvety black African night.

Two days later, we flew out, again on the little 12-seat bush plane, back to Maun, then on to Cape Town for New Year, much the richer for our experiences.

Fiona Day

Isaac Watts "Joy to the Word" (1719)

from 'Songs for Renewal'

"This hymn was written by Watts, not as a Christmas carol but as a paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9. Watts grew up in 17th century England at a time when only psalms were sung in worship, and those were often not done very well. A contemporary of Watts wrote of the 'shining, tooting, yelling, or screeching' taking place in many congregations. One day in church, when the eighteen year old expressed his disgust at the singing and refused to participate, his father suggested that if Isaac were smarter than King David, then perhaps he should write something better.

Watts' first hymn was sung the following Sunday, and he eventually wrote over six hundred more. In so doing he ushered in a new era of hymn singing in England and became known as the 'Father of English Hymnody.' ... In his psalm paraphrases, Watts' goal was 'to make David speak like a Christian.'...The evangelistic call is for each of us to 'prepare him room' not just at Advent or Christmas but every day.

This hymn celebrates the incarnation, the Word become flesh, breaking the power of sin and bringing God's kingdom to human hearts. But it also celebrates with prophetic vision Jesus' return in glory....All of creation has finally come under Christ's Lordship...Joy to the world!"

Gretchen Gillis



Christmas Carols: A Gift of Love

One of my most treasured childhood memories centres on Christmas carols in our home. As Christmas drew near, my mother would take her place at the piano after supper while the rest of us gathered around to sing our favourite carols. I loved singing these carols for the Baby Jesus with my family; they were a gift of love and joy for me.

As a child, I knew there was a difference between the joy I felt as we sang our carols and my overwrought, excited 'joy' in the Santa side of Christmas but I wasn't able then to express or even understand what made that difference. It is only in looking back that I realize now the source of my joy was centred in our family unity in love for the Baby Jesus, expressed through our carols.

Whatever difficulties and differences we might have experienced through the day were set aside for those few minutes every evening before Christmas, creating a special gift of love then and a treasured memory now.

Every child needs special, loving memories to treasure. May many children know the joy of love for the Baby Jesus this Christmas; may they have memories to treasure as they grow older, may they be blessed with gifts of love and joy in Jesus our risen Lord: the King of Love.

Gretchen Gillis

Baby Jesus

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given ... the Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6

See the baby Jesus sleeping there in peace,
 Sent by God, a Gift of love, that worldly strife might cease.
 The baby's eyes look all around, then focus on His mother,
 Of whom one day He'll trust her life and care unto another.
 The tiny hands and fingers explored with baby glee,
 Will feel the Crucifixion pain one day for you and me.
 The little body held so close by Mary in that stall,
 Will one day be a sacrifice of love for one and all.
 The little feet now kicking, and waving in the air,
 One day will start the journey of ministry and care
 For all the nations of this earth, according to God's plan,
 Messiah, Saviour, Lord of love, is reaching out to man.
 So when we see the manger scene, and read of Jesus' birth,
 Remember God *so* loved the world, that's why He came to earth,
 To reach out to His children, with a plan to set them free,
 That everyone might find a way to life eternally.
 We thank you, God in Heaven, for Your *Gift* You set our way,
 In the miracle of Jesus' birth, born on that Christmas day.

Written and composed with God's help for Christmas, year 2005

Denise G. McKay



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