



PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 308 KING ST, MIDLAND,
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**SERVICES FOR THE
CHRISTMAS SEASON 2010**

November 28 - 10am

First Sunday in Advent

December 5th - 10am

Second Sunday in Advent &
Sunday school Christmas Pageant

Following the service our
Christmas Pot Luck Luncheon

Everyone Welcome!

December 12th - 10am

Third Sunday in Advent

December 19th - 10am

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Choir Sunday

Cantata by our choir

December 24th - 7pm

Christmas Eve Service

Dec 26th Regular 10am Service



The Season of Advent is with us, we wish you Hope, Peace, Joy and Love!



HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2010
St. Paul's United Church

Advent and Christmas Message

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. [Isaiah 11:6](#)
 May the Lord be with You!

It sometimes seems difficult to believe that it has been almost ten months since I came to St. Paul's. Time has passed quickly because we all have been very active in the Lord's work. Reflecting back it is hard to believe how much has transpired. There have been the times of joy as we celebrated all the weddings and baptisms that have taken place. As well we have shared the happy memories and sadness of loss with families of congregants and area residents as they have reminisced about their loved ones who have passed away. It has been a privilege to be part of all these celebrations. As well it has been a joy and a privilege to be invited into many congregants' homes. These visits have enabled me to get to know you better and for you to get to know me. Your presence and your willingness to share your stories has had a profound impact upon me, and my ministry here at St. Paul's. It is my hope that you will continue to welcome me into your homes and to expand my contacts as time passes.

As we enter a New Year in the Church - the Season of Advent, St. Paul's has embarked on a new journey concerning its existence. The first step was the selection of the Joint Needs Committee and its resulting report. The next step has just recently been completed with the announcement that eleven volunteers have stepped forward to serve on the Joint Search Committee. Northern Waters Presbytery has named two representatives and so the important process for the selection of your new minister has taken on a new phase. This is an exciting time to be in a Christ-centred community for it gives all of us the opportunity to focus on the collective ministry of a congregation.

Out of all this has sprung many new initiatives and callings. Andy Ahrens has taken a leave of absence to think about where the Lord is calling him. His leave has prompted both he and Martha to step back from the vital work of the Christian Education Committee. Because this community is so vital, it is not surprising that many volunteers have stepped forward to assist in this important ministry. A new Christian Development Committee has been formed. At its first few meetings it has taken on the important task of spearheading the ministry necessary for the children's and adult's immediate needs for Christian Education. Bev Truax, a long time supporter of the children's ministry, has taken on the huge task of writing, rehearsing, and directing the children's participation in the White Gift Sunday service.

As we approach the Seasons of Advent and Christmas let us be ever mindful of the new life that sprung from the old. The prophet Isaiah calls us to experience new life in a world turned upside down, where nothing will seem the same. How could a little child lead God's people out of the wilderness? Yet that is what happened with the humble birth of our Saviour in that stable over 2010 years ago! As we begin a New Year in the Church anticipating Jesus' birth let us be reminded that God is constantly renewing and reframing our lives. May God bless you in the coming year, and may our collective ministry be a blessing to the community that immediately surrounds us, and to the greater world.

Advent and Christmas Blessings Jim

OFFICIAL BOARD REPORT:

November is a word synonymous with the approaching winter season and the impending arrival of the Christmas Season. It is so hard to believe that another year has passed us by and that we have enjoyed another year of each others companionship and prayerful fellowship at St Pauls.

First we dismantled the Chancel, and then watched it being rebuilt to what it is today. I'm so proud to have been able to have been part of this as it was Cliff's dream.

We then were able to acquire the services of Rev. Jim McKean as a Supply Minister for our Church.

We then celebrated the sounds of our new organ with the concert that was primarily organized by Nick Frans. This was a wonderful opportunity to hear what an organ can really do in our Church. But it was sure a nervous time for me to sit at the sound board and look at the ceiling wondering if would withstand the tremendous sounds and volumes coming from that wonderful instrument.

We then went into the fall of the year and the board put a couple of very important motions forward. The first of which saw the Board pass a motion to Support Andy Ahrens in his wish to become a Designated Lay minister for the United Church of Canada. The second was a motion passed as to the choice of the volunteers to be accepted as our new Search Committee for the selection of a new Full Time Minister of St Pauls,

I want to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers of this congregation for all their efforts during this year in so many of the different projects, committee functions and also the fund raising that has taken place here.

I would also like to thank the entire congregation for their support over the last three years of my tenure as it would not have been possible without it, thanks a lot.

As I close Sharon and I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year. Blessings and May God look after all of you and all of Your Friends and Family.

Colin Whiteside, Chair of the Board, St Pauls United Church.

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT

The Official Board passed a motion at the last meeting naming members to the Christian Development Committee: Joan Lavin, Rachel Leck (Chair), Angie Leis (Secretary), Lori Payne and Sheila Thompson (Vice-chair). The Committee is working hard to ensure that St. Paul's Christian Development programs continue to meet the needs of our congregation as we enter into a new phase in the life of our Church.

A group of over 20 members of the congregation gathered in early November to set short-term Christian Development priorities, including planning for the Christmas season. The Sunday School has focused on preparing a wonderful Christmas play for our Church family on White Gift Sunday. The Committee has also approached families to light the Advent candles, as has been done in the past, and we will ensure that our Christmas Eve traditions continue.

A number of programs have been deferred until after Christmas: Kicks and Sticks, Girls Night Out and Movie Night. In the New Year, we will assess the future of these programs. Food For Thought will continue under the leadership of Kay and Bob Megaw.

The Committee is actively planning for the New Year. We hope to continue to receive the enthusiastic support of the congregation as needed.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

As we all head into this busy and wondrous time of year I'll just take a minute to keep you current with the activities of your Communications committee at St. Paul's. We continue with our regular responsibilities, maintaining the Historic Roll and Family Directory - with thanks to Gunter and Judy, organizing social time after church and publishing and delivering the newsletters - with thanks to our church groups and committees who host, and visitors, distributing the videos of Sunday services - with thanks to the video crew and the volunteers who circulate them, keeping the web page up-to-date - with thanks to George and Louise Leck.

And a little 'head's up!' We'll be doing a family pictorial directory in 2011 so look forward to scheduling an appointment for a photo shoot in May.

We realize how blessed we are at St. Paul's to have the opportunity to serve God and each other through our church so as we enter this Advent season let us remember to enjoy the 'busyness' but to really appreciate the 'reason for the season'.

On behalf of my committee members, Gary Price, Gunter Freund, Brenda Fleming, George and Louise Leck, I wish you all a most blessed and joyous Christmas and a safe and healthy 2011. Sheila Thompson



Let the Light In!

By Antje Clarke

Just recently, I returned from an enriching family celebration in Northern Germany. My homeward bound journey at the Hamburg Airport began on a very blustery November day. By the time my much delayed flight landed in Amsterdam I could just wave to 0691 KLM bound for Toronto.

A multitude of similarly stranded passengers were herded to understaffed transfer counters for rebooking. "Let's see if I can help you." Kathi Scott, a management rep of the "Build-A-Bear" organization from Memphis, Tennessee shepherded this Midland senior to a special counter where, instead of a 4 hours line-up, I became the relieved owner of my new boarding pass in one hour; mind you, I couldn't fly until late the next day. Kathy seeing the overcrowded shuttle bus to the hotel, got us, flashing her business credit card, to the Park Plaza via taxi in style.

The austere hotel environment was soon illuminated by heartwarming interactions. I shared my evening meal with Larna a Phd. student from Stockholm en route to Boston. Being of Finnish-German parentage her thesis dealt with the immigration to Finland since 1980. How interesting! I had only been aware of Finnish people leaving their country. For dessert Lara happily showed me the picture of her 18month old, very blond daughter Mia with her smiling dad.

At breakfast I met Marion from Cologne who was looking forward, although with trepidation, to a year of au-pairing in Toronto to improve her already good English. Omi Clarke did a lot of listening and with my address in her hand Marion's Canadian adventure seemed less daunting.

When I finally returned home, although physically tired, I still felt spiritually refreshed by the purity of human interactions I had been privileged to experience. May we also let the light of human understanding shine among us when we approach Advent and greet, also this year, the Prince of Light.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The TV and sound crew consisting of Aileen & Vic Denise, Colin Whiteside, Bob Scott, Don Edwards and Mue Lah continue each year to volunteer their time to tape the Sunday service for the people who are unable to attend and also to insure that those that do attend are able to hear. There are a group of dedicated people including Graham Patchell, Allan James, Bill Healey, Bob Megaw and Joan Lavin, who deliver these tapes each week. Gary Price continues to donate his equipment and his employee's time to remove the snow at the

church in the early mornings during the winter months. Gary also arranges to have the grass cut and have the leaves removed in the fall.

During the year the committee has completed several projects. Lighting through out the church continues to be monitored and repaired or replaced as required. Two Low Flow Toilets were installed and it is the intention of the committee to have two more done in 2011. Eventually all the toilets will be replaced. Our ongoing window replacement project was put on hold for this year however we intend to replace windows in the Great Hall, at the back of the stage, in 2011. The bench, purchased and placed on the front lawn in 2008, was recoated with a stain before going out on the lawn this past spring. This will be done again in the spring of 2011. A new Telephone System is in the budget for 2011. The Chancel and Organ Renovation project has been completed and it has greatly enhanced the sanctuary. The Property Committee has made it its mission to insure that the newly renovated chancel and organ are properly maintained. It is always a challenge to maintain an older building such as ours. You're Property Committee along with a dedicated group of volunteers work very hard to accomplish this task.

Members of the property committee who generously give of their time include Hans Mueller, Tom Barber, Vic Denise, Alex Widmeyer, Colin Whiteside, Floyd Tilson, Bruce Wilcox and Bill Coveyduck. The committee would like to thank Linda Wilcox for her assistance at the committee's coffee hours. Many thanks also to Judy McConnell for looking after the committee's correspondence and maintaining the property records in the church computer. A final thank you to Maryellen Petticrew, our custodian, who keeps our building looking the best it can be.

We would like to thank all the people not mentioned who have contributed countless hours of work during 2010 and we would like to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Your Property Committee

UCW REPORT

Here we are in November with the sun shining down on us. We have had a really wonderful autumn season. Long may it last! Into December ??

We wish to send a heartfelt "THANK YOU" to everyone who contributed to the Bakeless Bake Sale. Your givings are much appreciated.

Our visit to the Wyevale United Church UCW where Bill Leeming gave us a presentation which was very worthwhile. Bill Leeming lives in the vicinity of Awenda Park so much of his talk and slides pertained to wolves and wildlife close to our communities. It was an informative and not always happy picture of how we interact with our local wildlife. Judy Stiles, one of our UCW members has become a spokesperson for domestic and wild animals.

The two UCW groups have had their regular monthly meetings in September, October, and November. We also have a regular UCW executive meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. All of the ladies are welcome to come to the executive meeting.

In September we hosted the Northern Waters Presbyterial Meeting at St. Paul's. It was a very rainy day, however we had a good attendance, with 55 ladies present from 19 organizations of this presbytery. The Theme of the meeting was CONNECTING WITH GOD. Our speaker was Rebecca Brownell of Haliburton. Rebecca is a registered marriage and family therapist. She is trained in alternative healing modalities, such as energy healing, and mindful meditation. Her ideas were well received. Our ladies served muffins, desserts, and beverages.

Our Meet and Greet Tea was well attended by our ladies, and with a few guests who might like to become UCW members.

The Fall Rummage Sale involved a number of people from the congregation, and we thank you for your help. It was a good day. Rummage sales entail lots of physical work, and we do seem to be able to work together companionably toward a successful outcome.

The December solstice will soon be with us, and all the attendant joyous celebrations of Christmas. Some of us will find this more of a sombre time of remembering. Although we may not all have family members close enough for visiting, hopefully friends and acquaintances will help us to enjoy some good visiting times. The winter months, of course, all too often bring enforced inside living, however, the seasons continue and Spring will arrive. Worth waiting for !!

We wish you all a continued warm autumn and a winter filled with interesting occupations, good friends, and good cheer.
Wilma Plews.

THE CHOIR

As you may have noticed, we have some new members in the choir for which we are very thankful. Paul, as usual, gives us music to learn that would be pleasing for the congregation as well as to tie in with the morning service message. New members are always welcome and your reward is to learn music under our extremely talented choir director, Paul Sloan.

As we approach the busy Advent and Christmas seasons, the choir is working very hard to produce our annual Christmas musical service for December 19th. It promises to be a wonderful uplifting entry into Christmas week. We again will be bringing in some extra singers for this special event to give more volume and more dynamics to this amazing production and as usual, we will also have the added instruments for accompaniment. This should be included in your "not to be missed" Christmas invitations.

As we are always too busy with our Christmas cantata for anything but learning, we schedule our pot luck "Christmas" party after Christmas. New members are always welcome to be part of this fun evening.

I would like to wish the St. Paul's family a blessed Christmas and may your New Year be filled with joy and contentment.
Pat Cowden Secretary, St. Paul's Choir.



Our choir Cantata service December, 2009

A Christmas Prayer

May the wonder of Christmas

Forever endure.

Revered and beloved by rich and by poor,

The gifts and the carols, the star and the
tree,

Family love, a child's ecstasy...

May the spirit of Christmas and its
gentle power

Prevail in our hearts and ennoble each
hour,

And if just for a time, may its magic
enthrall

Lightening our burdens, uplifting all ...

May the message of Christmas ring out
once again

And give us the vision to see in all men,
Goodness and virtue, devotion and worth,

Though weakness and ignorance stalk
the earth...

And may we in our lives see a world at
peace,

Where true friendships build and
enmities cease,

A universe where we may one day find

The love that is Christmas in all of
mankind.

Submitted by Elvera Isard and taken from a
Christmas card she received.

A Nativity Scene was erected in a church yard.
During the night the folks came across this scene.

An abandoned dog was looking for a comfortable,
protected place to sleep. He chose baby Jesus as
his comfort. No one had the heart to send him away
so he was there all night.



We should all have the good sense of this dog and
curl up in Jesus' lap from time to time. Note that the
dog's breed is "Shepherd".

The picture of the dog was submitted by Carol Isard.

Christmas Concerts at St. Paul's

Nov 27th Serenata Choir - 7:30pm

Dec 5th Children Community Choir - 7:00pm

Dec 11th Vox Huronia Choir - 7:30pm

Details are available on posters around the church.

BE AN ANGEL FOR CHRISTMAS

Help children in our community have a
better Christmas! Once again this year we
have received angel cards from the Salvation
Army, these cards will have either a boy or
girl on them and their age and a gift
suggestion. You may take a card and return it
with an **unwrapped gift** for the child to the
church office. All gifts will then be given to
the Salvation Army and will go out to the
family with their Christmas Hamper! Please
return your gift to the church office **By
December 10th!** After that date please take
your gifts directly to Salvation Army!

FELLOWSHIP CLUB REPORT

The Fellowship Club resumed meetings on September 7, 2010 following its summer hiatus with an interesting presentation by Erin Chapelle on the economic, social and nutritional benefits of accessing local fresh food sources. Sherri Desjardins described her experiences climbing Mount Kilimanjaro at the October meeting; and at the November meeting, which was extremely well attended, we heard from the two MSS high school teachers, John Faragher and Tim Jenkinson, who accompanied 46 students to France, Belgium and Holland to take part in the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Holland. Each of these presentations was followed by a period of fellowship over coffee and snacks provided by the organizing committees – convened by Terry MacPherson and Susan McNeil (September); Tom and Diane Marr (October); and Gerry and Lori Payne (November).

The Club also organized two successful special events during this period: the Annual Beef Dinner on September 29, and the Autumn Magic Car Rally/Chili Dinner (planned by Marg and Dirk Alberts) on October 16. In addition to delivering good food and good fun, these two events raised funds totalling \$2600 which the Club will donate to local organizations helping needy individuals and families in the Midland area during the Christmas season (\$800) and the remaining \$1800 to St. Paul's for purposes which the members will specify at the December meeting.

The Fellowship Club decorated the sanctuary on Thanksgiving Sunday with a colourful display of autumn flowers, fruits, vegetables and leaves – and many people expressed their appreciation for its beauty. The Fellowship Club is also contributing table decorations for the Sunday School luncheon which follows the White Gift Service on December 5.

The Club continues to contribute to overseas outreach activities by supporting a Foster Child through Plan Canada and contributing to the the Leprosy Mission. Members also contribute to a “Sunshine Fund” which provides resources for cards, flowers or donations for members who are ill or bereaved.

The December 7, 2010 meeting will be the traditional Christmas Dinner in the Great Hall. Tickets for members and their guests are on sale at the Church Office at \$16.

The Fellowship Club is always happy to welcome new members (fee is a bargain \$10/year per person) or to enjoy the occasional participation of those who just want to attend because of their interest in a specific topic.

THE CIRCLE

The circle has a busy few weeks ahead. We had a pie sale on Sunday, Nov. 7/10. We made 51 pies and a profit of just over approx. \$350. We will be hosting the newcomers luncheon on Sunday, Nov. 14 after the morning service. This is usually well attended. Our next function will be on Sunday, December. 5 where we will organizing the white gift potluck luncheon after the morning special service. In the new year, we will be planning to have our talent auction. This will take place in April 2011. So please start knitting, sewing, woodworking, planning to host someone over for a dinner, think of what baking or jams or jellies you would like to do. More details will be available in January. As you can see, these ladies are kept very busy. I would like to thank all of my committee for all the work that they do.

Gail Wilcox, Committee Chair





What a great turnout for our newcomers luncheon

Welcome to our newest members of St. Paul's

Thank you to Gail Wilcox for taking the pictures!

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Ner Da Shee, Sunshine and their baby daughter arrived in Midland in early March this year. This was the final phase of our church sponsorship program which began in 2007. Over the last four years, St. Paul's has donated over \$50,000 to sponsor a total of 13 members of a Burmese Karen family from a UNHCR refugee camp in Thailand. The families have quickly integrated into Canadian life. Most of them have either part-time or full-time work, and several are going to Georgian College here in Midland to upgrade their education in order to expand their future career opportunities. Two of the families have saved enough money to buy a duplex home close to Little Lake Park, the YMCA and St. Paul's Church! We are very proud and happy that they are settling into Canada so well.

This spring during the Lent period, the congregation donated approx. \$4300 to the Midland Street Outreach Program. With matching funds from the St. Paul's Special Projects Account, we contributed a total of approx. \$8600 to this important initiative designed to get help for the local disadvantaged people in downtown Midland.

In November we are again coordinating fundraising for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Last year the congregation contributed close to \$4000, which grew to close to \$20,000 with the 4:1 match by the federal government.

In addition, using funding from the Benevolent Fund, in December we plan to provide Christmas hampers to 20 needy families, including 50 children, living on Christian Island.

The Outreach Committee would like to recognize the generosity of the congregation here at St. Paul's. What a caring church family with which we are blessed! Thanks to all.
Greg Rothwell

A Christmas Poem, by Pat Cowden

It's the Christmas season, that time of the year,
When people are happy and full of good cheer,
We remember the baby who was born in a stall,
Who came to this earth for the good of us all.





The star in the east on that wonderful night
Astounded the shepherds, it was so very bright,
The visitors went to see what this could be
In a barn with the animals, a baby, you see.

And why did this baby look so heavenly bright?
His parents beside him with obvious delight,
The people all came when they saw the bright star
Bringing gifts for the baby from places afar.

They dropped to their knees at the infant's side,
In awe and with reverence, no gifts were denied,
They saw God's face in this wee tiny one
And knew he was blessed and God's only Son.

We, as Christians believe that important event
Is surely one that we cannot forget,
God sent this baby and we remember his birth,
He sent him proclaiming to be Peace on this Earth.



WORSHIP: REMEMBERING YOUR SPIRIT - WHAT DO YOU HEAR? Author unknown

A Native American and his friend were in the downtown area of a large city. It was during the noon lunch hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, taxicabs were squealing around corners, sirens were wailing and the sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly, the Native American said, "I hear a cricket." His friend said, "What? You must be crazy. You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise!" "No, I'm sure of it," The Native American said. "I heard a cricket." "That's crazy," said the friend. The Native American listened carefully for a moment, and then walked across the street to a big cement planter where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes, beneath the branches, and sure enough, he located a small cricket. His friend was utterly amazed.

"That's incredible," said his friend. "You must have superhuman ears!" "Yes, it's true," came the reply. "It depends on what is really important to you. Here, let me show you." He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and discreetly dropped them on the sidewalk. And then, with the noise of the crowded street still blaring in their ears, they noticed every head within twenty feet turn and look to see if the money that tinkled on the pavement was theirs. "See what I mean?" asked the Native American. "It all depends on what's important to you."

What's important to you? What do you listen for? Some people say that there is no God, and that He never speaks to us anymore. But perhaps they can't see or hear Him because they aren't listening for Him. They are living for themselves, not for God. If you are in Tune with God, you will be able to notice Him at work in your life and in The world. And you'll be able to hear Him when He speaks.

May God Bless You And Keep You Safe. From the Worship Committee Chair. Cathy Metzgar

DROP – IN- CENTRE

Another year has passed and we see many of the same faces week after week but also new ones as well. This clearly indicates there is a need for this service for several people. We have a very good group of volunteers: Antje Clarke, Bea Nayduk, Myrtha Parn, Kim Penna, Ewing Rae, Peter Tilson and Judy Venturelli.

We also enjoy the homemade soup that Marg & Dirk Alberts make for us once a month. Thank you to those people who made donations of food and other articles. Cans of coffee, powdered creamer, sugar, jam, peanut butter and serviettes would be much appreciated. Also for the yearly bags of toiletry articles of tooth paste, deoderant and bars of soap would also be appreciated. We will be making 40 of these bags in January.

Tom Marr

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Best wishes for a very joyous and spiritually enriching Christmas season from the Stewardship Committee. With all of the wonderful Christmas topics to report on we are again stuck with the dull stuff, (budgets, cash flow, Five- Year Plans, etc.), ugh!

Financial Status The news is mixed. St. Paul's cash flow position continues to be such that we are still operating independent of a line of credit.

We are currently running slightly behind budget relative to income and expenses.

A word of Caution! Although our Net Ordinary Income is only slightly under budget, the Net Ordinary Income budget to the end of October was a negative \$41,982. This is in line with our financial position in past years but means that we are relying on our traditional high-income months of November and December to cancel this deficit.

In order to balance the budget for the year, we still require an excellent income month in December. Please help as much as you can.

2010 Budget and Five-Year Plan - We are hard at work putting together the information required for the 2011 budget and the extension of St. Paul's five-year plan into the year 2015. Don't forget that your Pledge Sheet is an important part of this process. Please return it as soon as possible. Committee Heads, please return your completed forms regarding your budget needs and five year plan submissions.

Organ and Chancel Renovation Project

We are pleased to report that this project was completed on time and on budget. The results exceeded all expectations. Congratulations to all involved!

Financial Pamphlet Just a reminder that the financial operations of St. Paul's are described in the pamphlet:

Keeping God's House in Order A Guide to Financial Management at St. Paul's This document was prepared jointly by the Trustees and the Stewardship Committee. It contains information regarding the financial organization and financial policies and the people who manage them. It also contains vital information regarding you as a participant in the management process. Please read and/or review this document. Copies are available from the Church Office.

Your Stewardship Committee

WHAT HAPPENS IN HEAVEN WHEN WE PRAY?

I dreamt that I went to Heaven and an angel was showing me around. We walked side-by-side inside a large workroom filled with angels. My angel guide stopped in front of the first section and said, ' This is the Receiving Section. Here, all petitions to God said in prayer are received.

I looked around in this area, and it was terribly busy with so many angels sorting out petitions written on voluminous paper sheets and scraps from people all over the world.

Then we moved on down a long corridor until we reached the second section.

The angel then said to me, "This is the Packaging and Delivery Section. Here, the graces and blessings the people asked for are processed and delivered to the living persons who asked for them." I noticed again how busy it was there. There were many angels working hard at that station, since so many blessings had been requested and were being packaged for delivery to Earth.

Finally at the farthest end of the long corridor we stopped at the door of a very small station. To my great surprise, only one angel was seated there, idly doing nothing. "This is the Acknowledgment Section, my angel friend quietly admitted to me. He seemed embarrassed." How is it that there is no work going on here? ' I asked.

"So sad," the angel sighed. "After people receive the blessings that they asked for, very few send back acknowledgments"

"How does one acknowledge God's blessings? " I asked "Simple," the angel answered. Just say, "Thank you, Lord." "What blessings should they acknowledge?" I asked.

"If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. "

"And if you get this on your own computer, you are part of the 1% in the world who has that opportunity."

"If you woke up this morning with more health than illness.... You are more blessed than the many who will not even survive this day. "

"If you have never experienced the fear in battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ... You are ahead of 700 million people in the world."

"If you can attend a church without the fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death you are envied by, and more blessed than, three billion people in the world."

"If your parents are still alive and still married ...you are very rare."

"If you can hold your head up and smile, you are not the norm, you're unique to all those in doubt and despair....."

Ok, what now? How can I start?

If you can read this message, you just received a double blessing in that someone was thinking of you as very special and you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and if you care to, pass this along to remind everyone else how blessed we all are.