

# ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH MIDLAND, ON CHRISTMAS 2011 NEWSLETTER



## *Minister's Message:*

When I was a child I remember still to this day, the expectation and longing for the arrival of Christmas. In my time there was not an overabundance of toys, but there was still the excitement of Santa coming. Equally exciting was knowing that we would then head over to Grandpa and Grandma's house, small though it was, where anywhere from twenty-five to forty of us would gather for Christmas dinner. My grandparent's house was tiny but somehow we managed to fit in and laugh and love and celebrate together. It was the highlight of the year and Grandma loved Christmas.

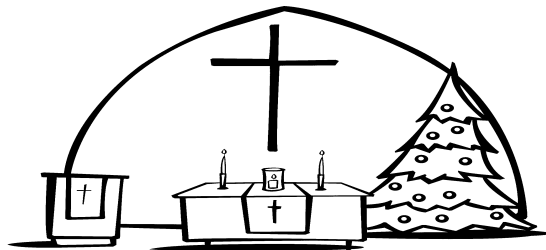
When I was expecting the arrival of my first and then my second child, there was a different kind of anticipation. It was a yearning for new life and a wee one in our lives. I was also filled with the anxiousness of being a new mother and the fear of childbirth itself. It was a time of joy and patient waiting and like Mary, the mother of Jesus, ponderings of the heart.

As I sat years later by the bedside of my mother as she lay dying, there was a different kind of waiting and yearning. I longed to hold her and keep her alive and well here in my world, yet I also longed for a peaceful death for her in the midst of her pain and her struggle. I was torn between gratitude to this woman who was so wonderful and important to my life and the overwhelming sense of loss and grief.

Waiting, yearning, longing – all three are part of our life's journey. They are also part of our Advent journey as Christians. While keeping the commercial aspect of Christmas at bay, we seek to create a space that longs for the birth of Jesus Christ again and again in our lives and in our world. It is a reflective waiting that asks questions like, "What difference does Christ make in my life? My world?" God incarnate, the mysterious presence of God, not just in Jesus Christ, but God in us. The stable door is open to us all to enter into the mystery and presence of the holy, in ways we can never explain but only seek to embrace and live.

On behalf of the congregation, I do invite each and every one of you to join us in our Advent journey and Christmas celebrations. Invite others to come, to enter into this special time in the Church's year. Also, Keith and I would like to wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and pray that the hope, peace, joy, and love of God might be with you this season and every day of your lives.

Merry Christmas,  
The Reverend Karen Ptolemy-Stam



## **Worship Schedule**

**SERVICES FOR THE  
CHRISTMAS SEASON 2011**

*November 27 - 10am*

**First Sunday in Advent**

*December 4<sup>th</sup> - 10am*

**Second Sunday in Advent &  
Sunday school Christmas Pageant**

**Following the service our**

**Christmas Pot Luck Luncheon Everyone Welcome**

*December 11<sup>th</sup> - 10am*

**Third Sunday in Advent**

*December 18<sup>th</sup> - 10am*

**Fourth Sunday in Advent**

***Choir Sunday***

***Cantata by our choir***

*December 24<sup>th</sup> - 7pm*

**Christmas Eve Service**

***Dec 25<sup>th</sup> Regular 10am Service***

## **OFFICIAL BOARD REPORT:**

The Official Board held its final quarterly meeting of 2011 at 7:00 PM on November 21 in the Parlour. After Louise Leck called the meeting to order and established that quorum had been met, Karen opened the meeting with prayer. The Board then proceeded to address three motions and several reports. The Board first thanked the members of both the Joint Search and the Transition Steering Committees for their excellent contributions and formally declared these committees terminated. The next two motions arose out of a special ad hoc meeting called earlier by Fred Earl, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, to discuss financial strategy as related to the 2012 and future budgets. Out of this meeting it became apparent that our church building requires attention beyond the scope of our normal repair and maintenance budget, including repairs to roof and brickwork on the bell tower, repairs to several flat roofs on various sections of the church, replacement of outdated and non-functional audio and visual equipment, and restoration of the stained glass windows.

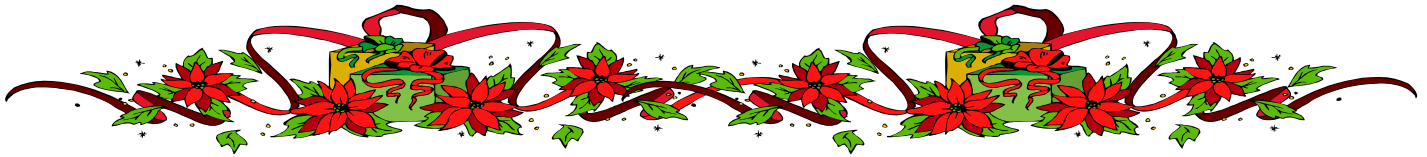
The Official Board approved in principle the implementation of a building improvement campaign in 2012 for the purpose of financing repairs and improvements to St. Paul's building. Approval to proceed is conditional on the Board's first receiving and approving a submission which details the scope, budget and financial plan for the project. Priorities and scheduling will be set in the Five Year Plan. Financing will be by campaign, with budgeting separate from the operating budget and will be included in the financial report for the Annual Meeting.

The Board also decided to improve the management of Memorial Funds donated to St. Paul's by creating and maintaining a prioritized list of recommended projects, approved by the Official Board, to which a donor could direct his/her Memorial donation. The list will contain a variety of options, both large and small, from which a donor might choose. These Memorial donations will be prominently recognized in our Annual Report and at the time of dedication. Board and Congregation members are requested to submit their suggestions for the list to Louise Leck, Chair of the Official Board, so that the Board may implement this motion early in the new year.

The Board heard up-dates from several project committees: a very professional looking bid has been prepared and submitted to Toronto Conference offering to host Toronto Conference's Annual meetings for 2013 – 2015; options for replacing our ageing audio visual system are being developed for further action by the Board in 2012; the review and up-dating of St. Paul's By-laws is well underway, aligning them with the 2010 version of the United Church Manual; preparations are being made to meet the legislative requirements for addressing the needs of Ontarians With Disabilities which we are expected to implement in January 2012 and to implement provincial legislation regarding violence and harassment in the workplace. Policy work and training will be addressed early in the new year. Board members had an opportunity to address questions to the minister, committee and group chairs about their reports, and to discuss plans for St. Paul's Annual meeting which will be held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, January 29, 2012 immediately following the service. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM following a sung benediction.

*On behalf of the Official Board I would like to wish everyone at St. Paul's, your families and friends, a very joyous Christmas season -- and invite everyone to participate fully in the special Christmas programs and services planned by the Sunday School and the Worship Committee. We look forward to sharing our Christmas traditions with visiting family members and newcomers to our faith community. All are welcome here.*

*Louise Leck, Chair*



## **FAITH FORMATION CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT**

Since Thanksgiving, the FFCE committee has been focused on supporting Sunday school leaders and youth in preparation for the upcoming Christmas play, and other Christmas activities.

As we last reported, the Sunday nursery officially became available on September 18, 2011. There was very little need in the first month or so, and volunteer staffing was somewhat sporadic. In the past several weeks, however, a genuine need has been noted and we are making every effort to ensure the nursery is staffed every Sunday for infants and toddlers.

The October Halloween-themed Family Fun Night was a great success, with about 20 kids and 15-20 adults attending. Family Fun Nights will continue on the last Friday of every month.

We thank the Church and the Board for their continued support.

*Rachel Leck, Chair*

## **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

As the year progresses and we near that most special season of the year, the Communications committee continues to keep busy. We have some new blood on our team, and new blood brings new ideas. We have been working on tweaking some of the programmes that are already in place and starting something new in 2012.

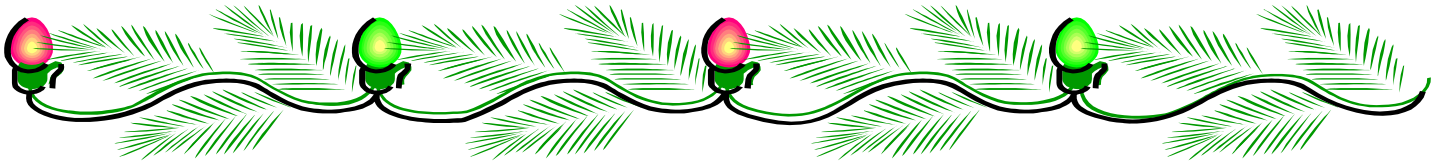
As always, we are responsible for organizing Fellowship time following Sunday worship - and taking our own turn at hosting, delivering the newsletter you are holding in your hand, delivering videos of Sunday service, the web-site - have you checked it out lately? and other duties that may crop up - like finding rides to church for those who need them.

We have just recently distributed and collected a revised talent survey (read Interests and Opportunities). One of the new ideas was a men's breakfast group. The final data hasn't been tabulated yet, but we know that this venture was very positively received and we will work to set it into motion in the New Year. We will also work with Karen to get an organized visiting programme into place. If you have completed the talent survey, we thank you for your input. If you haven't gotten around to it yet - here's another opportunity, there is a talent survey included in your newsletter, so please fill it in and let us know how we can help you help your church.

Our committee feels that we have had a busy and productive 2011 and look forward to continuing our work at St. Paul's.

**On behalf of my committee I wish all our friends at St. Paul's a most happy and blessed Christmas season, and a safe, healthy and purposeful 2012.**

**Sheila Thompson, Chair**

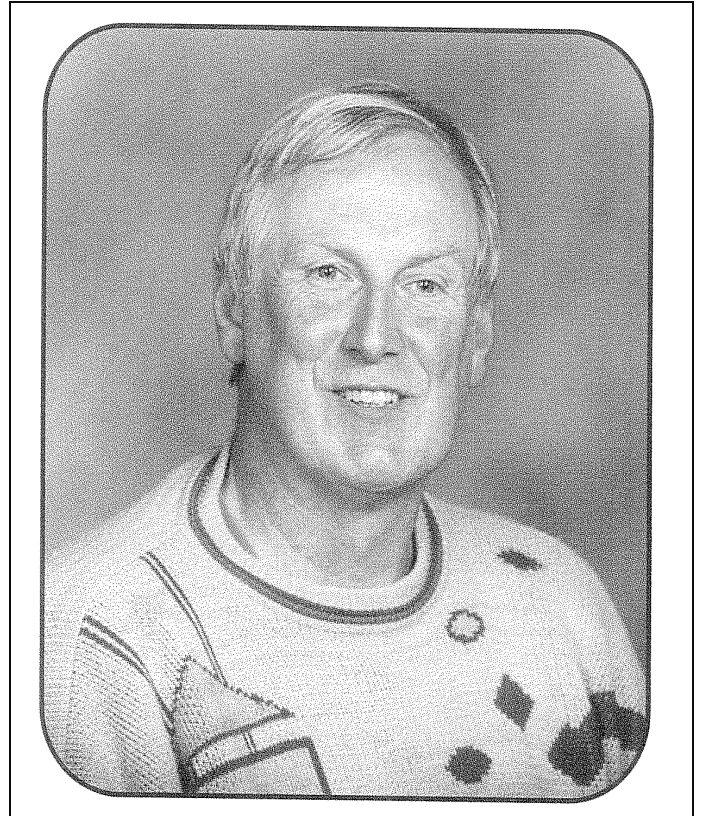


## DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS AROUND ST. PAUL'S



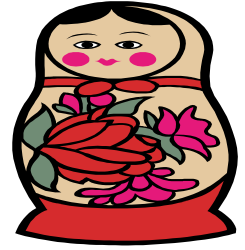
**COLLEEN STOCKER**

Colleen Stocker takes very seriously her job of ensuring that there is a glass of fresh water for the minister each Sunday. She's been taking care of this for a number of years, knows who prefers a glass drinking glass to plastic and makes sure that if she's going to be away, someone takes over for her. She knows which glasses in our church kitchen best fit the holder on the pulpit. Colleen is also a strong supporter of Fellowship after church each week, knows who is hosting and thus who will be providing the refreshments. Thank you, Colleen, for your commitment to St. Paul's.



**RICK TAYLOR**

You may wonder who the gentleman is playing the organ before worship begins. Rick Taylor was encouraged to do this by Bob Bruer, his teacher, a number of years ago and with Paul Sloan out with the choir before church, Rick's contribution is greatly appreciated. His background music prepares us all for worship. Thank you Rick!



## What a Doll!

When I learned of Bev Truax's preparations for White Gift Sunday, Omi Clarke (me) felt that her five year old Toronto granddaughter Phoibe would enjoy seeing "The Best Christmas Present Eve". Phoibe has attended Sunday school when visiting me and, although sometimes confused by more serious messages, she found a social anchor in gentle Paw Roe Shee at St. Paul's and has looked forward to her visits here.

"Phoibe, my Sunday school is putting on a special play for Christmas. Would you like to see it?" "No, if I can't be in it."

After this definite response I conferred with the pageant's patient director who felt that another toy doll was needed in the toy store. A future good size doll was delighted to be part of Bev's all inclusive White Gift service.

Here are the ensuing responses of my reading of the Christmas story to my unchurched, imaginative granddaughter.

"Why was there no room at the inn?"

The animals kept Baby Jesus warm. Right?

Who looked after the sheep when the shepherds were away?

It's good that the Magi made the stable smell better, what happened to the baby later?"

"He was sent by God to be the Prince of Peace among us"

"That's good, Omi. Isn't it!"

**So my friends, look out for an eager, very original doll in Bev's store. You can't miss her.**

*By Antje Clarke*



DEUTSCH		ENGLISH
<i>Text: Christoph von Schmid</i>		<i>Literal prose translation</i>
<p>Ihr Kinderlein, kommet,  O kommet doch all!  Zur Krippe her kommet  In Bethlehems Stall.  Und seht was in dieser  Hochheiligen Nacht  Der Vater im Himmel  Für Freude uns macht.</p>		<p><i>Ye children come  O come ye all!  Come to the cradle  in Bethlehem's stall  and see what in this  most holy night  the Father in heaven  such joy for us makes.</i></p>

### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The TV and sound crew consisting of Aileen & Vic Denise, Colin Whiteside, Bob Scott, Don Edwards and Christy Bath 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. This year we were pleased to add David Todd to the crew. There are a group of dedicated people including Graham and Diane Patchell, Allan James, Bill Healey 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.
- Our ongoing window replacement project was put on hold for this year however we intend to replace or repair windows in the Great Hall and at the back of the stage, in 2012.
- A new Telephone System was installed in 2011. This greatly enhances the church's ability to deal with all telephone calls.
- Renovations to Room 21 have started and will continue into 2012 as budget permits.
- The washroom outside of the church office is to be retrofitted to make it wheel chair assessable.
- Many small projects including some painting and window repair have been completed by Chairman Bill.
- The Chancel and Organ Renovation project which was completed in 2010, 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.
- In the coming years the Stained Glass Windows in the sanctuary will need to be restored.
- The Bricks on the exterior of the church will need to be replaced or repaired.
- A sub-committee has been exploring new sound and video systems which will replace

- our current ageing equipment.
- All five flat roofs will have to be replaced in the next couple of years.

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, Colin Whiteside, Floyd Tilson, Bruce Wilcox, Bill Coveyduck, George Leck and Honorary Member Alex Widmeyer. 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 2011. Your Property Committed would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Your Property Committee

## UCW REPORT



'twas in the moon of winter time, when all the birds  
had fled,  
that mighty Gitchi Manitou sent angel choirs instead,  
before their light the stars grew dim,  
and wandering hunters heard the hymn... (# 71,  
Voices United).

We have lovely Christmas hymns in Voices United, we are indeed lucky.

Here we are in late November, wondering about a snow storm. We hope for a long, open autumn and a short winter!! Life is so much easier and pleasant when the streets and sidewalks are dry.

The Harmony and Penetanguishene Units are now combined into one unit and this seems to be working out well. There were 22 ladies present at the September and the November meeting, not as many at the October meeting, for various reasons. Most of the ladies from the 2 groups are very pleased

with the turn-out. The groups are well organized and usually have a worship service and a program time during the meetings, besides whatever business needs to be discussed and decisions made.

The December meeting will be on the regular meeting day, that is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 12:30, in the Ladies' Parlour. Bring a bag lunch. Finger foods will be provided for dessert, and tea and coffee. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the Christmas theme and the fellowship.

The Rummage/Garage Sale was the usual success. It is becoming a congregational event – are we 'visiting while we work' or are we 'working while we visit'? Judy Stiles and Kay Lapere were in

charge with a great deal of help from the congregation – donating, working, and buying. Thank you, to all who helped in any way. We realized a nice bit of money which will be put toward good ideas in January at our budget meeting, when we will be reviewing our plans for the coming year. The January meeting will also be when Karen comes and we have our installation of officers for the coming year. When we are into 2012 the Penetanguishene ladies will be more involved in the monthly meetings.

We always strive to stay with our mandate – to unite the women of the congregation for the total mission of the church, as each of us expresses our loyalty to the Christian path of witness, study, fellowship and service.

MERRY CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL, from the United Church Women. May we all feel the strength and warmth of God in our lives as we celebrate the birth of a child.



***UCW BENEDICTION***

The light of God surrounds us,  
The love of God enfolds us,  
The power of God protects us,  
The presence of God watches over us,

***Wherever we are, God is. Thank you, Wilma Plews.***



**FELLOWSHIP CLUB REPORT**

Merry Christmas From the Fellowship Club ...

Merry Christmas to you all! The Fellowship Club is already getting into the Christmas spirit by preparing for our annual Christmas dinner for members and friends, to be held on December 6, 2011 at St. Paul's -- a lovely catered dinner, with ham and turkey and all the seasonal trimmings, set amidst traditional Christmas decorations. Tickets are \$16. each. This year we are encouraging our members to invite newcomers to St. Paul's to join us at the Christmas Dinner for a relaxed evening of great food and fellowship.

The Fellowship Club currently has approximately 60 members and we would love to have more! We meet on the first Tuesday of the month (except January, July and August), usually at 7:00 pm in the Great Hall. Most of our members have reached retirement age and many spend several months each winter in warmer climates, so we don't expect our members to attend every meeting. We are just happy to reconnect whenever people are able to come out, socialize with other members, participate in

programs on a wide variety of subjects, contribute to the club's short business meeting and enjoy refreshments. We also welcome those who are just interested in the subject of a particular meeting, or who love to attend our annual beef dinner, Christmas dinner and other special events.

Our annual membership fees are \$10 per person (payable in January). We also contribute to a Sunshine Fund which recognizes club members who are ill or bereaved (five cents per year, in the month of your birthday); and to a Leprosy fund – we collect members' loose change monthly and forward money regularly to assist those with this devastating disease. We have supported children overseas through the Foster Parents' Plan for many years; however, next year, we have decided to contribute instead to the Moon Garden Dormitory For Girls, in the Umpium Refugee Camp in Thailand. This service for girls without parents provides a safe home and some educational supports to approximately 25 girls while they attend school. The dormitory is the former home of our Karen family members, Law Eh Shee, Lah June, Ner Ta Shee and Dah Dah Eh – and is operated by their mother.

We have a new executive committee ready to lead the club next year, and seven program convenors who have volunteered to plan regular programs and special events. The 2012 Executive Committee members are: Past Presidents, Louise and George Leck; Co-Presidents, Marg and Dick Alberts/Velma and Harold Bertram; Secretary, Sharon Whiteside; Treasurer, Colin Whiteside; Coffee after Church Coordinators, Doreen and Ken Gunson; Christmas Dinner Coordinators, Allan Borrow and Marjory Baks; Sunshine Fund Coordinator, Pat Cowden.

***Our first meeting of 2012 will be a potluck supper held on Tuesday evening, February 7 at 5:00 pm. This will give those of us who stay home for the winter a chance to enjoy some fellowship and commiserate about the weather. New members and visitors welcome. Please join us and get to know a great group of people a little better!***

***Have a wonderful Christmas season and a happy new year!  
George and Louise Leck, Presidents***



#### **THE CIRCLE**

I can't believe we are approaching the Christmas seasons again.

The circle ladies would like to thank all those who supported our recent apple pie sale. We sold 53 pies and the money raised will be use for church projects.

On Sunday, Dec.4/11, after the children's white gift service, the circle is hosting our annual potluck luncheon. We ask that you bring a main dish or a dessert. Tea and coffee will be provided. I have also heard, that there will be a very special visit from Santa, so I hope everyone has been good. Hope everyone plans to attend.

At this time, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

***Gail Wilcox, Committee Chair***

## **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

In October the congregation generously donated approximately \$4500 to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. With the 1:1 matching from St. Paul's Special Project Account as well as the 4:1 matching from the federal government, this means that St. Paul's has donated the equivalent of \$45,000 worth of food for the hungry in the horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, etc) as well as in other desperate areas of the world. Congratulations, St. Paul's for this wonderful achievement. We really appreciate your support and thank you for caring.

This year we are jointly working with the Salvation Army and Covenant Community Church in Penetang to provide Christmas hampers for needy families on Christian Island. With \$1600 from the St. Paul's Benevolent Fund along with a similar amount from Covenant Church, we plan to provide Christmas hampers of food and toys to approximately 40 families, including 100 children. The Salvation Army will also be providing more than 300 Christmas hampers to other families in the greater Midland area. St. Paul's and Covenant Church are currently working with the Health Centre, Family Services and Social Services on Christian Island to identify the most needy families, and representatives from both churches plan to go to Christian Island on Saturday December 17 to distribute the hampers.

On Sunday December 4th we will be providing hot chocolate to young families enjoying the Santa Claus parade. It is felt that the young children would appreciate a nice hot chocolate while watching the parade during a cold winter day, and it may also encourage some of these families to consider St. Paul's as their church home sometime in the future.

Next spring during Lent, we are investigating the possibility of fundraising for the Moon Garden Dormitory, which is an orphanage for 25 Karen girls in the Umpium refugee camp in Thailand. This orphanage is operated by Lah Eh Shee's mother, and has been supported privately by 8 -10 concerned families for the last two years.

*The Outreach Committee sincerely thanks the congregation for helping to take care of some of the less fortunate locally and around the world.*

*We wish you a Merry Christmas.*

*Outreach Committee, Greg Rothwell*

## **WORSHIP:**

Each of us is finding our own niche in the committee, in transition with our new minister. Long time traditions and some suggested opinions on additions from Karen have melded very nicely together.

Our Christ Candle dilemma was solved. Between 1. The cost of a new fancy candle (\$500.00 more or less) 2. To buying a new candle periodically. 3. To Fixing the existing candle. A compromise suggested by someone? was agreed upon. The existing candle was levelled off by cutting it at the top, whittling out a space, in the middle, to hold a tea light, removed the ragged decal and voile! a candle which is working well. In the future we may opt for a new one, but for now this works. Thanks to open discussion.

On occasion a display, theme appropriate and tastefully done will appear on the communion table. (such as the one on Remembrance Day Sunday). Keep an eye out for this.

Christmas falls on a Sunday this year. There will be a regular 10:00 a.m. service at St. Paul's.

We had a little scare. I read and cut out the Santa Clause Parade announcement in the newspaper which stated that the parade will be Dec. 4/11 at 11:00 a.m. instead of 1:00 p.m. On investigation the event will not be Sunday Dec. 4th but Saturday Dec 3/11 at 11:00 a.m. What a relief!!

### **CHRISTMAS ADVENT CALENDAR**

Nov. 27/11 1st of Advent - Communion

Dec. 4/11 - 2nd of Advent - White Gift - all Ages Worship, Sunday School Pageant, Pot Luck Luncheon and a visit from Santa.

Dec. 11/11 - 3rd of Advent

Dec. 18/11 - 4th of Advent - Choir Cantata

Dec. 21/11 - Quiet Christmas Service of Hope?

Dec. 24/11 - Christmas Eve Family Service at 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 25/11 - Christmas Day Regular Church Service at 10:00 a.m.



### **Dates for your information in 2012**

Jan. 01/12 - New Year's Day Communion

Feb. 22/12 - Ash Wednesday

**From the Worship Committee**

**Cathy Metzgar, Chair**

### **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.).

### **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. As reported weekly in the church bulletin we are currently running behind budget relative to income and expenses. However, this has been improving during the month of November.

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

### **2012 Budget and Five-Year Plan**

We are hard at work putting together the information required for the 2012 budget and the extension of St. Paul's five-year plan into the year 2016. 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.

## 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

A revised and updated version of this pamphlet will be available for distribution at the Annual General Meeting.

This document is 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. Copies are available from the Church Office. Please read it!

#### Your Stewardship Committee

Fred Earl, Chair



#### Musical Selections for Christmas 2011

##### Wednesday Nov. 30th

"A Christmas Carol" - JEUNESSES MUSICALES CANADA - 7:00 @St. Paul's  
United

(Public Youth concerts)

##### Sunday Dec.4th

Children's Community Choir – 7:00

##### Saturday Dec.10th

VOX Huronia Chamber Choir "Light Your Christmas" – 7:30 @ St. Paul's United

##### Saturday Dec.17<sup>th</sup>

"A Christmas Serenade" 7:30 @ St. Paul's United

with **Victoria Thompson and John French**

\*special guest - James LaBrie

##### Sunday Dec.18th

Christmas Cantata @ St. Paul's United Church – 10:00am

**COME OUT AND ENJOY THE MUSIC OF THE SEASON!**

