

Fort Massey Star

ADVENT- CHRISTMAS 2016

www.fortmasseychurch.com



One man relates the following, "My wife still hasn't spoken to me since last Christmas. I asked her what she wanted for Christmas and she said 'Surprise me.' So at three a.m. on Christmas morning I woke her up, leaned over, and said 'BOO!'" Most of us know the feeling, especially on a day like Christmas, how do you surprise someone? How do you know what someone else really wants for Christmas? And is that what Christmas is all about anyway?

When we lived in St. Andrews, NB, we would sometimes run into one couple, the local RCMP officer and his wife, a busy nurse, on Christmas Eve, shopping! They started their shopping that morning. They drove across the border to Calais to start and

then they would finish up madly dashing around the local grocery store for the turkey and all of the trimmings. They had two teenage boys and a very busy schedule. But to say that they looked totally and completely stressed out on the 24th of December would be the understatement. Yet they would somehow show up in church that night and then go home for all night wrapping, and then obviously unwrapping. I guess they limited their stress to 24 hours rather than the whole month of December, but most of us would pass out at the thought of doing that!

Other families have given up gift giving completely. They donate some time and energy to a charity like a refugee family, or they give a single thoughtful gift and nothing more.

Regardless of what end of that spectrum you find yourself we often find ourselves wondering what we really, really, really want for Christmas. And if we are honest I would guess that some of us would

want exactly what Robert Fulghum puts so well into words, "*I want to be 5 years old again for an hour. I want to laugh a lot and cry a lot. I want to be picked up or rocked to sleep in someone's arms, and carried up to bed just one more time.*"

For this time of year is about remembering. And so as we enter the Advent journey to Bethlehem once again, with our childhood Christmas memories dancing through our heads like sugarplums, we wonder if this year will be magical. Fulghum writes, "*Christmas is about a child, of long ago and far away, and it is about the child of now. In you and me. Waiting behind the door of our hearts for something wonderful to happen.*" Christmas is about love, and family, and children, and finding the child inside each of us one more time May this be the year that the child escapes in you.

Happy Christmas!

Rev. Trent

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WRITINGS BY YVONNE SAMPSON

Fort Massey by the Sea

My thanks for your generous way
Here in the pews of Fort Massey
Once again allowed to be faithful and pray
To live as God intended me.

The inspiration of our pastor
And echoing words of the Lord
Later conversation and laughter
Your kindness makes my heart soar!

I thank you with all my soul
As the heavens look down from above
Faith and prayers keeping me whole
May God bless you with his eternal love!

~October 2016

The Glorious City

I was alone and praying to God up above,
Praying for all the people that I love;
And for the one's with sorrow within,
That they find peace, and believing in him.

God does work in glorious ways,
Just keep praying, he will listen to what you say.
God is in everything you do,
Keep on praying and he will answer you.

One clear night as I look up at the sky,
I thank you God with tears in my eyes.
For the strength and hardship I go through,
God is there to help me and you.

Some day when I go to heaven in the sky,
There will be no more pain and no tears in my eyes.
I often heard of that glorious city,
And I will be there for all eternity!

~Song 2016

My Life Highway

As I travel along life's long highway,
I stop to pray along the way.
I climb mountains and hills so high,
But God was there to smooth my climb.

The tears I shed make me strong today,
And through God, with Him I pray.
I met nice friends to comfort me-
Who bring me joy and company.

As I travel along life's long highway
I pray for help along the way -
To find courage to accept what's new,
And to follow God all the way through.

As I travel along my last highway,
God will meet me there upon that day -
With open arms at heaven' door,
And I will be with him for evermore!

~Song 2016



*The earth has grown old
with its burden of care,
but at Christmas it always is young,
the heart of the jewel burns lustrous
and fair, and its soul full of music
breaks the air, when the song of
angels is sung.*

~Phillips Brooks

LIMERICKS BY RUTH MACKENZIE

For Irene Parks

There was a young lass
named Irene
Whose smile, it was
always a beam.
Having Peace for a name,
'Twas from Guysbro' she came
Bringing love that was truly our
gain!!

For Kim Curlett

We met this young preacher
named Kim,
The summer she came to fill in.
Many gifts she did bring,
But boy, could she sing!
We'll miss her when she
goes away.

FROM THE MANSE-ON- CAMBRIDGE 2016

I suspect that in every family there are both Scrooges and Santas - those who look forward with anticipation to the Christmas season and those who would prefer to mutter their "Humbugs" under their breath. Growing up it was my maternal grandmother (our Nanny Swim - Swim being her surname) who was the Christmas spirit in our clan. She had grown up without many Christmases to remember.

My grandmother had been given to another family when her mother died and then went back home to a stepmother who sounded like Cinderella. She rarely talked about any of it but she loved Christmas with such a total zeal that it was infectious. She had a real tree every year and even when she became too frail to decorate it, she

invited grandchildren to come and help. None of those small ceramic table-top trees for her. She called daily to inform us how many gifts were under her tree and every small gift was a cause for great excitement. We learned that five small gifts were much more exciting than one large one. And she refused to wait until a civilized hour to unwrap gifts when family could watch. She woke up at 5 and would wait to call when she thought other people should be out of bed to talk about it. Sometimes that was earlier than the rest of the clan was allowed to be up and opening.

Giving her gifts was fun because every small gift even if it was homemade from a school project was as valued as a larger store-bought gift. And one of my cousins gave her a doll one year when she was in her 80's. She was so pleased because she had always wanted and never received a doll when she was little. Having missed out on a childhood Christmas to remember, she loved and celebrated every Christmas as if she was five and waiting for the reindeer.

Some years Christmas seems commercial and the malls a nightmare. And some of us are very tempted to give up on the holiday. But fortunately most of us know someone with that Christmas spirit that makes every gift a joy to give and every year more special.

This year our children and their partners will join us for traditions that mark Christmas for us and we at the manse wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and all the best in 2017.

**Submitted by Linda Cleveland
-Thompson**



UNITED CHURCH GIFTS WITH VISION CHALLENGE

Moderator Jordan Cantwell challenges everyone connected with The United Church of Canada to give a Gift with Vision this year.

With Giving Tuesday on November 29th and the Christmas season following soon after, this year's 'Gifts with Vision' catalogue offers opportunities to give meaningful gifts to help people in their community, in Canada, and around the world. To order gifts, please visit:

www.giftswithvision.ca/ or call
1-844-715-7969.



The spirit of
Christmas is the spirit of
love and of generosity
and of goodness.

It illuminates
the picture window of the
soul, and we look out upon
the world's busy life and
become more interested in
people than in things.

~Thomas S. Monson

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM BOBBY AND ME

As Christmas is coming I am reminded of a time long ago. When i was young I had a CGIT group at my old home church.

We always had a project to collect food and take a Christmas dinner to someone less fortunate.

One year i got my 15 years old brother Bob to help me deliver it. We had a long toboggan with a red plaid cushion. Well we pulled it about a mile down Robie Street. We loaded the boxes, and started out.

It was heavy and harder to pull back up Robie Street, over toward Gottingen and eventually to a small house on the other side of Fort Nerdham.

Bob was a big help and we had fun. We talked about our own plans for the holidays. Our family had a Mom and a Dad, five children and a grandmother. We would be warm, well fed and have lots of presents.

When we found the house, we were more surprised than the people there. They had nothing. The house didn't have much furniture, they had no food, and there was no sign of Christmas.

We almost ran back over near Robie St. where Mom and Dad collected up a lot of things and we went back with a Christmas tree and trimmings! Everyone had a good Christmas! Bobby never forgot it.

When he grew up he was an electrician, married and lived in Ontario.

Whenever we got together he always mentioned the time we took the toboggan to the poor family.

It made a big impression on him, after that I think he was always mindful of the needs of others.

Bobby was a cancer patient who died in 2000.

From M. Jean Brown, O.F.M.

ADVENT VIRUS WARNING!

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions.

This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

Some signs and symptoms of The Advent Virus:

-A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.

-An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.

-A loss of interest in judging other people.

-A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.

-A loss of interest in conflict.

-A loss of the ability to worry.

-Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.

-Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.

-Frequent attacks of smiling.

-An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.

-An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

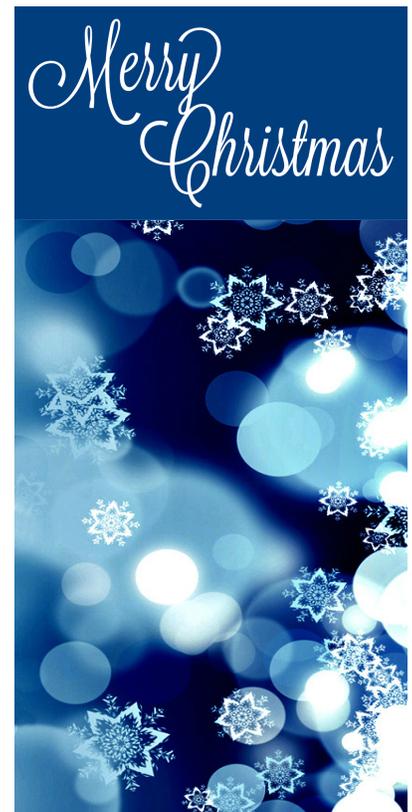
This virus can and has affected many systems. Some systems have been completely cleaned out because of it.

Note from Holly and Alan:

Christmas is a season of great joy: a time for remembering the past and hoping for the future.

May the glorious message of hope, peace, joy and love fill you with joy during this most wonderful season.

Wishing each of you a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.



A POEM THAT WAS US

A little house with three bedrooms,
One bathroom and one car
on the street
A mower that you had to push
To make the grass look neat.

In the kitchen on the wall
We only had one phone,
And no need for recording things,
Someone was always home.

We only had a living room
Where we would congregate,
Unless it was at mealtime
in the kitchen where we ate.

We had no need for family rooms
Or extra rooms to dine.
When meeting as a family
Those two rooms would
work out fine.

We only had one TV set
And channels maybe two,
But always there was one of them
With something worth the view.

For snacks we had potato chips
That tasted like a chip.
And if you wanted flavour
There was Lipton's onion dip.

Store-bought snacks were
rare because
My mother liked to cook
And nothing can compare to snacks
In Betty Crocker's book.

Weekends were for family trips
Or staying home to play.
We all did things together
Even go to church to pray.

When we did our weekend trips
Depending on the weather,
No one stayed at home because
We liked to be together.

Sometimes we would separate
To do things on our own,
But we knew where the others were
Without our own cell phone.

Then there were the movies
With your favourite movie star,
And nothing can compare
To watching movies in your car.

Then there were the picnics
at the peak of summer season,
Pack a lunch and find some trees
And never need a reason.

Go to a baseball game together
With all the friends you know,
Have real action playing ball
And no game video.

Remember when the doctor
Used to be the family friend,
And didn't need insurance
Or a lawyer to defend.

The way that he took care of you
Or what he had to do,
Because he took an oath
and strived
To do the best for you.

Remember going to the store
And shopping casually,
And when you went to pay for it
You used your own money?

Nothing that you had to swipe
Or punch in some amount,
And remember when the
cashier person
Had to really count?

The milkman used to go
From door to door,
And it was just a few cents more
Than going to the store.

There was a time when
mailed letters
Came right to your door,
Without a lot of junk mail ads
Sent out by every store .

The mailman knew each
house by name
And knew where it was sent;
There were not loads of
mail addressed
To "present occupant."

There was a time when
just one glance
Was all that it would take,
And you would know
the kind of car,
The model and the make.

Cars didn't look like turtles

Trying to squeeze out every mile;
They were streamlined,
white walls, fins
And really had some style.

One time the music that you played
Whenever you would jive,
Was from a vinyl, big-holed record
Called a forty-five.

The record player had a post
To keep them all in line
And then the records would
drop down
And play one at a time.

Oh sure, we had our problems then,
Just like we do today
And always we were striving,
To find a better way.

Oh, the simple life we lived
Still seems like so much fun,
How can you explain a game,
Just kick the can and run?

And why would boys put
baseball cards
Between bicycle spokes
And for a nickel, red machines
Had little bottled Cokes?

This life seemed so much easier
Slower in some ways.
I love the new technology
But I sure do miss those days.

So time moves on and so do we
And nothing stays the same,
But I sure love to reminisce
And walk down memory lane.

With all today's technology
We grant that it's a plus!
But it's fun to look way
back and say,

Hey look, guys, **THAT WAS US!**

~*Author Unknown*

