



FORT MASSEY STAR



Autumn 2009

www.fortmasseychurch.com

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...



Thank you cards are no longer part of our culture. Most of us receive fewer and fewer of them. Think about the number of gifts which you have given in the past few years for which no card was forthcoming. Perhaps the computer can be blamed. It's not that most people expect or want the thanks. Often they just want to know that someone actually received the gift. It feels odd when you ship a gift off and no thank you note or acknowledgement is forthcoming.

Thanksgiving is the time when we spend the weekend asking ourselves what we are thankful for, and for many of us what we thank God for. Yet even that language makes us uncomfortable. What does Thanksgiving mean if it means more than simply bowing our heads and thanking God for the harvest?

For the Israelite nation bringing a thanks offering to the altar was a way of giving to the priest and to the poor. They were called upon to share their harvest, to give a portion to those in need - to those who served them and to the community. There were no social safety nets in their society, no food banks, no welfare. Even for the early settlers in America it was a day to share the bounty, a day for those who had good

crops to share with those who were struggling.

For early communities sharing was essential. It was the only way to survive. Today we expect others to do the sharing. We pay our taxes and we think that someone else will do it. Yet you only have to open the newspaper any day of the week to realize that it is not always happening.

We come today surrounded by a city and a country, and a world, in need. We will carve our turkeys, cook our vegetables, and make our stuffing, aware that the need of the world is absolutely overwhelming. We cannot bow our heads and thank God that we have and others do not. It is not simply hard work and our own effort for which we have been blessed. There are so many factors beyond our control.

If our hearts are grateful writing a thank you note to God and then counting up what we have is not enough. We must also begin to live in a grateful manner. Grateful hearts should lead us to grateful lives, giving lives, lives which display our genuine gratitude.

May we enjoy our Thanksgiving feast and may our grateful hearts lead us into grateful living tomorrow and

for all the tomorrows ahead. Let us give to others because we have been given much.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Rev. Trent

Thanksgiving Day Prayer

*Heavenly Father, on
Thanksgiving Day
We bow our hearts to You
and pray.
We give You thanks for all
You've done
Especially for the gift of
Jesus, Your Son.
For beauty in nature, Your
glory we see
For joy and health, friends
and family,
For daily provision, Your
mercy and care
These are the blessings
You graciously share.
So today we offer this
response of praise
With a promise to follow
You all of our days.*

~Mary Fairchild

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A Response to a 'Dear John' Letter

Karen Hutton from Pleasantville, California, writes: "Is there any purpose in staying a member of a traditional Christian Church if you no longer believe the things the church regards as its core beliefs? Why have you stayed with your church, given your criticisms of many of the basic aspects of Christianity?"

Dear Karen,

Before answering that question, we need to identify what it is you are calling "core beliefs" or the "basic aspects of Christianity." I believe that what most people call orthodoxy in religious beliefs is little more than the imposed authority of some part of the Christian faith. The claim to be orthodox in one's belief is not to acknowledge a point of view that is true, but only the point of view that has prevailed. My studies lead me to believe that there never was a single consistent set of Christian beliefs. There were many Christianities from the dawn of Christianity itself. Various groups have tried to define true Christianity, but when they do they almost always define their own institutional, authoritarian system.

Some people, for

example, assert that the historic creeds defined primitive Christianity. The Apostles' Creed, however, began as a series of baptismal formulas in local churches in the third century and these formulas differed widely until they evolved into a single form somewhere between 250 and 290 CE. I doubt if the actual apostles would have recognized much of it.

The Nicene Creed, adopted at the Council of Nicea in 325 CE, was designed primarily to close the loopholes in the Apostles' Creed. The Athanasian Creed, a product of the late fourth century, was designed to close loopholes in the Nicene Creed. The earliest creed of the Church was only three words, Jesus is Messiah. The word "messiah" meant a variety of things to the Jews, so even the three-word creed had wide flexibility.

Others assert that believing in the Virgin Birth is a "core doctrine" of Christianity, but scholars can now demonstrate quite conclusively that both Paul and Mark seem never to have heard of it; and John, who was among the last writers in the New Testament, appears to have specifi-

cally rejected it since he refers to Jesus on two occasions as the "son of Joseph."

Still others suggest that the physical resurrection of Jesus is the essential core belief of Christianity, but I think I can demonstrate that Paul did not believe the resurrection was physical, and neither did Mark. Matthew is ambivalent. It is Luke and John, the last two gospels to be written, that interpret the resurrection as a physical resuscitation of a deceased body. So determining what the "core beliefs" of Christianity are is not as easy as people seem to think.

Some, usually in evangelical or in the conservative Catholic traditions, argue that doctrines like the Incarnation, the Atonement and the Trinity set the boundaries around essential Christianity, but once again these doctrines were not fully developed until the third and fourth centuries and it would be difficult to demonstrate that either Paul or Mark were Trinitarians.

My point is that Christianity has always been a movement and that most churches have simply frozen Christianity at fairly primitive levels. It is not

to oppose basic Christianity that is the agenda of Christian scholars; it is to seek truth through the Christian story or through the Christian lens. That is what keeps me active in church life. Christianity is not static or doctrinal. It is a pathway we walk into the mystery of God. I grant that it is easier to walk the Christ path in some churches than in others, but true Christianity is always evolving into what it can be; its purpose is not to protect what it has been. So I would suggest that for you to see your role in your church to be that of a change agent, you are in fact being a true worshiper of Christ.

I hope this helps. I think institutional Christianity needs people like you and me in it.

~John Shelby Spong



Update Report From Your Board of Management

Your Board has been busy on a number of fronts this summer.

The audit was completed and approved by the Board at its September meeting. Our 2008 books were looked at by the auditor, Darlene Read, with "no indication of any wrong-doing on the part of anyone involved in the process." Numerous recommendations were made to assist the Treasurer and the Finance Committee in making the accounting process easier for everyone. Tim Dean from the Planning Committee has been assisting the Finance Committee in implementing some of these changes.

Fort Massey Church was named a beneficiary from the estate of the late Jean W. Lamb, and will receive 8% annually from "The Herbert S. and Jean W. Lamb Charitable Foundation."

Our Property Committee was very busy with the installation of the new natural gas furnace and hot water heating system in the physical plant of both the Church and Church Hall. Under the guidance of the Property Committee's Chair's, Doug MacDonald, contracts had been

awarded and our sexton, Richard Robinson and his brother, David Robinson, along with Doug, spent countless hours assisting the contractors, saving FMC thousands of dollars in labour. Thank you, gentlemen. We hope for a much warmer winter in the pews!

Also, the kitchen received its annual "spring cleaning" by Irene Parks. This was a day long project. Thank you, Irene.

The Administration Committee secured the services of Gillian Strong as our new Admin. Assistant/Secretary beginning in September. Gillian has an interesting background - a PK, she hails from St. John's, is a graduate from NSCAD, and has worked with L'arche, and recently returned from the national gathering of the ecumenical social justice group, KAIROS. Welcome Gillian. She will be in the church office 9 hours a week.

The congregation should be aware that we have a very good Board who have been working extremely hard on your behalf. Tough decisions are being made in these tough times with careful scru-

tiny and wise counsel from both the Trustees and Planning Committee. Your appreciation for their efforts is demonstrated in your continued generous financial support.

Respectfully yours,

Trent D. Cleveland-Thompson, Acting Chair, Board of Management

Upcoming UCW Events

October 17th: Harvest Tea & Bake Sale, 2 - 4 p.m. Free Will Offering. Music by the "Cranston Trio."

November 14th: Christmas Tea & Sale, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Tables include New-to-You, Christmas, Jams & Jellies Pantry, Jewelry, and Silent Auction. Tickets: \$5.00



"The congregation should be aware that we have a very good Board who have been working extremely hard on your behalf."

*October gave a party;
The leaves by
hundreds came -
The Chestnuts, Oaks,
and Maples,
and leaves of every
name.
The Sunshine spread a
carpet,
and everything was
grand,
Miss Weather led the
dancing,
Professor Wind the
band.*

~George Cooper



Daddy's Poem



Her hair was up in a pony tail,
her favourite dress tied
with a bow.
Today was Daddy's Day at
school,
and she couldn't wait to go.



But her mommy tried to tell her,
that she probably should
stay home.



Why the kids might
not understand,
if she went to school alone.



But she was not afraid;
she knew just what to say.
What to tell her classmates
of why he wasn't there today.



But still her mother worried,
for her to face this day alone.
And that was why once again,
she tried to keep her
daughter home.



But the little girl went to school
eager to tell them all.
About a dad she never sees
a dad who never calls.



There were daddies along the
wall in back,
for everyone to meet.
Children squirming impatiently,
anxious in their seats.



One by one the teacher called
a student from the class.
To introduce their daddy,
as seconds slowly passed.



At last the teacher called
her name,
every child turned to stare.
Each of them was searching
for a man who wasn't there.



'Where's her daddy at?'
She heard a boy call out.
'She probably doesn't have one,'
another student dared to shout.



And from somewhere
near the back,
she heard a daddy say,
'Looks like another
deadbeat dad,
too busy to waste his day.'



The words did not offend her,
as she smiled up at her Mom.
And looked back at her teacher,
who told her to go on.

And with hands behind her back,
slowly she began to speak.
And out from the mouth
of a child,
came words incredibly unique.

'My Daddy couldn't be here,
because he lives so far away.
But I know he wishes
he could be,
since this is such a special day.

And though you cannot
meet him,
I wanted you to know.
All about my daddy,
and how much he loves me so.

He loved to tell me stories.
He taught me to ride my bike.
He surprised me with pink roses,
and taught me to fly a kite.

We used to share
fudge sundaes,
and ice cream in a cone.
And though you cannot see him,
I'm not standing here alone.

'Cause my daddy's
always with me,
even though we are apart.
I know because he told me,
he'll forever be in my heart.'

With that, her little hand
reached up,
and lay across her chest.
Feeling her own heartbeat,
beneath her favourite dress.

And from somewhere here in the
crowd of dads,
her mother stood in tears.
Proudly watching her daughter,
who was wise beyond her years.

For she stood up for the love
of a man not in her life.
Doing what was best for her,
doing what was right.

And when she dropped her
hand back down,

staring straight into the crowd.
She finished with a voice so soft,
but its message clear and loud.

"I love my daddy very much,
he's my shining star.
And if he could, he'd be here,
but heaven's just too far.

You see he is a
Canadian soldier,
and died just this past year
When a roadside bomb
hit his convoy
and taught Canadians to fear.

But sometimes when I
close my eyes,
it's like he never went away."
And then she closed her eyes,
and saw him there that day.

And to her mothers amazement,
she witnessed with surprise.
A room full of daddies
and children,
all starting to close their eyes.

Who knows what they
saw before them,
who knows what they felt inside.
Perhaps for merely a second,
they saw him at her side.

"I know you're with me Daddy,"
to the silence she called out.
And what happened next
made believers,
of those once filled with doubt.

Not one in that room
could explain it,
for each of their eyes
had been closed.
But there on the desk beside her,
was a fragrant
long-stemmed rose.

And a child was blessed, if only
for a moment,
by the love of her shining star.
And given the gift of believing,
that heaven is never very far.

By:
Cheryl Costello-Forshey





Remembrance Day Service

The Annual Fort Massey Church Remembrance Sunday Service will be held on November 8th, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. All veterans, as well as past & present serving military personnel, including reservists, are asked to gather at 10:15 a.m. in the Tobin Street lobby to line up for the Processional.

Outreach in Bolivia

Hi! My name is Emily Tredger. Some of you may recognize me from the church choir, or may have met me when I spoke to the congregation in June. This fall, I've teamed up with the Outreach Committee at Fort Massey for a project in Bolivia. I'll be volunteering in a city called Potosi to teach music and health education.

Potosi is located high in the Southern Andes. It was once famous for its silver mines, but since the mines have been depleted the city has been struggling with an economic crisis. I will be volunteering for a local organization that works to reduce and eradicate poverty in Potosi, by supporting education and health.

Together with my friend Antonia, I'll be living with host

families. Our first project is to teach music to the children. I think this will be fun and exciting while giving us a way to connect to people. Our second project is to promote health education. Currently there is a nutritionist volunteering in Potosi, who will make suggestions for how families can eat healthier given the resources they have. Antonia and I plan to help the families implement her suggestions. We also want to teach some very basic health practices, such as hand washing and food safety. I think the best way to do this will be to lead by example. Making lifestyle changes is a huge challenge for anyone, so I want to be encouraging and non-aggressive, rather than telling people what they should do.

I believe that the work Antonia and I will do in Potosi is only one part of the experience of volunteering overseas. I know that this experience will dramatically affect my perception and understanding of the world. I also want to share this experience with my larger community, in Canada, in Halifax, and at Fort Massey. To help do this, I'll be sending updates to the Outreach Committee throughout my project. You can also follow my travel blog at www.travelpod.com/members/emza

Thank you Fort Massey for your support and prayers!

~Emily Tredger



A Very Special Thank You

Thanks everyone for your support over the last few years.

Nothing is harder than looking in your sons eyes and knowing that you will never be able to do what you did in the past. With that in mind I have thrown myself at the cause of the wounded and injured soldiers and hope that the torch is being carried by the next generation of soldiers.

I know the latest batch of amputees and even spinal cord victims will move the bar even more forward.

My own charity will work with both the soldiers and civilians in amputee care and promotion of Freedom Through Sports which includes all disabled persons.

My last day in uniform is Sept 30th and my last day in the CF is Nov 16th.

If anyone needs my help please email me as I will always be glad to help any injured or wounded soldier as they progress along the path of recovery. I'll be here to help out as best I can.

ptepaul@yahoo.co.uk
www.franklinfoundation.ca

~Paul Franklin
Master Corporal (ret)

Note: Fort Massey's Alison McDonald had this to say about Paul Franklin: "I had the opportunity to hear Paul Franklin when he was our opening keynote speaker at the Canadian Physiotherapy Association National Congress in Calgary this summer. He is a very powerful speaker."

Using Local Produce - Eating Locally

While I strongly support the use/eating of local produce, I realized that I might have to think twice recently! In late August, (before Bill blew in), perhaps to ensure that I would not be hungry, my cat, Irene, kindly brought me in a live field mouse. While I do appreciate her generosity and concern, I would prefer not to receive another one and would take a pass on the 'eating locally' in this case!! I shared this with Info Morning when they were seeking and getting the best local meals in NS!

~Ruth Mackenzie

Royal Canadian College of Organists Halifax Chapter
PRESENTS

Phantoms of the Pipes XII

an evening of
ORGANists
Musical Guests
and FUN
Walter Kemp, MC



Friday, Oct 30/09
7:30 pm
\$5 adults
\$2 children

Prize for best costume!

Fort Massey United Church
Queen & Tobin St., Halifax
www.fortmasseychurch.com 423-4294

Thanksgiving
Dinner
Word Search

apple pie
bread
corn
cranberries
dressing
giblets
gravy
green beans
ham
peas
potatoes
pumpkin pie
rolls
salad
stuffing
sweet potatoes
turkey
yams

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What Do You See?

When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a small hospital near Tampa, Florida, it was believed that he had nothing left of any value.

Later, when the nurses were going through his meager possessions, they found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital. One nurse took her copy to Missouri. The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the St. Louis Association for Mental Health. A slide presentation has also been made based on his simple, but eloquent, poem. And this little old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this "anonymous" poem winging across the Internet.

Crabby Old Man

What do you see nurses?
 What do you see?
 What are you thinking, when
 you're looking at me?
 A crabby old man, not very
 wise,
 Uncertain of habit with
 faraway eyes?

Who dribbles his food and
 makes no reply.
 When you say in a loud voice
 "I do wish you'd try!"
 Who seems not to notice the
 things that you do.
 And forever is losing a sock
 or a shoe?

Who, resisting or not lets you
 do as you will,
 With bathing and feeding, the
 long day to fill?
 Is that what you're thinking?

Is that what you see?
 Then open your eyes, nurse
 you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am, as I sit
 here so still,
 As I do at your bidding, as I
 eat at your will.
 I'm a small child of ten with a
 father and mother,
 Brothers and sisters who love
 one another.

A young boy of sixteen with
 wings on his feet,
 Dreaming that soon now, a
 lover he'll meet.
 A groom soon at twenty, my
 heart gives a leap.
 Remembering the vows that I
 promised to keep.

At twenty-five, now I have
 young of my own.
 Who need me to guide and
 secure a happy home.
 A man of thirty, my young
 now grown fast,
 Bound to each other with ties
 that should last.

At forty, my young sons have
 grown and are gone,
 But my woman's beside me
 to see I don't mourn.
 At fifty, once more, babies
 play round my knee,
 Again, we know children my
 loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me my
 wife is now dead.
 I look at the future, I shudder
 with dread.
 For my young are all rearing
 young of their own.
 And I think of the years and
 the love that I've known.

I'm now an old man and
 nature is cruel.
 Tis jest to make old age look
 like a fool.
 The body, it crumbles,

grace and vigor, depart.
 There is now a stone where I
 once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass a
 young guy still dwells,
 And now and again my
 battered heart swells.
 I remember the joys,
 I remember the pain.
 And I'm loving and living life
 over again.

I think of the years ,all too
 few, gone too fast.
 And accept the stark fact
 that nothing can last.
 So open your eyes people,
 open and see,
 not a crabby old man.
 Look closer.....see..... **ME!!**

Remember this poem when
 you next meet an older per-
 son who you might brush
 aside without looking at the
 young soul within. We will all,
 one day, be there, too!

**Submitted by Ruth
 MacKenzie**

