



OPENING UP TO GOD

Dear Friends,

We lived in Weredale Park, when I was about five years old. It wasn't much of a park as I remember it, more like a circular drive with a patch of grass in the middle. The park was just off the main intersection of Dorchester and Atwater. St. Stephen's Anglican Church sat at the corner, the rectory tucked in behind. The Hospital for Sick Children was across the street from the Church, a fire station three doors down, and of course the Forum, home of the Montreal Canadiens, three short blocks away.

It was a busy corner in the heart of Montreal. The old Victorian rectory, which was sheltered from the din of the traffic, was home for my family. It was a large and rambling house with fireplaces in almost every room, the perfect home to play hide and seek in. We even had a balcony off our bedroom that overlooked the patch of grass. I liked that balcony. You could see the world from that perch.

One of my fondest memories of that time was Christmas Eve, 1966. In bed by seven in the evening, I tossed and turned trying desperately hard to will the morning to come. I longed for the delight of gifts and toys, games and puzzles, but more than anything else I wanted to see Santa Claus! I wanted to know that he was real, that the story was true. So, I willed myself to stay awake to catch a glimpse of the man in a red suit. Eventually sleep would come. Early in the morning on Christmas Day, I was awakened by the sound of hoofs on our roof, bells ringing faintly in the distance. It's Santa, I thought. With lightning speed I ran toward the balcony, pulling on the door, but it would not open. I pressed my face against the glass craning to see something, anything. As quickly as the sounds had appeared they disappeared, snow fell gently, early light dawned, I was satisfied that Santa had come.

ABOVE: THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST BY JAMES TISSOT PUBLIC DOMAIN

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >>

Inside »

The Year of Matthew 2

Standing Rock Report 4

Waiting in Hope & Welcoming Refugees: A Report 5

Upcoming Dates 6

Same Gender Marriage 7

Season in Review 8

**The Reverend Canon
David Brinton OGS**
VICAR & SUB-DEAN



THE YEAR OF MATTHEW

During much of the current church year (which began on the first Sunday of Advent 2016) the gospel reading at the Sunday Eucharist will be taken from Matthew. What distinguishes his voice from Mark's, Luke's and John's?

It is Luke's vision that predominates at Christmas with the tender gospel stories of the annunciation to Mary, her visit to Elizabeth, the choirs of angels, the shepherds journeying to the crèche.

Matthew's contribution to Christmas is a darker one. He gives us the mysterious star in the sky leading the magi to Bethlehem and the moving portrait of Joseph, initially confused about his role in the mystery unfolding around him, but then resolutely accepting what he cannot understand. He escapes with Mary and Jesus into Egypt after the horrifying slaughter by King Herod of the two year old boys of Judea.

In this story of the "Flight into Egypt" Matthew intends us to understand Jesus as a kind of "new Moses", the great liberator and law-giver of the ancient Hebrews, enslaved under Pharaoh.

It is in Matthew's gospel that we read of Jesus sitting down on the mountain to deliver the Sermon on the Mount with its beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit... the merciful... those who mourn... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5), just as Moses had come down from the mountain to deliver the 10 commandments to the Hebrews.

Matthew also gives us the central ethical teaching of Jesus in chapter 25, the separation of the sheep and the goats at the Last Judgment: when we help those in need, we help Jesus, and when we ignore them, we ignore him. This basic description of Christian obligation to help the poor is depicted in the Cathedral's "works of mercy window" to the right of the High Altar.

At the heart of all the gospels is the narrative of the suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord. The Passion according to St. Matthew, which has been sublimely rendered into music by Bach, closely resembles that of Mark but has many unique details, such as the earthquake that splits open tombs at the moment of Jesus' death, causing the dead beneath to rise, and the posting of a guard at the tomb of Jesus, meant by Pilate to frustrate any attempt by his followers to fake his resurrection. The theological point of these details is that the death of Jesus is cosmic in its disrupting effect, and that no human act can stop the action of God in raising him from the dead.

We speak of sacred scripture as the "inspired Word of God". In other words, the bible is not simply the work of human imagination (although it is certainly that), but comes to us through a mysterious combination of human individuality (including human weakness) and divine guidance. To believe that the bible is "inspired" is not to believe that every syllable of it is "inerrant" but that all the truth God intends for us is found in Scripture, mediated to

>> FROM PAGE 2

us through the individuality and historical circumstances of its many voices.

One of the most moving images of this mystery of the divine and human working together in the inspiration of scripture, is Carravagio's first version of St. Matthew and the Angel. We know it only from photographs as the original was destroyed during WW II. Carravagio's Matthew is a poor man, dressed in working clothes, his bare legs and feet crudely dangling at the viewer's eye level, seated with a book in which he writes the first words of his gospel guided by an angelic young boy whose wings enfold the scene in a loving embrace. Here we see the light of the written gospel coming into the world for the first time through the meeting of a child, and an old man representing the divine and the ordinary fused to bring into the world the Good News. The country- bumpkin quality of this Matthew infuriated Carravagio's patron who demanded a new version with a more dignified Evangelist. It is this one that can still be seen in a Roman church today. The one we lost is closer to the truth.

THE LIGHT FOR THE CITY CHALICE

On her eighty-eighth birthday, distinguished Canadian silversmith Lois Betteridge completed a chalice for St. James Cathedral encompassing the ideas of Light for the City and the Tree of Life. The commission honours The Very Reverend Douglas Stoute, who retired in January 2016 after 21 years as Rector and Dean. The chalice and its accompanying paten, a plate to hold the Host, are made of sterling silver and lapis lazuli. The design suggests the branches of a tree cradling a bowl, representing the halved apple and the story of creation. The surfaces reflect light and the blue of the lapis lazuli stone symbolizes the flow of water. The chalice was consecrated for use by Archbishop Terence E. Finlay at a service held in St. George's Chapel. It has now been engraved and will be used for the first time in the Cathedral on January 15, and will be available to view after the 9:00 and 11:00am services. All are invited to attend.

AT RIGHT: LIGHT FOR THE CITY CHALICE PHOTO SUPPLIED

Holy Baptism

- Oct 2 An (Andrew) Cui
Finn River Beau Henderson
Grayson Anthony Nuttall
Grace Delamere Webster
- Nov 27 Quinten Peter Sinclair
- Dec 14 Jeffrey Kinsella

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord

- May 11 Edwin Clare Cunningham
- Sept 5 Shirley Aileen Anderson
- Sept 21 LaVerne Tworek
- Oct 21 Gordon Ford
- Nov 11 Moira Esdaile
- Dec 12 Jane Cook

For many of us, Christmas is a time shared with family and friends. The Cathedral has a tradition of hosting a turkey dinner for our Drop-in community. We are especially grateful to Michael Vinci of Vinci Catering and Event Planning for preparing and donating the meal for this year's gathering. We also give thanks to all of our caterers who support our Drop-in throughout the year. Each month, one of our five preferred caterers for the Cathedral Centre prepares and donates a meal to our Drop-in.



THE CATHEDRAL NEWSLETTER

The Cathedral Church
of St. James

Church: King & Church Streets

Office: 65 Church Street,
Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2E9

416-364-7865
info@stjamescathedral.on.ca
www.stjamescathedral.on.ca

**The Reverend
Leigh Kern**
ASSISTANT CURATE



STANDING ROCK REPORT



In the first week of November I was invited, along with Bishop Mark MacDonald, to come to Standing Rock, North Dakota to pray. Our prayers had been asked, by the Elders of Oceti Sakowin and Sacred Stone camps, for the protection of their water and land from the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). On treaty land, construction of the DAPL has begun without proper consultation; in this process their burial sites have been opened and desecrated. Pipelines are hazardous; a leak in DAPL could mean the poisoning of large water sources, including the Missouri River. Since DAPL began their project last spring, the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies have been camping out on their land, in protection of their territory and treaty rights. The ‘water protectors’ have engaged in nonviolent and prayerful public witness, yet have been met by heavily militarized police yielding tear gas, riot gear, sound canons, rubber bullets, and more. Just a few days before I arrived, their North Camp was raided by the police. Dozens of Indigenous water protectors I met had terrifying stories of being pulled out of tepees (where they were in ceremony) and being beaten, arrested, strip searched, held under bright lights for over 24 hours, and then kept in dog kennels, as the jail cells were full. At Oceti Sakowin, I experienced the most radical generosity I have ever encountered. I was taken in by the Cheyenne River Sioux, whose water source is also the Missouri river. My hosts offered me a tepee to sleep in and invited me into their rhythm of meals around an open fire. There was always a hot pot of coffee breaking over that flame and a member of their family made us hot buffalo stews at night (which I later learned he did with a broken

arm, from the police violence). In the water protectors, I witnessed such profound courage, kindness, hospitality, prayer, and resilience. Though snipers on hill tops and constant aero surveillance overshadowed Oceti Sakowin, the camp was filled with the sound of singing around the big drums, round dances, and prayers around sacred fires. I was privileged to attend prayer walks around the area, a vigil at a local jail, and participate in many gatherings of prayer for the protection of the waters, land, and people. At Oceti Sakowin, I met Indigenous peoples from as far as Arizona who had travelled on foot to stand with the people of Standing Rock. The courage and faith of the people at Standing Rock, in the face of such violence, was a profound witness of the love that we are called to embody. I carry from this experience into Christmastide the call to share whatever we have and that all things are possible through the transformative love of God. The Elders of Oceti Sakowin told me that they were only capable of such endurance through the mercy and power of the Creator, and that when we are committed to the service of God, we must be prepared to lay down our lives for the cause of love. The call of Christmas is to receive the free gift of God’s abundant and life-giving presence. I encountered this love viscerally in the water protectors and their giving of themselves: how are you encountering the transformative love of God in your community? How does receiving God’s gift of God’s very self expand your heart this season?

ABOVE: VIGIL AT THE MORTON COUNTY JAIL, PRAYING FOR PROTECTION OF WATER PROTECTORS FROM VIOLENCE AND RELEASE OF CAPTIVES.
PHOTO SUPPLIED

The Reverend Canon Kate Merriman
 CHAIR, CATHEDRAL-COMMUNITY
 REFUGEE RESPONSE COMMITTEE



WAITING IN HOPE & WELCOMING REFUGEES AN UPDATE

It is now early December. Canada is celebrating the first anniversary of the arrival of some 35,000 Syrian refugees, and in early November, the Cathedral-Community Refugee Response Committee celebrated our own first anniversary with much rejoicing.

Kambiz, an Iranian man who arrived mid-July, continues to adjust to his new life in Toronto, focusing his efforts on learning English, planning a career path, seeking appropriate part-time employment, and learning about life in Canada. While sponsorship is undeniably hard work, it can also be a lot of fun and richly rewarding. At Thanksgiving we held a Thanksgiving themed gathering complete with turkey sandwiches, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, seasonal decorations, and a history lesson about some of the holiday's traditions. Kambiz, who spent the previous three years in Ankara, Turkey, asked why North Americans had named their favourite Thanksgiving bird after that country. He has experienced his first brief blast of Canadian winter and shopped for a good pair of winter boots, and he has been introduced to that quintessential Canadian winter sport, hockey. (The Marlies won 5 to 3 against Hartford.) There are plans for a visit to the Aga Khan Museum for a concert of Iranian music.

We continued our fundraising efforts on October 22 with the Affordable Art Affair. It was a gala event – fun, festive, and elegant. Snell Hall was transformed into a beautiful art gallery complete with a pianist, a generous supply of excellent wine, and trays of crackers and cheese. This was made possible by the very generous support of many from

both the community and the cathedral, and raised over \$13,000.00 for refugee sponsorship.

As we have reported in the past, some of our work has moved into the area of advocacy with the federal government. This began with the unexpected slow-down in the processing of Syrian refugees in February that left hundreds of groups like ours looking at long wait times. It continues as the first Syrians who arrived in Canada one year ago, their sponsors, settlement agencies, and the federal government review that experience. The Senate report released on December 6, “Finding Refuge in Canada: A Syrian Resettlement Story,” calls the outpouring of support a Canadian success story, but at the same time identifies areas where improvement and additional funding are needed. Members of our committee are focusing on the need for year-round access to English as a Second Language courses and are collaborating with our sponsorship agreement holder, AURA, and local Members of Parliament. There is a groundswell of support for this particular initiative since proficiency in one of Canada's two official languages is the key to successful resettlement.

The work we have accomplished in our first year would not have been possible without the ongoing support of the Cathedral congregation and staff, as well as many in the community, for which we are deeply grateful. We wish everyone the deep joy and peace of the Christmas season.

ABOVE: KAMBIZ (RIGHT) AND HIS FRIEND SOUSSAN (LEFT) WITH PARISHIONER GAIL SCOTT (MIDDLE) AT THE MARLIES' GAME ON DECEMBER 3 AT RICOH COLISEUM

PHOTO SUPPLIED

UPCOMING DATES

JAN 1 **The Epiphany of the Lord, New Year's Day**
8:00am Said Eucharist
9:00am Sung Eucharist
11:00am Procession & Choral Eucharist
2:00-3:15pm The Archbishop's Levée
3:30pm Festive Music
4:00pm Choral Evensong and Presentations of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto

JAN 7 **Ordination of Bishops at St. Paul's, Bloor St.**
10:30am The Reverend Canon Jenny Andison, The Reverend Canon Kevin Robertson and The Reverend Riscylla Walsh Shaw will be ordained.

JAN 10 **Epiphany Lecture Series: Discipleship and the Journey of Faith, Part 1: Why Follow Jesus?**
7:00-8:00pm in the Cathedral Centre
 ALSO, PARTS 2-4: JAN 17, 24, 31

JAN 11 **Cantatas in the Cathedral**
6:00pm Christmas Oratorio Pt 6, BWV 248, J.S. Bach
 Soprano Shannon Mercer, Alto Jessica Wright, Tenor Asitha Tennekoon, Bass Graham Robinson
 Admission free, donations welcome

JAN 14 **The Ordination of The Reverend Leigh Kern to the Sacred Order of Priests**
3:00pm, to be followed by a reception

JAN 15 **Display of new Chalice honouring Dean Stoute**
Following morning services; Watch for details
Trinity College Service
4:30pm Choral Evensong

JAN 18 **Truth & Reconciliation Series: Lee Maracle on 'Thinking Locally, How Toronto Can Act'**
6:00pm Service of Light and Evensong
6:30pm Refreshments
7:00pm Lecture

JAN 22 **Sunday in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

JAN 28 **Amnesty International Action Circle Meeting**
1:00pm in the Cathedral Centre
 ALSO MEETING FEB 25, MAR 25

OPENING UP TO GOD FROM PAGE 1

That memory stays with me as do all the little moments that make Christmas the mystical event that it is; playing Herod in the pageant as a nine-year-old, a server at midnight mass as a teenager and watching our own children play the same parts. Somewhere along the way the faint sounds of hoofs and bells were exchanged for something deeper and richer and yet sometimes just as elusive. Somewhere along the way a virgin giving birth to the Messiah in a manger apprehended more than my imagination. It captured my soul.

If I say to you that I believe every word, you might think that I am naïve and ill-informed. If I say to you, it couldn't possibly have happened this way, you might say that I am unorthodox and have little faith. If I say to you that it's just a quaint story, you might say it diminishes the meaning to moral and instruction. If the truth be told, I have no trouble holding in creative tension science with theology, experience with reason. I find the telling of this truth with no firm evidence the very nature of how we walk as a people of faith. Mary, a young woman, was compelled to

listen and participate, to open up, to suffer, to let go so that God might come. I am in awe of her trust, courage and want to change the world... I want the same, expect the same. I am moved by Joseph's willingness to stay, protect and hold on when so many fathers would run for the hills. I am inspired by the shepherds who trust the word of an angel and go and see for themselves.

What happened so long ago in the city of David comes to pass in the here and now. Perched on the cusp of a new year, we gather at Christmas to ask God to bless and heal the broken bits of our lives, the hurt, the disappointment and the shame. We pray God to turn our unbelief to trust and faith. We dare to open up and allow God to reshape our patched souls into green patches of possibility in the heart of the city. We remain awake to the possibility that out of us this Christmas Christ is born.

Peace,
 Andrew
The Very Reverend Andrew Asbil, Rector and Dean

JAN 30 **Anglican 101: A Three Part Introduction to the Anglican Way**
6:00pm *ALSO FEB 6, 13*

FEB 5 **St. James Black History Exhibit & Opening Services**
9:00am and 11:00am services to mark the opening of the Archives Exhibit entitled "A Black Canadian Journey" which will continue on view in the Cathedral daily till February 28.

Commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of the Accession of Her Majesty the Queen
4:30pm Choral Evensong

FEB 7 **Catechism: A Grounding for a Life of Faith**
A Tuesday evening course for those preparing for Baptism or Confirmation and those interested in deepening their faith. Runs till April 4 and includes a shared meal. Contact The Reverend Leigh Kern for details (lkern@stjamescathedral.on.ca).

FEB 12 **Installation Service for Indigenous Native Priest, The Reverend Chris Harper and Canon Pastor, The Reverend John Anderson**
4:30pm

FEB 26 **The Annual Meeting of Vestry**
1:00pm

Choral Evensong with Guest Preacher The Reverend Dr. Fleming Rutledge
4:30pm

FEB 28 **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**
Details to be announced

MAR 1 **Ash Wednesday**
7:30am, 8:30am, 12:30pm, 5:15pm, 6:30pm
Liturgies with imposition of ashes

Ash Wednesday Cathedral Discovery Day
9:00am-3:00pm Event for Children and Youth of the Diocese ages 6 -14; Check the Cathedral website for registration and event details.

MAR 9 **York Group Speaker Meeting**
1:00pm in the York Group Lecture Room
Guest Speaker: RN Gloria Wiebe
Bring a lunch, coffee and tea provided

.....
MORE INFORMATION about all listings available at 416-364-7865 or info@stjamescathedral.on.ca

SAME GENDER MARRIAGE: AN UPDATE

The decision to allow same gender marriage at the 41st Anglican General Synod in July of 2016 is the culmination of a long dialogue and period of reflection on the issue that began in the late 1970s. General Synod passed the resolution to move in this direction with a two thirds majority vote in the houses of laity, clergy and bishops. In order to change the marriage canon, the resolution will need to be brought back to the floor of General Synod for a second reading in 2019. In the meantime, there are no canonical restrictions that would prevent bishops in dioceses across the land from proceeding with the change.

St. James Cathedral has also been engaged with this issue for some time. On June 24, 2013 we were granted permission, by the Bishop of Toronto, to perform same gender blessings. Following the decision made at General Synod this summer, Archbishop Johnson granted permission to parishes already engaged with this ministry to begin offering marriage to same gender couples with whom the church has a pastoral relationship. We were formally invited to do so on October 11, 2016.

On November 30, 2016, Cathedral Council unanimously recommended that the Dean accept the Archbishop's invitation and begin to offer same gender marriages at St. James. We know that this decision will be met with sincere gratitude by many and disappointment by some. It is our intent to offer opportunities for education and theological reflection on this issue as a part of our Christian formation programming in 2017. - *The Dean and Churchwardens*

We congratulate two members of the Cathedral Community, Verger Paul Seddon and Director of Operations and Finance Robert Saffrey, who are to be presented with the Order of the Diocese of Toronto on January 1. Paul and Rob will join Cathedral recipients Archivist Nancy Mallett and former Parish Nurse Gloria Wiebe, who were honoured in previous years.

THE SEASON IN REVIEW



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

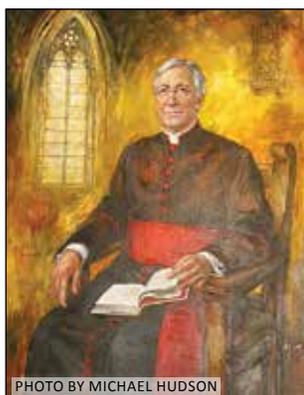


PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HUDSON

TOP LEFT COLUMN (2 IMAGES): DEAN ASBIL, DEAN STOUTE, MARIA GABANKOVA (PAINTER), LOIS BETTERIDGE (SILVERSMITH), DEAN ABRAHAM AND CANON BRINTON, WITH CHALICE MADE IN HONOUR OF DEAN STOUTE AND HIS PORTRAIT UNVEILED, SEPTEMBER 29, SEE ARTICLE PAGE 3; MANDARIN MINISTRY PASTORAL ASSOCIATE JAMES LIU, HIS WIFE DORCAS, DAUGHTER ELEANOR AND SON FREDERICK, BORN NOVEMBER 3, 2016. **TOP RIGHT COLUMN (3 IMAGES):** THE BLESSING OF ANIMALS SERVICE, OCTOBER 8. **BOTTOM LEFT COLUMN (2 IMAGES):** FAITHWORKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA IN SNELL HALL, OCTOBER 30. **BOTTOM RIGHT COLUMN (2 IMAGES):** KAMBIZ AND SOUSSAN AT THE TORONTO MARLIES GAME, SEE ARTICLE PAGE 5.