



Mary remembered all these things

Christmas Services

Dec 2	3:15 Worship Park Manor PCH Sunshine Choir will Sing	Dec 24	5 & 7 pm Christmas Eve services - 10pm Communion Service
Dec 9	7 pm Blue Christmas Service	Dec 30	10am Worship around the breakfast table (Yale Hall)
Dec 16	7:30 pm Jazz Vespers	Jan 27	10am Worship 11am Annual Meeting
Dec 23	9:30 & 11:15 am Christmas Cantata		

Transcona Memorial United Church

COMMISSIONER

How I Spent My Sabbatical

After being trapped in a house swept into the sky by a tornado, Dorothy opens the door to discover that she is now in the land of Oz.

Speaking to the shivering dog she holds in her arms she says, "I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore, Toto."

Anyone who has seen the movie version of The Wizard of Oz knows that Dorothy goes on an adventure meeting characters who turn out to be both like and unlike the people she knew in Kansas.

There were a few times during my three-month sabbatical when I found myself saying "I'm not in Transcona anymore."

After Easter until mid-July, I was away from my responsibilities at TMUC for a time of study and rest.

The policy of The United Church of Canada allows a minister to take at least three months of paid sabbatical if he/she has served the same congregation for at least five consecutive years.

Since Carol and I have been at TMUC for 19 years, we both are eligible for a sabbatical leave. We decided that the congregation was best served if we did not both go on sabbatical at the same time. We decided I would go this year and Carol will take a sabbatical in the near future.

I spent my sabbatical studying the 'Emerging Church' in North America. The Emerging Church is a descriptive phrase for a conversation occurring amongst various church communities, primarily in North America and Europe. Emerging churches are trying to connect historic Christian faith with contem-

porary culture.

There is a great diversity of worship styles and church structures amongst emerging churches. All are trying to live as faithful companions and disciples of Jesus the Christ.

I met wonderful people meeting in 'churches' different from mainline United Church 'churches'. I worshiped for two hours one evening in an Internet Café in Edmonton with Sol Café, a group of about 20 (seemingly all younger than myself) people studying the scriptures.

I visited with the youth pastor at a large Pentecostal church and enjoyed my first latte from the coffee bar located just outside the entrance to their sanctuary.

I spent a day listening to Emerging Church guru Brian McLaren and a host of other

(Cont. pg2)

(Continued from pg 1)

local emerging church folk in Seattle talk about being good neighbours. They all were envisioning a church seeking to be a blessing within its community. They envisioned churches going into their communities, not simply waiting for people to show up for worship or a mid-week program.

I visited two United Churches in southern Ontario. I attended a course on Healthy Practices for Congregations at the Five Oaks Centre. I attended both a jazz and a traditional eucharistic service at Trinity Episcopal church in Cleveland, and spoke to the staff about their decision to invite children to participate in blessing the bread and

wine.

I worshipped in a massive high school theatre with Imago Dei in Portland, where an icon of Jesus was projected on the front wall throughout the service. I had a stimulating week of studying the Bible at lectures by historical Jesus scholars Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

The sabbatical left me with a pervasive sense that God is up to something in the church. People are longing to experience God's life-giving and life-challenging presence. They want a faith that shapes and transforms their lives twenty-four hours a day. They aren't concerned about belonging to a prestigious, flashy or 'successful' church. They don't want to belong to a church so much

as be the church, loving and doing justly in the world.

I was no longer in Transcona. I was in new places both like and unlike TMUC. Different people, different worship spaces and style, but a common faith and commitment to the way of Christ.

I am grateful to TMUC for supporting me on my sabbatical leave. I extend a HUGE THANK YOU to Carol for providing such incredible leadership and ministry during what-turned-out-to-be a very busy time of my absence.

I will be sharing further stories and reflections from my sabbatical during conversations, sermons and articles on the church's website.

Jeff Cook

Shepherds & Angels

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Savior was born - Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him, they

told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard were amazed at what the shepherds said.

Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them.

The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them. Luke: 2: 8 - 11





Christmas Hampers

Again this year our congregation will be giving gifts and food to 15 families through the hamper program. As in the past, we are hoping that many will support the program through monetary gifts, and through regular grocery donations. To assist us in planning for the hampers, we have divided the food items into five separate categories. This will be placed in the weekly church announcements, but for those who like to plan ahead, we are including them in the newsletter.

Nov.11: Bean Blessings

- Canned beans, proteins such as canned fish and meat.

Nov.18: Breakfast is Ready

- juice, peanut butter, jams, oatmeal, cereals, pancake mix, and syrup.

Nov.25: Meal Mates

- packaged foods such as Kraft Dinner, pasta, rice, jello, puddings, crackers, and stove top stuffings.

Dec.2: Can We Do It

- canned and packaged soups, fruit, vegetables, and cranberry sauce.

Dec.9: Coffee Break

- coffee, tea, sugar, creamers such as Coffee Mate, cookies, cake mix, hot chocolate, and

packaged, boxed, or tinned candies.

Please remember that all items donated should be dated currently, as we can not include items in the hampers that are outdated.

As we prepare for this very beautiful, and blessed time of the year, we know that the congregation of TMUC. will again be very supportive of this program, and thank you in advance for your generosity.

Please look for updates in the church announcements for further news regarding the hampers.

Memories

I worked 48 years for the Bank -24 in Alberta and 24 in Manitoba. It was my pleasure to open a new branch of the Imperial Bank on Dec. 10, 1956.

I had noticed the United Church and thought it would suit my wife Helen and our three children; so I joined and sang in the choir for 40 years until my voice gave out.

I was elected to serve on several Committees and later was Chair of the Worship Committee. I enjoyed the choirs, meeting new people and the different choir leaders. They all served well. I should mention that your present leader, Dorothy Ross, is the "Queen" of choir leaders.

Jeff and Carol are wonderful people. I hope they stay with us for many more years.

by Bernie Hubert

TMUC Sends Supplies To Uganda

A big thank you to all who donated medical and school supplies for the people in Northern Uganda. These supplies were carried by Dorian Watts, as she traveled to Uganda with the Canadian Physicians for Aid & Relief this fall.

Dorian writes that they had a very warm welcome at a school with singing and dancing. The children of the school were so thrilled to see all the pencils. Thank you for making a difference!!

by Sophronia Earnest

Newsletter Survey

The newsletter committee would appreciate your help in evaluating the newsletter content and method of delivery.

Electronic distribution of the newsletter would support conservation and reduce costs. On the other hand paper copies can be read by all.

Please circle the answer you feel is appropriate and return to the church or tmuc@shaw.ca.

When I get the newsletter I read:

All Some Very Little

The content of the newsletter is:

Too short Too long OK

I prefer to read:

Paper Email Web



2007 Congregational Questionnaire

As many of you know, a questionnaire was presented to the TMUC congregation in the spring of 2007. The questions were designed to get some demographic information but more importantly to get opinions on the goals defined by the board and committees as part of the strategic planning process for TMUC.

Following is a summary of the results of this questionnaire (a more complete analysis of the questionnaire is available);

- There were 138 replies, 78 from those over 60 and 55 from those under 60.
- 80% live within 15 blocks of the church; · 55% are retired

The responses were tabulated using a weighted scoring system where the percentages of responses in the agree and strongly agree categories were combined. Double weight was given to the strongly agree category. The higher the number shown the higher the priority given for that priority by those replying to the questionnaire.

The table below shows the score for questions dealing with possible congregational priorities;

Attracting younger people 1.46	Sunday School Program 1.32	Supporting Social Action and Justice 1.27	Enhancing Youth Programs 1.26	Children & Family Oriented Activities 1.25
Encouraging past and new members to come 1.23	Support social programs for the disadvantaged 1.06	Programs dealing with pollution and environment 1.04	Promoting and practicing energy conservation 1.01	Supporting the community 0.97
Finding other sources of revenue 0.93	New ways of understanding Christianity 0.93	Annual budgeting for growth 0.90	Global warming issues 0.89	Issues of protecting plants and animals 0.80
Programs for Bible study 0.74	Increased givings from members 0.67	Alternative forms of worship 0.66	Expand parking on current site 0.53	Improve current facilities 0.47
Finding an alternate church 0.43	Expand sanctuary into current parking 0.30			

A number of interesting conclusions may be drawn from these results;

- There is strong support for providing programs dealing with global warming and other environmental issues.
- There is strong support for attracting young people and increasing membership as well as for family oriented programming and for Sunday school and bible study programs.
- There is strong support for community programs for the disadvantaged and for social and justice issues.
- The least support was for expanding the church physical facilities on the existing site or expanding to a new site.
- All priorities presented garnered relatively strong support –ie- none were rejected as unimportant.

This was valuable input to the planning process and we thank all of those who responded.



The Sound Of Music

The church is alive with the sound of choral music as the choirs prepare for Advent and Christmas. There is also the wonderful sound of many instruments as the Advent Band rehearses.

The first Sunday in Advent is December 2nd and the Sunshine Choir will be singing that Sunday at both morning services. Then in the afternoon they will sing at the Park Manor worship service.

The Cherub Choir rehearses each Saturday morning from 11 to 11:30 a.m. and will be singing in church at both services on December 9th.

Then on December 16th the Advent Band will be playing.

On December 23rd, The Chancel Choir and The Carillons will combine to present the new

Cantata, "Holy Night of Miracles" by Lloyd Larson.

The Carillons will be singing at the "Festival of Trees and Lights" which is at the Conservatory at Assiniboine Park on Sunday, November 18th at 3 p.m. They will also present their Christmas program at Park Manor at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 27th.

If you're looking for Christmas gifts, the choirs have 5 CD'S available for sale. They are as follows:

The Carillons:

*Here We Are Lord
Shine Jesus Shine
A Carillon Christmas
Songs of the Spirit*

The Chancel Choir:

Celebrate & Sing With Praise

To reserve a copy, please phone the church office at 222-1331 or

see Dorothy Ross or or ask any choir member and we will be glad to help you.

The Christmas Eve services are as follows:

The 5 p.m. & 7 p.m. Family services will have music led by The Carillons.

The 10 p.m. Communion Service will have music led by The Chancel Choir.

On December 30th there will be one service at 10 a.m. This will be "Worship Around the Breakfast Table" as we have had in the past, and The Carillons will be singing.

Yes, our church is definitely alive with the sound of music and from all the singers and musicians, we wish you and those you love, a Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year.

Dorothy Ross

Carillon Reunion June 2007

Our first Carillon reunion was held on the weekend of June 8-10 this year. Approximately 35 guests (singers and musicians) attended over the three day event hosted by the C. E. committee.

We kicked off the reunion Friday with a dessert party where guests met or were reacquainted with each other. We played the party game "Who am I?" to mingle and meet. The C.E. committee put on a wonderful dessert party which included fruits, pastries and even a chocolate fountain!! We also played a "Carillon Quiz"

game. Did you know that the Carillons have had 71 members over the years, and sang approximately 306 anthems so far??? We also had an opportunity to go down memory lane and watch a photo presentation that Melanie Sidorow compiled. It was fun and touching to look back at all the concerts, choir shows and other singing events we were a part of, and to chuckle at all the amusing styles of hair and outfits we had.

Saturday was a day of rehearsal. Lunch and snacks were provided by the C.E. committee and water bottles supplied for our parched members.

Our Folk Communion reunion service was on Sunday, the 10th and was well attended. It was so nice to have all the instruments: piano, organ, guitar, bass and drums to accompany some of our Carillon favorites which included "The Greatest of These", "Living in the Light", "What Does the Lord Require of You?" and several others. It was a music filled service and we all had a wonderful time (congregation included!) Perhaps we will have another reunion in the future. Until we meet again.....

by Sherri Jennings



A Musical Pilgrimage

This summer, our TMUC choir conductor, Dorothy Ross, traveled with Peggy and Jim Lawrence to France and England on "A Singing Heart, 2007 Pilgrimage." The focus of the tour was the history of great hymn writers who contributed to our spiritual heritage. Dorothy shares with us some of the experiences she recorded in her trip diary.

A Singing Heart Pilgrimage

Our trip began at the village of Heiligenstein, in the province of Alsace, France. A Lutheran worship at the Cathedral near our hotel was first on our agenda, followed by a visit to the famous Strasbourg Cathedral with an "evensong" service.

The next day we visited the monastery at the top of Mount St. Odile and the Holy Well, which we learned was supposed to have healing powers.

We went back to Strasbourg and St. Thomas Church, where the fabulous Silverman Organ was once played by Mozart & Albert Schweitzer and returned on Saturday to hear the Bach organ recital, on the anniversary of Mozart's death.

While in Strasbourg we visited Eglise Reformed Bourcier and learned about psalmody in the reformation. Psalms were the only music allowed in the church at that time. Our hymns were based on the psalms. We also visited the recently discovered 16th century artwork illustrating Psalm 1 in a Strasbourg home.

In New St. Peter's Church in Strasbourg we learned about the spirituality of Bach, then went on to St. Matthew in Colmar (upper Alsace) to experience a Taize service with a short history on how this was begun. It is a very prayerful service with much chant-like singing.

Two days later we were in England and while in Winslow we visited St. Lawrence Anglican Church: a lovely old church with special hand-made kneeling cushions. We heard about

church music in the English language-350 years ago (17th century) and sang hymns by Benjamin Keach and Isaac Watts.

The next morning we went to visit the new St. Andrews Church in Breerton. The old St. Andrews Church was where George Herbert was appointed in 1630 and was only there for 3 years before he died. After our lunch we walked the 3-kilometer walk to the Cathedral in Salisbury and took part in daily Evensong Service at 5:30 p.m.

On Wednesday we went to Bristol to John Wesley's Chapel "The New Room". We learned about Methodists and how they came to be. The New Room was built in 1742 and has been in continuous use ever since. John and his brother Charles were both Anglican priests as well as poets. We sing their hymns in our church today. In the evening we went back to a place called "The Pilgrim Centre" for a time of singing and reflecting.

On Thursday we made a stop at Olney and visited Cowper's House, Museum and Gardens where poet William Cowper and preacher John Newton met. In Olney where John Newton was pastor we sang hymns by Cowper and Newton, including Amazing Grace, written by John Newton.

On Friday we visited Thaxted Church in the village of Thaxted where Percy Dearmer (1867-1936) was one of the first members of the Christian Social Union. He hoped that Christian Socialism would reveal that beauty in art and music would touch the lives

of the poor as well as the prosperous. Socialist friends drew his attention to Ralph Vaughan Williams so Dearmer worked with Williams to write hymn tunes that would be more singable for congregations. Gustav Holtz was later involved in the writing of Hymn tunes. He was a radical Christian Socialist who believed passionately (Like Dearmer) that there can be no relationship with God that does not include our neighbor.

We went to London on Saturday to visit St. Botolph's Algate Church and met the wonderful Fred Kahn. Unfortunately he is in the early stages of Alzheimer's and will no longer be able to write. We have many of his hymns in Voices United.

The 2nd Vatican Council (ecumenical) started the "hymn explosion" of The Sixties and the World Council of Churches in 1983 changed the lives of the local church. There were hymns of justice, peace, integrity of creation, and the intergenerational acceptability of the music. Many of these hymns are in Voices United and are listed on a separate page. There is a resurgence of deep yearning for spirituality (a close relationship with God).

A wrap-up of our Pilgrimage:

- Music is a doorway to the heart.
- Hymns sung are in the moment "now" – not on the printed page.
- Hymns are moments between the past and the future.



The Top Ten Things To Do At The Transcona Memorial United Church Website

Canadians are among the most “connected” people in all the world in internet use; and have led the way with the high speed connections of DSL and Cable. One site that is growing in use locally is www.tmuc.ca, our church presence “on the net”. If you are a present user, or someone who has never visited, here are some suggestions to try:

10. See great pictures and read stories of upcoming church events, news of things to come in the life of the congregation. At the time of this writing, pictures and details on the choir program “A Singing Heart” were posted. This article could have persuaded you to come if you had not planned to be there.

9. On the other hand, see great pictures and read stories of past church events, whether you were there or not. Recent examples are some great pictures of our youth (and some others) at their outing to the corn maze. There will be other items fresh to the TMUC website by the time this article reaches print.

8. Be inspired ! Read some of the many items in the section titled “Faith Reflections”. They may be sermons, projects from our youth group, thoughtful meditations from small services that few had a chance to hear, or special moments such as new Christmas stories. There is likely to be something that touches your heart, your soul, and/or your intellect; and causes you to laugh, or cry, or both.

7. Check the Church Calendar

..... or search it. View an online calendar to see what is coming up this week, this month, and so on. You can “click” on any event for details. You can also search for an event.

6. Do a search of tmuc.ca. Find a specific article or item you are looking for, or just search for a word or words of interest. The search engine allows for a fairly simple search, or some very specific and powerful searches.

5. Send a note. Have a question or comment? Want to add an item to the website? Want to contact the church? No need to wait for office hours to call by phone; and sometimes written is better. You can send a message (and send a copy to yourself if you want) direct from the TMUC website using the “Contact Us” page, no e-mail program needed. You can also get the church phone number and street address here.

4. Find out about TMUC. This works for anyone from regular attending member or adherent, through to complete strangers. On Page Links that always appear in the left margin, any site visitor can find out “About Us”, “What We Do”, “What We Believe”, and about our “Ministry Team” of Jeff and Carol. Each page talks of us being warm and welcoming, and many invitations to visit in person are extended. Refer a friend !

3. Dig deeper. The “Links” page takes you outside the TMUC site to locate more information. Can’t find, remember, or locate the link to a site related to the church or its activities? It just may be here, from the United Church conversation and spiritual exploration site of Wondercafe.ca, to daily prayer links, online Bibles, the Sunday School curriculum, and more.

2. Go exploring. A click on the menu item “Church News” brings you to a listing of all articles retained on the site, even though they may not appear on the home page as the “Latest News” or under other specific links. As well, see random images lifted from the “graphic storehouse” or picked from slideshows or pictures, by clicking to various pages.

1. Make the TMUC site your own. It can be used in many ways, only some of which have been mentioned here. Explore, share, ask questions, make suggestions. Make the site your “Home Page” in your web browser, or at least save it as a “Favorite” or “Bookmark”, and visit often to keep up to date on church activities

by Jack Binkley





And you, my child, will be
called a
prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord
to
prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowl-
edge of salvation
through the forgiveness of
their sins,
because of the tender mercy of
our God,
by which the rising sun will
come to us
from heaven
to shine on those living in
darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path
of peace.
-Luke 1:76-79

Every father wants his son to do well in life, but not many fathers speak this profoundly about their 8-day old son. We are told, however, that the words do not originate with Zechariah, the father of John the Baptizer. We are told that he is “filled with the Holy Spirit” when he spoke. God speaks through the voice of Zechariah.

As is often the case in Biblical

narratives, nothing seems out of the ordinary in this scene. Two parents, an infant, perhaps a few friends and a rabbi – no thundering voice, no pillar of fire, no shaking of the foundations of the earth.

We have just a father, suddenly finding his lost voice and speaking of a future promised by God.

Looking at his baby son, Zechariah says this child will be a prophet. It had been awhile since a prophet had walked amongst the people. Prophets spoke of God’s desires for the world.

This child, John, would be God’s Advance Agent. He would go before, to prepare the way, to prepare the people for what God was about to do.

He would prepare the people to receive forgiveness, to experience God as the One who forgives, as the One of tender mercy, as light piercing through the darkness, as the One who would guide the people to peace.

The story reminds us that we are a people being prepared;

prepared for an experience of God’s love, God’s forgiveness; prepared to find that light in our places of darkness, whether they be places of grief, of frustration, of rejection, of disappointed dreams, of physical pain. God seeks us in all those places. God is with us in all those places.

Nothing seems out of the ordinary. Our lives consist of routines, of familiar faces, of daily responsibilities, of periodic celebrations and periodic losses. It is in such nothing-out-of-the-ordinary times and places that God is present. Such times rest in the timeless love of God.

In the season of Advent we are being prepared – prepared for a birth, prepared for a star in the east, for angels singing in the fields, and a mother pondering it all in her heart. We are being prepared to meet God’s tender mercy walking amongst us.

The Christmas birth happened! The Christmas birth happens! Christ is present in our lives. God is amongst us.

Do You Know?

The weekly bulletin is available via email. To enrol: email your request to the church office at www.tmuc@shaw.ca

Sixty-eight people hand deliver the church newsletters every time one is published. Some people have been delivering for many years.

A copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual is available in the office for anyone to use as a reference.

If you are asked to serve on a committee and wonder what that committee does you can find out by reading about it in the Policies and Procedures Manual under the name of the committee.



Message From Adrian Measner Chair of the Official Board

While I am still relatively new in my role as Chair of the Official Board at TMUC, I can say that it has been a busy time and I know that will continue. TMUC is a very active Church and that creates involvement of many members of the congregation. I had the opportunity to welcome the Winnipeg Presbytery members to our Church at their meeting in September. I took the opportunity to talk about my perspective of TMUC. I described the Church in two ways, one of music and one of activity and then went on to describe four performing choirs, a Jazz Vespers service and our Advent Band. On the activity side I commented on the fact that we have book groups, Bible study groups, a large UCW group, two youth groups, Sunday School, Explorers, and CGIT groups. With our hosting and sponsoring of Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Ventures, a seniors meal and exercise program, the Transcona Food Bank, the Families Connecting group and a Nursery School, it was clear that the Church was an impressive hub of activity and energy. I know they detected a sense of pride in my voice.

Now I would like to focus on the future. Earlier this year the Official Board started a process to create a Strategic Plan for TMUC. Two committees, the Long Range Planning Committee and the Community Strategy Committee were combined to form the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). The SPG put together the necessary background information including a congregational questionnaire and laid the groundwork for the plan. Early in the process the Official Board set four priorities to guide the work 1) making a welcoming environment for 20 -45 year olds 2) reviewing options for the Church building and property 3) implementing programs to deal with the environment and 4) increasing revenue.

All of this background work came to a head with a mid October retreat / planning session where 27 Board and Committee members spent one and one half days working on a future direction for TMUC. During the first part of the session the participants led by Reverend Pat Wotton read through a number of Biblical stories to determine the stories that God is living through this congregation at this time. The three stories chosen were “A Child Helps Jesus – Feeding the 5000” (page 190 Living God’s Way), “Washing the Feet” (page 228 Living God’s Way) and “Peter Learns – the disciples fishing/bonfire” (page 250 Living God’s Way).

The second part of this session focused on putting together a Strategic Plan for TMUC. The result of this work was a new Vision and Mission Statement for the Church and five Goals together with Strategies. The Goals focused on the environment, participation of young people, outreach, the building and property and revenue for Church operations.

The revised Strategic Plan flowing from this session will be presented to the Official Board at the November Board meeting. The objective is to have the plan approved by the Board this fall so it can be circulated to the congregation prior to the annual meeting this winter with the plan discussed and hopefully approved at that meeting. Always keep in mind that such a plan will continue to evolve and although this approval of the plan starts the Church moving in this new direction it will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary.

This has been a long and rigorous exercise but it is exciting putting this direction together and will be even more interesting executing the direction set. That task will fall on all of our shoulders but it is critical for the future success of our Church. I look forward to performing that task with you.

THE LAST PAGE

“Behold, He Stands at the Door and Knocks”

by Jeff Cook

They don't build
churches like that anymore
a southern Ontario
red brick
monument
accessibility
not yet a public concern
you stepped up
and up
to approach
the God of glory
..led upwards
by multiple turns
of stairs
even more if
you chose to
ascend to the balcony

You entered
the house of God

Like many church buildings
the nooks and niches
the little rooms
nestled under stairways
were
for children and youth
Alice's looking glass
places to be entered
and explored...

Amongst remembered images
is one so common...
the framed print
of the Saviour Jesus
long-haired
with a look
of gentle intensity
or perhaps
of intense gentleness

etched on a face
encircled by light
one hand raised
knocking
knocking on a door

Somehow
I came to believe
that my role
the church's role
was to open the door

to allow Jesus
entry
into our hearts

Perhaps
that door
did open
perhaps
Jesus did enter
like some
divine pace-maker

Perhaps
that is why
my heart now
invites me to
return
to that door

not to allow
Jesus entry
to my side

but to extend
my foot
across the threshold

to go outside
to go
to Jesus

to exit the
red brick monument

for me
to enter
into
the heart of Jesus

to find Christ
in the heart
of life.

Delivered By:

Merry Christmas