

Commissioner

NOVEMBER 2010

LOOKING AHEAD

- Nov 28 9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 1
Folk Communion Service
UCW Cookie Walk 10:30am
- Dec 4 9—1 pm Advent Event
"In the Moment 2010"
- Dec 5 9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 2
Sunshine Singers
- Dec 12 9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 3
Communion Service
Cherub Choir
- Dec 19 9:30 & 11:15 am Advent 4
Baptism Service
Christmas Cantata:
"The Wondrous Story"
3:15pm Worship at Park
Manor Care Home
7pm Blue Christmas Service
- Dec 24 5 & 7 pm Christmas Eve
Family Services
10 pm Communion Service
- Dec 26 10 am Worship Service
- Jan 2 10 am Worship Around the
Breakfast Table
- Jan 2 to Feb 6 One Worship Service at
10:00 am
- Feb 6 10 am Worship Service
11 am Annual
Congregational Meeting
and Potluck Lunch
- Feb 13 Return to 2 Worship
Services 9:30 & 11:15 am

LOOKING BACK/LOOKING FORWARD

by Adrian Measner

When we look back at our Church activities 10 years from now, I think we will view 2010 as a significant decision making year.

The first critical decision was made by the congregation at our May congregational meeting where the congregation gave very strong support to the new governance structure for TMUC. This new model is designed to streamline Board and Committee activities and decisions and reduces both the number of committees as well as the membership on the remaining committees. It also introduces a new concept called 'House Groups' to spread out the weekly tasks such as ushering and scripture readings. The new structure will force renewal of committee and board members and reduce time commitments to hopefully encourage more young people and individuals also holding full time jobs to be active participants in the governance of our church. The Terms of Reference for the new governance model were approved by the congregation at the November 7th congregational meeting, as were the initial make up of the new teams.

The second major decision also happened at our November 7th congregational meeting. The Building Committee presented the results of their work. They had been asked to look at the costs of either building a new church or renovating and expanding our current facility. The results of their work indicated that both options would cost over \$5 million. Since both of these options were projected to cost in excess of \$5 million the congregation was asked whether they supported fundraising and taking on a project of that magnitude. A secret ballot was held and the vote by members of TMUC was 44 in favour and 74 against going in that direction. The council was then asked to consider a third option which was renovating our current facility (without expansion). The council will come back to the congregation with a plan to explore just renovating our current facility. As St. George's Anglican Church had approached TMUC on the

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NOTES FROM THE CHOIRS

by Dorothy Ross



Greetings to one and all!

The choirs have settled in to regular rehearsals which by now include Christmas music.

The Advent and Christmas services are as follows:

Advent 1 November 28 - Folk Communion with music by the Carillon Singers.
Advent 11 December 5 – The Sunshine Singers and the Chancel Choir.
Advent 111 December 12 – The Cherub Choir and the Chancel Choir.
Advent 1V December 19 – The beautiful cantata "The Wondrous Story" by Don Besig and
Nancy Price presented by the combined choirs of the Chancel Choir
and the Carillon Singers.

Christmas Eve Services:

Family Services at 5 & 7 pm with the Carillon Singers
Communion Service at 10 pm with the Chancel Choir.

Our Spring Concert (with all the choirs) is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, March 18 & 19.
More news on this in the New Year.

Remember: New members are always welcome in all choirs.
Rehearsals: Chancel Choir – Thursdays at 7:30 pm (we especially need altos).
Carillons – Tuesdays at 7 pm.
Sunshine Singers – Mondays at 6 to 7 pm.
Cherubs- Saturdays at 11 to 11:30 am (Christmas and Easter).

For further information, please call Dorothy Ross at 222-1551.

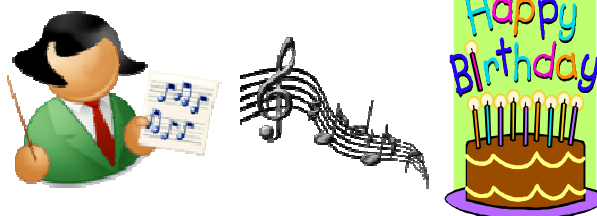
WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN US!!

Commissioner is the newsletter of Transcona Memorial United Church. It is published two times annually.

Submissions, news, and other items of interest are welcome. Contributions may be edited for length. To submit articles, please contact the church.

Transcona Memorial United Church

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Double Celebration

Everyone is invited to join in celebrating Dorothy Ross' 20 year anniversary as Music Director with TMUC as well as her 'very special' birthday.

Please join us for coffee, cake and song immediately following the second service on Sunday, December 12th in Yale Hall.

TESSA IN TRINIDAD

Tessa Blaikie, a member of this congregation, has just begun a six month stay in Trinidad volunteering with the Joint Overseas Mission Action Team (JOMAT). It is funded and organized by The Caribbean and North American Council of Churches for Mission (CANACOM) and its Canadian partner, the United Church of Canada. This trip is one of their many and varied global overseas partnership programs.

Tessa writes:

The Presbyterian Church came to Trinidad in 1878 and began work with the indentured laborers from India, after the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925 the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) partnered with them, this relationship is now one of mutual giving. The PCTT is hosting the JOMAT unexpectedly because the original JOMAT plan in Guyana could not be carried out. Because of the change we have not started volunteering in working contexts yet but are primarily visiting with all of the social outreach projects the PCTT is involved in or would like to be, and getting to know people. I have collected a wealth of cultural knowledge, as well as a Milky Way of mosquito bites, for real Winnipeggers, you have nothing on Trinidad!



Tessa's hand covered in mud from the mud volcanoes at The Devils Wood Yr in Trinidad

The list of the projects I will be volunteering my skills at, learning on and sharing in include; working with people with disabilities who have limited rights and are heavily neglected culturally here, working with abused children in foster homes, working with men and women recovering from addictions, working within the school system to promote sport, health and self esteem and working with inner city children as a mentor.

As I learn on this trip some of the cultural differences, some of the faith differences I hope to carry deep appreciation with me, as well as an understanding of the colonial role in shaping Trinidad. It is essential to note that it was Canadian Christians who formed this particular church. And as Canadian Christianity has developed within our church, the United Church of Canada (UCC), it has not always done so in other churches. I am proud and grateful to be a United Church of Canada member, where rights of people with disabilities are recognized, where members of the gay community are accepted, where honesty and humility are valued beyond the surface appearances of being a 'good Christian'. We are as a people called to share in love, no matter one's religion we are people of God/Gods/Goddesses. Jesus taught us to accept the sick, the social outcast, the poor and the lame. The people here have most certainly accepted us, the Canadians, and the youth are very forward thinking, but in this context of strict cultural church norms and differing views, I more deeply appreciate that I call UCC home.

(Continued from page 1)

possibility of looking together at our respective future requirements and shared ministry, that will also be considered. While it is clear from the above vote that there are different views on the direction TMUC should take relative to our building, the congregation did make a long overdue decision that allows the council and congregation to continue to move forward.

There is an old quote by Georg Lichtenberg, 'I cannot say whether things will get better if we change, what I can say is they must change if they are to get better'. I think that quote is very fitting given the stage we are at in the evolution of TMUC. Of course both of these decisions are very long term in nature. On the shorter term a very good response from our congregation has resolved most of our financial concerns for this year, although we are coming up to a very critical period for givings and we need to finish the year with a similar momentum. The newly established dinner theatre group should also assist us financially as we move forward.

On a final note the change in the Board Chair to Gail Purcell, originally scheduled for September, was delayed until November as Gail wanted to focus on the transition to the new governance structure. This of course is a large undertaking and our thanks goes out to Gail for her willingness to take this on. By the time you read this Gail will have assumed her new duties and title of Council Chair, as that happened at the November 7th congregational meeting.



*Gail Purcell
Council Chair*

TRANSCONA MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH

OUR MISSION:

As a Church we seek justice, foster and nurture growth by teaching, worshiping, through music, sharing and being welcoming to all. We value and share our gifts, protect the earth and walk humbly with our God.

OUR VISION:

TMUC is an evolving, welcoming, sharing and inclusive community church serving Christ.

BLUEGRASS CONCERT

The third Annual Bluegrass Night organized by the Building and Property Committee, featured Borderline Drive with Alvin Elias on the banjo, Mark Fehr - guitar, John Kran—mandolin, and Kayla Elias on acoustic upright bass. Their skillful instrumentation carried through the whole concert even when they traded instruments. The audience enjoyed a variety of gospel and secular tunes sung by all members of the band in tight harmony.

As usual, our own Harbour View Mountain Boys, Merlin Shoesmith, Richard Middlestead and Gerry Miller, opened the show delighting the audience with their songs, jokes and tall tales.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT!!

WHO – Caught In the Act Co. of TMUC along with the talents and volunteer efforts of our congregation and community friends.



WHAT – Dinner Theatre - *Males Order Brides, a comedy sure to make you say "I DO!!" along with a fabulous full-course meal.

WHEN – Performance dates:
Thurs, Fri & Sat, May 12, 13, 14, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 15, 2011 at 4:30 p.m.

Tickets go on sale Saturday, November 27/10 from 10 – 1 p.m. in Suthwyn Hall (first come, first served). After this date contact Amber Rusnak at 663-6620. \$40 each; a \$20 tax receipt will be issued at the time of purchase (cheques payable to Caught In the Act Co.) Makes a great Christmas gift for those "hard to buy for folks"!

WHERE – Lower halls of TMUC. Tables accommodate six people. All seats reserved.

WHY – Major fundraiser for our church, an evening of enjoyment, and the opportunity for everyone to share their gifts and talents.

Auditions were held on November 8th. Our cast has been selected and will begin rehearsals at the end of January. We still need people for various positions involving the performance as well as the dinner. If you would like to be part of this exciting event, please see the poster on the C.E. entrance bulletin board for the various volunteer opportunities or contact Lynn Measner at 661-0478 or lmeasner@shaw.ca



* A play written by Billy St. John, produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama Service Inc, Englewood, Co

Urgently Needed

A pianist for our dinner theatre production. Even if you haven't played the piano for awhile, but want to be part of this fun event, we'd like to hear from you. Please call Lynn 661-0478 or Shirley 444-3539.

Pocket a Penny for Lent

by Delsie Cousineau

Most people won't stoop to pick a penny up off the ground these days but if you get a pocket full, they do add up.

During lent this year, Sunday School children stood in the narthex after church services wearing a special pocket apron where people could deposit their pennies or other change.

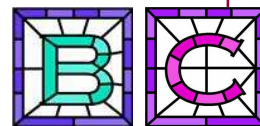
Alma Jennings and Bev Conway (with husband Richard helping the last time) rolled and deposited all the money collected in the apron pocket, and the grand total was **\$294.80**.

That is a lot of change and a good sized donation to support the Vacation Bible School program.

Pick a penny anyone?

INITIALS REACTION

by Jeff Cook

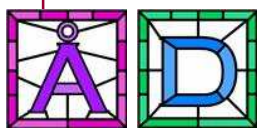


Sometimes, just for the fun of it, when I have to indicate my authorship on a church-related email or note, I will use just my initials -'JC'. I like to think they add a certain authority to any Christian missive. I hope they will provoke what I like to call an 'Initials Reaction.'

There are some other initials used by society and the church which are drawing a reaction.

The initials are the ones we have commonly used to designate time: BC referring to 'Before Christ' and AD, meaning anno Domini, "the year of our Lord."

The reason these initials are drawing a reaction is that we live in a world which is becoming both more aware and more affirming of religious pluralism and more appreciative of the religious and spiritual insights found in many faiths and religions. To designate time with initials that date everything in reference to the life of Jesus seems to contain a tinge of triumphalism and Christian dominance. Even non-Christians have to view history from a place that starts with Jesus.



These initials have been in use for a long time, although they do not date back to Jesus. According to W. Eugene March (A.B. Rhodes Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) , "a monk named Dionysius Exiguus, sometime in the 500s of the Common Era, was the first to use these terms to designate time categories. But not until nearly nine hundred years later, by around 1400, did the BC/AD system come into wide use in Europe."

Some scholars, (and some of us who don't define ourselves primarily as 'scholars') now use different initials to refer to the time periods before and after the zero place on the historic time scale. They now use the designations BCE, for 'Before Common Era', and CE, for 'Common Era'.

March says, "This is not a plot to get rid of Jesus, no matter what some of the conspiracy theorists among us may say. Rather, the scholarly community has found that this terminology effectively designates events before the time of Jesus and after Jesus without the religious imperialism of the 'traditional' lingo.

So, if you see or hear CE or BCE being used, you will know that it is the time measurement equivalent of having converted from miles to kilometers - just another way of saying the same thing.

Any initials reactions?

A SAFE HOME - HOUSE OF PEACE

by Delsie Cousineau

Sister Lesley Sacourman and Mojan Heidari, guest speakers at the UCW Thankoffering Service on Sunday, October 24, spoke about the Holy Names House of Peace residence, for newcomers and women in transition. Sister Lesley is a permanent resident; Mojan lived there for nine months but still considers it her home.

When Mojan came to Canada from Afghanistan at fourteen years of age, she had not been to school and had never even held a pen in her hand. She now has a job and lives in her own apartment.



The House of Peace provides safe, affordable housing for women of different faiths, cultures, and life commitment who are in transition. They have the opportunity to stay up to two years. Because of the need for this type of housing, a building expansion is taking place to enable the House of Peace to provide space for 14 – 17 women.

For further information visit their website at www.houseofpeace.ca

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN *by Julia Brooks*

The United Church Women continue their commitment to the work, fun, study and fund raising which has historically been done by the membership.

The United Church Women are actively looking for new members. One of the Units meet in Suthwyn Hall on the third Saturday morning of each month with the hope that the ladies of the church who work outside the home will be able to attend. The meeting starts at 11:00 a.m. and everyone brings their lunch with them. The second Unit meets on the second Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in Knox Lounge. Coffee and tea are supplied for the meetings. If you would like more information about the Units please call Linda Antymis at 222-4685 (re Saturday meetings) or Lorraine Reimer at 254-7839 (re Monday meetings).

The Units join together at the General UCW meetings to plan joint projects. Our last meeting is a "Christmas in November Luncheon" held on Saturday, November 20th, 2010 at 11 a.m.

The United Church Women continue to cater luncheons for funerals and if you are willing to help serve please call Margaret Fierheller at 222-4985.

Plans for the year include hosting a Thankoffering Church Service and Ladies Nite Out Dinner, having a Cookie Walk, hosting a Whist Drive and participating in the World Day of Prayer. Our upcoming Cookie Walk is between worship services on Sunday, Nov. 28th—homemade Christmas cakes also available.

All the ladies of the church are welcome to join the United Church Women Units.

Book Group News

The meetings of the Book Groups at Transcona Memorial are a great way to explore faith and culture through the variety of books which are read. If you would like to read one of the books, or the whole season's worth of books, you would be very welcome to join in on the meetings.

The Monthly Book Group meets at the Church at 7 p.m. with the exception of the December and June meetings.

The set reading schedule is -

December 13: *Please choose something by Gail Bowen*

January 17: *Book to be decided in November /December*

There is a long list of interesting books for our potential choosing for the new year. Please feel free to join us and share in the discussions!



TMUC UNITED CHURCH WOMEN MONDAY UNIT

by Lorraine Reimer

Our group hosted a party for the residents of Park Manor Personal Care Home on Friday October 1. We had 4 wonderful musicians who entertained the group for an hour plus. The residents do love to hear those songs that they know. A good number like to sing along while others simply tap their toes or clap their hands & smile.

We will be hosting another party on Dec. 3rd & once again will be serving their favorite sandwiches and dainties which they just wait for. It is a wonderful afternoon of fellowship and enjoyed by all.

The Weekly Book Group meets on **Thursdays from 7:00 to 8:30 pm.** This group usually meets in the homes of the members, and to keep everyone in the loop of where we are meeting, we have a blog which can be accessed from the TMUC Web Links on our home page.

For those who read this, and think that this group reads a book a week, we actually do not. The weekly book group takes several weeks to read each selected book, depending on the book's length, but we meet each week to discuss the material that has been read.

Our selections for the 2010/2011 season include:

Water for Elephants—Sara Gruen
The Forgotten Garden—Kate Morton
Boy of Good Breeding—Miriam Toews
Alice in Wonderland—Lewis Carroll
Sarah's Key—Tatiana De Rosnay
Baking Cakes in Kigali—Gaile Parkin
The Year of the Flood—Margaret Atwood

If you would like to be a part of a reading group, you would be welcome!

DANCING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by Carol Fletcher

I heard a story about a woman whose Christmas gift for her family was a dance lesson. Thirty family members, ranging in age from 7 to 83, received a professional dance lesson and developed their very own hip hop routine—suitable for all the non-dancers as for the dancers. They made a recording of the dance, and all have a copy as a souvenir.

Perhaps by now, you have already seen the gift of dance that Lynn Measner, Gail Purcell, and I shared with the '1 hope Winnipeg' campaign (www.1hopewinnipeg.com). On Tuesday, October 26, United Church people (including Jeff Cook, Barb and Beth Newell) gathered at centre court at Portage Place to be part of a Flash Mob scene. It was the launch of the song 'My World' by Sadie and Bubba B. A group of us, posing as regular Mall customers, broke into a choreographed dance at just the right moment. Very few of us were actual dancers, but at that moment, we were all dancing our faith that one hope, one world, could come together and make a difference.



The 1 Hope Winnipeg Campaign will be making a catalogue available for us this Christmas season, and our congregation has the opportunity to share a gift of 'justice' not 'just us'. The catalogue will feature 'living gifts' to support the Community Ministries of Stella North End, St. Matthew's/ Maryland, Oak Table, West Broadway, and Rainbow. We are working together to make a difference in our world.

Watch our web site, 1hopewinnipeg.com and our weekly announcements, or call the Church office for further information and to make a purchase.

GIFT GIVING AND GIFTS THAT GIVE

In addition to the Gift Catalogue that supports 1hopewinnipeg, the congregation will make a few other items available for gift giving that support local businesses, and give back to the community. We will have our third annual sale of Mordens' Chocolates. This year, we are also selling locally produced pasta from Nature's Farm. The order forms are in the office and need to be returned with payment to TMUC by December 3.

The poinsettias from Hospice and Manitoba Palliative Care Association will be available through us and the orders must be placed by November 21. Throughout Advent and Christmas, we are offering the Stars of Hope in support of the Bernie Wolfe School lunch program.

IN THE MOMENT: AT THE MANGER

The Reverend Dr. Jim Christie will be at Transcona Memorial on Saturday, December 4 to launch the third Annual In the Moment Event. This year's event focuses our attention on the moment "In the Manger" as we review the story told in Luke 2. Jim will speak from 9 to 10:30, then a fabulous brunch will be provided. Following brunch from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. there will be two workshops offered, one on music, and one on art. The cost for the event is just \$10.00 and everyone is welcome.

Please contact the church office (tmuc@shaw.ca or 222-1331) to register. Payment can be made in advance or at the door.

CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROGRAM

by Brenda LeBeau

We have begun our collection of food that will continue for a total of 6 weeks. We have specific guidelines set out by the Christmas Cheer Board, so please keep the following in mind:

- ⇒ Check the best before date on the item. We cannot include items that are out of date.
- ⇒ No open packaging. Although there is nothing wrong with bulk items, they cannot go into the hampers. This includes pasta and leftover Halloween candy.

Here is what we need to collect. Everything you donate is definitely appreciated and TMUC really does a great job of making sure 15 families in our community have a good Christmas.

For the past two weeks we have collected Proteins and Breakfast Items. We are asking for donations of the following items on the dates listed:

November 21st—Beverages (includes juice, coffee and tea)

November 28th—Soup (both cans and boxed), Pasta and Rice

December 5th—Canned Vegetables and Fruit

December 12th—The rest of the fixings for Christmas (includes Jello, Stuffing, Cookies, Cake Mixes, Sugar and Cranberry Sauce)

December 19th—if we are short of any items, we will let you know what they are before this date

Once we receive the information of the families (sizes and ages) a sign up list for gifts and turkeys will be sent around during worship services (or in the office during the weekdays). Keep in mind if you sign up to purchase a gift, it needs to be new with a value of \$15-\$20, and not wrapped (suggestion for teenagers are movie gift certificates). All gifts need to be dropped off at the church by December 12th. Monetary donations are also happily accepted in the church office, since there are often overlooked items that need to be purchased. Envelopes (marked Hampers) for these donations are in the narthex or office. For further information or questions contact Brenda LeBeau at 224-5590.

IN CELEBRATION....

In June 2010, **Sean Barry**, the new guitar player with the Carillons, answered an invitation to students in Manitoba who have shown promise in the music industry. He sent in an essay about his musical ability and how music had enriched his life and was chosen by CBC's "Freeze Frame" to participate in the Show Off! Program for the upcoming Canadian Culture Days celebration in September 2010. Sean created a video called "99% Perspiration" that featured his own life story and how he became involved in music. It featured an original song called "Flying" that he had written, played by his band Premonition. Sean's video and participation in Culture Days was shown on CBC television on September 23 and was hosted by Jihan Ghomeshi. Sean's video can be seen on YouTube by searching for "Show Off Sean Barry WEB".



Audrey Lumsden was one of two people honoured with The Helen Mann 50th Anniversary Award which was presented on September 29th at the annual University of Manitoba Home Coming celebrations at the Faculty of Social Work. The award is presented for recognition of outstanding contribution to the Social Work profession and/or to the field of social work in general in the Province of Manitoba. Ms. Mann was a former Dean of Social Work at the University of Manitoba.

Audrey with her family at the ceremony

Alexa Rosentreter was nominated for a Gemini Award (Best Cross-Platform Project—Non-Fiction) for One Ocean Interactive (<http://oneocean.cbc.ca>). The website was co-produced by Merit Motion Pictures & Tactica Communications, and Alexa is one of the producers (for MMP). The website is inspired by a 4 part series co-produced by MMP and the CBC for The Nature of Things, and is designed to challenge people to learn, have fun and change the way they think and act to preserve the ocean. Unfortunately, they were not selected to receive the award, but we are still very proud of Alexa's nomination.



Constable Kathryn Antymis is a 10-year veteran of the Winnipeg Police Service and has been their counterfeit currency investigator since 2007. She, and four colleagues, were recently honoured with the 2009 Excellence in Law Enforcement Award which is given to those who have made significant contributions to their police service, law enforcement or the community. Kathy's arrest success rate on the passing of counterfeit money exceeds any other in Canada. She is directly responsible for the successful resolution of several lengthy fraud-related investigations through the Commercial Crime Unit, with the recovery of property and assets from investigations totalling well over \$7 million. Kathy is now teaching at the Police Academy.

GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

by Carol Fletcher and Jeff Cook



"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee..."
- Luke 1:26

Apparently even God was busy getting ready for Christmas!

On Christmas Eve we will gather to worship and hear the story of the birth of Jesus. The story of the birth extends into both the past and the future. Like the flame of a candle, it casts a light that reaches beyond itself.

In Luke's Gospel, the story of Jesus's birth was preceded by the story of the birth of John the Baptizer. The angel Gabriel comes to Zechariah to announce that he and Elizabeth will give birth to a child. Later, Gabriel was sent to Mary to announce that she and Joseph will give birth to a child. God was busy sending messages. Gabriel was the messenger, a kind of embodied email. Today he might say to Elizabeth and Mary, "You've got mail. It's from God. Listen.."

After hearing the news, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth and sang about the amazing things God was doing. After John was born, his father Zechariah also burst into song. Something about Christmas leads us into music.

The church gets ready for Christmas during the four Sundays prior to Christmas day - a time, or season, called Advent (meaning 'arrival'). During that time most of us are also busy preparing for the holiday aspects of Christmas - planning Christmas dinner, making or buying gifts, writing and sending emails or cards, decorating the tree...

While we are busy, it is a good faith practice to remember that God is also busy.

The word *Christmas* derives from the Middle English *Christmasse* and the Old English *Cristes maesses*, both of which mean 'Christ's mass.' The Mass, or Eucharist, commonly denotes the sharing of the Lord's Supper, or communion. The word 'Mass', however, comes from the Latin *missio* meaning 'dismissal'. Over time, the Christian church came to use this term to refer to Jesus' dismissing of his disciples as he sent them into the world to proclaim the gospel. *Missio* came to mean 'mission'.

Thus, Christmas can be understood to mean "Christ's mission".

That mission, that task, extends into the past history of God's creating of life. It extends into the past history of God calling a people to be blessed in order to bless others. It extends into the past of prophets saying that God desires justice and mercy and compassion for all.

Christ's mission refers to the way Jesus lived as if this world was indeed God's world - healing people of physical and emotional and societal wounds, inviting all people to banquet at God's table, praying for God's love to be displayed in all aspects of life, forgiving rather than retaliating, embracing all people as children of God.

As we gather to hear the story of the baby born in a manger, the story invites us to envision a future shaped by Christ's mission. The story invites us to realize that God is still busy - at Christmas and at all times - loving us into being more loving, inviting us to share in Christ's mission.

God was busy getting ready for Christ's mission - for Christmas. May we also be busy getting ready for Christmas - for Christ's mission.