

WESTMINSTER CHIMES



Saint James Westminster Church
115 Askin Street, London ON N6C 1E7
Telephone: (519) 432-1915
e mail: stjameswest@bellnet.ca
website: www.saintjameswestminster.ca

RECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends in Christ,

What a great story* as we prepare for Christmas! World renowned violin virtuoso, Joshua Bell, after playing to sold-out audiences at Boston's Symphony Hall, played (on a dare) to busy commuters in a train station. Bell opened the violin case he carried, threw in a few coins to "prime the pump" and played for 43 minutes. He stroked his multi-million dollar Stradivarius violin and treated the commuters to some of the best and most classical music in the world.

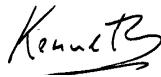
Can you guess what happened? Were people mesmerized? Did he make a fortune? After 43 minutes, he made a grand total of \$32. Two people stopped to listen. 1,070 others simply skittered by, oblivious, obsessed by their own agendas. Rushing to catch a train.

How can we sum up what happened? If we can't take the time out of our hectic lives and listen to one of the best musicians on earth play some of the best music ever written, then what *else* are we missing?

If the surge of modern life so overpowers us that we are deaf and blind to something like that, should we not be slowing up and taking stock?

At St. James, this Christmas, through the magical family opera "**Amahl and the Night Visitors**", through the timeless **Lessons and Carols** service, through the precious **Christmas Eve Communion** (in candlelight) are we prepared to slow down and have a life-altering experience of the holy? I invite you to celebrate one of your best Christmases ever!

Your Friend in Christ,



* Google "Pearls Before Breakfast", a Washington Post article, for much more on this story.

Christmas 2008

- Dec. 21st** *Holy Communion 9:30 am ***
Lessons & Carols 7:00 pm
Our awesome, awe-inspiring
Candlelight service with
traditional readings, hymns &
anthems (Nursery provided)
- Dec. 24th** *Candlelight Communion 7 pm*
(with Nursery)
Candlelight Communion 11 pm
- Dec. 25th** *Holy Communion 10:00 am*
- Dec. 28th** *Holy Communion 8:30 am*
Holy Communion 10:30 am
Denise Pelley, Soloist

** Please note: ONE service only this morning

WE DECORATE FOR CHRISTMAS

The flowers and greenery for Christmas are purchased with donations given by parish members. All donations are most appreciated and will be acknowledged with a tax receipt. Please complete the form in the bulletin or call Rita Fawcett to arrange this. She can be reached at 226-663-6100.



This year we will be decorating the church on Friday, December 12th at 9:30 am. Everyone is welcome (yes, men too).

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

The clergy of the parish will be bringing home Communion to about 30 people from the congregation. If you have not been on the list please contact the Church office at 519-432-1915.



Have you bought your tickets to see **AMAHL & THE NIGHT VISITORS** yet?
Still hesitating? Not sure if you would enjoy an opera?

Here are the **TOP TEN** reasons why you should see this delightful, inspiring story, told in a musical opera for the whole family, from December 18-20 [4 shows]:

10. It's a great way to kick off the Christmas season and get you "*in the true spirit of the Holiday Season*"
9. A good reason to take a special friend out, before or after the performance, for a romantic "*Dinner & Show*" in Wortley Village.
8. Another great excuse to invite friends and family over for an "*Amahl Pre- Show Cocktail Party*" – what about a theme party?
7. The tickets make great *early Christmas gifts*.
6. Even if you cannot attend, you can *buy and donate tickets* to someone who cannot afford to purchase tickets – a wonderful act of charity
5. Instead of buying a traditional Christmas gift for your colleague, boss, worker or client, why not *give the gift of a memorable experience* that will last a lifetime?
4. When was the last time you attended a play that was billed a "*holiday classic*", "*rare art.....tender and exquisite*", "*warm and compassionate*"?
3. What better way is there to spend *quality time* with your family, teaching them the lessons of faith, hope and love, while exposing your children/grandchildren to superb culture!
2. Where else can you experience an opera *in English, in one hour, and in one act*? And what's more, *Gian Carlo Menotti* tells the story of his most famous opera, inspired by his own miraculous recovery from lameness as a child.
1. The incredible *Morgan Jones* [and, of course, *Sonja Gustafson's* magnificent voice, *Stephen Holowitz's* moving music, *Don Fleckser's* brilliant artistic direction, the 40 strong choir voices.....]

Call Carole Alce at the Office **(519) 432-1915** or Jacqueline Fraser at **(519) 453-3198**
to book your tickets (\$20 each) now before it's too late, or check out our web page at [http://
saintjameswestminster.ca/amahl/](http://saintjameswestminster.ca/amahl/) for more information.

FAITH QUEST SUNDAY SCHOOL



Since the Thanksgiving issue, the Faith Quest kids have explored two topics: The Beatitudes and The Good Samaritan. The Beatitudes are a particularly difficult topic to discuss and explain, but our kids did very well in understanding that they are keys to living happily.

To enhance their learning we have worked in the kitchen to share breakfast foods with others, taking care of their needs and to accept help. We watched movies about forgiveness (Veggie Tales - "God Wants me to Forgive them?" and Ben-Hur); played computer games; and created foam keys depicting the Beatitudes.

The Good Samaritan is a nice parable about helping others, even people others do not like. The Faith Quest kids have explored this story by performing puppet shows; watching a Veggie Tales movie about loving our enemies; and making "Soothies" in the kitchen.

The Faith Quest kids also had the privilege of watching a muppetan presentation called "Flatman and Bobbin: There's a new superhero in town" by Debbie Greenshields and Josline Manguen. It was a very funny story about the word from God and His love. Thank you for sharing your talents with us!!

Next up for the Faith Quest kids is an Advent Birth Narrative featuring four fun workshops.

Finally, but never the last thought in our minds, many, many thanks go to our teachers and shepherds. Your willingness to share your gifts during the three or four week workshop rotations with the Faith Quest kids is appreciated a million times over by them and the Family Ministry staff.

A blessed Advent and Merry Christmas to all!
Laura Manias and Ann Teetzel De Bono



A BIG "TASTE OF TAIZE" THANK YOU

It has been a very gratifying time here for Youth Ministry at St James. We have been involved in planning for and serving at our 'Taste of Taize' fundraising evening this past November 15. We are thrilled to report that we raised over \$22000 for 30 youth and their leaders to attend at the ecumenical community known as The Taize Community, located 1-1/2 hours southwest of Paris. There will be 2 pilgrimages for youth aged 15 and 16, the first in July 2009 and the second in 2010. What incredible generosity of spirit we have received from our St James family. Thank you so much for accompanying us on this great Christian journey of trust, peace and reconciliation found in the company of the brothers of Taize. For a wonderful video on Taize go to http://www.taize.fr/en_article6822.html.

St James youth are an integral part of church life. Not only do we attend our youth group meetings on Sunday mornings, but we participate in church leadership as well. We are servers, intercessors, Gospel readers, Sunday School teachers, volunteers at seniors' services, Vacation Bible School leaders, community breakfast workers and much, much more. We feel passionate about our church and faith and we catch a lot of that from our elders and supporters. The flame that we light today will be carried on as we grow into adults in the church.

We continue on into our new year by merging our 2 younger youth groups into one—just like Survivor! Except we encourage people to join us on the Island! We will celebrate our new Middle School Ministry on December 14 with a lunch after our 10:30 youth meeting. Games and activities will be part of the festivities for youth in grades 6, 7 and 8, under the leadership of Rob Cosh, Bill Wilford and Ann De Bono.

All of our youth will join in our Sunday Night Live youth service at 7 pm on Dec 7th. This special Advent service will include invited friends of the youth. We look forward to sharing this special season with all our guests. Our youth groups will join together on December 21st during the 10:30 service for an Advent/ Christmas celebration. Fun and games will be part of these festivities as well.



Wishing you all a blessed and holy Advent and Christmas!

Ann DeBono

FUNDSCRIP PROCEEDS HELPING SAINT JAMES YOUTH

The Saint James Pilgrimage has received over \$1700 from the FundScrip merchants since we enrolled in this fundraising program last Spring!

Thank you to the Saint James families and friends who have been buying their groceries, gas, and other everyday purchases using pre-paid FundScrip gift cards. With Christmas fast approaching, you may use these cards for your holiday purchases, or purchase gift cards as gifts for teens or those hard to shop for people on your list. There are numerous popular retailers participating in the program including Future Shop, Best Buy, Chapters, Canadian Tire, HomeSense, Old Navy, Roots, Body Shop, M&M meats, and several grocery stores, just to name a few. Visit www.fundscrip.com to view the complete list.

Here's how it works...

The retailers who participate in the FundScrip program donate a percentage of what you spend in their store to the participating charity. By purchasing gift cards through Saint James for your everyday spending before you shop, and then spending them as you would cash, you earn an average of 5% in cash rebates for the Saint James youth. The proceeds are being used to offset the cost of the youth pilgrimage trip to Taize, France. This is a wonderful way for you to support our youth without spending additional funds.

How do I participate?

Look for the FundScrip table set up during every coffee hour after the 10:30 am service. You may complete an order form or purchase gift cards directly from the table. We accept cheques or cash. If you are placing an order, your order will be ready for pick-up the following Sunday. You may pay for your order at pickup.

Alternatively, you may place an order online at www.fundscrip.com. Orders received before Monday at 9:30 am will be available for pick up at Saint James the following Sunday. You may pay by cheque when you pick up your order or pay by credit card online.

Ordering online is easy. You simply login as a supporter, select your group ("St. James Pilgrimage"), and complete your order. You may pay by credit card, or cheque at the time of pick up.

Questions? Mary Ann McDowell, (519) 432-8536 or email mamcdowell@sympatico.ca

The Saint James parish family has been very supportive of our recent fundraising efforts. On behalf of the Taize youth and their parents, I thank you for your kind and generous support.

Submitted by: Heather Sercombe



ACES HIGH

First Meeting for 2009: January 05 2009

Aces High is a social group that meets on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday of each month in the Westminster Room to play bridge and euchre, unless a statutory holiday occurs. For a complete list of dates visit:

www.saintjameswestminster.ca

Select About and click on Aces High.

You do not need a partner, but please invite any interested friends. Please arrive at 12:45 PM to start playing at 1 PM. Coffee Tea and refreshments are served about 3:15 PM.

There is a nominal cover charge of \$2.00

Chairperson: Lyon Barnum 519-453-3034





FROM THE BACK PEW

Been There Done That

I don't much like the phrase I used as a title for this piece – but on short notice I can't think of a better one.

Where I have been and what I have done is to experience a depression and come out the other side the better for it – or, at least, not too damaged. I expect other 'old timers' in our congregation might share my opinion.

I'm talking about the worldwide Great Depression of the 1930s. In my case, living in a small rural community in Manitoba, the effect of the depression was vastly compounded by something called 'The Drought' which lasted for several years and brought our agricultural based economy to a virtual standstill.

Are we about to go there again - who knows? Am I worried? – not much. This may sound like a selfish opinion but it is based on experience that can be a great teacher – if one listens.

Of course I was just a teenager the last time around – the last child in a family of eight. We lived in my grandfather's house after grandmother died and after my grandfather and father had 'gone broke' in a retail business venture they had launched in the early '20s. My father went 'on the road' for Beatty Brothers – covering rural southern Saskatchewan and Alberta on the dirt roads of the time trying to sell windmills and dairy equipment to farmers who themselves were having great problems making ends meet.

In my memory it was a great time and place to grow up in . The playing field had been leveled for all. Those who were fortunate enough to have a cow, a few chickens and enough ground to grow vegetables became self sufficient to a large degree – and that was just about everybody in town. Those who did have shared gladly with those who didn't. The few merchants, doctors and lawyers carried a great load on 'the tab' that may or may not have been recovered when things got better – but, in the meantime their kids were no better off than the rest of us. It was the most egalitarian society imaginable - Carl Marx, eat your heart out.

We kids studied some, worried little and played lots - and as no one had money there was no room for envy or the argument that 'everybody else has one'. With three older brothers, two of whom had been around in better times, I was particularly fortunate in the hand-me-down chain – skates, mitts etc. I never owned a pair of 'new' pants until I joined the air force in 1942.

The church, Presbyterian cum United, the only active one in town, was the same. All worshippers, including the Chinese restaurant owner, the Jewish store operator and the out of work Catholics, and their families, were decidedly equal, not only in the eyes of God but to their fellow worshippers. At least that is my memory.

The school was a great place for kids but the church involved the whole community. Whether by design or good luck, it became the social and cultural centre of the community with its small library, meeting rooms and kitchen facilities. Entertainment, as well as welfare activities, started and ended at the church.

It is a risky business recommending a period of hardship, and I'm not. I only want to remind myself, and any other who wishes to listen, that hard times can sometimes be good times, in a peculiar way, in a caring community.

Lloyd 'Mo' Morrison



WHEELS TO MEALS

A program for seniors living and eating alone on Sunday. **Our Christmas dinner will take place on December 14th following the 10:30 service.** Transportation is available by calling Esther Robinson (519-471-7923) or the Church Office (519-432-1915). Please plan to attend and bring a friend if you wish.

AMAZING GRACE SUNDAY REFLECTION

Amazing Grace Sunday, November 23, 2008 has been a day like no other. I have been blessed with the privilege of being able to sing this beautiful hymn three times, each time more moving and heart wrenching than the previous.

Sung first as a member of a congregation, standing in my pew looking forward at the familiar scene - Steps, Choir stalls, Organ, Altar...

Sung second as a member of the Church Choir, standing in the choir stall looking out into the sea of faces before me. Reading the emotion on peoples faces and watching a beautiful scene of a father and a young boy as father led boy through music. Leading people through the choir, in song, not only participating this time but helping to initiate and create the atmosphere all together. A truly emotionally charged moment in time for me as those all too familiar words rolled off my lips helping create the beautiful music around me.

Sung the third time with a small group of people. It was later in the evening and we were gathered in the library in my hometown of St. Marys after watching the film 'Amazing Grace'. As we gathered in a circle to sing the hymn, I took a breath and gave the starting note. Shaking and with adrenalin pumping through my veins like electricity, I eased my self into this familiar hymn, letting my mind flow back to the first time I ever sang these words as a solo.

I have truly been blessed today by these words and by this hymn. Music is a part of me, the glue that binds my spiritual self to you Lord. Once again thank you for giving me this gift.

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

Submitted by Katie Nightingale-Taylor
Parishioner and Chorister at St. James Westminster

** Amazing Grace Sunday

509 people sang "Amazing Grace" that day and we have forwarded (509 x \$2) \$1,018 to further the work of the Church in the Canadian North.



4th Annual Women's Retreat-- Come Join the Circle

These are just some of the women who attended our wonderful weekend of relaxation, worship, discussion, art, yoga and fellowship at Canterbury Hills in October. What a great location and fantastic company!