

Church of the Ascension

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LIGHT IN THE CITY

We are a caring Anglican Church, joyously seeking to grow God's love, and to demonstrate the greatness of Jesus by meeting the diverse needs



Christmas – Emmanuel God Is With Us

The recent cold weather we've had reminds me of Christina Rossetti's poem "In the bleak midwinter, Frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone."

When the weather is hard and harsh like stone, I often wonder where do homeless people go? Don't they have families? Who do they belong to? It's not just the weather that can be harsh, our reception and acceptance of others can be equally as harsh. Certainly, Mary & Joseph did not receive a warm embrace when they entered Bethlehem, even though it was Joseph's ancestral family home.

Christmas is a family festival. The Ascension is a family. Like all families we have our share of idiosyncrasies, peculiarities, a little dysfunction, and challenges, but we also have tremendous gifts, talents, and resources to reach out and share with those in need, with the reassurance that, no matter where they are in life, no matter in what condition they find themselves, God's love will always pursue them. It's a love that never stops shining, and whether you belong to a large family, a small family or have no family, we all belong to the Family of God.

It is this bond of belonging that unites us, and which compels each of us, "as followers of Jesus, to listen for those calling out to us, and to respond in love by reaching out and reminding them by word and deed of their sacred identity." Indeed the Spirit of Christmas is out in the world 365 days a year, seeking Angel Tree Families, Café 65 guests, Food Bank recipients, the stranger in the pew, or maybe even one of us into a relationship with himself. No one is too poor, too uneducated, too insignificant, too rich, too educated or too sophisticated, to know God in Jesus Christ who is the living promise that we are never alone - Emmanuel God is with us! It is this living reality that we can share with our friends, neighbours and community.

Catherine and I wish you and your families God's richest blessings, good health and plenty of joy and laughter this Christmas and in the New Year.

Merry Christmas!

Fr. Nick Morkel



Music at the Ascension

The Ascension has many things of which it can be proud: warmth and fellowship; celebration of Birthday Sunday; recognition Sunday; youth and family night; and last, but not least, its great music program ably directed by Lawrence (Larry) Green, our talented organist and music director.

Larry dedicates his time and energy to preparing and training both the contemporary/folk choir and the main choir for the regular Sunday and monthly family services. He chooses from a wide repertoire of hymns, anthems and praise songs to suit the season and enhance the services.

Members, friends and their families who attended the **Faure's Requiem** on November 5, to commemorate the feast of **All Saints** felt truly uplifted by the rendition. The Church choir, joined by some members from the Toronto Choral Society, two guest soloists and an instrumental ensemble, and superbly conducted by Larry, lifted their voices in celebration of the souls of all the loved ones who have passed on to another shore. It was truly a Holy Day in the presence of God and surpassed the renditions of previous years.

On Sunday, November 27, the first Sunday in Advent, the choir presented Bach's Cantata, **Wachet Auf**, as part of our Advent Lessons and Carols Service. This hymn, based on the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25, is an invitation to the virgins to prepare their lamps to be ready for the arrival of the bridegroom. Similarly, Advent is the time for us to prepare our hearts for the arrival of the Christ child.

We do not know yet what Larry has "on the burner" for our Christmas Nine Lessons and Carol Service on Sunday, December 18th, but we do know it will be something appetizing. We are truly blessed to have a choir of such dedicated members and to have Larry as our source of inspiration.

ACW No Bake Sale

The February 24th A.C.W. No Bake Sale appeal letter identified three different items for this year's fundraising: New Altar Linens, a Canister vacuum for the altar/chapel and Signs for church parking. The total of funds raised for the campaign was \$2,405. The funds were allocated to:

New Altar Linens:	138.21
Canister Vacuum:	250.00
Parking Signs:	<u>2,000.01</u>
Total:	\$2,388.22

Thank you to the women of our A.C.W for leading a very successful campaign and to the parishioners' generous response. As their appeal letter stated: *Thanks for Not Baking, but sending us a bit of Dough!*

Parking at the Ascension

As some of you may already have experienced, parking on our property is a challenge at times. The Corporation has been working on resolving the situation. To this end, we have created numbered decals that will be distributed to our parishioners, tenants and renters commencing in January 2017. You will be

asked to place these on the right side of the rear window of your car. Once this is done, we plan to engage parking



attendants on certain days to monitor the parking lot to ensure that only the cars with decals are being parked. Those illegally parked will be tagged and or towed at their owners' expense. The Parking signs recently installed clearly state that cars will be tagged without an Ascension decal. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Rochard at 416-391-2003/ barbara.rochard@gmail.com

A Sincere Thank you... to all of you for your selfless giving: the *Poinsettia Fund Raiser* was a complete success, raising @ \$600; and the *Angel Tree Outreach* made Christmas a true blessing for two families in our Parish. Congratulations to Barbara Rochard & her team and all who helped!

Prayer Shawl Ministry... Mantles of God's gentle love and blessings.

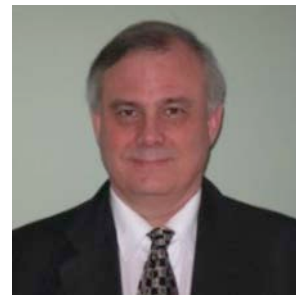
A prayer shawl is a shawl that has been knitted or crocheted by a caring person, and we have one in Janet Smith whose many shawls have been given to members of our congregation who have faced serious illness or surgery, are grieving, or facing difficult life circumstances.

Our hope is that, as the recipients wear their shawls, they will be enfolded by God's warmth, peace, strength and comfort. Thank you Janet for blessing us with your gifts of time and talent.

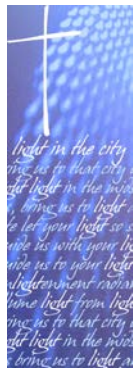


Order of the Diocese of Toronto awarded to Andrew Gledhill

Congratulations Andrew for your outstanding years of dedication in serving our Lord Jesus Christ and your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are indeed a modest leader with few words and many works! We are all so very proud of you! Andrew will be presented with his medal on New Years Day, Sunday, January 1st, at the Choral Evensong Service, St James Cathedral, at 3:30 p.m., following the Archbishop's Levee that begins at 1:30 pm. All are welcome.



Could You Tithe Your Time?



If we are truly honest, most of us would agree that tithing our money to church and charity is something we struggle with. Stewardship educators have found that one of the quickest ways to limit a conversation on giving is to insist that we give away ten percent of all we earn. With giving levels close to only 2% of family income in the Anglican Church, you can understand why. If we want to make headway in the conversation we usually begin by speaking about giving proportionately and then challenge people to increase their giving on an annual basis.

But what if we encouraged people to tithe their time? Past experience shows that those parishes that encourage members to involve themselves at a heightened level of ministry and community service tend to experience very generous levels of financial giving. The relationship is clear; people give most generously to the causes they are intimately involved.

Regardless of personal economic situation, we all have the same amount of time. We all have the capacity within our daily routine to dedicate our time to serving God and the people of God in the world.

How does the average Canadian spend their week? A typical week might look something like this:
Sleep – 49 Hours; Work – 40 Hours; Television/Internet – 15 Hours; Meal Preparation and Eating – 15 Hours; Chores, Laundry, Cleaning – 15 Hours; Travel – 15 Hours; Family Time and Church – 10 Hours; Exercise & Grooming – 9 Hours; Total = 168 Hours in a week

Of course seniors who are retired break down their workweek differently. But let's consider how we might dedicate 16.8 hours of time in the service of the Lord over the course of a week. Surprisingly there are many opportunities to weave prayer, reading, service and worship into our weekly schedule. Instead of listening to the radio, choose an inspirational CD. While walking to the grocery store, meditate. Challenge yourself to read 30 minutes of scripture each day. Participate in a weekly bible study and then volunteer in another ministry at the church. Attend the Wednesday Eucharist and stay for Café 65.

The ways in which we could tithe our time are endless. And consider the benefits: How might the pace of life change if we consciously chose to use more of our time to serve God? How might our relationships with one another be enhanced? How might our Christian journey be more fulfilling? In finding ways to commit our time more intentionally to God's mission we actually fulfill our baptismal promises.

All too frequently we think of stewardship as synonymous with the gift of treasure, however, imagine what our parish experience might be like if everyone in the congregation was encouraged to tithe their time. 3

A Short Biography of Deborah & Joseph Katende Members of the Anglican Church of the Ascension



Deborah and Joseph were both born and raised in Christian families in Uganda – East Africa, where they also went to school before studying abroad for higher education. Deborah being the only child of her parents was carefully guided to love and live a Christian life and eventually found herself a befitting husband of comparable love for Christian values and life. Joseph was born in a Christian family of seven but lost his father when he was 9 and had to be raised along with his four siblings by their widowed mother, who never remarried. Joseph and Deborah were married on 14th August 1993, by the head of the Anglican church of Uganda, Archbishop M. Nkoyoyo, now Emeritus. Both Deborah and Joseph feel that their greatest achievement is God’s kindness and the gift of their marriage, as well as God’s blessing them with five children: Chris, Claire, Cathy, Carey, Cianna.

They have a strong desire to raise their children into responsible, well-educated, volunteering, compassionate and generous adult Canadians, who will benefit not only themselves but also mankind as a whole. It is this desire which compelled Joseph and Deborah to take up the opportunity to emigrate to Canada as landed immigrants from Kenya, where Joseph was posted to do international trade union work as regional secretary for Africa, a post from which he has since resigned from. Deborah also gave up her work in marketing in the National Social Security programs in Uganda.

Deborah holds an MBA in marketing, which she completed after her bachelor’s degree in social work. She also holds three higher diplomas: Project Planning, Management and Evaluation - Kenya; Community Services – Canada; Immigration Consultancy - Canada. She is continuing to sharpen her skills and experience as a friend of the Immigration Tribunal/Court in Toronto. Through hard work Deborah achieved the highest social security compliance in her region in Uganda for four continuous years using her marketing skill. Thousands of elderly seniors benefitted from her innovations.

Joseph is a highly experienced labour relations specialist at national and international levels. He holds a Masters degree in Industrial relations (MAIR) – Warwick University UK; Higher Diploma Labour Studies – Oxford UK; Higher Diploma International Labour Standards – ILO Turin Centre Italy; Diploma on Role of Trade Unions in National Development - Tel Aviv Israel; and a motor vehicle technicians diploma – UNIDO - Shanghai China. These skills and experiences enabled Joseph to lead a UN project that facilitated the workers, employers and governments’ parliaments to develop consensus and enact life-changing labour laws in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zanzibar. In recognition of this achievement Joseph was eight years later awarded the most respected Uganda’s national golden jubilee medal. Joseph as a young sportsman and member of the national boxing team won several medals for Uganda 1982-1985.

When they arrived in Toronto they quickly looked for an Anglican Church where to worship and fellowship. The Katende’s warmly received by Father Nick and the people of the Ascension, whose warm embrace made them feel as if they belonged.

Café 65

Wednesday, January 18th
12 – 2 pm. \$7.00
Lianne Harris presents
“Everything You Ever
Wanted to Know about
Scotland... in 1 Hour”

Mardi Gras

Dinner & Dance
Saturday, February 25th
Tickets \$25.00
Dispel the gloom & cold of
winter with an evening
celebration just before Lent.

Annual General Vestry

Sunday, February 26th, 12 pm.
The deadline for submitting
reports is February 6th.
Please email reports to
ascension@ca.inter.net