



Central United Church Christmas Newsletter

135 Wellington Street, St. Thomas, Ontario N5R 2R7
Phone: 519-631-3503 Fax: 519-631-7525
www.centraluc.ca
Pastor Troy's email: troy@centraluc.ca
Church Office email: centraluc@bellnet.ca

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Message from Pastor Troy

Would It Still Be Christmas If...?

What is really important this season? In a time when we have more events, more shopping, more commitments... what really matters? Would Christmas be Christmas if...

There were no presents under the tree?
There was no tree?
There was no extra shopping to deal with?
There were less events to be at, and less commitments to deal with?
There was less canned Christmas carols in the malls?

Would Christmas feel like Christmas without all of this?

But let's back up one more step. We hear Christmas, and we think about manger scenes, with kings and shepherds bowing down before a newborn baby. But would Christmas be Christmas without...

Shepherds?
Wise men?
Sheep and cattle?
A Manger?

A baby was born... the One who would rescue all of humanity, and bring creation back to God's original intention. I believe that all we need this season is a desire to honour that One who came as one of us, that we might become like him.

God bless you all, and may you find joy, hope, peace and love in all you do this season,

Pastor Troy

Message from Reverend John Brown

Dear Friends:

Let's Not Mix Our Price Tags

There is a story told about the hoodlums who broke into a department store one night. They didn't steal - or destroy - anything. They just had a wonderful time - switching price tags. The next morning customers were puzzled and delighted to find fur coats selling for \$5 and face cream priced at \$150 dollars. A silver tea service was marked \$1.75 and a pair of ladies hose \$390. There were umbrellas for \$1,000 and diamond rings for \$2.

Some of us have started to survey the price tags in the last few weeks, and we are groaning with the concern that our budgets will be totally shot to pieces. A number of ladies have been looking at the price tags for gifts for hubby - perhaps a reclining rocker. The value of this may not be as important as to ask oneself this Christmas season - If I were my husband, what sort of woman would I want to come home to? The response to that question may be more valuable than the gift of the rocker. Sometimes, husbands are not sure what to purchase for their wives. Will it be clothing or an electrical appliance? What about the gift of a good listening ear to sympathetically hear mother's frustrations after her difficult day?

After Mom and Dad have totaled up the price tags re gifts for the children- will one more gift be added? "To my children this Christmas I shall be more articulate in my love and appreciation of them as persons. If I cannot give them a perfect parent I can at least give them more of the one they've got - and make that one more loving". When our children long for love and sympathy, and we think that a pair of skates will fill the same need, we've switched the price tags.

Have you watched children making a Christmas present for another member of the family? They draw, and colour and paste and wrap with tremendous amounts of enthusiasm and joy. There can be a lot of love and pleasure wrapped up in this 5 cent gift. No switching of the price tags. The love and joy of giving predominates above the value of the material gift.

The real gifts of Christmas - love and forgiveness and Christian concern should still be viewed as more important than the material gifts. Let's not mix the price tags!

Rev. John Brown

Minister of Pastoral Care

Special Thank You from Bazaar Committee

I want to personally thank each and everyone who had anything to do at all with our Christmas Bazaar. We had one of the most successful bazaars ever and people are still talking about it.

We raised over \$9400 dollars from this event and we could not do this without you. This money goes directly into the Church coffers. We rely on your generosity to continue to be successful, and we look forward to your help in making next year's bazaar equally successful.

Sincerely,

Scott Doupe
Chair of Central's Bazaar

Upcoming Events

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| <i>December 11th</i> | <i>White Gift Sunday</i> |
| <i>December 11th</i> | <i>Carols by Candlelight, 7:00 p.m. ~ refreshments to follow</i> |
| <i>December 14th</i> | <i>Christmas Euchre Potluck 12:00 noon ~ cards to follow.</i> |
| <i>December 18th</i> | <i>Christian Education Student Presentation of "Christmas Candles" at the 10:30 service</i> |
| <i>December 24th</i> <i>"One Magical"</i> | <i>7: 30 p.m. Family Christmas Eve service featuring "Christmas" ~ a Christmas story told through narration and song</i> |
| <i>December 24th</i> | <i>10:00 p.m. Communion Service with Choir, song and candles</i> |
| <i>December 25th</i> | <i>Shared Christmas service with Pastor Troy, Rev. Ken Brooks and Inn Out of the Cold ~ time to be announced</i> |
| <i>January 1st</i> | <i>One service only at 10:30 a.m. with Reverend John Brown</i> |



Please consider the following wish list from the Inn Out of the Cold:

**Christmas Wish List of the guests from
INN OUT OF THE COLD**

Purchased items

- Tim Horton's gift cards (\$5 max.)
- Dollarama gift cards? (\$5-10 max.)
- Grocery store gift cards (\$10 max.)
- McDonald's gift certificates
- (local) Bell phone cards (\$5 max.)
- Movie passes
- Bus passes or tickets for local transit
- Small flashlights (that take AA or AAA batteries) (available at dollarama)

A couple of guests are hoping that someone could give them a used (refurbished) laptop to do their homework for school on and used for looking for a job.

PS3 games

Some guests would like MP3 players (5 in total)

Clothing items

- Sleep pants (large and extra large)
- Track pants (large and extra large)
- Sweatshirts (large and extra large)
- Hoodies (large and extra large)
- Long-sleeved T-shirts

Inn Out of the Cold items

- Grocery/department store gift cards (to buy fresh vegetables, fruits, meats and other items used in the day to day operations of our winter shelter program)
- Vinyl twin size mattress covers (zippered) (available at Wal-Mart, Zellers \$8 each).

Medium and large tote storage bins

Thank you to all and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Merry Christmas from the Worship Committee

The four Sundays of Advent are Nov. 27th, Dec. 4th, Dec. 11th and Dec. 18th. There are two services (9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.) on each of these Sundays. The 9 a.m. is the celebration worship with The Messiah's Misfits in each case.

This year, Christmas Eve is on a Saturday night. The two services for Christmas Eve are at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. The 7:30 p.m. is considered to be the children's service.

Saturday, Dec. 24th @ 7:30 p.m. One magical Christmas Eve: the story about what happened long ago on the hills of Bethlehem. Let the magic of a children's Christmas creep into your heart.

Saturday, Dec. 24th @ 10:00 p.m. Communion, choir, songs and candles.

Sunday, Dec. 25th (TBA) Shared service with Rev. Ken Brooks and the Inn Out of the Cold.

Sunday, Jan. 1st 2012 Rev. John Brown at 10:30 a.m. (one service only)

The Worship Committee continues to discuss and evaluate worship events. Our goal is to meet the worship needs of the congregation by working co-operatively with the ministers, the choir director, and other committees. To that end, we value your input from the congregation.

John Lounsbury,
Co-Chair.

Marie Findlay,
Co-Chair.

A Message re Pop Can Trailer

Any person donating pop cans or any other aluminum cans from now on are asked to please put them in White Clear Plastic bags. There has been a box added on to the trailer that does hold clear bags if you need them. The recycling company will not take them unless they are in these bags. We want to encourage you all to continue to donate to this worthwhile cause as all monies are used for Sunday School or youth programs. These children are not only the future of our church but our future leaders.

Scott Doupe,

Pop Can Trailer Owner.

Merry Christmas from the Finance & Stewardship Committee

Well here we go again...another form letter asking for more of your money and time. We are asking for more money and yes we are asking that you give more of your time to make Central the best church that it can be. We can continue what we do, not only for our members, but for the community as a whole. Now let me tell you where some of your money goes.

The Christmas envelope has been added to this newsletter and I understand monies might be tight around this year as St. Thomas tries to recover from all of the layoffs and plant closures and the fact Christmas will soon be around us. Your support allows our Church to run the many programs it does. For example:

1) **The Inn Out of the Cold Homeless Shelter program which provides a place to stay for free.** Can you imagine what it would be like to sit in the rain all night, or sleeping at a park or some other area of St. Thomas with no food or no hope? I know I think about this as I watch TV on my leather couch in front of my fireplace in my warm home.

2) **Allows people to use the church and it's facilities for fellowship and friendship.** Have you ever played euchre on the second Wednesdays of the month? You should, as it's a very fun event full of laughter and wonderful card playing.

3) **We have a choice of two Worship Services.** Our Celebration service at 9:00 a.m. and our Traditional service at 10:30 a.m. These services allow us to go to church to be enlightened and learn about God, the Bible and the impact it plays in our life today.

4) **Your money allows the Church to rent out spaces to programs that cannot pay a large amount of monies at this time.** There are many worthwhile programs that use our facility for a place to have a meeting at reduced costs. Al-Anon is just one of those groups. If anyone has had to live with an alcoholic they know it's not fun and it could be deadly for that person. Central allows this group to use our facilities to host meetings where these individuals have a safe place to talk about what they are going through and get the encouragement they need to stay sober and live a more productive life. My father was an Alcoholic and I believe if we can help one person that is a blessing not only for the individual but for their family, friends, co-workers and society as a whole.

5) **Allows committees to do the work that they believe will have the most impact on our Church. Do your children go to Sunday School?** If they do then you will know that our dedicated Sunday school teachers try their hardest to use the programs that they have purchased to interpret the Bible for children. Not an easy job, but a rewarding job. I still remember my teachers and what I learned from them. All committees do a lot of great things with the money provided to them but ask yourself this "what could they do if they had more money to work with" and I am sure your mind will be abuzz with ideas.

Your money goes a long way. These are just a few examples. The Church cannot and will not survive unless we all do our part and give financially, and volunteer. I know we are all tired but the saying 'many hands make light work' is so true and should be the new motto of our church. We do many things at the church. Some events are recognized and others are not, but there is nothing better than stopping in, driving past, or telling someone that I go to Central United Church.

On behalf of my committee, we want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas & a joyous New Year and a special thanks for all you do and all that you give.

Scott Doupe, Chair of Finance and Stewardship

Christmas Gift Envelopes

Please note the Christmas Gift Envelopes which have been enclosed for your convenience. If you are able to make a special contribution to our General Fund it would be greatly appreciated.

Merry Christmas from the Christian Education Committee

Through the Sunday School program and our excellent teaching staff, we continue to offer stimulation for young minds through our Rock Solid curriculum during the 10:30 Service and The One Room Schoolhouse for the 9:00 service. This is about building a heart filled with faith, not just knowledge, through story-based experiences. In these lessons, the students are engaged through sensory challenges and an exciting craft. As well, this program has the students up and moving too, always a plus for young people.

As we did last Christmas, the students reached out through their birthday givings, to address broader global issues and make the world a better place. After discussion and a vote, our students decided to supply two items for families far away. First they chose a goat. That would provide more than 20 litres of milk per month and two or three kids a year for selling or breeding – the beginning of a flourishing dairy business. They also selected a gift of clean water for a family. Our gift of filters will eliminate waterborne diseases and quench thirsty souls at the same time. The students took this opportunity to serve very seriously and we thank them for their generosity in that Scrooge struggled with for so long: it is the highest calling to serve others and not oneself first – especially so when the recipients are so needy.

In addition, we recently held a very successful "Art Day", held on the latest school P.D. day. Our appreciation is extended to Heather Kaufmann-Seelisch and her volunteers for providing this opportunity for our youth. Also the Christian Education Committee hosted the annual Advent Event, a joyous occasion featuring a potluck luncheon and Christmas crafts session. We thank all those who attended.

As well, we look forward to having our students present the verses of "Christmas Candles" on Sunday, December 18th at the Traditional service, 10:30 a.m. This is our gift to the congregation.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Anne Lounsbury, Christian Education Co-Chair

Merry Christmas from The St. Thomas Central Academy of Music

The faculty of St. Thomas Central Academy of Music performed in a recital "Teachers in Concert" on Sunday November 20th. We are so blessed to have such talent associated with Central United Church! Thank you to all of you who supported the teachers. They raised \$315.00 for the "Inn Out of the Cold" program.

Mary MacLachlan
Crystal Magee