

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31, 2017

*Unto us a Son is given;
O come let us worship!*

8:30 a.m. – Morning Prayer:

✦ Psalm 132 | Ruth 4:1-17 | St. John 6:41-58

9:00 a.m. – The Holy Eucharist

Introit Psalm 93:	page 450
The Gloria:	page 86
The Collect:	page 113
The Old Testament Reading:	Isaiah 62:10-12
Christmas Anthems	page 104
The Epistle:	page 113
Gradual Psalm 110:1-4:	page 477
The Holy Gospel:	page 114
The Creed:	page 71
The Homily	
The Prayers of the People:	L: Lord, in thy mercy; C: Hear our prayer
The Consecration:	page 82
Post-Communion Prayer:	page 85

9:45 a.m. – Sunday School: Parish Hall Time with Fr. Stockall

10:30 a.m. – The Holy Eucharist

♪ PROCESSIONAL HYMN:	81 (Regent Square 628)
The Gloria:	page 86
The Collect:	page 113
The Old Testament Reading:	Isaiah 62:10-12
Christmas Anthems	page 104
The Epistle:	page 113
♪ GRADUAL HYMN:	747 (Iris)
The Holy Gospel:	page 114
♪ GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (refrain only):	747 (Iris)
The Creed:	page 71
The Homily	
♪ OFFERTORY HYMN:	357 (King's Weston)
The Prayers of the People:	L: Lord, in your mercy; C: Hear our prayer
The Consecration:	page 82
Post-Communion Prayer:	page 85
♪ RECESSIONAL HYMN:	319 (Noel)

*Please join us in the Parish Hall
following the 10:30 Celebration for
Coffee & Conversation.*

✦

From the Rector _____

The season of Christmas, with its carols and cards and old family traditions, always seems to call us back to a simpler, quieter time; a time when the world used candles for light; when homes were filled with the scent of pine; and horses pulled sleighs through the snow. It seems that nearly every Christmas story harkens back to these images and tells of warm homes and generous hearts.

Now, at its most obvious level, this may seem to be little more than just simple nostalgia; but I'm not so sure it's only that. I think that it is also, at another level, an expression within all of us of a deeply felt need to rediscover that which is most real about our lives.

Somewhere, within our household gatherings and family rituals, in a world that seems all too complex, is the deep yearning for those things that are basic and

dependable and essential: the kinds of things that provide meaning, like faith in God and hope in humanity and love in our hearts: intangible realities that, now and then, need to be touched and felt and experienced, much in the same way that we might experience by sight and smell a tree full of lights or a home where blankets are warm and food is delicious and laughter is free.

This yearning is, I think, in all of us; a desire for a place where the nervousness and anxiety of modern life can be put on hold, if only for a moment. We are drawn back to simpler days: to places like this church and our weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist; and I believe that, at some level, we are drawn here because we can't find what we're most looking for at the mall; because it is here, as nowhere else, that we rediscover who we really are.

Here, in the ancient rituals of our faith, we encounter the God calls us back to that which is essential and indispensable to our lives: such as the memory of a new born baby's cry in a manger in a village called Bethlehem; or the memory of a tough old prophet out in the desert telling us to prepare a way for God straight into our hearts. And, of course, we come to the Holy Eucharist, again and again, to hear the words of the One who spoke as no one had ever spoken before; the One who healed the sick and calmed the terrified and desperate.

Here we are drawn out of the world of computers and traffic and sales to the Cross and, in the end, to a small piece of Bread; and we find ourselves reaching up to receive a cup of Wine, first offered by the calloused hands of a man who Himself once worked with wood and pulled up fish from the sea; and in that moment we're drawn back to older realities. We're told that all the things we've ever done to mess up our lives really are in the past and that we are now reborn and our lives can start all over.

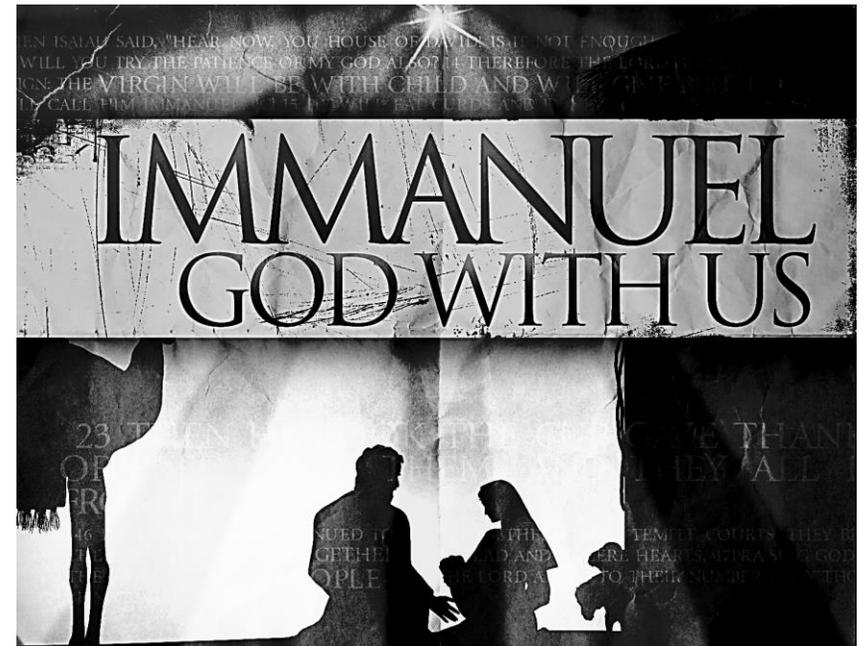
At the heart of the Christmas story is the image of home: of God making His home with us and, in the process, wonderfully, mystically, making our home in Him; of God entering this very troubled world that, just by being with us, He might make those troubles less troublesome.

And that, I think, is what it means to be transformed by the story of Christmas. It is to be able live every moment of life differently because we know that Christ, this incarnate Lord who we see as an infant born in a manger, is living it with us; because we know that every step we take, every thought we think, every decision we have to make, no matter how difficult or easy, no matter how important or trivial, is done in and with the Christ.

Into a space of fear and insecurity, God spoke one Word. Not a word of triumphant certainty, but one small creative word in flesh and blood; a Word so small that most people missed it. Yet when other words were silenced, and other promises failed, the light of that Word continued to shine in the darkness and the darkness of doubt and fear did not overcome it.

Rejoice and sing with the angels. God knows your every struggle and has provided for your rescue. Whatever burdens and fears might be yours, rejoice that Christ has been born; that Emmanuel has come. God is with us!

The Anglican Church of Canada
The Diocese of Fredericton
THE PARISH OF ST. MARY, YORK



Never again are we to look at the stars, as we did when we were children, and wonder how far it is to God. A being outside our world would be a spectator, looking on but taking no part in this life where we try to be brave despite all the bafflement. A God who created, and withdrew, could be mighty, but he could not be love. Who could love a God remote, when suffering is our lot? Our God is closer than our problems, for they are out there, to be faced; He is here, beside us, Emmanuel.

Joseph E. McCabe, *Handel's Messiah*

Priest and Rector

The Revd. Canon Kevin M. Stockall, B.A. (Hons), M.Div.

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Visit us at: <http://www.stmarysfredericton.ca/>

Parish Notices and Updates

PLEASE JOIN US NEXT SUNDAY, following the 10:30 a.m. Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, for our monthly *Shared Meal*. Members of both congregations are warmly encouraged to gather with their sisters and brothers in Christ as we share the peace and joy which are have in Jesus Christ.

ST. MARY'S WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY is on its Christmas Break. Plan to join us when we resume on January 12th.

THE FREDERICTON WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL will be hosting a Panel discussion on the Theme "God's Dream for Us: Finding Unity in Diversity" at Holy Family Church, 1500 Hanwell Road, on Thursday, January 25th from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Panel members Moderator Mary Ryan along with Gladys Lacey-House, Linda Lamont, Nancy Bauer, Dr. W. Barry Miller, Margaret Leonard, Kate Rogers, Chris McAloon, Lisa Bamford, Kay Furlong, Shirley DeMerchant and Father Monte Peters. The storm date will be Sunday, January 28th at the same time and place. Free will donation will be collected for Liberty Lane, a home for Abused Women.



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

JANUARY 3: THE OCTAVE DAY OF CHRISTMAS (trans.)

6:30 p.m. – Evening Prayer

7:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist

JANUARY 4: CHRISTMAS FERIA

8:30 a.m. – Morning Prayer

Followed by time for personal prayer in the Church

11:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, *Alleira Assisted Living*

JANUARY 6: THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

4:30 p.m. – Evening Prayer

5:00 p.m. – Holy Eucharist

JANUARY 7: THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

8:30 a.m. – Morning Prayer

9:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

9:45 a.m. – Sunday School for all ages!

10:30 a.m. – Holy Eucharist

Followed by a Shared Meal in the Parish Hall

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