

Tidings of St Mary's



Parish of Saint Mary's York

Jan/Feb 2017

This Month at St. Mary's

Signs & Symbols



The Church has always looked to images to help the faithful to understand as fully as possible the mystery of who Jesus is and what he does on our behalf.

One symbol that we still see nearly 2000 years after it first arose is an image of a fish with 5 Greek letters in the centre.

As we know, fish are mentioned and given symbolic meaning several times in the Gospels. Several of the first apostles were fishermen by trade and Jesus calls them to become fishers of men. At the feeding of the 5000 a boy brings five small loaves and two fish, with which Jesus feeds the multitude.

But even above these Gospel stories, according to tradition, ancient Christians, during their persecution by the Roman Empire in the first few centuries after Christ, used the symbol of a fish to mark meeting places and tombs, or to distinguish friends from foes. According to one ancient story, when a Christian met a stranger in the road, the Christian sometimes drew one arc of the simple fish outline in the dirt. If the stranger drew the other arc, both believers knew they were in good company. And many times, instead of written words, the simple picture of the fish, scrawled on a wall, would identify the location as a place where other Christians could safely gather.

The use of the fish as a symbol for Christ and for Christians arises from a play on words.

The word for fish in Greek is *ἰχθύς* (*ichthys*); but symbolically is also serves as an acrostic for the phrase *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*.

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ
(*Iēsous Christos, Theou Uios, Sōtēr*)

- Iota (i) is the first letter of *Iēsous* (Ἰησοῦς), Greek for "Jesus".
 - Chi (ch) is the first letter of *Christos* (Χριστός), Greek for "anointed."
- (Continued top right)

- Theta (th) is the first letter of *Theou* (Θεοῦ), Greek for "God's."
- Upsilon (u) is the first letter of (*h*)*uios*^[7] (Υἱός), Greek for "Son."
- Sigma (s) is the first letter of *sōtēr* (Σωτήρ), Greek for "Saviour."

So, when you see the symbol I hope that you're reminded of the courage of the early Christians who believed in Christ even in the face of great danger. And, like them, I hope that you're reminded of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ, God's Son, born to be our Saviour!

MOTHERS' UNION SOARING ON EAGLE WINGS

Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) is an approach adopted by Mothers' Union in developing countries to help communities break free from dependency and self-solve issues such as poverty – both spiritually and physically. A key step for developing CCM is to ensure the local community take ownership of the process. This means Mothers' Union at the local level will name their own adaptation. "Eagle" is the name Mothers' Union Uganda have chosen for their own process of CCM. Started in 2014, Eagle has helped around 15,000 people so far using a three-step process:

- **Envisioning the church:** Bible studies help congregations realise that, with God's help, they can be the masters of their own change rather than always relying on outside agencies to help. Eagle groups then start their own projects to test and apply the learning.

(see over)

Mothers' UNION

• **Envisioning the community:** The church takes what they have learnt to community leaders. Together they identify the needs of the community and 'dream dreams' to come up with solutions.

• **Taking action and working together:** A committee of members from both the church and wider community oversee these dreams being put into action and monitor its progress.

Eagle really brings tangible and holistic change particularly in the following areas:

Relationships with God, others (including the vulnerable) and the environment

Eagle helps people develop a more active prayer life, and learn not just to read the Bible but how to actually apply it to their lives. As a result, people spoke of having a real relationship with God for the first time. People also start to look outwards to their community. For example, in South Ankole people now take more time to care for the vulnerable.

Eagle has helped people in Madi West Nile realise the impact they have on the environment. As a result they have stopped cutting down trees and are using compost, removing plastic bags and cleaning up their communities. Farming communities who have been seriously affected by drought caused by climate change have learnt new techniques to overcome this and improve the amount and quality of the food they eat across the year.

Local initiative and use of resources

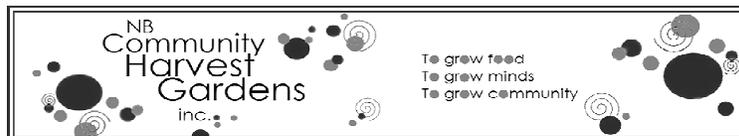
In South Ankole Eagle has helped people start businesses such as a banana plantation, piggeries, chicken-rearing, soap production, crafts and brick-making. Groups have learnt to share expertise instead of competing and the income they make supports their family's needs, such as buying a bicycle and sending their children to school.

Improved health and sanitation

Eagle has helped people construct new latrines, bathing shelters and drying racks. Families have also learnt the importance of keeping their homes clean and well maintained. Some dioceses have also successfully helped their communities to access health screening. For example, in Madi West Nile the Eagle clean-up of the community football ground and road clearing paved the way for the government to immunise children.

Improved gender relations

Another important outcome of Eagle has been that women gain more of a say in family decision-making. For example, traditionally the husband decided how money was spent but many couples now work together to form a family budget and ensure there is enough to cover everyone's needs. We have also seen that women are taking on more leadership roles in the church.



New Brunswick Community Harvest Gardens are now accepting 2017 applications for Garden Plots at St. Mary's and Marysville Community Gardens. Your annual membership will be valid from *January 1, 2017 until December 31st, 2017.* (*Sponsorship to cover fees may be requested if required.*)

NBCHG General Membership fee is \$10.00 and includes:

- Free access to gardening, seed library and our educational programs throughout the year related to food production and preservation
- Discounted fee for cooking workshops
- Newsletter and Informational Updates via email
- Invitations to NBCHG social events
- Opportunities to help steward the organization through committee work
- Opportunities to have an active voice at our Annual General Meetings including the election of officers
- NBCHG Garden Plot fee is an additional \$10.00 for each 4ft. x 10ft. plot at St. Mary's Community Garden
 - \$20.00 for each 4ft. x 16ft. plot at Marysville Community Garden

Application forms are available at:

www.nbchg.org/resources/join/

or at the *Fredericton Public Library* (12 Carleton Street)

or at the *Nashwaaksis Library Branch* (324 Fulton Avenue).

Completed forms & required fees can be dropped-off at either library in a sealed envelope (envelopes & forms available at the library), or mailed to:

NBCHG Membership, 16 Lawrence Crescent, Fredericton, NB E3A 2H3.

Please make cheques payable to NBCHG Inc.

NBCHG encourages **Non-gardeners** to submit their application as soon as possible in order to be added to our email distribution list for future updates and to take full advantage of upcoming workshops and events.

The deadline for **Renewing Gardeners** who had a plot with NBCHG in 2016 is *March 1st* – for submitting their 2017 Membership Application Form, fees and *mandatory survey form.*

The deadline for **New Gardeners** is *June 2nd*. You will initially be placed on a waiting list. Available plots will be assigned to new members *starting April 1st, 2017* on a first-come-first-serve basis. Please note: All new gardeners will be required to take part in on-site orientation and safety training before a plot will be assigned to them.