

# The Message

The Newsletter of the People of St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill

10030 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, ON Canada L4C 1T8



## What's in your Manger?

by The Rev. Matthew McMillan

A Minister's family had started putting up a nativity scene in their front yard. All of them were working together to carry out the little statues to put up the nativity scene. Finally everything was in place - Mary & Joseph, the manger, the baby Jesus, angels, shepherds and all the barnyard animals.

Then all of a sudden little Scott came out, carrying one of his favorite toys, the figure of the fierce Tyrannosaurus Rex, King of the Dinosaurs. It was one of those plastic figures that you inflate, and in comparison to the other figures it was an enormous thing. It towered over them all, and was certainly not something to have in a nativity scene!

The Minister said to his son, "Scott, you have to take that back because it doesn't belong there. Dinosaurs existed way, way before the baby Jesus was born, and it just doesn't belong in a nativity scene."

But little Scott insisted, so they finally put it there behind all the other figures - a fierce dinosaur hovering over the manger and everything else.

As the family took a step back and looked at it, they realized that maybe, *'that dinosaur'*, says more than everyone had initially realized. For over each of us there can be menacing things that threaten to rob us of all our joy and peace and cheer. Or, we could even find ourselves being that way with others.

The Minister's Wife said to the family as they stood there staring at their nativity scene, "Christmas reminds us that the baby in the manger is stronger than all the dinosaurs in any of our lives. God has given us this gift of Love, and brought us victory over all the dinosaurs in our lives, through the gift of His Son. What a true Christmas gift!"

As we look to the wonders of the Christmas Season, may we all find ways to bring our gifts to the babe in the manger, that they may bless others and share God's love.

Blessings,  
Fr. Matthew+



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**Mission Statement:** We, the people of St. Mary's Anglican Church, called by God and committed to Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, seek to live and make known, in word and action, the good news of God's love in the world. Using our gifts, we worship, proclaim, learn, serve, reach out, welcome others, and develop a caring and sharing community of be-



## Youth Ministry Update

St. Mary's has been blessed this past year with a wonderful group of young people who regularly participate in our weekly services and programs. This past summer we had our annual summer 'Church Picnic' on the front lawn of St. Mary's to celebrate the efforts of our Sunday School Children and begin the summer. Mid-summer we had our Rectory BBQ where lots of fun and fellowship was enjoyed by our youth and the whole parish family. Our programming continued again in the fall with a great fanfare and it continues to grow.

This Fall St. Mary's has continued our work to hire a new staff member, to support our growing Children and Youth's program offerings at St. Mary's. In the spring and summer we reviewed our program needs and structure, and relaunched our hiring process at the beginning of the fall. We are currently entering into a round of interviews and are excited to connect with the candidates that have replied to our posting. If you would like to know more details, please feel free to check out our job posting on the parish website, which is found on our St. Mary's home page.

Our aims for this new staff member will be to help invigorate and energize our Parish Youth programs, helping to support and lead in areas of ministry that bring God's love to life in the hearts of our younger members. We'll be looking to have this new person step in and lead programming with our senior youth, build and develop St. Mary's Youth Group, and be a programming resource to support our youth lead ministries of our A/V and Broadcasting activities. This individual will also help to lead and facilitate our Family Nights and other special activities to help nurture and bless our parish family. Please stay tuned as we work towards having this new ministry presence up and active at St. Mary's.

*Sincerely, The Corporation*



***Thanks to our Property Team  
for the construction and  
furnishing of our new  
"Youth Lounge"  
Located on the balcony of  
Wrixon Hall.***



## **Update from the Board of Directors – Richmond Hill Ecumenical Homes Corporation**



In the fall of 2018, St. Mary's was invited to have a member of our parish community fill a vacancy on the board of the Richmond Hill Ecumenical Homes Corporation. This organization was started over 30 years ago by concerned residents of the Richmond Hill community, to help our municipality work to expand affordable housing offerings in our local area. Our parish priest, the Reverend Matthew McMillan was invited to join the board and become part of the group's newest sub-committee that is working towards starting construction of a new affordable housing building. This supportive housing group currently manages 500 units in Richmond Hill across 3 apartment buildings. They are now working with different levels of government to hopefully add another building with 100 units or more, of affordable housing for our community. At present the Richmond Hill Ecumenical Homes Corporation Board is working

with engineers and planners to obtain all the approvals and permissions for this work. The present priority for the board is to work towards having shovels in the ground in 2 years' time for a new building. We want to be able to help those struggling to find adequate housing with affordable options in Richmond Hill. Please be sure to advocate to your elected officials that more government assistance and partnership is needed to help move forward this important work.

## St. Mary's Anglican Church, Richmond Hill.

### Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Led by

Fr. Matthew McMillan

**Proposed Dates -- November 01—12, 2020**

*"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!' Our feet shall stand within your gates, O Jerusalem." (Psalm 122:1-2) Experience the life and landscape of the Bible and the culture of the ancient Middle East. Walk in the steps of the Patriarchs, of Prophets, of Jesus. Our pilgrimage will include visits to well-known biblical/archaeological and other sites in the context of prayer, worship, on-site learning and fellowship with local Anglicans! Roam the peaceful green hills of GALILEE, experience Masada and the Salt Sea, then brace yourself for JERUSALEM – the city like no other – "the city of the Great King."*

*Join us on this inspirational experience of a lifetime in the Holy Land!*

*You'll never read the Bible the same way again!*

This fall St. Mary's conducted a travel night to explore a parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We have been working with a local travel specialist *Amiron Travel*, to build a 10 day tour for us. Our agents are currently working on securing blocks of accommodations and direct airline tickets. In late December we will have our firm travel dates and costs. Travel brochures will be available in late December 2019 or early January 2020 for interested individuals to obtain copies of. We hope to see you next year in Jerusalem!

### ***So which is it, a Creche or Manger? And which animals were really there?***



When referring to a Nativity Scene, which term do you use? Crèche is an Old French word that is derived from the Old High German krippa, meaning crib. The word manger, from the Old English mangeour, is derived from the Old French maingeure, to eat, which, in turn, is derived from the Latin manducare, to chew. So, though both words relate to the place where Jesus was laid, the one calls it a baby's crib,

the other a feeding trough. The latter, of course, is more in line with the Scriptures: "[A]nd she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).



With regards to the animals that were present at the Nativity, allow me to say that since the earliest depictions of the nativity artists have always reflected the theology of the time, their own spirituality, and even their day-to-day experiences in their art. One of the earliest depictions of the nativity we know is found on a fourth-century Roman sarcophagus currently preserved in Milan. It simply shows the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes, laying in a manger with a donkey on one side and an ox on the other. The beholder is to fill in the rest of the story.

Though neither animal is mentioned in the gospels, artists may have presumed that if Jesus was born in a stable, animals would have been present. Another, more deeply theological, explanation is a reference found in the book of the prophet Isaiah: "An ox knows its owner, / and an ass, its master's manger; / But Israel does not know, / my people have not understood" (Isa 1:3). Thus the presence of an ox and donkey is a signal to us of the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Since the written documents that link the depiction of the ox and donkey to this biblical passage postdate the first depictions, Isaiah or other scriptures may or may not have influenced the artists. Nevertheless, to us it provides a deeper level of meaning to the presence of these animals in the stable.



# What's going on at Saint Mary's?

*Happenings and Opportunities to Serve!*

## ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING



### Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> is Vestry Sunday

St. Mary's will be holding our AGM, also commonly known as "Vestry" on **Sunday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>**. This meeting will be held following our main worship service and will be where the congregation receives annual reports on all parish activities and approves priorities and finances for 2020. On the Sunday prior to Vestry, a special 'Budget Consultation' will be offered, so that our Parish Treasurer can go through in detail our audit and budget. Please speak to the office or Fr. Matt if you have any questions or concerns.

*Vestry reports are due to the office by the end of January, 2020.*

## MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

St. Mary's Weekly Bible Study meets in the Sunday School Room in Wrixon Hall, Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:00 pm. All are welcome to join this Bible study group, as we explore the weekly scripture passages from the church's reading cycle. Our fall program has gone over well and our Bible study program will be on break over the Advent and Christmas Season. From December 11<sup>th</sup> until January 8<sup>th</sup>, our program will be on break while everyone is busy with their holiday plans. Our Bible study will begin again on January 15<sup>th</sup> and continue through into the spring. If you would like to pick up a study package to review on your own or with us as a group, they can be found in the Narthex or the Sunday School Room. All are welcome to join in and if you need further information, please speak to the office or Fr. Matt.



Did you know that through our new parish website you are able to donate to St. Mary's? In the spring of 2019 we launched our new website with many upgraded features and functions. One of them being our online giving platform. St. Mary's has partnered with ('Canada Helps') a Canadian Not-for-Profit agency that helps charities raise funds through various online resources. There is a cost to process each donation, which is 3.5 cents on every dollar. This helps cover processing and other costs. Tax Receipts are issued

immediately when the donation is made. If you're away on holidays and St. Mary's pops into your head, just go to our parish website and click on the 'Giving' tab at the top. From there you can click to give online and make your contribution. Thank you to everyone who gives so generously to support our parish church, and we hope that this additional resource will make it even easier to do so. *Thanks, St. Mary's Envelope Secretaries*

## Social Media / Online Updates

In 2019 our parish has undertaken much work to position St. Mary's for future growth, to be able to reach out to the community and share our life of faith with others. We have accomplished a lot! This year we launched live video broadcasts of our Sunday Services, to help those unable to be physically present be able to worship with us each week. We are still learning our way through this development at St. Mary's, and we are thankful for all our young teenagers who help to run and manage this weekly work. For those who would like to watch our weekly service or catch it later through the week, please go to our website [www.saintmarysanglican.ca](http://www.saintmarysanglican.ca) and click on the "Watch With Us" link at the bottom of the screen.

## Watch With Us



Choral Mattins - Reign of Christ



As we have continued in our work to modernize our online presence, we've also been working to help individuals keep connected to St. Mary's through our Facebook page. A special thank you to Jennifer Ferdinands and Lucia Ferrara for all their work to add content and for keeping things fresh. Click on <https://www.facebook.com/StMarysRichmondHill/> to follow and be part of our page.

## Morning Prayer Services

Throughout the year at St. Mary's, we augment our traditional 10:30 AM service with a number of special additions to enhance the life of worship at our church.

On four Sundays a year, St. Mary's offers Sung Choral Mattins from The Book of Common Prayer. This service (*also known as Morning Prayer*), was the main form of worship for generations in our faith tradition. It is a service without communion and consists of communal prayers that are sung, in addition to the traditional prayer routine of a standard Sunday Service. Morning Prayer will occur on the **4th Sundays of September, November, February and May** at our 10:30 AM service. Please join us these Sundays as you are able.

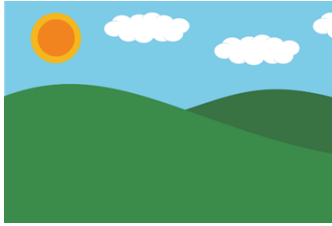


Prayer is an important part of our lives. It centres us, lifts up to God needs and builds communities, seeking holier paths for all God's creation. Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday afternoon during the year (*excluding the summer months*) St. Mary's Prayer Group holds their monthly meeting at the home of Barb and Neil Mann, just past the Mill Pond at 379 Sugar Maple Lane. This meeting is open to the entire congregation and is a time for any prayer needs within our community to be prayed for. This gathering is informal and is an opportunity to gather and pray about: medical or spiritual needs for yourselves or loved ones, concerns facing our community or nation, environmental or creation needs and any other personal or private needs that are known to the group. If you would like more information, like to participate or have any prayer needs, please contact Barb at (905) 884-4618.



## Land Usage Committee Update

St. Mary's senior leadership has been working to complete our wide ranging consultations with the Diocese, The City of Richmond Hill, and other parties, on our proposed plan to sell surplus parish lands adjacent to the south end of the church. This proposal's purpose is to help determine a possible plan to fund ongoing enhancements and future capital needs for St. Mary's, by selling surplus land. The parish at our last AGM gave permission for the Wardens to explore this option and to report back to the congregation, once all the details have come together. We have completed our engineering review, met with Diocesan and Municipal Officials, drafted a Long-Range ministry plan for the parish and completed other assessments. The Land Usage Committee is looking to meet with our Bishop and Senior Diocesan Staff mid-



December, to approve in principal a final plan for a sale process, which could be presented to the congregation for review in early 2020. Thank you

to St. Mary's senior leadership for all your hard work and efforts to steward this for our parish. Stay tuned as updates will be coming soon!

## Engineering Report Update

At St. Mary's Annual Vestry in 2019, the parish reviewed

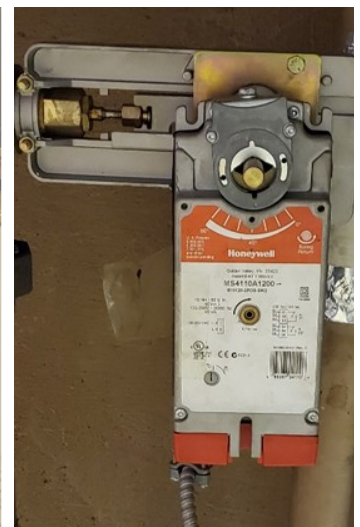


and approved plans to conduct a formal Engineering Study of our property. This work is mandated by the Diocese for all parishes every 10 years. Our initial quotes for the work was just under \$20,000. As our property team researched further, we were able to find a firm to conduct our review for \$11,500. This cost has been covered from our current year's building line in the budget and has not been taken from the Heritage Fund,

as was previously thought to likely be the funding source. St. Mary's structure is in good general repair, but as has been previously shared, there is much ongoing maintenance needed. If anyone would like to read through and review this work, copies are available to be borrowed from the main office. To borrow a copy, please drop by the office Tuesday to Friday anytime between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

## Property / Building Update

A special thanks to our Property Team of Mr. Chas Mills and Mr. Colin Webb for all their work through the fall and into the winter. We are truly blessed to have this energetic duo caring for our facilities at St. Mary's.



In the late spring of 2019, St. Mary's long-time caretaker John Macey stepped down and over the summer we welcomed a husband and wife team as our new caretaking and cleaning staff. Aydin and Ayse Apaydin, are new Canadians originally from Turkey. They have worked hard to get to know the building during this transition and many things have been

brought up to date during this transition. Please extend a warm welcome to Aydin and Ayse whenever you see them. They would be happy to help with any group's needs, so please speak to them or the office if you or your programs need any assistance.

St. Mary's has done a lot of work across all the sections of our buildings this year. We have worked to upgrade and modernize our youth ministry areas, in advance of our new youth ministry staff person arriving. We converted a storage room in Wrixon Hall into a new Youth Lounge that can double as an additional classroom for Sunday School (See pics in Youth Update on page 2). The heating systems have had new valves, boiler controls and thermostats replaced to ensure ongoing operation.



In addition to working on small areas around the building, we have also undertaken efforts to enhance the greening of St. Mary's. We have implemented a waste diversion program, and increased our recycling efforts with our tenants and users of the building. Recycling containers are now in all program spaces and we have gone from monthly to twice a month for our recycling bin pick-ups. We have also worked to repair and replace worn weather-stripping on emergency exits, to reduce heat loss. The exterior lighting has been transitioned to LED in our parking lot and in our illuminated sign on Yonge Street. Thank you to the congregation for your support and encouragement as we continue to take on this important work.



## Plans for 2020

The current leadership of St. Mary's are working on plans to upgrade and enhance Wrixon Hall in 2020. The Wardens were approached by our lead tenant, Discovery Academy who suggested they would be willing to help financially and contribute towards upgrading some of the elements of Wrixon Hall, so it could help meet their programming needs. The leadership was excited by this opportunity, as it would enhance the space for our needs as well. The parish has recently been looking into quotes for painting the entire hall, and working with the school to explore new flooring, some athletic equipment and other items. Please stay tuned as we look forward to our next steps!

## African/Caribbean Dinner

Every February, Canadians are invited to participate in Black History Month, to honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present. St. Mary's is blessed to have many



**St. Mary's Anglican Church**  
invites you to an  
**AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN**  
**EVENING**

Games/Entertainment  
DJ Music

Door Prizes  
50/50 Draw

of our community with origins of African descent or from the Caribbean. To honour and celebrate these communities' gifts and legacies, St. Mary's holds our annual African/Caribbean Dinner at the end of February. Please mark your calendars and join us on Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup> for this year's 2020 dinner. The dinner will be from 6 to 10 pm and will have a full program of activities, entertainment, dinner and dancing. Tickets will be available towards the end of January. Be sure to get yours before their gone!





## Lenten Schedule

Before we are aware, the season of Lent will be upon us. Please be sure to mark these dates on your calendars, so you can deepen your own Lenten journey by sharing it with your parish family! Our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will be in Wrixon Hall from 5-7pm. On Ash Wednesday, we'll be having a midday service at noon, followed by a 7:15 pm evening service for the imposition of ashes. As we reach the beginning of Holy Week, daily midday services will be held at noon, and our Maundy Thursday evening Eucharist will be at 7:15 pm. On Good Friday we will have our Youth & Family Program at 10 am, followed by our Solemn Liturgy and Veneration of the Holy Cross at 11 am. Our Easter Vigil and kindling of the Easter Fire will be at 7 pm, and Easter Morning, April 12th will be our regular service times of 8 am and 10:30 am. If you are not able to join us in person for our services, please remember you can always join in through our service broadcast on St. Mary's website. May one and all, have a blessed Lent and a glorious Easter!

Lent 2020	
Shrove Tuesday	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
Ash Wednesday	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
Palm Sunday	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
Holy Thursday	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
Good Friday	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
Holy Saturday	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
Easter Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
Easter Monday	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2020



## A Lent in Dibley

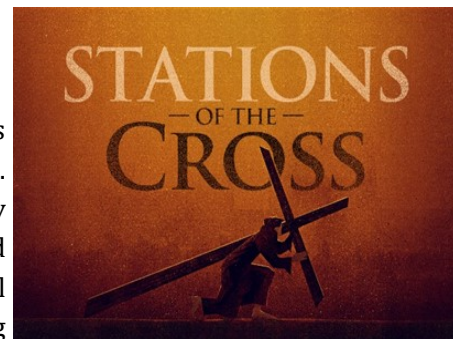
During the season of Lent, we prepare ourselves for Easter with special devotions and acts of alms giving and fasting. This Lent, Fr. Matt will be offering a study program based on the hit BBC comedy, "The Vicar of Dibley". Join us for 5 Wednesdays (March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1) at St. Mary's from 7:30 – 9:00pm. Each evening we'll be watching a different episode and following up with a discussion about different Lenten themes. *Please join us as you are able this Lent!*

## Lenten Reflection - Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross, one of the most popular devotional practices of the Church, is indeed, like many other aspects of our faith, loved by some and not practiced by others. Regardless of one's affection for the practice, its fundamental concept of a spiritual journey through the last days of Jesus' life is rooted in a deep human need to see, touch, and experience places of personal, historic, or religious importance. Sometimes people will travel thousands of miles to visit such places. Hockey fans, for instance, will think nothing of crossing the country merely to visit the Hockey Hall of Fame and waiting in line to touch the Stanley Cup. Many Christians have made pilgrimages to Rome, Greece, or the Holy Land. And many Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike visit Jerusalem, an important location on the spiritual map of these three major monotheistic religions.

This desire to visit Jerusalem is nothing new. During the Middle Ages, western European Christians not only desired to visit the places where Jesus had lived but also to defend them from non-Christians. Thus, some medieval Christians went to Jerusalem as pilgrims, others as crusaders. Regardless of their intent, those who returned to their homelands brought back stories and descriptions of the holy sites.

The growing emphasis on the Lord's passion during a time plagued with pestilence, famine, and war, combined with the pilgrim stories, gave rise to the creation of rituals dedicated to the passion of our Lord. A particular tradition that was preached by the Franciscan Friars, was a devotion that followed Jesus on his last journey from his trial to his tomb. This has developed into the current devotional rite we have today known as the "Stations of the Cross."





Today's Stations of the Cross are characterized as a meditation on Jesus' obedience unto death, God's unending love, and our human frailty. Lent, with its baptismal and penitential emphasis, is well suited for the celebration of this devotion. The aim of this journey is to allow those seeking a closer walk with Christ to enter into an experience that was his and gain a deeper glimpse into the heart of God. As we do this, this devotion has the power to change our lives, and allow them to become more like Christ, the giver of life.

This lent, members of St. Mary's may wish to take some extra time on Sundays to take a Station's prayer guide and pray the Stations while at church, entering into their own journey with Christ. In our own ways this lent, may we all take an opportunity and walk with Christ, to grow more aware of God's grace and love poured out through the cross.

## Outreach & Social Justice Committee

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who faithfully support Loonie Muffin Sundays and the sale of Fair Trade Chocolate. Without our committed bakers and eager customers we would not have been able to continue to support our two foster children through Plan International, work in conjunction with the Sunday School to finance shipping of books to children in Canada's far north or to purchase \$750.00 of \$25.00 denomination Loblaw cards for the office to use at their discretion for those who come to the church in need. Working together we can foster God's love and make a difference.



Continuing in this vein, we trust our partnership with Blue Door Shelters for our Christmas Outreach Program will enable Blue Door to further their support of homeless families with the help of our support. Providing for a more comfortable Christmas for those struggling to find housing.

Looking forward into 2020, Maggie and Lyne are gearing up for another season delivering Out of the Cold at St. Mary's, beginning January 27 and continuing every Monday until March 30, 2020. If you are interested in volunteering in some capacity, please contact Maggie. If you have winter coats, sweaters or boots that are no longer needed, we can always use them in our weekly clothing bank for the duration of Out of the Cold. If you are able to bake muffins, squares, brownies or a dessert loaf, as in past years we will have a sign-up sheet in Wrixon Hall for these donations.

Many of you expressed your appreciation last year for the opportunity to donate, one article per day to the Richmond Hill Food Bank, during the 40 days of Lent. We look forward to continuing this initiative in 2020 beginning February 26.

Please be assured that the Outreach & Social Justice Committee is NOT a closed society. Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings and to join this committee. We meet once/month, usually the 3rd Monday at 1:30 p.m. Please speak to any of our committee members for more information or to share an idea that you might have as a potential Outreach service for St. Mary's. *Submitted by Lyne Webb on behalf of the Committee: Maggie Veltheer, Norman McMullen, Dionne Robertson & Julie Hastie*



### Blue Door Christmas Outreach

This year your Outreach Committee has decided to direct St. Mary's Annual Christmas Family Support to Blue Door Shelters of York Region. For more than 35 years, Blue Door Shelters has opened doors to families, youth, women and men without a safe place to stay. Blue Door, offers a wide variety of additional services that help people transition to permanent housing, to move on with their lives. Homelessness can happen to anyone. Each year, 1,300 people from babies to seniors stay in one of Blue Door's three shelters. If you would like to see more information on Blue Doors, please go to [www.bluedoor.ca](http://www.bluedoor.ca). As we have done in the past, we will receive your cash donations given in the Christmas Family designated envelopes, found on our beautiful Blue Door (thank you Monika Quinn), located in the Narthex. In turn, we will purchase Merchant Cards, as per Blue Door preferred Vendors, through our Merchant Card Program. To meet the program deadline we require your donations by Dec. 8. If you would prefer to donate 'in kind', ie: men's socks/ underwear, baby needs, toiletries please contact Lyne Webb and she will advise you as to what is needed. Thank you for your continued support of our various Outreach initiatives as we endeavour to be 'missional' outside our church walls.



## Home on the Hill's Free Community Lunch

Coming together and sharing food is the most engaging and binding activity in any community. Our community is no different. We all have a strong need to come together in a warm and accepting environment. We all appreciate the opportunity to take part and feel a sense of belonging while at the same time enjoying a nourishing lunch. Home on the Hill offers a free lunch every Friday at noon in Wrixon Hall at St. Mary's Anglican Church. We cordially welcome all community members of any age including seniors, and their family members, or caregivers.



## Upcoming Parish Luncheons

**Wednesday, December 4th**

*Christmas Sing-a-long*

There will not be a luncheon in January 2020.

1<sup>st</sup> event of 2020 will be **Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>**.

**York Symphony Orchestra (YSO)**

**Holiday Spectacular**

**Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**St. Mary's Anglican Church — 8:00 p.m.**



Join us for a York Symphony Orchestra tradition. Our annual holiday concert, is filled with cheerful seasonal favourites and audience sing-a-long. Bring the family along for this delightful winter concert.

**Seniors \$20; Adults \$25; Students \$10**







# Christmas 2019



## St. Mary's Christmas Pageant - Sunday, December 15th

St. Mary's Sunday School has been hard at work since our programming resumed at the beginning of the school year this September. As we begin the month of December, we are slowly working our way through Advent towards Christmas. One of the highlights of this time of year is our annual Christmas Pageant, so please mark your calendars and join us for this year's performance. Family, friends and guests are welcome to join us on Sunday, December 15th at our 10:30 am service for our 2019 pageant. Come and enjoy the blessings of the season as our youngest members share the story of our Saviour's birth.



*As our Sunday School programming continues through the winter, we would like to thank our parish volunteers, who work tirelessly to help provide programming every Sunday for the youth of our church. Thank you to Lauren Wirtzfeld our Sunday School coordinator and her team for all their help. We would like to thank; Natasha, Lucia, Bob, Julie, Eric, Pam, Lucy, Norman and Mona for all their dedication and effort from January to December of 2019. Sincerely, The Wardens*

## A History of Nativity Scenes

In early Italian Churches from the 3rd and 4th Centuries, you can find early depictions of the nativity. These pictures, carvings and statues would have helped the faithful learn the story of Jesus' birth and what it meant to the world. As the Church grew, over time this story was given new ways of being told. In the year 1223, St. Francis of Assisi organised the first living nativity, in the town of Greccio, Italy.



Francis's special devotion to the nativity scene had two basic reasons. On the one hand, he was inspired by a trip to the Holy Land, when he realized that one did not have to be there to celebrate the important moments in the life of Jesus. With the help of art one could do that fruitfully anywhere in the world. On the other hand, his devotion was encouraged by his disappointment with the celebration of Christmas in his homeland. Using the nativity scene, he wanted to refocus his contemporaries' attention on the reason for the celebration of Christmas. Doesn't that sound like a familiar problem?

Having received the Church's blessing, the custom of live nativities spread with the Franciscans throughout Europe. Elaborate re-enactments of the story of the nativity developed as a great teaching tool, especially for those who had not had the benefit of any formal education. As with many good things, over the centuries these well-intentioned re-enactments quickly started overshadowing the celebration of Christmas. As a result, they were abolished and the live scenes were replaced with statues, who gradually made their way from church yards and town squares into our homes.

## Richmond Hill Community Christmas Lunch – December 25<sup>th</sup> at Noon



This Christmas, the Salvation Army and other community partners are working to hosting a community Christmas Dinner on Christmas Day. This event is open to any who are in need or don't have a Christmas meal to attend and would enjoy spending



the day with others. The Salvation Army is holding this event at the Legion on Centre Street in Richmond Hill. If any individuals would like to help volunteer or contribute towards this program, please contact Mary Halbert, the director of Community and Family Services for the Richmond Hill Salvation Army (mary.halbert@rhcconline.ca or 905-737-0496 Ext. 114).

# The Message

## St. Mary's Anglican Church

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(905) 884-2227



### **Christmas Services at St. Mary's**

This year St. Mary's will be offering a special Christmas experience at our 4:00 pm Family Service on Christmas Eve. At our early service this year we will be having a live manger in the church. We invite you and your friends to come join us 'in the manger' this Christmas! Our manger animals will be available beginning at 3:30 pm for those attending the service to come and mingle with. Also, the animals will be staying afterwards to greet more guests, in case it was a little hard to get up close and introduce yourself prior to the service. Hope to see ewe there!



*Join us at St. Mary's this Christmas Season, to celebrate the birth of Jesus!*

#### **Tuesday, December 24th – Christmas Eve**

**4:00 pm Candlelight Family Service with Live Manger and Communion**

**7:00 pm Candlelight Service with Communion**

**10:30 pm Carols, Anthems and Readings**

**11:00 pm Candlelight Midnight Eucharist**

#### **Wednesday, December 25th – Christmas Day**

**10:30 am Christmas Day Service**

#### **Sunday, December 29th**

**8:00 am BCP Holy Communion**

**10:30 am Service of Lessons & Carols**

