



Wyman Memorial & Cotz St. Charles United
Churches
Hudson Pastoral Charge

Christmas Season 2015 - Newsletter

Forecasters Unsure Whether There Will Be Snow for Christmas

The weather forecast for December 25, 2015, is for a high of 18°C, and a low of 8°C. In Bethlehem. Certainly won't be snow there this year.

But here, we associate Christmas with snow. "Can't have Christmas without snow," one hears people say. Well, actually, we can't have Christmas without Christ. Everything else is either a pleasant supplement, or a distraction: in a way, the choice is ours.

"Let's sing a Christmas carol."

"Yes, let's sing *Jingle Bells!*"

Going to a website of "Popular Christmas Carols", the top "carol" is *Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer*. Of the top fifteen songs, seven have something to do with the birth of Jesus. The others, the majority, are about Santa Claus, reindeer, Christmas trees and winter.

All the other things are frequently a distraction from the core of Christmas. But most can be a good supplement.

Even before modern times, Christmas was a confused celebration. Without any hints in the Bible about what time of year Jesus was born, the date of December 25 was set for one of two reasons: It was nine months after March 25, the date of the celebration of the annunciation which took place on what was then New Year's Day. (Annunciation: when the angel spoke to Mary.) Or it was set to December 25 to give Christians something to celebrate while everyone else was celebrating the return of the sun with the winter solstice. In either case, some of our traditions come from the Roman Saturnalia festivities - with our gift-giving (which we associate with the Magi), and feasting (and much drunkenness a few centuries ago).

And then, through the years, other influences have shaped how we celebrate Christmas: *Tree worship was common among the pagan Europeans and survived their conversion to Christianity in the Scandinavian customs of decorating the house and barn with evergreens at the New Year to scare away the devil and of setting up a tree for the birds during Christmastime.*" (Encyclopedia Britannica)

With the "confused heritage" of the Christmas celebration, and our challenge with the "confused present" of the Christian celebration (primarily the commercialization, where we "just have to" get gifts, and more gifts and spend more money), our challenge is for ourselves to maintain our primary focus.

To keep our primary focus not on the snow. Or the gifts under the tree. Or the turkey on the table. Rather, to keep our primary focus on the good news of what happened 2000 years ago: God with us, Emmanuel. God, coming into our troubled world to be with us, live as us. God's compassion and grace, lying in a manger.

May all the meaning, joy and hope of Christmas be with you all.

Peace

kent

Kent Chown (Rev)



Our Seasonal Calendar Sunday and Other Services

Sunday Dec. 6
Sunday Dec. 13

2nd Sunday of Advent. 10.30 a.m.
3rd Sunday of Advent.
White Gift Sunday 10.30 a.m.
Choir Candlelight Service 7.30 p.m.

Sunday Dec. 20 4th Sunday of Advent 10.30 a.m.
"Blue Christmas" Service at Cote St. Charles Church 7.00 p.m.

Thursday Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Family Service - Wyman Church 10.30 a.m.
Christmas Eve Service - Cote Church 11.00 p.m.
Sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday December 27 Worship Service 10.30 a.m.

Sunday December 13 - White Gift Sunday

Unwrapped gifts/toys for children of all ages as well as for adults are collected this Sunday to be sent to St. Columba House. These gifts may also be brought to the Candlelight Service in the evening.



Mitts, hats and scarves are collected to decorate the Mitten Tree and will be sent in time for Christmas to those whose need is greatest. Food items will be given to our local Food Bank.

CANDLELIGHT CHOIR SERVICE

December 13, 7:30 p.m. @ Wyman

Christmas Grace

Our full choir presents several anthems, and all who are gathered are invited to sing some familiar, much-loved carols.

**Refreshments are served.
There is no admission charge,
but a free-will offering is received.**



Deck the halls and Join the Chorus.

Or to put it another way, come on along to Wyman Memorial United Church and join in as the choir once again celebrates the festive Christmas season.

It all takes place on Sunday evening, December 13, as the choir returns with its annual candlelight offering of Christmas music and readings, old and new, the recounting of that golden story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem so many years ago.

This year's concert theme is Christmas Grace. Incorporating music specially selected by Wyman's brilliant Director of Music Wanda Kaluzny, a long-time pillar of the Montreal area music scene, choices all reflect the quiet and gentle nature of the Christmas story, even while still making room for those great moments of awe and wonder, and sheer joy, which accompanied that magnificent event.

As is the custom, the program will include a variety of anthems, vocal ensembles and solos, along with full audience participation in several of our most beloved Christmas Carols.

This annual concert adheres closely to an order of service little changed from the ones first introduced in Wyman's founding years, when even then echoes of the very first Christmas concerts were already dancing across the sanctuary's freshly painted walls.

We encourage you to set the date aside – December 13 at 7:30 pm – and, as we suggest above, do come and join the chorus. There is no admission fee, although a free-will offering is suggested, with all revenues earmarked to assist the choir in the purchase of music, and with other related expenses.

As a special treat, following the concert, you are all invited to gather in the lower hall to enjoy a tasty collation of Christmas treats, and chat with the choir members.

Wyman is located at 513 Main, corner of Selkirk, across from the Vivery Restaurant. For more information call the church office – 450 458 4912 – or e-mail admin@wyman-hudson.ca/

Merry Christmas – and may God bless us, everyone.



Blue Christmas Service

Sunday December 20 - 7.00 p.m.

Côte St. Charles Church

Joy. Lighthearted. Celebration. Carefree. What the world tells us we should be feeling.

Our reality is frequently not what the world tells us. There are many very real reasons why we find it impossible, to 100% get into the world's idea of Christmas celebrations. Griets, anxieties, stress, burdens. These things are very real. And this year there are many in our community feeling loss. These feelings are not connected to the ho-ho-ho that is the world's gospel.



But these things are very much connected with the Gospel of the coming of Christ.

So we offer you an invitation to join us for a thoughtful evening service on December 20th, 7:00 p.m., at the Côte Church. Especially we would like to invite those for whom grief is fresh. But everyone is welcome.

Stewardship Campaign

Many thanks to all those who returned their pledge forms and who contributed to our "Bust the Deficit" project. Once again we were successful in reaching our goal of \$5,000.00! We have 47 contributors to PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance). Remember that contributing by PAR is a way to regularly support your church and avoids "catch-up" periods. As the church has ongoing commitments every week, the more people on PAR makes the programme more valuable and viable. There is still time to send your commitment in if you have not already done so or, if you prefer, a one-time donation would be appreciated. An added way to support your church is by using Fundscrip.....



Greetings,

We are using Fundscrip to raise money for Hudson Pastoral Charge. By buying gift cards for everyday purchases from a wide array of retail categories such as groceries, gas, home improvement, department stores, restaurants, coffee shops, clothing stores and many more, you can help. The gift cards themselves come from some of Canada's largest retailers. They are sold at face value, but earn rebates for the congregation ranging from 2%- 10% of the purchase price of the cards. A list of participating retailers and their rebate percentages is included in this newsletter. There are also other forms for gift cards that can be used specifically in the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia.

Promotions for the month of December are: Petro-Canada 3%; GAP/Old Navy/Banana Republic 5%; Children's Place 10%; PizzaPizza 12%; Stokes 6%; Ultimate Dining Card = Swiss Chalet, Harveys, East Side Mario, Montanas or Kelsey's 5%; Spafinder 13%.

Do you buy gift cards as employee rewards and/or bonuses? Do you need gifts for that hard-to-buy for person who could choose their own gift by using a gift card? Maybe you're considering it? If so, would you consider purchasing your gift cards through Fundscrip to help us?

Gift cards are such a wonderful product, and buying your gift cards through Fundscrip is a win-win situation. At no additional cost, you get the gift cards you need; and our church will raise much needed funds. The gift cards themselves come directly from the retailer and are the same cards you would purchase if you went directly to the stores to buy them. Buying them this way will save you time, energy, and let you help raise funds.

Please follow up with Mona Van Egmond either at church, at 450-458-7545 or mojoli@msn.com about placing an order by the **13 December** for Christmas gift giving. Thank you in advance for your support.

News from the Outreach Committee.....

We have a couple of Plum Puddings left at \$15.00 each. Call Inga Lawson at 450-424-2893.

Our Christmas fundraiser - Poinsettias and Cyclamens in all colours - place your order with Peggy Shutler at 450-458-1394 for delivery on Sunday December 13th and 20th . Proceeds go towards local organizations.



Donations were sent out to:

Le Pont Bridging, Montreal City Mission, NOVA, La Passerelle, Palliative Care Unit, Concordia Multi-Faith for a total of \$1,100.00.

"The Wyman Outreach Committee takes this opportunity to thank our congregation for all its support throughout the year 2014. We wish you all a safe and blessed year in 2016"

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## Operation Christmas Child

A note received from Lucy Alaimo and the OCC team at Westview Bible Church

*"A huge thank you to everyone who filled boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Your shoeboxes have been sent to the children of Costa Rica, Guinea, Haiti, Nicaragua, Chile & Senegal. Thanks to all your efforts and dedication, we collected 5105 shoeboxes this year. This is great considering we were told that our numbers would decrease significantly in the first year of the new direct ship process. They have only dropped by 77 shoeboxes. I am humbled by how you give of yourselves to the work of this ministry. We are extremely grateful that so many children will receive the gift of hope and the opportunity to learn about God's salvation."*



### Wyman Breakfast Group

The Wyman Group Breakfast will meet again on January 9<sup>th</sup>. More details at a later date.

Geoff. Cobden, Chairman Wyman Breakfast Group

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## Turkey Dinner

On Saturday evening, (Nov. 21) we enjoyed a wonderful Christmas Dinner in Wyman hall. Very special thanks to Carol Laws and Jean Wood, co-ordinators of the event, who worked tirelessly for many weeks to make sure every small detail was checked out. Thanks to all who helped out in many different ways to make this a successful and fun fundraiser for our church - \$3932.90 was raised!

## Our Community Involvement

Many of you may not be aware that your churches are an important facet in the community. We are not isolated in that we open our doors to many groups who rent our premises at Wyman and at the Cote St. Charles Churches. We welcome in our midst Prescolaire Hudson, the Village Quilters, The Bridge Club, Ballet Classes, Women's Way (A.A.), Sparks, and the Rotary Club (and on occasion The Village Theatre) in Wyman Church; and Evergreen Community Church, Yoga Classes, Al-Anon and the Hudson Literacy Clinic at the Cote St. Charles Church. We wish them all a Happy Christmas and our best wishes in 2016.

### **Congregational Meeting**

On January 10, 2016 there will be a special Congregational Meeting after worship. At this meeting, the Futures Committee of the congregation will have an update on the possible development of the land at the top of Stephenson Court and motions of support, in principle, or possibly motions for "sale in the first instance", will be proposed.

### **Annual Reports**

**Annual Reports** must be submitted to the church office by the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 in readiness for the Board meeting at the end of the month and then onwards to the Annual Meeting in February. It would be appreciated, if possible, that the reports be sent by e-mail or on discs. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Income Tax Receipts** - Donations which you wish credited to 2015 must be received by December 31, 2015 .

### **Do you have a cell phone?**

We are adding to our contact information (which is only shared if you give permission) in order to maintain contact with you - because you are important. This means we are gathering cell phone numbers, your preference as to how we use such a number (emergencies only, or anytime at all) and text information. One use of the text information would be for bulk communication in case of emergency communications: for example, the cancellation of Sunday services due to weather or power, etc. Please go to: <http://www.wyman-hudson.ca/cell-contact>



**Merry Christmas to all!**

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