

# THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST **MESSENGER**

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**Have you ever read an email,** text message, book, or letter too quickly and so misunderstood what was being communicated? In our hectic and busy world, there can be instant communication at any time. Not only do computers, cell phones, and tablets facilitate communication, but they increase the expectation of what is a timely response. In the midst of this hurriedness, communicating slowly may not be an option.

“Just wait,” is not a favorite phrase. Our impatient generation’s vocabulary is filled with words like fast, quick, and instant. Whether it is food, service, money or technology – we don’t want to wait. “Please wait,” is not what we want to hear.

**Have you ever examined** a Christmas package anticipating the surprise inside? Ever rattled a present? Waiting to open presents builds anticipation. It is not an easy task for the curious and eager. God’s people waited in anticipation for the promised birth of Christ. This is a special kind of waiting. It means “waiting with hope,” not “wait and see what happens.” It is not just the passing of time. It is anticipation. We have God’s promises to anticipate. We can trust Him. He keeps His promises.



*So, soon they topped the hill, and raced together*

*Over an open stretch of herb and heather  
Exposed. And instantly the whole sky burned  
With fury against them; and soft sudden cups  
Opened in thousands for their blood; and the green slopes  
Chasmed and steepened sheer to infinite space.*

*What candles may be held to speed them all?  
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes  
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.  
The pallor of girls’ brows shall be their pall;  
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,  
**And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.***

Wilfrid Owen

**IF ONLY IT WERE SO...**

**A day will come** when the only fields of battle will be markets opening up to trade and minds opening up to ideas. A day will come when the bullets and the bombs will be replaced by votes, by the universal suffrage of the peoples, by the venerable arbitration of a great sovereign senate which will be to Europe what this parliament is to England, what this diet is to Germany, what this legislative assembly is to France. A day will come when we will display cannon in museums just as we display instruments of torture today, and are amazed that such things could ever have been possible... It is after all a prodigious and admirable epoch, and the nineteenth century will be – let us say it openly – the greatest page in history. As I reminded you just now, all our advances are revealing and manifesting themselves together, in rapid succession:

(Continued overleaf)

The first mention of God's promise of Christ was to Adam and Eve. Imagine that! He had planned His promise before He created the world. A Saviour would come – Christ. Every day God's people waited, reminding themselves that Christ would come just as God had promised.

***They waited. They watched. They hoped.***

He would not come sooner than planned nor later than scheduled. At just the right moment – Jesus came. In His way, in His time. He asks us to wait... with hope. He promises to return. He promises to come into our hearts and he will keep his promise.

From Church Resources for Advent, 2015

## For All the Saints

***I don't believe you will think me irrelevant if I say to you that there is a lot in the Bible that is tough to swallow. Take, for example, Luke's version of the Beatitudes.***

The eminent twentieth century theologian, Paul Tillich, once noted that readers and students of the New Testament often find that it is not the refined argument of Paul or the mystical wisdom of John, but the simple sayings of Jesus, as recorded by the first three evangelists, which are the most difficult to interpret. He was referring primarily to the Beatitudes.

All Saints' Day is a day when we honour those saints who have gone before us and whose memory is precious to us. It is no accident that these challenging words from Luke are chosen for this special day, for it is wrestling with these words that we come to understand the faith of the saints and can renew our efforts to follow in their footsteps.

For a moment, let's imagine how Jesus' Beatitudes might have been received by his disciples applying today's standards and misunderstanding ...

And he taught them, saying ...

***Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

***Blessed are the meek.***

***Blessed are they that mourn.***

***Blessed are the merciful.***

***Blessed are they who thirst for justice.***

***Blessed are you when you are persecuted.***

***Blessed are you when you suffer.***

***Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven.***

Then Simon Peter said, "Are we supposed to write this down?"

And Andrew asked, "Do you expect us to know this?"

And James asked, "Will we have a test on this?"

And Phillip said, "I don't have any paper."

And Bartholomew asked, "Do we have to turn this in?"

And John said, "The other disciples didn't have to learn this."

And Matthew asked, "Can I go to the boys' room?"

And Judas asked, "What does this have to do with real life?"

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of Jesus, "What are your objectives in all of this?"

***And Jesus wept.***

In reality, according to the gospel of Luke, here's what happened...

Jesus had just started his ministry and was gaining in popularity. Large crowds were gathering. He had just picked out his disciples. And in the quiet of the rolling grassy hills of

*the decline in international animosity, the disappearance of frontiers from maps and of prejudices from hearts, a movement towards unity, a softening of manners, an increase in the level of education and a drop in the level of penalties, the dominance of the most literary, that is to say the most humane, languages; everything is moving at once, political economy, science, industry, philosophy, legislation, and is converging upon the same end, the creation of well-being and benevolence, and that for me is the end to which I shall always strive, the extinction of misery inside and of war outside.*

Victor Hugo, International Peace Congress, 1849



northern Israel by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus delivered a sermon to a multitude. Acres and acres of human faces! The crowd represented a cross section of humanity. There were rich and poor, young and old, doubtless of varied races, those who were astute business men and those who were failures. In fact, the crowd that Jesus spoke to that day represented the world in miniature. Yet, as different as they all were, Jesus understood that they were all on the same quest. They were all after the same thing. They all wanted happiness. Well, we are just like them aren't we? Isn't that what we want for ourselves? Isn't that what we ultimately want for our children ... and our grandchildren?

Happiness...

The problem is that many of us really don't grasp the true nature of happiness, and because of that it so often seems to elude us. You see, we think that happiness deals with our outer circumstances. We think that the truly happy man is one who has achieved outward success.

Thus our beatitudes might read:

1. **Blessed is the man who makes a fortune.**
2. **Blessed is he who earns six figures.**
3. **Happy is the man who has a palace in the city and a summer home in the mountains.**
4. **Blessed is he who has won the applause of his peers.**
5. **Blessed is the woman who is recognized as a darling of society.**

While I was mulling these ideas over, I thought of one of Yogi Berra's picturesque sayings. Berra, you may remember, was the New York Yankees catcher back in the 1950's and '60's who in his own garbled way said some profound things, once asserting that *"the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."* In effect, is this not what Jesus is saying to his critics? In the life of faith, keep focused on the main thing. And what is the main thing, but to maintain and nurture our rootedness in God, to embrace life in God's kingdom, a life of compassion and grace, of peace and self-giving love, of servant-hood and hope.

When asked by a group of theological students: "What do you think of the Beatitudes?", E. Stanley Jones, a famous foreign missionary, replied as follows:

***"At first sight, I felt they turn everything upside down. At second sight, I understood that they turned everything right side up. The first time you read them, they are impossible. The second time you read them, nothing else is possible. The beatitudes are not a chart for Christian duty ... they are a charter for Christian liberty!"***

Bob Cowell, Layreader, November 2016

## SULTANA CAKE OR LOAF

- ½ lb butter (250 g or 1 cup)
- 3 eggs
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1 lb. sultana raisins(3 cups)
- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- Lemon essence or juice of a lemon (2-3 tbs.)

*Cover sultanas with water and boil for 5 minutes. Then put in a colander and run cold water over to cool and clean them. Cream butter and sugar, add beaten eggs, then sultanas, flour and essence, baking powder and salt.*

Two hours in fairly slow oven, 250 deg to 325 deg. Fills 2 small loaf pans. I used a big loaf pan at 275 deg, and it took 2 ½ hours.

When cool, I halve it and put the two halves in a freezer. It freezes really well, and can be taken out when needed.

June Mace



## Be Careful What You Wish For

**Wouldn't it be great** to win a million dollars? Well, maybe it wouldn't be so great. Not everyone has the same idea of a great time. One person's wish may be another's nightmare. Take, for example, the story of three men who were sailing together in the Pacific Ocean.

Their vessel was wrecked and they found themselves isolated on an island. They had plenty of food, but their existence was in every way different from what their lives had been in the past. The men were walking by the seashore one day after they had been there for some months and they found an ancient lantern. One man picked it up. As he began to rub it and clean it, a genie popped out and said, "Well, since you have been good enough to release me, I will give each of you one wish."

The first man said, "Oh, that's perfectly marvellous. I'm a cattleman from Alberta and I wish I were back on my ranch." Poof! He was back on his ranch.

The second man said, "Well, I'm a stockbroker, and I wish that I were back in Toronto." Poof! He was back in the TSX with his papers, his telephones and his computers.

The third fellow was somewhat more relaxed about life and actually had rather enjoyed life there on the island. He said, "Well, I am quite happy here. I just wish my two friends were back."

Poof! Poof!

RC

## All In the Details

I had occasion to call an old school friend and asked what he was doing these days.

He replied:

*"I am working on aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminium and steel under a constrained environment."*

I was very impressed... however, on further inquiry, he admitted that he was washing dishes with hot water – under his wife's supervision.

With thanks to JM

Then again, I should pass this on because it worked for me today.

A doctor on TV said that in order to have inner peace in our lives during this political campaign, we should always finish things that we start. Since we all could use more calm in our lives, I looked around my house to find things I'd started and hadn't finished.

So I finished a bottle of Merlot, a bottle of Chardonnay, a bottle of Baileys, a bottle of wum, the remainder of Valium scriptins, an a box a choclutz. Yu has no idr how fablus I feel rite now.

Sned tis to all ur frenz who ned inner peas. An telum u luvum.

With thanks to IP

## Transition



**As time goes by**, we are often eager to proclaim, “Things never change!” A lot of the time, this turns out to be true, certainly in what we perceive of the world around us. Our hopes for “sunny ways” never seem to pan out, as, pointedly accentuated by the quote from Victor Hugo found elsewhere in this MESSENGER. However, as we all know, things do indeed change – or at least some things do! This is evidenced in the picture above, taken just before the church was destroyed by fire in 1992. Written in fading pencil on the back of this picture is one word, “Transition.”

From the uniquely personal standpoint of many of the individuals portrayed, “*transition*” will not begin to describe the changes which have taken place. The passage of time is evident for all to see. Of more relevant consequence for present parishioners is the fact that, a few short weeks after the picture was taken, in the month of November, the Church of Saint John the Baptist burned down.

Several of those pictured in the photograph, taken twenty-four years ago, continue to be involved in the various offices of the parish which support the administration of the church. Most, in fact, volunteer in several capacities, a testament to their constancy, resilience and concern. They join those who organize sales, bazaars and other fund-raising activities. As we try to formulate a slate of officers for the coming year, the need to engage some *new faces* has not proved very productive, a trend echoing that of recent years.

We might also state that “a lot of water has passed under the bridge” since the sunny day pictured above. Certainly the parish, in recent times, has undergone “transition”, little of which can be argued as being for the better as we try to find a viable future. The recent merger *fasco* seems to have left the parish in limbo, in spite of a valiant effort on the part of two congregations and their representatives over almost two years, up to and including the Induction of a new incumbent. The disappointment of the failed negotiations no doubt taught some lessons but, unfortunately, it may also have led to disillusionment or even apathy. With little sign of any cogent encouragement coming from the diocese(?), our present status calls for the engagement of all members of the parish.

David L. Paterson, Editor

## Annual Neologism Contest

### Did You Know?

The English language is constantly picking up neologisms. Recently, for example, computer technology has added a number of new terms to the language. “**webinar**,” “**malware**,” and “**blogosphere**” are just a few examples of modern-day neologisms that have been integrated into our language. The word neologism was itself a brand-new coinage at the beginning of the 19th century, when English speakers first borrowed it from the French *nèologisme*. Its roots, however, are quite old. Ultimately, “**neologism**” comes from the Greek *neos* (meaning “new”) and *logos* (meaning “word”).

Over the years, the **Washington Post** has published the winning submissions to its yearly neologism contest, in which readers are asked to supply alternative meanings for common words. Here are some of the winners.

1. **Coffee** (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.
2. **Flabbergasted** (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. **Lothargio** (n.), A lazy lover
4. **Willy-nilly** (adj.), impotent.
5. **Negligent** (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.
6. **Audity** (n), Something that sounds strange and has financial implications (for Malcolm).
7. **Shelfie** (n.), Someone who takes (and posts on social media) tons of pictures of home improvement projects
8. **Balderdash** (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.
9. **Rectitude** (n.), the formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
10. **Pokemon** (n), a Rastafarian proctologist.
11. **Circumvent** (n.), an opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by Jewish men.
12. **Relaxative** (n), The condition which began when you confused the castor oil for the vodka.
13. **Frisbeetarianism** (n.), The belief that, when you die, your soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.
14. **Accidance** (n.), The process of recovering balance, especially on black ice.
15. **Pulpitation** (n.), A state of acute agitation that develops when talking to someone with fruit fibres between their teeth.
16. **Precrastination** (n.), Not even thinking about starting to do something.

If you have a recipe or anecdote that you would like to share, don't be shy! Send it to the Editor.