

# GRAPEVINE

Holy Trinity Anglican Church  
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**DECEMBER 2008**

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.” –Luke 2:10

Where I lived in Saskatchewan, each year, the local pastors would get together with the Program Coordinators from the extended care homes and the funeral home directors to plan a Christmas Service of Remembrance. The idea was to gather together all of the families of people that had passed away in the past year, and to talk about celebrating their first family Christmas without the person that they had lost. It was, understandably, an emotional time. The names of all of the people who had died would be read out, and family would be encouraged to lay flowers, or light candles, or some such thing, in their memory. A couple of times I remember that a name would be read, and no-one would come forward to light the candle; or no-one would come forward to lay a flower. Now, it could be that the night of the Service of Remembrance had just been a night full of other commitments for those people's family and friends – but I remember wondering, “Isn't there anyone that remembers him?” “Will no-one be missing her this Christmas?”

So often our Christmas-times can be filled with all kinds of commitments, can't they? We decorate the house and find that some of the decorations left over from last year just aren't what they should be, and run out to buy new decorations, and we decorate the house with these new ones. We make plans to see family during the holidays, and we need to make sure that we have our shopping done in time (the joke around our house, growing up, was that Hoskins didn't celebrate Christmas with family until May – and on more than one occasion, even though my father's brother's family lived in Red Deer and us in Rocky Mountain House, less than an hour away, we didn't get together for Christmas until May or even June!). We make plans to watch the Christmas specials on TV, the ones we grew up with and the ones from more recent years that we found helpful to make things feel like Christmas again. We make plans to visit with friends at Christmastime. In the midst of all of the bustle of Christmas, Jesus can sometimes be lost in the shuffle. There are times when the question might well be asked, “Isn't there anyone that remembers Him?”

Now, we won't be holding a special Christmas Service of Remembrance for Jesus. After all, Christmas isn't about Jesus' passing (that's Good Friday), but about His birth. In some ways, Christmas itself is a time of remembrance – remembrance of His birth; remembrance of God's gift to the world of His Son, our Saviour; remembrance of the proclamation of the angels to the shepherds, that Jesus' coming is “good news of great joy for all people.” Christmas is about knowing in our hearts that the news about Jesus is good news; about knowing Him in our hearts; about joining in the song of the angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth!”



The challenge for all of us, this Christmas, is that as we plan time for family and friends; as we make time for shopping and decorations; as we schedule time for Christmas specials on TV; the challenge is that we would take time to celebrate what really makes Christmas itself special. Let's make this Christmas a Christmas of Remembrance, and in remembering let us share the joy of the heavenly messengers at the glory of God, and share in the wonder of the shepherds at the good news that they heard.

May God bless you and your family this Christmas,

Pastor Jonathan

## VESTRY NEWS AND WARDEN'S UPDATE December 2008

This fall was a busy one for vestry, wardens & our pastors.

Jonathan & Stephen have been busy with taking care of regular duties as well as preparing for Christmas, offering the Wednesday evening sessions of Becoming More Like Him, Lord of the Rings on Sundays and working with the Youth.

The Cabinetry in the Altar Guild Room has been completed and is serving us well. It was blessed during the bishop's visit for confirmation in October.

We have made plans to purchase a fridge at a reasonable cost to replace the one in the kitchen that is beyond repair.

We have been getting appraisals for the equipment in the studio that is no longer in use and are negotiating with a buyer.

We are working with our Maintenance Ministry Head Paul Wood to best prioritize and handle maintenance issues. Roof repairs were needed on the southwest corner and were completed. The issues of pigeons enjoying the comforts of our roofs remains. We are costing out solutions.

We have engaged our snow removal contractor (same as last winter) to clear our parking lot when there is 3 cm + of snow accumulation. The Snow removal ministry will work to keep the sidewalks clear.

Graffiti on the west side has been removed. We have met with the Calgary Police Service Community Liaison officer and are looking at ways to engage young people in our community.

Kaz Murayama & Brian McKenzie are working closely on our financial matters each month and are assisting us to develop the budget for 2009 to present at the upcoming AGM.

In regards to our financial situation, our income is down from the budget as of October. We had budgeted for \$167,582 and actual income was \$121,767.79. The offerings for the month of November were good and seemed to have helped us gain some ground, but we are awaiting final numbers from the treasurers. Expenses were up as of October with the budget being \$210,036.30 and the actual being \$219,513.22. However, a lot of work has gone into making Holy Trinity become Property Tax Exempt with the City of Calgary. We have been successful! We are awaiting a refund of prior Property Taxes paid which will change greatly the numbers represented above.

Please never hesitate to contact a member of vestry or a warden, if you wish to discuss anything.

Thank you for your prayerful support of our Vestry, Wardens and Pastors.

May the Peace of Christ be with you during this Christmas season & always.

### UPCOMING SERVICES AT HOLY TRINITY

December 21, 2008	10:00 a.m.	Sunday Service—4th Sunday of Advent
December 24, 2008	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service for people of all ages with A child-friendly message.
	10:30 p.m.	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
December 25, 2008	10:00 a.m.	Christmas Day Service
December 28, 2008	10:00 a.m.	Regular Sunday Service



# THE MARRIAGE COURSE

## How to build a healthy marriage that lasts a lifetime

Starting on Sunday, January 11 from 6:15 pm to 9pm Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Hanson Ranch will once again be offering—*The Marriage Course*. Over seven Sunday evenings couples share a candlelit meal with each other and talk about important issues that often can get swept under the carpet in the rush of daily life. Topics include: recognizing each other's needs, learning to communicate effectively, resolving conflict, healing past hurt, knowing how to make each other feel loved, relating to parents and in-laws, good sex, making time for each other and having fun together.

Privacy as a couple is always respected. There is no group discussion and no requirement to disclose anything about your relationship to anyone else. The setting is welcoming, relaxed and unthreatening.

The course, while based on Christian principles, is very helpful for any couple with or without a Christian faith or church background.

Take a look at what some people are saying about The Marriage Course:  
*"We have further opened our marriage for dialogue and have grown even closer."* Chris from Calgary

*"Absolutely loved this course"* Darlene from Calgary

*"The course has brought many things out in our relationship that have and will continue to enhance our marriage!"* participant from Calgary

For more information or to register for *The Marriage Course* please go to the Holy Trinity web page [www.holytrinitycalgary.org](http://www.holytrinitycalgary.org) and follow *The Marriage Course* link.



## Marriage Preparation Course Coming to Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity offers a Marriage Preparation Course once a year for couple preparing to get married in the next six to eighteen months. This year's course will begin on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:15p.m. and will run for five weeks. Each session will include a candle-lit dinner for two, a video teaching component and an opportunity for you and your fiancé to talk about important things that will help you to plan not only for your wedding day, but more importantly, prepare for your marriage. At Holy Trinity we want to do all we can to build healthy marriages. Weekly sessions include, communication, commitment, resolving anger, keeping love alive and shared values. The cost of the course is \$120.00 per couple and this includes the meals and course booklets.

If you are interested in attending this course, please sign up on the sheet provided in the foyer or register online by clicking on The Marriage Course link on our webpage [www.holytrinitycalgary.org](http://www.holytrinitycalgary.org).



## MINISTRY PROFILE

### Time for Tots is Tops with Moms (and Dads)

By Rob Petkau

Every Tuesday afternoon, a band of pint-sized, drooling, incontinents converges on Holy Trinity's nursery. But that's a good thing, because these high-needs visitors are generally accompanied by their moms.

The church's Parent-Tot Group meets weekly at 1 p.m. in a very relaxed, casual atmosphere.

"We take turns bringing snacks, and we meet in the nursery. We bring in chairs and sit in a circle," says Megan Murayama – a regular attendee who helped organize the initial gatherings.

"The kids play with the toys, and we just sit around and talk. Sometimes we talk in a large group, sometimes we break off into individual conversations. It's a place to hang out and chat with other people at a similar stage of life."

Most of the participants are moms, although a couple of dads have come and are always welcome, says participant-organizer Cindy Hoskin.

"There are a lot of new moms and babies in the church. I noticed when I first started bringing Adrianna to the nursery on Sundays, a lot of parents would stay in the nursery to talk, rather than going back to the Sanctuary for the service," she says. "I think there's a real need to connect with other parents, and talk about parent-related things."

Between six and 10 babies show up at Parent-Tot Group with their moms and/or dads each week.

"We have been having a great turnout," says fellow organizer Karen Taylor, who regularly brings her son Callum to the gatherings. "We've even had a few ladies from within the community join us who do not attend the church."

While most of the children who attend the group are babies, the group is for all kids under age 3.

"I like getting out of the house during the day and being with other moms and dads," says Cindy.

Megan agrees, saying, "I like getting parenting advice from people with babies older than Evan. "I think the kids like coming, too. They don't always interact, but the older babies do play together, and it's fun to watch them."

Although the group is comprised mainly of Christians who meet in a Christian facility, the activities aren't in any way liturgical or religious.

"We don't do any Bible study or anything. That could grow out of it if people want it to, but it's a social activity. Still, it gets people into the building," says Cindy.

The group's first meeting was in October, and they've already arranged their first field trip – an outing to Heritage Park on Dec. 13.

"We want to do more things like that in the future," Megan says.

A core group of participants is now established, but there's always room for more, Cindy stresses, saying, "If we outgrow the nursery, we'll just move to the church hall. It's fun, the snacks are great, most people won't have to drive too far, and best of all, it's free."



## So When Does Worship Begin?

By Pastor Stephen Hambidge

I have been asked that question before, perhaps you have too. Such a question being asked by somebody who is unfamiliar with our church seems perfectly normal. If ever somebody wants to consider coming, they need to know when to arrive; however, what happens when such a question is asked by people who are regular at our church—people who have been coming to our church for years? When does worship begin?

I have come to learn the reason for the question. People are sometimes concerned with our worship services starting “late,” they know that “officially” we state that the starting time is 10am but they feel that in reality our services begin much later. I can understand the confusion as there are times when people arrive at church ten or fifteen minutes after 10am. It is true that sometimes arriving late very likely could be avoided—sometimes we don’t get our act together soon enough on a Sunday morning and before we know it, it is 10am and we haven’t left the house—there were times during my sabbatical that we cut things pretty close. But it is important for us also to recognize that there are times when arriving a bit late is unavoidable—particularly when parents have to get young children ready. Sometimes, things just don’t go according to plan. This is why it is helpful when people leave the last row of chairs in the church empty—it leaves an easy place for any who come in late. I would rather a young family come into church a bit late on a Sunday morning, than for them to feel as though they just couldn’t do that, and then have them decide not to go to church at all. It is true that we can fall into the habit of arriving late, and it is important that we try hard that that doesn’t happen—I think it can say to God and to the church community that *we* come first; however, since we don’t know the circumstances that have led to a person arriving late, it is important for us to extend our graciousness and our understanding to them.



Even this conversation though, does not fully address the question of what time worship begins. People could say that even if people are arriving late, that should not affect when the service starts. This is true. If we say that our service begins at 10am we should begin at 10am; however, it is important for us to ask ourselves the question, “What constitutes worship?” I have heard different answers to this question. Some people believe that the worship begins when people are invited to stand to sing the opening song, while others believe that worship doesn’t begin until the pastor stands up front. I have a problem with such thinking, as it tends to place emphasis on the pastor and takes away the involvement and the ministry of the whole body of believers. At Holy Trinity our custom has been to have our music team lead us in singing at the start of the service. Some people see this part as an optional extra (perhaps this is why some people arrive at ten or fifteen minutes past ten) and if they do, it seems to them as though the service starts late. If the music starts at 10am and the pastor doesn’t welcome the congregation until 10:10 then it *feels* to some as though the service is starting ten minutes late. But I believe that we must broaden our sense of worship. Worship is not just our formal service; in fact, worship is meant to be a part of us all of the time—whether we are in church or not. Worship is all what we offer to God. Our lives are to be worship. Our conversations are to be worship. Our actions are to be worship. Granted, there are times when our worship falls far short of what it could be, but it is important for us to seek to keep God at the centre of our focus.

So when does worship begin at Holy Trinity?--really the moment you walk in the door. Actually, it is my hope that it begins even before you walk in the door. This means that the music that is being played and the songs that the music team are trying to lead us in are very much part of our worship. When the music starts, the service has very definitely started even though one of the pastors may not speak for a number of minutes. Ministry is for the whole Body of Christ—the whole body of believers—whether they are ordained pastors or not. A musician can offer a call to worship as effectively as a pastor can and this is important for us to recognize and embrace. Rather than looking at our watches and thinking that things should get going, let us focus on giving God the honour that he deserves. Let's seek to respect those around us by not distracting them from worship and let us see all what we do here as part of our service of worship. I believe such an understanding will lead each of us to a deeper appreciation of our whole church community and a deeper appreciation of the presence of God. With such an appreciation, I believe our worship will go deeper as we focus ourselves more fully on God. So I invite each person to begin to look at worship with new eyes in the coming months. Let us seek to focus on God and give him the glory that he deserves.



## **Pastors Sharing Ministry**

By Stephen Hambidge

2008 has been quite a year for me. The year started with the arrival of Jonathan, Cindy and Adriana Hoskin to our church as Jonathan took up the position of Assistant Curate at Holy Trinity in the middle of January. It was great to welcome him and his family to our church community after their move from the community of Unity, Saskatchewan. From Jonathan's arrival at the church, time was of the essence as I tried to help him get acclimatized to our church community prior to the start of my sabbatical in the middle of February. During my six months away from working in the parish, Jonathan had the responsibilities that I had carried and he worked at getting settled into life and ministry at Holy Trinity.

In the middle of August, I finished my sabbatical with the relief that I had completed my Doctor of Ministry Dissertation and the satisfaction that my written work had been accepted by the staff at Fuller Seminary. It was then time for Jonathan and me to begin to work together. It has been a good four months. During this time we have gotten to know each other better, we have been able to worship and pray together regularly and have started to understand where we might focus our ministries so that we might be able to complement one another in our ministry at Holy Trinity.

Jonathan and I continue to explore ministry opportunities and we are looking forward to some new initiatives in 2009. While some of these new initiatives will be described in detail at a later date I do want to mention something that will be introduced almost immediately. One of the directions that Jonathan will be focusing on in the New Year will be in the area of Youth Ministry. During the past year Jonathan spent a number of weeks with the Confirmation Class and there were many comments from the young people about how much they enjoyed their time together with him. To help facilitate greater involvement with the youth, Jonathan will be going out with the Youth Group on two Sundays a month during the Sunday service. With Jonathan's added Sunday youth focus I will increase my Sunday responsibilities to include preaching on three Sundays a month while Jonathan preaches one Sunday a month. Rather than simply dividing Sunday ministry as we have been doing for the past few months, we will take on particular ministry focuses. It is our hope that this will bear fruit at Holy Trinity.

I invited you to pray for Jonathan and me in this transition and to continue praying for the ministry of our entire church community. Please pray that we may give God glory in all that we do.

## NEWCOMER PROFILE

### Holy Trinity Feels Like Home for Aussie

By Rob Petkau

If you think work keeps you away from family too much, try John Swift's life on for size.

The Holy Trinity newcomer's wife and children live 16 hours away – by commercial jet – in Sydney, Aus.

“Originally, they came to Calgary with me, but my father had a slight stroke recently, and he can't be on his own anymore, so I took the family back to look after him,” John explains. “My wife comes from a very family-oriented people. We've taken care of members of her family when they came to Australia; we've all been helping each other out. That's what families do.”

John grew up in Sydney, and worked as an owner-manager of Tandy Electronics (Australia's version of Radio Shack) stores Down Under, until the chain was bought out by Woolworth's and the independent franchises discontinued.

He and his wife Vijaya, stepson Vijayan, daughter Keshani and sons Geoffrey and William, moved to Campbell River, B.C. in 2006, where John owned and operated a Source by Circuit City store. He came to Calgary about 10 months later and now runs The Source in Market Mall.

When Vijaya and the kids were here, they lived in a Coventry Hills house, but that's too much space for just John, so he Swiftly sold the home after the family flew south in mid-2008. He now rents a Huntington Hills basement suite from Holy Trinity parishioners Matt and Lillian Thomas.

“They're just fantastic people. I've really lucked out,” he says.

John grew up in the Anglican Church, where he was baptized and confirmed as a child. But he didn't truly embrace Christianity until he was 21, after some significant soul searching after tagging along with a friend on a church winter excursion.

“I looked at my life. I'm not an overly religious person, but I realized that there had been a guiding hand in all the events of my life. I've come to realize that you're placed here to do a certain job,” he explains.

In his late 30s, he took a cross-cultural ministry course, and joined the humanitarian-focused Uniting Church in Australia (similar to the United Church of Canada) to apply it.

“I told them they could send me anywhere they like for a month. They sent me to an orphanage complex in the eastern province of Sri Lanka,” says John.

He made an impression on many of the children in St. John's Orphanage in Batticaloa, including a preschool-aged girl who asked if he'd come back. Offhandedly, he said yes.

“I realized on the plane home that I'd just promised a three-year-old orphan that I was going back to Sri Lanka,” John recalls with a chuckle.

He kept his promise, and then some – returning 18 more times to the orphanage in the next decade and a half. He met Vijaya there – she's Sri Lankan, and was working at the orphanage as a cook. They fell in love and got married, and she moved back to Australia with him.



“She lived in a palm-leaf shack with a sand floor, so needless to say, coming to Australia was a huge event. But she’s adapted incredibly well.”

St. John’s has seen significant improvements since John started his mission trips there. During one of his early visits, he had a generator brought in to provide electricity. He’s also championed numerous facility expansions, so the orphanage now looks after 1,000 children “from nappies to about 16 years old,” in several Sri Lankan villages, operates a school for younger children and a vocational training centre for older ones – as well as the general public.

“My trips to Sri Lanka really put life into perspective. You see one society where it’s survival from one day to the next, and over here, we’ve got too much. You start to resent the false values that are here,” he says.

“There, it’s a Hindu society, so when people become Christians, it’s a real conversion where their faith is really strong. As a result, their church group is incredibly strong.”

John hopes to head back to Sri Lanka sometime in 2009, and he’s open to talking with any Holy Trinity members interested in helping. In the meantime, he’ll continue to work long hours at his store, and phone his family every two or three days to stay connected.

And although he only started attending Holy Trinity this fall, the church helps him feel at home in Calgary.

“Everyone here has made me feel welcome. I was walking out of the church one Sunday, and Jonathan (Hoskin, associate pastor) asked me what I was doing for Thanksgiving. We don’t celebrate Thanksgiving in Australia, so I said nothing. So they invited me to dinner at their house. It was wonderful,” he says.

“This church is like a family. It helps keeps me going at this stage.”

He’s not sure how long this stage will last. He goes back to Australia three or four times a year, and figures he’ll eventually move back permanently.

“I was on a three- to five-year plan and I’m now halfway through that term. But the reality is I’ve got a good business here, and there’s not much for me back there,” he says.

“I used to make a lot of plans, but now I don’t make so many. I know I’m in Canada for a reason; it may not have manifested itself yet, but it will.”

On the Web: <http://www.orphanage.org/stjohns/index.html>



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting for the year ending 2008 will be held after church on Sunday, January 25, 2009 preceded by a potluck lunch. At this meeting we will review reports from the various ministries within our church, review and pass a budget for the coming year, elect new members to serve on our Parish Vestry (Board) and spend some time looking ahead to God’s call to us for the future. Everyone from the parish is encouraged to attend this important meeting and is encouraged to continue to pray for our church as we seek God’s direction for 2008. Ministry Heads are asked to have end-of-year Ministry Reports into the church office by Sunday, January 11th so that we can compile and distribute them to each member of the church.



## A LETTER FROM OUR MISSIONS PARTNER—DAVE MATTHEWS

Dear Holy Trinity,

Have you ever heard the term “the rug was pulled out from under them”? Well recently I have felt this in my own life. This year I have held the privilege of working along side some strong individuals, who seek after God with their lives and inspire me to do the same. It is a very encouraging atmosphere. Yet throughout this year I have been met with disappointment as the missions trips that I have scheduled have taken turns for the worse... or simply have collapsed.

Originally this year was to hold missions to China, as well as Sierra Leone, and perhaps even to Belize. The focus of these missions was to range from teaching the bible, to mercy ministry oriented tasks. Yet as the year has progressed each mission has been met with upset. The mission to Belize didn't go through due to price hikes in the airfare that made the trip double what it had cost the year previously. The mission to China has been indefinitely postponed, with the vague possibility for redemption in the spring, due to the government cracking down on Christianity during the Olympics. Lastly the mission to Sierra Leone has met frustration after frustration as the different organizations I was to work with have gone through “serious restructuring”. While I can be glad I was not in either of these last two nations when these problems began, it is still extremely disappointing that neither of the missions went through.

With this in mind I have applied myself to the continued task I have in front of me; teaching in the School of the Bible, enjoying the opportunity to share with and encourage young Christians to continue to seek God with their lives. This year (school) has not been what I intended when I set out in August, or was planning back in the early spring, but I continue to cling to God in that it is he who is directing me in this time and calling me to minister to the nations.

While I cannot physically be in these nations at this time I am still consigned to pray for these peoples. Please pray with me in this time for specifically these people. While we often may talk of prayer for a location what we really desire is prayer for a people group. A nation is made up of people. A government is made of up people and ideas. Neither ideas, nor land, are saved. It is individuals that God cares about, and people that he died on the cross for. With this in mind please join with me in prayer for specifically the Chinese, Sierra Leonian, and Belizian peoples. If you have time you can research these people on the internet and find out more about their cultures and history, and perhaps pray for them more effectively.

I will be back in Calgary briefly for a short time around Christmas and hope to see you all then. God bless.

Yours In Christ,

David Matthews



*Dave Matthews is a member of Holy Trinity, Calgary currently serving with Youth With a Mission. If you would like to send Dave an email you can do so by sending it to: [dcrmtot@hotmail.com](mailto:dcrmtot@hotmail.com)*

## Pre-Authorized Donations Authorization for Bank Withdrawal

**Please check one:**

- I hereby authorize The Synod of the Diocese of Calgary, Anglican Church of Canada (the "Diocese") to start withdrawing the amount indicated below from my bank account and transfer it to my congregation (which is registered with the Diocese to use this service) on or about the 16th day of each month beginning with the month shown below until I cancel or change my instructions in writing.
  
- I hereby authorize The Synod of the Diocese of Calgary, Anglican Church of Canada (the "Diocese") to change the monthly withdrawal from my bank account in accordance with the information provided below.
  
- I hereby cancel my authorization for The Synod of the Diocese of Calgary, Anglican Church of Canada to withdraw a monthly amount from my bank account on behalf of my congregation.

**Please return the completed form (signed and dated) and any subsequent instructions to the parish official that is administering this program (usually the Envelope Secretary or Parish Treasurer).**

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