

December 15, 2023

Dear friends:

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11)

After the loss of a beloved elder, **Morgan Stewart**, “joy” may not be front of mind for the St. David’s community this weekend. But Jesus promises that, even in times of sorrow, his joy will be with us. As we light the Candle of Joy this Sunday, may you experience the fullness of God’s joyful presence. We give thanks that Morgan passed away peacefully after a long and fulfilling life that touched many of us (memorial arrangements to follow next week).

Sunday 17 Dec, Advent 3 (Joy)

Our **service of “lessons and carols”** this Sunday will be unlike any other at St. David’s in recent years. We are joined by guest vocalist [Marcus Mosely](#), accompanied by our Music Director, Monique Creber, and a St. David’s choir that has been hard at work preparing for a joyful service. Marcus has deep roots in the Gospel tradition and he will lead us in songs and carols as we hear the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke. Be sure to arrive before 10:30 a.m. to warm up with John Lennon’s “Happy Xmas” and you’re all invited stay for coffee and conversation after the service. Friends and family members are warmly welcomed.



The Past Week

It's been another full week for the St. David's community!

Last Saturday 9 Dec, the St. David's Choir joined other North Shore church choirs and the Cypress Singers, members of the Creber family and the Lions Gate Sinfonia, for the annual **Sinfonia Family Christmas** at West Vancouver United Church. We have received wonderful reports of the concert and offer special thanks to Monique and the St. David's choir for all the rehearsing that made this such a joyful community event.

Last Sunday (Advent 2) we lit the Candle of Peace and celebrated the sacrament of Holy Communion. Highlights of a lovely musical program included Monique's solo "Grown-up Christmas List" and two fine Advent hymns on the organ by Sam Balden. In our Scripture readings, we heard the Prophet Isaiah offering "Comfort, O Comfort my people" and John the Baptist preparing "the way of the Lord, make his paths straight". I offered some thoughts on how each of us might "prepare the way" this Advent season – I'm enclosing a copy of my Reflection in case you missed it. Thanks to all who participated in our service and to Rev. Dal McCrindle for his assistance with the serving of Communion.

On Monday 11 Dec, after many hours of planning, buying and wrapping, with Mary Hammond, Sandi McIntosh-Kocaba delivered the **Christmas Hamper** to a family sponsored by St. David's (a single mom with two children), introduced to us by Family Services of the North Shore.



Sandi writes: The folk at St. David's are so amazing and SO generous! Together, we were able to raise a little over \$885 and every cent was put toward the Christmas hamper for our sponsored family. That meant that we were able to fulfil not just one but all of the 3 choices that each of the three family members had made, as well as doubling the required \$50 per person gift card for food. We could also add some gift cards for a nice meal at the White Spot and for other more personal gifts. Of course, there were lots of special edible treats included too, to fill the 110 litre hamper. Let us hope that our family will enjoy everything as much as we have enjoyed putting everything together! Thank you again for being such wonderful, generous-hearted people. God is so good to us and it is such a pleasure to be able to share God's bounty and love."

Special thanks to Sandi and Mary, and to Leanne for her encouragement and advice, for bringing Christmas joy to a North Shore family in need.

On Tuesday, the **Pastoral Care Team** met for their Christmas potluck lunch in the Lounge. We shared some of the joys and sorrows of this past year and looked forward in hope towards Christmas and New Year. Special thanks were given to Becky Knapton, our compassionate Chair of Pastoral Care, and to all the team members who have brought support and comfort to those in need in the St. David's community. It is an essential ministry for which we are so grateful.



Later on Tuesday, the **St. David's Board** gathered for an end-of-year meeting, led by Cay Holbrook (Chair) and Mandy Zou (Vice Chair). We will write more fully later about the decisions reached on budget and staffing but are pleased to share the joyful news that Leslie Buerschaper's contract, as Coordinator, Community Outreach and Partnerships, was extended to Dec 31, 2024; Cay Holbrook confirmed that, subject to re-election at the AGM in March/April 2024, she is willing to serve as Board Chair for another year; and that, God willing, I will continue as your Minister until June 2025. A tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work has been done by Jim Morrison, our Treasurer, and Mary Hammond and Tudor Weeks, co-Chairs of the Ministry and Personnel Committee, on a provisional budget and position descriptions and we will be ending the year in a stronger financial position than expected with a Board leadership and staff team committed to serving you in the new year.

Yesterday evening, Dec 14, Leslie and I led a **Quiet Christmas service** in a beautifully decorated Sanctuary, enchanted by the harp music of [Rebecca Blair](#) and the piano accompaniment and singing of Monique. For the first time, we also heard the angelic voice of Nadia Hamian, who sang a solo verse of "Away in a Manger" in French. We read some scripture texts, said prayers, and lit candles in memory of loved ones whose loss we mourn. Thank you to our readers – Tudor, Nadia and Becky – and particularly to our musicians Rebecca and Monique for a meaningful service. We felt the comforting presence of God in our midst. (Thanks to Melinda Shard for the photo of Rebecca playing a seasonal medley at the end of the service.



The Week Ahead

Tomorrow, Saturday 16 Dec, Leslie invites you to join her at 10:00 a.m. in the Quiet Room to watch **The Chosen's** Christmas Episodes, The Shepherd: The Story of the First Christmas and the Messengers.

As noted, Marcus Mosely joins us for Sunday worship at 10:30 a.m. for a **Service of Lessons and Carols**, gospel style. Come and experience the joy of the Christmas season in this last service before Christmas Eve.

A new highlight of the Christmas Season at St. David's is the **Magic of Christmas: Let There Be Peace** this Monday 18 Dec, at 7:00 p.m. This is a ticketed event, hosted by the Creber family, that features the St. David's Choir and local church choirs, and special musical guests and readers. The event is sponsored by St. David's and we're pleased to extend a warm welcome to all attending this joyful Christmas concert. Ticket information can be found [HERE](#) and members of the St. David's community may use a special promo code SDUC. If you feel able to volunteer with parking, ticketing or ushering please contact Monique or Cay Holbrook this Sunday. We're again attaching a poster with details of the event.

On Thursday 21 Dec, at 7 p.m. in the Lounge, the **St. David's Bell Choir** holds its final practice before the **Christmas Eve services** (10:30 a.m., a service for all ages, and 10:00 p.m. for a traditional Candlelight Service). We're pleased to let you know that Jaine Annette Griffith, born March 13, 2023 (great granddaughter of Grace Osborn, daughter of Garrett and Justine) will be baptized during the morning service.

We hold the Stewart and Koeman families and friends in our prayers at this time and we hope that they, and you, may experience holy joy in the days ahead, as we await the coming of the One Who is Among Us, here and present in our lives, and yet still coming – with love and blessings,

Philip

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Creber Music presents


The Magic of Christmas
Let There Be Peace

December 18, 2023 @ 7pm
St. David's United Church

TICKETS: [MagicofChristmas2023.eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/magic-of-christmas-2023-tickets-70448421211)

Hosted by
Monique Creber
Michael Creber
Michelle Creber

With special guests
Natalie Sharp, Toby Verchere
Mara Ayque, Philip Francis
Leslie Buerschaper



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