

## Pastor's Ponderings...(or in this case Bill's Introspection)

### LISTENING TO GOD IN TIMES OF CHOICE

Bill Kingston

Similar to other husbands of choir members at my home church, I sometimes sit in the Church library reflecting or socializing before the service begins. Some time ago, while sitting there, I decided to go through the bookshelves; I was not looking for a book in particular but searching for something that might captivate my attention. During this process, I came across a book entitled *Listening to God in Times of Choice: The Art of Discerning God's Will* by Gordon T. Smith.

I felt this would be helpful for me to discern God's will as I continue my studies at Wycliffe College. I brought the book home and delved into it. While I found it interesting as it applies to me, I also saw that it could be helpful to all of us at Christ Church St. James as we go through this interregnum period searching for a new minister. With this in mind, I thought I would try to share my thoughts with a synopsis of the book.

In Chapter 1, "Dancing with God," Smith discusses decision-making as part of life. Every day, we face choices big and small, and each decision makes a difference and shapes our lives and those we love. We make decisions in our work, in our church, in our homes, and in all of these situations, we need the wisdom of God and a sense of His direction. We all desire to choose well and to do what is right primarily because we also fear the consequences of poor decisions.

These days, we live busy lives, and change is constant. However, it does not make sense for a Christian to live with indecision or continuous anxiety because the Bible is clear that God longs to guide us and give us assurance about our future. This is why developing the art of discernment is necessary to live a Christian life. So, how do we discern? According to Gordon Smith, discernment comes with growth in wisdom and maturity, and he offers two different views on divine guidance.

The first view is called the *blueprint school*. This concept sees God as having a perfect plan for each person's life and in determining His will. The focus is on external signs and counsel and looking for what is often called "open doors."

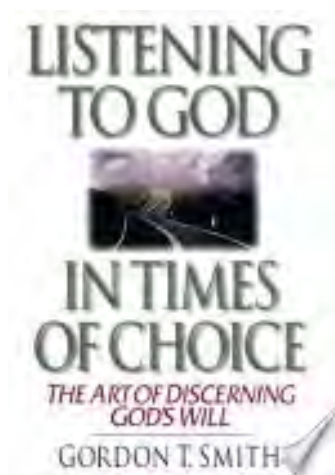
The second view is called *wisdom school*. The central belief here is that God does not expect His people to look for signs and open doors or even listen to little voices in their heads; instead, it's through scripture that our minds are renewed as we grow in wisdom and become capable of making good decisions.

We know that God is omnipresent, and He does speak, and we can hear and respond to his prompting. Throughout scripture, God is present in times of choice. The Bible affirms that God is a shepherd, and he guides. Noah was guided to build the ark, Abraham to go to Canaan, and Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." God spoke through a donkey, and as we study the lives of the apostles, we find many examples of them being guided by the work of the Spirit. The whole book of Acts is about God directing, guiding and prompting. Philip was led by an angel when he encountered the Ethiopian, Paul was led to Damascus and Peter, in a dream, was advised to go to the house of Cornelius.

However, the question remains: can we, as twenty-first-century urban Christians, also receive clear direction from God? If so, it is because of Pentecost. This is when the Spirit of God was granted to the church and each believer. The Spirit rebukes, corrects and convicts of sin, consoles, comforts, brings encouragement, guides, directs and reveals the mind of God.

So, when and how does God speak? How can we tap into His Spirit? Gordon Smith suggests the most helpful place to begin is with the principle of friendship with God. We cannot control or manipulate God, but we can pray for help with our choices, and He will guide us if we are listening to Him.

I learned from the book that we should stay tuned.



## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Dear Church family,

Greetings from the youth and family ministries corner! It is always great to begin a fresh new calendar year. For one thing, new beginnings present opportunities to start afresh with a new zeal to do better than what has gone before. For another, a new beginning gives us a chance to embrace new challenges and adventures. There is indeed something hopeful and promising about the opportunity of a fresh start. Throughout the Bible, we find instances of God's promises to do something new in the lives of God's people and for God's Kingdom here on earth.



*“...I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.” Isaiah 43:19 – God’s Word*

I can very much resonate with these Words, as related to youth and family ministry in general at CCSJ, and as we begin a new calendar year. I am excited about the opportunities that are presented to us as we continue to journey together in Christ. I anticipate what God has in store!

## Upcoming Activities

### Sunday Mornings

Our children and youth ministry classes are currently journeying through the Bible from Genesis to learn about God's wonderful story of love, salvation and reconciliation. At the Youth Ministry, we are following a curriculum which allows the youths to creatively express their interpretation of each Bible story and relate these ancient stories to their present reality. Join us on Sunday mornings as we learn about God's Word in creative and interactive ways.



## Bread Tuesdays

Dear Youths, your helping hands are wanted!



Join us on our monthly Bread Tuesdays for a time of serving and fellowship. We have dinner, fellowship, games, and sort/bag breads for the CCSJ Foodbank.

Our next Bread Tuesday is on **February 20**. Upcoming Bread Tuesday events are **March 19**, and **April 16**.

The Bread Tuesdays is an excellent opportunity for our youths to serve, while forming friendships.



Remember  
to bring a  
friend.



## Messy Church



Our Multi-generational family program (also known as Messy Church) happens on the first Sunday of the Month. The February Messy Church is scheduled for February 4, from 4PM to 6PM. Our theme for the Month of February is on King Solomon. We get to learn more about how wise he was through God's blessing.

Everyone is welcome, whether families or individuals; young or old. Families who are not able to make it to Church every Sunday morning with their little ones are welcome. And any youth who is

interested in helping out with games and crafts should let me know. Your presence, participation, and help would be most appreciated.

## Pioneer Camp - Radiate Youth Retreat

The youths will be heading northwards in the weekend of February 9-11 for the annual Ontario



Pioneer Camp Radiate Youth Retreat. The Retreat offers an opportunity for young people to "encounter Jesus, grow in their understanding of what their purpose is in Jesus Christ, and to grow in the understanding of what their identity is in Jesus Christ." There will be a variety of different outdoor and indoor activities and experiences offered throughout the weekend including snow sports, tubing, snowshoeing, campfire, games room, cake decorating, etc. Your

prayers and support for a successful weekend of retreat are welcome.

For more information on the Family and Youth program at CCSJ, contact: Maureen, Youth Pastor, at [ccsj.youth.group@gmail.com](mailto:ccsj.youth.group@gmail.com) or 416-994-7375

Follow us on Facebook CCSJ Youth Group and Instagram @ccsj\_youth\_group to stay in touch.

## Where have all the pastors gone, long time passing?"

A recent Gallup poll in the USA noted that 53% of clergy are seriously considering quitting ministry this year. 53%! Additionally, the average age of the clergy is 59. Fewer men and women are 'signing up' for service, which ultimately means many congregations will not have a pastor once their current pastor retires or packs it in.

Interesting times. I don't have the stats for Canada, but it will not surprise us if they reflect some of the same trends.

Given that, this little check list may be worth a glance or two. Here goes:

Things to know about those ministering to us at CCSJ:

1. They love God and you a lot.  
(Be mindful.)
2. They are painfully limited human beings.  
(Be realistic.)
3. They probably have a pretty low view of their "performance".  
(Be kind.)
4. They wish they were better preachers.  
(Be awake.)
5. They really do want God's best for you and your family.  
(Be open-hearted.)
6. Their work knows no time or locational boundaries.  
(Be patient.)
7. They hear much more negative information than positive.  
(Be encouraging.)
8. They have chosen a vocation in which few remain.  
(Be praying.)
9. They have chosen a highly leadership-intensive call.  
(Be lead-able.)
10. They need help.  
(Be available.)
11. Their God-given vision is bigger than themselves and the church.  
(Be faith-filled.)
12. They want to personally meet all the needs but know they can't.  
(Be understanding.)
13. They are going to say some dumb things every now and then.  
(Be forgiving.)



**Where have all the pastors gone, long time passing?" (cont'd)**

14. They are greatly encouraged by your faithfulness.

(Be there.)

15. They are passionate for God's Word to be made practical to you.

(Be hungry.)

16. They long for church to be your spiritual oasis.

(Be loving.)

17. They dream for your and your family's spiritual health.

(Be receptive.)

18. They need to hear that you prayed for them.

(Be interceding.)

19. They're just regular people.

(Be real.)



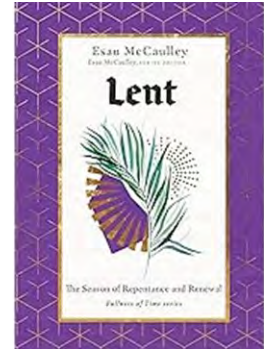
## January 2024 From the Library

We are just a couple of weeks before Ash Wednesday February 14 and the beginning of Lent.

Lent is one of the key seasons of the church year. It is a time in which we repent, (meaning change direction) and are renewed to begin again.

“Lent, then is about turning away from our sins and toward the living God.

A season dedicated to repentance and renewal should not lead us to despair; it should cause us to praise God for his grace. Central to Lent is the idea that we need this kind of renewal consistently throughout our lives.” (from *Esau McCauley in Lent: the season of Repentance and Renewal*)

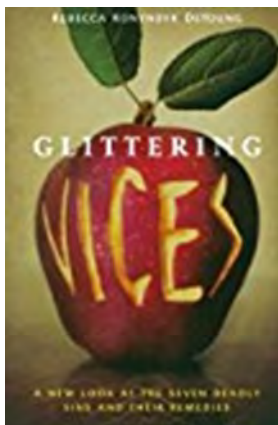


Lent can be a time of fasting- in order to listen to God more clearly- or a time in which we choose to give particular space to growing in our spiritual lives. This can be aided by learning from the wisdom of those who have come before, by following a daily reading plan specifically considering Lent or by learning more about growing into a deeper relation with God through topics you feel you want to understand better.

A couple of books that I would recommend that fit with the idea of repentance are by Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung I found them useful and helpful when I read them

### **Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and their Remedies**

Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung



Gifts from the desert: the origins and history of the vices tradition – Envy: feeling bitter when others have it better – Vainglory: image is everything – Sloth: resistance to the demands of love – Avarice: I want it all – Anger: holy emotion or hellish passion? – Gluttony: feeding your face and starving your heart – Lust: smoke, fire, and ashes. Contemporary culture trivializes, psychologizes, or even dismisses the seven vices as if they have no serious moral or spiritual implications. *Glittering Vices* clears that misconception with a brief history of the vices and an informative chapter on each "deadly sin." Readers gain practical understanding of how the vices shape our culture and why gluttony, lust, sloth, and others are, in fact, incredibly

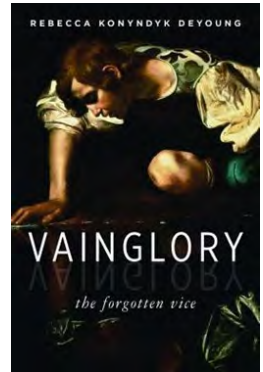
destructive. –(from publisher description)

## Library (cont'd)

### **Vainglory: The Forgotten Vice** by Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung

Glory, goodness, and getting attention – Varieties of vainglory – Vainglory's roots: pride and fear – Honesty required: hypocrisy and habituation – Making a mockery of magnificent virtue – Practices of resistance, places of encouragement – Sharing the (lime)light: – Grace, formation, and community.

Chances are, says Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, that we all suffer from vainglory – a keen desire for attention and approval. Although contemporary culture has largely forgotten about vainglory, it was on the original list of seven capital vices and is perhaps more dangerous than ever today.



In *The Forgotten Vice* DeYoung tells the story of this vice, moving from its ancient origins to its modern expressions. She defines vainglory, gives examples from popular culture, explores motivational sources, and discusses other vices associated with it such as hypocrisy and boasting.

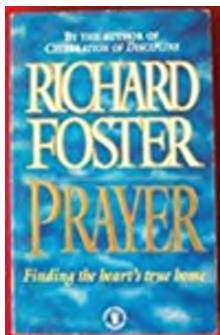
After exposing the many ways in which vainglory can rear its ugly head, she explores personal spiritual practices that can help us resist it and community practices that can help us handle glory well. (from publisher description)

If you would like to understand Prayer better, one classic is Richard Foster's

### **Prayer: Finding the Heart's true home.**

Written over 30 years ago, it has had repeated editions along the way. Marabelle recommended this, suggesting that it would be a good one to feature in *Walking in the Way for Lent*.

This excerpt, from the first page of the book says it all.



God has graciously allowed me to catch a glimpse into his heart, and I want to share with you what I have seen. Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. He mourns that we do not draw near to him. He grieves that we have forgotten him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence. And he is inviting you – and me – to come home, to come home to where we belong, to come home to that for which we were created. His arms are stretched out wide to receive us. His heart is enlarged to take us in.

For too long we have been in a far country: a country of noise and hurry and crowds, country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation.



## Library (cont'd)

We do not need to be shy. He invites us into the living room of his heart, where we can put on old slippers and share freely. He invites us into the kitchen of his friendship, where chatter and batter mix in good fun. He invites us into the dining room of his strength, where we can feast to our heart's delight. He invites us into the study of his wisdom, where we can learn and grow and stretch ... and ask all the questions we want. He invites us into the workshop of his creativity, where we can be co-laborers with him, working together to determine the outcomes of events. He invites us into the bedroom of his rest, where new peace is found and where we can be naked and vulnerable and free. It is also the place of deepest intimacy, where we know and are known to the fullest.

### **The Key and the Door**

The key to this home, this heart of God, is prayer. Perhaps you have never prayed before except in anguish or terror. It may be that the only time the Divine Name has been on your lips has been in angry expletives. Never mind. I am here to tell you that the Father's heart is open wide — you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps you do not believe in prayer. You may have tried to pray and were profoundly disappointed ... and disillusioned. You seem to have little faith, or none. It does not matter. The Father's heart is open wide — you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps you are bruised and broken by the pressures of life. Others have wronged you, and you feel scarred for life. You have old, painful memories that have never been healed. You avoid prayer because you feel too distant, too unworthy, too defiled. Do not despair. The Father's heart is open wide — you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps you have prayed for many years, but the words have grown brittle and cold. Little ever happens anymore. God seems remote and inaccessible. Listen to me. The Father's heart is open wide — you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps prayer is the delight of your life. You have lived in the divine milieu for a long time and can attest to its goodness. But you long for more: more power, more love, more of God in your life. Believe me. The Father's heart is open wide— you too are welcome to come higher up and deeper in.

If the key is prayer, the door is Jesus Christ. How good of God to provide us a way into his heart. He knows that we are stiff-necked and hard-hearted, so he has provided a means of entrance. Jesus, the Christ, lived a perfect life, died in our place, and rose victorious over all the dark powers so that we might live through him. This is wonderfully good news. No longer do we have to stand outside, barred from nearness to God by our rebellion. We may now enter through the door of God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.

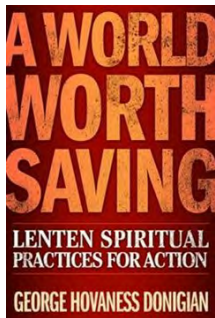
There are a number of other resources on prayer available in the library as well as other topics. For example Foster's **Celebration of Discipline**.

## Library (cont'd)

Librarians' contributions

### Grace

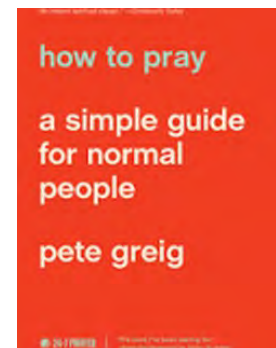
Joyce Huggett's book **God's Springtime** gives us prayers and readings for Lent. For each day there is a printed Bible passage, a comment and a prayer or meditation. One purpose of the book is to help us to pray more effectively. Her explanations are interesting. She explains the meaning of the word "lent" This book can be used by groups.



**A World Worth Saving** by George Hovaness Donigian is a 6-week study to help us with our prayer life and to encourage us to become more responsive to those around us by reacting with love and compassion. We can make a difference in the world. When we serve others, our actions show God's love to the world.

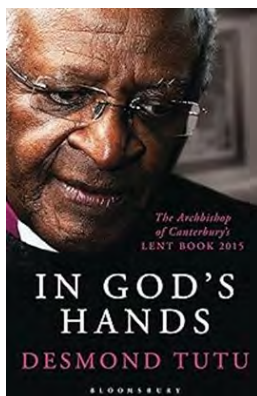
### Katherine

Whenever I think of Lent I think of a quiet time for prayer and meditation. A time for us to be closer to God. Personally, I'm not really good at meditation or prayer, but I've recently stumbled across this book, **How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People**. From flipping through it, I've got the impression that Pete Greig writes in a way that is more like having a conversation with a gentle push towards how I can better pray and be close to my God. It will definitely be on my reading pile for Lent this year.



### Jacquie

My contribution for lent is "**In God's Hands**" by Desmond Tutu. He was the primate of the Anglican Church of South Africa and head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I have long found Desmond Tutu to be inspirational in that after all he had endured living for so long under apartheid rule and for much of his childhood in poverty and spending his adult life fighting for the rights of the oppressed, he remained unwavering in his faith and his belief that we are ALL loved by God and above all that there is always hope. This "Lent Book of 2015" is an exploration of that love, written towards the end of his life when he has had plenty of time and experience for reflection and understanding



## Library (cont'd)

There are several possibilities to choose from as guides on with our Lent journey. These are on display in the library and can be signed out in the library

### Daily readings for each day in Lent Some older authors to get to know

Ignatian Workout for Lent

Journeying through lent with Luke (or with Mark)

Lent and Easter Wisdom from G.K. Chesterton

Lent and Easter Wisdom from Henri Nouwen

Lent and Easter Wisdom from Thomas Merton

Lent for Everyone by N.T. Wright (Matthew, Mark & Luke)

Lent with Evelyn Underhill

### Art Related

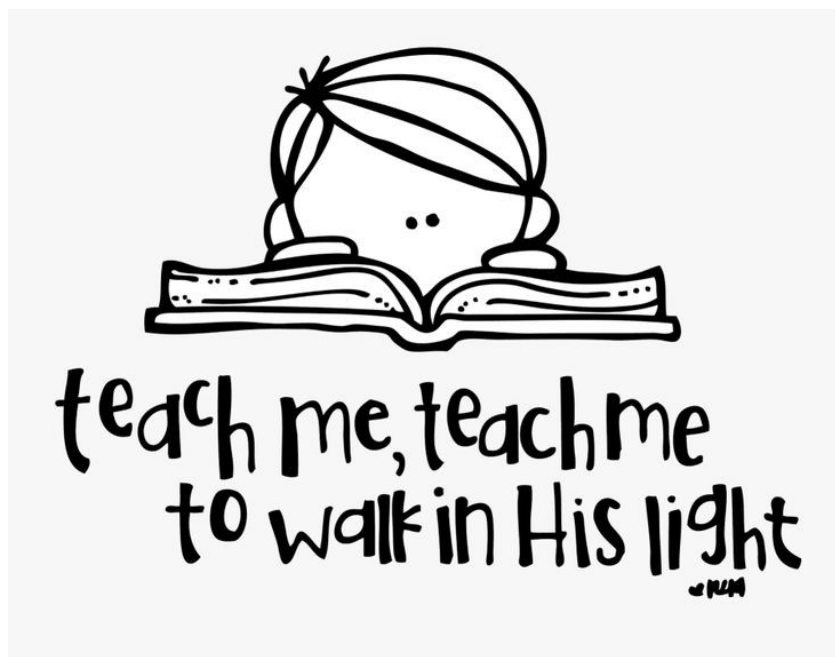
We have a number of Art books on the shelves under 246 with artwork related to Lent & Easter themes

### Crossings: Stations of the Cross: A Journey to Easter Arts Exhibition

is a compilation of the art out door displays from Imago in 2022

**Steve Bell's Pilgrim Year Series:** a set of 7 booklets cased together.

A Journey of reflection, poetry, song on the liturgical seasons and a 2 CD set of songs allows listening as well as reading the songs - Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter might be relevant now.



CCSJ and



## “The Coldest Night of the Year”:

Partnering with our friends at  
The Dale

We know life is hard, if not brutal for many of our sisters and brothers.  
Many of them are literally minutes away from our  
doorstep, near Queen West and Cowan.

“How can we help?” is the heartbeat of CCSJ.

One way is to join us on SUNDAY MARCH 10th, 2pm to  
**worship** with our friends and those they serve at The Dale (201 Cowan Ave, just  
south of Queen St. W.)

join in our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Prayer Walk** around their neighborhood

**Contribute** financially to ‘*help our friends help others*’.

**Invite friends to ‘sponsor’ you.**

Sound good? We can car-pool from here, 1:30pm.

If keen, please sign up in the church foyer.

Contact Bruce if you have any questions ([rbsmith055@gmail.com](mailto:rbsmith055@gmail.com))



Caroling with our friends at the Dale and our  
Amazing Special Meal Prep Team





## They Came for Refuge....Now Life is Getting Much Sweeter.

Eight years ago, CCSJ members 'stepped up', rolled up their sleeves, opened their hearts and their wallets to sponsor Peyman and Mehrhoush. They had fled their home country due to persecution, having become followers of Jesus. For years they were 'housed' in a tent, sponsored by the UN in Turkey.

Since arriving in Canada, there was no turning back for them. Both committed to learning English; they welcomed opportunities for employment; they soon became a family of four; they also planted a church in their own apartment for Iranian believers and frequently found ways to evangelize in that community.

In August of 2023, they took a huge step of faith in launching their own business:

***Unique Pastry.***

***4750 Yonge St., Unit 160.***

I popped in their recently and I can tell you that Mehrnoush is quite the baker! It is well worth the trip, be it to stock up for a party, a household event, or just to enjoy a treat. But even more importantly, any visit from CCSJ will encourage them. Though living a distance now from 194 Park Lawn, their hearts are here. They have already expressed hope in joining us again this coming summer at Camp Koinonia, if at all possible.

We give God praise for the privilege of being there for this inspirational, devout couple, and we pray our Lord will grant them great success in this "unique" endeavor.

Bruce



## The Welcome Mat is Down and the Kettle is on!

Officially or otherwise, it is always a plus to extend a sincere and joy-filled 'welcome' at the door on a Sunday morning. Just as we would do in our own homes, the basic courtesy can make a world of difference, ...perhaps even an eternal difference!

Research shows that most visitors will have made up their mind in the first two minutes whether they come again or not. Some might assume people return because of the sermons; others might believe that the quality of the worship team cause people to come back for more.

But actually it is probably the small, almost missed things that will decide whether we will have the privilege of welcoming the same visitors next week.

Take 'hotel doorman' theory:

There is value having someone stand at the front of a hotel even when the door can be automatically opened. It is the smile, the reassurance, the knowledge of taxis, the umbrella, and the small comments that will make a guest's stay that more memorable.

These are the small, intangible things that are so hard to put a value on but worth everything when a visiting a church for the first time.

We are created to be social animals, and those small human moments of connection are what keep us coming.

John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Church used to say, ***"People come to church for many years reasons but stay for only one — relationship."***

It takes a lot of courage to turn up to church when you don't know what you believe, and everyone seems to know someone else.

If we can help bring a smile and ease the tension a little, it seems the sermon has already begun.

*Submitted by Marabelle McTavish; written by Andrew Stewart-Darling (UK); edited by "Walking in the Way".*



# A Quick Look Back

The Hobby Show Was A Huge Hit!



Our Men's Breakfast  
Downstairs &  
Women's Breakfast  
Downstairs





## A Quick Look Back (cont'd) Celebrating

Celebrating Grace at Circle of Friends



TNT (Tuesday Night Together)



Birthday Celebrations at TNT for Tendo and Eunice



A Great Time at Celebration Café



New Years Eve at at Café Church





## A Quick Look Back (cont'd)..The Joy of Giving

Alderwood Church Generosity

(turned into )

Toy Mountain at CCSJ



Winter Clothing for  
Our Many New  
Friends



CCSJ Youth Pitching in At  
Bread Sorting Day. Giving  
to both the Food Bank Vol-  
unteers and the Food



Freddy, A Diligent  
Food Bank Volunteer



## A Quick Look Back (cont'd)

Caroling with our friends at the Dale Ministry (1&2)

#1



#2



CCSJ team Prepares 100 Meals for the Dale

#3



#4 Many of our CCSJ Friends provided Winter Wear For People in Need



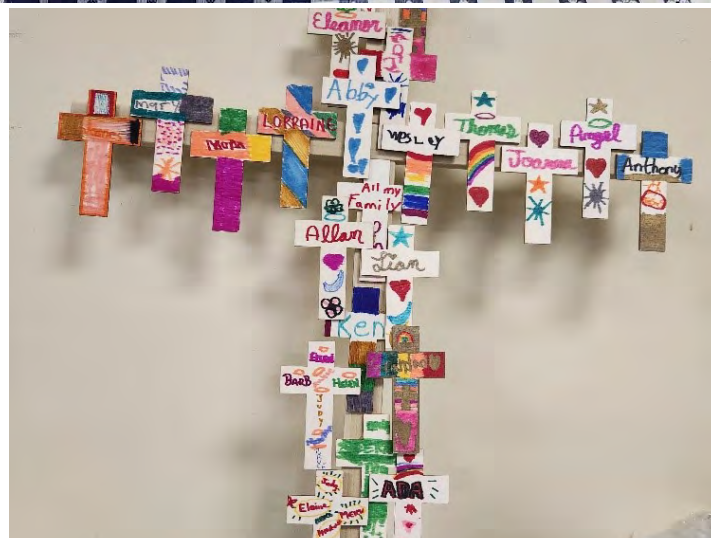


A Quick Look Back (cont'd) Messy Church





## A Quick Look Back....More Messy Church



## Saints Who Have Helped Us on Our Christian Journey



## A Quick Look Back

### Messy Church Continues



The Smile Say It All!!!  
Messy Church  
1st Sunday Of Each Month  
4-6





## A Quick Look Back (cont'd)

Café Church Caroling and...



Gift Giving on the Lakeshore



Café Church with  
Mairi Standing Up to  
Give God Thanks



A Quick Look Back (cont'd)

Christms Eve, Full of Joy



## A Quick Look Back (cont'd)



We are all “works in progress” and here is how the group called “Artistic Play at CCSJ” spent time together recently working on a painting, each one an individual “work in progress” using the wonderful ability to be creative that God has given us.

Ginger Bread  
Houses by  
Participants of  
Church School





## CCSJ Goes to Jail....

Yup. It was only a matter of time. J

For more than 8 years, a team of men and women from CCSJ have made the Keele Correctional Center a place of ministry. Every month, 4-6 people 'go inside' with a meal to share with all those who are completing their sentencing there.

Many relationships have been formed; the good news of Jesus has been shared, sometimes even in words. Men have asked for prayer; others have asked for help in other ways (from coats, to boats, to suits, to radios, TV, escorted rides to funerals, and more).

Below is a recent email sent out to 'the team', from Bruce. It is shared as a word of encouragement to CCSJ for making prison ministry a top priority. It is also shared in the hope that as you read it, you might take a moment to pray for the men inside, that they might be in a place to get serious with Jesus.

This is just a real quick note to send **HUGE THANKS** for yesterday's "**Meal to the Keele**" (M2K).

The meal was a mega-hit, to say the least. Chili and wings....how do you beat that? And Paul, you sure went the extra mile with all the extras.

All were well fed and all were extremely thankful. Lots of gratitude around that circle, for sure.

Other highlights include some very meaningful talks with guys. One guy has just finished 25yrs inside....very open and honest as to why. He looks forward to our next visit, not just for the food but for an opportunity to meet with men who aren't part of 'the system'. The fact that a bunch of "church guys" come inside with nothing up their sleeves seems to be sending a message.

And being on the 'inside team' is one thing: sending in food is quite another. Many thanks to Sandra, Rob, Mary, Paul and Chris for your much-needed partnership last night. Jeff's wings were amazing; Pete and Peter's chili made it all complete.

I always wonder 'will there be enough?',".. as we never really know how many guys will belly up to the trough. Loaves and fish spring to mind.

Thankful for you, big time, and already looking forward to the next M2K (Tuesday, Feb. 20th, with Paul Goebel's 'cabbage rolls to die for' as the main), I am

Your brother, Bruce

## On The Immediate Horizon



### **What is Taize Prayer?**

Taize Prayer is a simple and meditative prayer format,  
it's not traditional church, there is no liturgy or sermon.

It is a quiet time of peace, your time to be with God.

Taize combines singing, silence,  
scripture reading and intercessions within a candle-lit prayer time.  
Please feel free to sing, pray or just listen as you are so moved  
throughout the various songs.



**All are welcome, our focus for this prayer will be hope.**

**Please come and join us at Christ Church St. James**

**194 Park Lawn Road, Etobicoke, ON M8Y 3J1**

**Wednesday February 7th**

**A simple supper will be served at 6:00 pm**

**The Taize prayer will begin at 7:00 pm**

Not familiar with Taize Hymns?

The first song during Communion  
is almost always a Taize Hymn

## On The Immediate Horizon (cont'd)

### Diocesan Social Justice Vestry Motion

#### **Info Session - Feb 11** (right after church)

Because the Diocesan social justice Vestry motion is an **important** and complex one on **housing** issues this year, Helen Gill and Sandra Fawcett of our Housing Committee are inviting everyone to a short educational session on **February 11**, immediately following morning service.

The vestry motion for 2024 and backgrounder are available for you to review in advance by [clicking on this link](https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/diocesan-life/social-justice-advocacy/social-justice-vestry-motion). (<https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/diocesan-life/social-justice-advocacy/social-justice-vestry-motion>)

Please bring a copy of motion and your questions, so that you can make an informed vote on February 27.

### Social Justice Vestry Motion 2024: Protecting and Advancing the Right to Housing

We call on the Government of Canada to ensure that federal subsidies and incentives are targeted to those developers and projects that demonstrably address housing need and uphold the human right to housing by meeting clear conditions on affordable rents, non-displacement policies and eviction prevention measures.

We call on the Government of Canada to end the favourable tax treatment of Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and tax them at the regular corporate rate, with resulting revenues being directed toward the creation and preservation of affordable housing.

We call on the Province of Ontario to enact rent controls and vacancy controls on all rental housing and put restrictions on Above Guideline Rent Increases.

We call on the Province of Ontario to work with municipal governments to enact and enforce restrictions on short-term rentals to protect rental housing stock.



## On The Immediate Horizon (cont'd)

### Shrove Tuesday - Feb 13: 5-7:00pm

Tuesday Feb. 13th....our 'almost annual' Pancake Tuesday, 5-7pm. Like to help?

We need 4 non-stick frying pans to borrow for this occasion. A team is coming together, but we would always welcome more help. Just let Bruce know if you can pitch in, please, [rbsmith055@gmail.com](mailto:rbsmith055@gmail.com)



### Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday February 14

10:00am and 7:00pm

Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes



### Women's Breakfast

Saturday March 2 9:00am

Guest Speaker: Eunice Rukundo



Sunday February 4 , March 3, April 7, May 5

4-6pm



## On The Immediate Horizon (cont'd)

### World Day of Prayer

Imagine over **1.5 million** Christians speaking **90 different languages** in **150 countries** coming together in spirit; uniting to pray for relevant issues affecting women and children. This was the 2023 reality for this tremendous movement that has been active for nearly **100 years**.

The World Day of Prayer in our neighborhood will be celebrated on **Saturday the 2nd of March** from noon to three. .



**"I Beg You...  
Bear With One  
Another in Love"**

**Ephesians 4:1-3**

Artwork by Halima Aziz



**« Je vous en prie,  
supportez-vous  
les uns les autres  
avec amour »  
Éphésiens 4, 1-3**

œuvre par Halima Aziz

#### Ecumenical Worship Service Information

**Saturday March 2, 2024**

12 pm Set up & Potluck

1 pm Service & Discussion

**Martin Luther Church**

2379 Lake Shore Blvd W. Toronto, ON M8V 1B7 (Lake Shore and Mimico)

Paid street parking available. Accessible by public transit. Elevator on site.

You are invited to become a part of the team. Do you love to play an instrument, enjoy singing, reading, cooking, are tech savvy or your talent is decorating?

Contact [office@martinluther.ca](mailto:office@martinluther.ca).

Service written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Palestine, prepared and adapted for use in Canada by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada





## On The Immediate Horizon (cont'd)

### CELEBRATION CAFÉ

Sunday March 17

10:00am

CCSJ Parish Hall (downstairs)

Join us for a light breakfast and lots of **singing, praising, sharing** and **fellowship**

**Guest Speaker: Jim Sanderson, Pastor of Mimico Baptist Church.**



### TNT

Tuesday Night Together

Tuesday March 26 6pm CCSJ Foyer

Pot-Luck Meal, Person of Interest (aka Guest Speaker), and Prayer.

**We do Together well!! Come and Join Us**



### Good Friday - Mar 29

CCSJ is going on the road this morning for the Good Friday service.

This year, we join our neighbours at Mimico Baptist Church for the morning's worship service with other churches in the area.

More details to come

Mimico Baptist: 80 Hillside Ave. -right beside John English PS)

Paul's Prescription for Political Anxiety, (condensed and-written by Steven Bateman,  
Professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, The Gospel Coalition

The USA election is drawing near. With it will come a deluge of desperate pleas, dire warnings, and delicious rumors. We will have our own elections in the not-too distant future, provincially and federally.

The church at Philippi knew something about living in a challenging and confusing environment. Yet Paul's letter to them is optimistic and joyful, containing some of our favorite verses, such as **Philippians 4:6: "Do not be anxious about anything."** Even politics.

Christians should engage in the political process for the common good, but under the condition found in the preceding verse: **"Let your reasonableness be known to everyone" (v. 5).** Political anxiety in the church declines in response to the rise of reasonableness. More reasonableness, less anxiety. A reasonable person is not given to extreme opinions, carried away by passions, abusive in leadership, harsh in speech, or reactionary to personal insults. If anxiety is the disease, reasonableness is the cure.

**This trait is essential for church unity (v. 2),** but it's also essential for managing the mountains of divisive political messages assailing us every election cycle. Here are four traits of reasonableness from Philippians.

1. Reasonable people do the right thing and trust God with the outcome.

Paul exhorts believers to live ***"worthy of the gospel since *our citizenship is in heaven*" (1:27; 3:20).*** These words convey political overtones. Caesar is lord, but Jesus is Lord of lords. Caesar will soon judge Paul, but Jesus will soon judge Caesar. Many knees bow to Caesar now, but every knee will bow to Jesus then. Knowing he'll share Christ's future victory motivates Paul to share Christ's present sufferings **(3:10).**

Political turmoil might tempt us to compromise our ethics to win. Writing in a period of intense political anxiety 1,600 years ago, Augustine asked, There's some bad person you don't like? Don't let there be two. You criticize him and you join him. You swell the ranks that you're condemning. Are you trying to overcome evil with evil? To overcome hatred with hatred? Can't you hear the advice your Lord gave the apostle Paul? "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"?

2. Reasonable people accept the outcome as God's sovereign plan. Reasonable people see God's hand in adversity. He daily permits what doesn't please him, even the passion-driven sin of political opponents. He causes our present losses to contribute to our ultimate joy. Yes, by doing the right thing, Paul ended up in prison. But because prison prevented a personal visit then, we have the book of Philippians now.

And becoming a loser in the world's eyes "served to advance the gospel" as he shared the good news with Caesar's household (1:12; 4:22). People went to heaven because Paul went to prison.

3. Reasonable people check facts. Paul's world was fraught with political propaganda. Commissioned monuments served as billboards. Plays, gladiator games, coins, the imperial cult, and poetry sent the same message: "Thanks to the leadership of the emperor, we can all go safely about our business and prosper." Roman roads were the information highway, and by controlling the *cursus publicus*, Caesar put his spin on news flowing to citizens.

Paul's letter traveled the same roads with a competing message. At 50 miles a day, the average for the *cursus publicus*, it would've taken more than 16 days for Paul's letter to travel from Rome to Philippi on the Via Egnatia. But how could they know the letter was genuine? There were frauds on this imperial internet. Many couriers of heresy, traveled these roads slandering God, forging letters in Paul's name, and frightening believers (Phil. 1:28; 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:2). **There's nothing new about fake news.**

So Paul warned them to check the facts as they consumed the news.

To experience the peace of God, we should consistently think about **"whatever is true"** (Phil. 4:8), and this assumes we work to discern the truth. Today, breaking news and political ads travel at 50 miles a millisecond. But the duty to check facts remains. Reasonable people will wisely judge the information they receive.

4. Reasonable people pray. **Paul urges us to replace anxiety with prayer (Phil. 4:6).** We intercede **"for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life"** (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

But consider the apostles receiving those final instructions from the Lord to carry his message from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Here is the grand reversal of the Roman Empire's information highway. For years, couriers carried decrees from the lord in Rome to Jerusalem. Now, couriers will carry the decrees from the Lord in Jerusalem to Rome. The Roman roads of the proud Caesars are sovereignly seized by the humble Christ.

To keep the information highway open for the gospel, God may choose to work through our principled political persuasion, **honorable nonviolent protest, and well-reasoned argument in the public square (Acts 16:37).** But in the end, the peaceful lives we rightly desire will come about only by the power of a gracious God.



## Smiles and Chuckles



"How much to hire a church singing group?"

"You mean a choir?"

"Fine, how much to acquire a church singing group?"

**The early bird can keep the worm. I'll take the coffee**

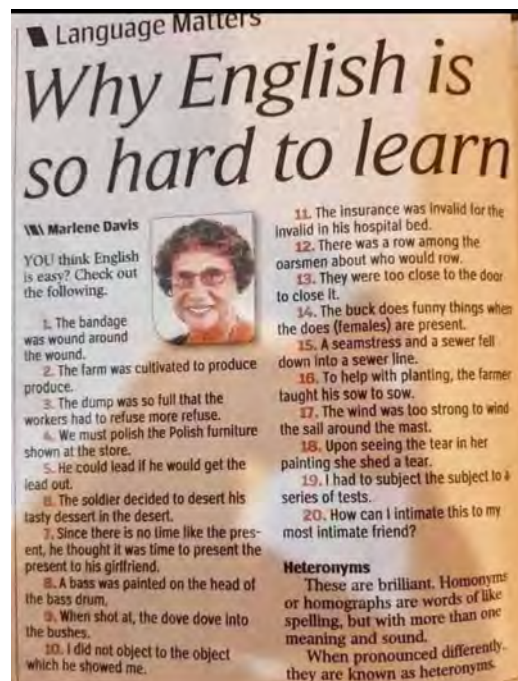


## Comic Relief!

As part of the admission procedure in the hospital where I work, I ask the patients if they are allergic to anything. If they are, I print it on an allergy band placed on the patient's wrists.

Once when I asked an elderly woman if she had any allergies, she said she couldn't eat bananas.

Imagine my surprise when, several hours later, a very irate son came out to the nurse station demanding, "Who's responsible for labeling my mother 'bananas'?"

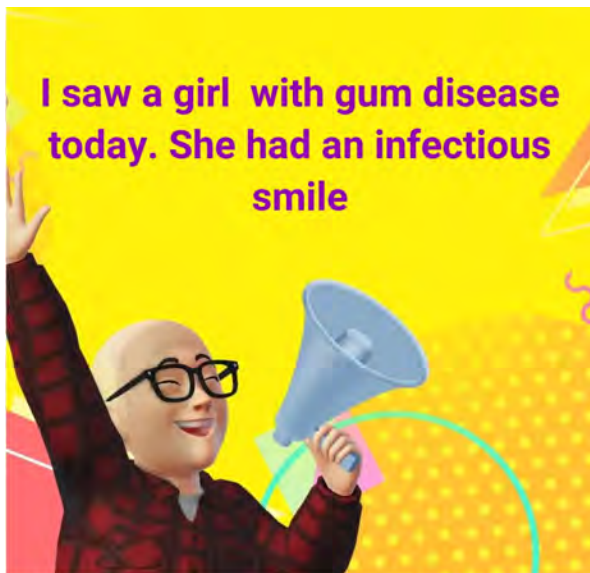


**I hate my job. All I do is crush cans all day. It's just...**

**Soda pressing.**



## Smiles and Chuckles



## Hmmmm....

Found at the bottom of a receipt recently: "In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act".

(Shared by Joanna Moon, staff worker at the Dale:)

When people ask why there are more visibly unhoused people these days...

### **Poverty is a policy choice:**

Living wage - \$23 /hour

Rental wage - \$34 /hour

Minimum wage - \$16.50/ hour

Ontario works: \$2.14/ hour

ODSP: \$4.20/hour.

## Wise Words from Mother Teresa

(shared by Grace Hunter)

- Every time you smile at someone, it is a gift to that person
- Some enter your life as blessings; others as lessons
- If we want to love, we must learn to forgive.
- If you cannot feed 100 people, then feed one.
- If you judge people, you have no time to love them.
- If you want to change the world, love your family.
- Peace begins with a smile.





## Right Now Media: Free Bible Study Videos & Resources!

Many of our newest friends at CCSJ may not be aware of an amazing resource CCSJ is pleased to provide for each and every one of us, young and old.

It is basically a “Christian Netflix”, of 25,000 videos. - the world's largest streaming library of video Bible study resources.



This extensive library includes teachers such as NT Wright, Tim Mackie (The Bible Project), Tim Keller, Francis Chan, as well as top-notch videos for children and youth.

These Bible study videos can be used as part of a group study or for personal devotions, and many series include free discussion guides and handouts.

RightNow Media is a tool that can help us live out our faith in every area of life -at home, at work, and in your community. In addition to series on books of the Bible, RightNow Media has videos for everyone on a variety of topics like marriage, parenting, personal finances, mental health, and more.

The library for kids has over 2,000 safe, entertaining videos.

RightNow Media has a free app that's available on all major streaming devices so you can access content anywhere, anytime.

“How can I get this?” Jeff Coatsworth has made a clear and simple way:

- a. Go to our website ([christchurchstjames.ca](http://christchurchstjames.ca))
  - b. Click on “Outreach and Programs”
  - c. Click on “Digital Media Resources”
- d. And there you will see these words: To create your own curated account under our partnership with RightNow Media, use this link – <https://www.righnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/ChristChurchStJames> or click the Get Access button.

We pray that RightNow Media will be a huge blessing to you! Enjoy!

*p.s. if you have any questions, contact the church office and we will be delighted to help you set up your own account. Again, this is absolutely free, as is it one way CCSJ can help you grow in your own personal faith as a follower of Jesus.*



# February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>2</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> HE Service 10am Messy Church 4pm	<b>5</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Choir Practice 7pm	<b>6</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>7</b> Dale Run	<b>8</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>9</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>10</b> FB
<b>11</b> HE Service 10am	<b>12</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Artistic Play at CCSJ 1:00 - 2:30 pm Choir Practice	<b>13</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Shrove Tuesday 5:pm	<b>14</b> Ash Wednesday 10am 7pm	<b>15</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>16</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> HE Service 10am	<b>19</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Choir Practice 7pm Artistic Play at CCSJ 1:00 - 2:30 pm	<b>20</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Youth Group Bread Night 6pm Keele 5pm	<b>21</b> Dale Run  FB	<b>22</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>23</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> HE Service 10am	<b>26</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Choir Practice 7pm	<b>27</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Vestry 7:30	<b>28</b>  FB	<b>29</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm		

# March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>2</b> Women's Breakfast 9am World Day of Prayer 12noon
<b>3</b> HE Service 10am Messy Church 4pm	<b>4</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Choir Practice 7pm	<b>5</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>6</b> Dale Run	<b>7</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>8</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>9</b> Foodbank
<b>10</b> HE Service 10am Dale Coldest Night Prayer Walk 2pm	<b>11</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Choir Practice 7pm	<b>12</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>15</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> Celebration café 10:00am	<b>18</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Keele 5pm Choir Practice	<b>19</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>20</b> Dale Run Foodbank	<b>21</b> H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>22</b> Deeper Journey Group 10:30am- 12pm	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> HE Service 10am	<b>25</b> Kickstart Your Week Prayer Time 9am Choir Practice 7pm	<b>26</b> SG Ladies Group God, Coffee & Me? 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm TNT 6:00pm	<b>27</b> Foodbank	<b>28</b> Maundy Thursday H.E. Service 10am Bible Study 11am Café Church 7pm	<b>29</b> Good Friday	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> HE Service 10am EASTER DAY						