



GRAPEVINE ADVENT 2018



FONTHILL UNITED CHURCH

42 Church Hill - Box 926
Fonthill, ON L0S 1E0
Telephone: 905 892-6433
fonthilu@vaxxine.com
www.fonthillunited.com

The Challenge of Christmas

Christmas is many things to many people. It is a celebration of God's love expressed in the birth of the Christ child. It is an affirmation that in the darkness of the world, God's light continues to shine. It is the assurance that God continues to give the gifts of Christmas: hope, peace, joy and love. However, in the Christmas message, God also issues us a challenge.

The challenge is represented in one of the big theological words we hear at Christmas: "incarnation." The Christmas event tells us with the birth of Jesus, God became "incarnate." Incarnate literally means "in meat" or "in the flesh."

The gospel of John does not contain a Christmas story of angels and shepherds or wise men following a star. Instead, John's gospel begins with a poem which says that, God's "Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) The Word of God was in Christ and became human. One theologian quipped that the life of Jesus is what God would look like, wearing sandals. When looking at the life of Jesus we see God, as if God were living a human life.

Well, if God can make this happen once, can God make it happen again? And that may be the challenge of Christmas: to let God be incarnated again and in us. I cannot make the claim that God has become incarnate in my life, because I am all too aware of my faults and failings. As much as I try to live up to the ideal of following Jesus' teaching and living the way Jesus lived, I cannot claim to have succeeded.

But what we cannot claim to do as individuals, we can do as part of the Christian community. In his letters, St Paul often refers to the church community as "the body of Christ." He saw that after Easter, the spirit of God that had been incarnated in Jesus, had been raised to be incarnated in the church.

Christmas presents us with the challenge to live the life of Christ together. As we take up the challenge of loving our neighbours and welcoming the stranger, God's spirit is made incarnate in us again.

Garry van Bruchem

AED Training

Fonthill United has an Automatic External Defibrillator mounted to the wall in the entrance, next to the elevator. This device can be used to help someone who is having a heart attack, provided that someone knows how to use it. In October we had our annual training session and 8 people took part. Here is the list of those who have been trained to help someone in medical distress:

Garry van Bruchem
Bob Laing
Brian McDonald
Alvin Penner

Larry Bousfield
Bill Laing
Marian McDonald
Patrice Walker

If you do see someone in distress, do not hesitate to call on them for help.

Feeling Faint?

It happens. You're sitting in church and you're not feeling well, and you wonder whether you might pass out. Your peripheral vision may be getting dark, you might see spots, and you might feel sweaty. This is common enough that I'd like to suggest some guidelines for when it happens.

If you are feeling faint...

Don't stand up. When the rest of the congregation stands to sing a hymn, you should **remain seated**. If you are already standing, **sit down** right away. If you are already sitting down and you still feel faint, **tell** the person next to you that you are feeling faint, so they can make room for you to **lie down** on the pew. Most fainting happens because of low blood pressure so that there is not enough blood going to the brain. When you lie down, it allows more blood to flow to your brain, and that may prevent you from passing out. If you are lying down when you pass out you will not fall and hurt yourself. It will be like having a nap. If you feel that you might throw up, just let it hit the floor.

If you are **helping** someone who is feeling faint or has already fainted, stay with them and make sure they are breathing. As long as they are breathing normally, not much needs to be done. But if you think they have stopped breathing, or there are signs of medical distress shout, “**Someone needs help!**” Don't hesitate to **shout out loud** even in the middle of the church service, “**Someone needs help!**” It's embarrassing, but so what? Being embarrassed is a lot better than not helping someone who needs it.

When someone shouts for help, those with the AED training should come close and be ready to help. Everyone else should back away so as to give them room to work. Someone should bring the AED defibrillator in case it is needed. Anyone with a cell phone should call 911 and request an ambulance at 42 Church Hill, then go to the front door to meet the first responders and tell them where they are needed. They will arrive within a few minutes, and when they do, let them take over.

There are some things you can do to help **prevent** a fainting spell in church. If you are not feeling well on a Sunday, you would be better off to stay at home. You may be fighting a virus without knowing it. Having a good breakfast and drinking a full glass of water before church will also help prevent a fainting spell.

Every year about 2 or 3 people faint in church, but there have been no fatalities, and we don't expect any. A fainting spell is not that big a deal, and it will happen again. When it does, we can be ready to follow these guidelines.

Email list

Are you on our email list? Or has your email address changed recently? We like to have an up to date list to notify the congregation of upcoming events, funerals, and if a service has to be cancelled. If you are unsure whether we have your email address, the easiest way to ensure we do, would be to send an email to Patrice at this address:

fonthilu@vaxxine.com

Snowstorms

Winter is coming and snowstorms happen. Once every few years it snows so much that we have to cancel a Sunday morning service. If you wake up on a Sunday wondering if last night's snowstorm was bad enough to cancel the service, you can find out by going online to the church's website: www.fonthillunited.com. In the event of service cancellation, Patrice will post a notice and send an email to everyone on her list. We will do our best to notify those who do not have an email address by phone.

Annual Meeting Nominations

Our annual meeting is being planned for Sunday February 24 after worship. At the annual meeting, the congregation elects those who will serve on Church Council and its Committees: Worship and Membership, Pastoral Care, Finance and Property, and Ministry and Personnel, as well as the Trustees. There is also a new Church Growth Committee. Council would like to welcome some new members to help guide the church's life, and some of our Committees would welcome new members and fresh ideas. The church cannot function without its Council and its Committees and this is a great way to become be more involved in the church's life.

To find out more, please talk to one of the Committee chairpersons to find out how you can get involved. And if you know of someone who has a lot to offer, please suggest their name and someone will approach them.

Council:	Brian McDonald
Worship and Membership:	Janet Hamilton
Pastoral Care:	Marleene Kretchman
Finance and Property:	Jim Bradley
Ministry and Personnel:	Marian McDonald
Trustees:	Bob Laing

Upcoming Christmas Services and Events

Dec. 5	2:00 pm	Lessons, Carols & Cookies Service
Dec. 6	7:00 pm	Blue Christmas Service at Bethany United Church, Dunnville
Dec. 9	7:00 pm	Community Carol Sing at Central United Church, Welland with combined choirs of Central, Wesley, Fenwick and Fonthill United churches
Dec. 12	7:00 pm	Blue Christmas Service at First Grantham United Church, St. Catharines
Dec. 16	9:30 am	Fonthill Choir Christmas Cantata
Dec. 24	9:00 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion at Fonthill – <i>Invite your family and friends to join us in worship at this beautiful candlelight service</i>
Dec. 30	9:30 am	Regular Service at Fonthill United
Jan. 6	9:30 am	Epiphany Sunday at Fonthill United

Pastoral Care Committee

We continue to meet monthly with Garry to share and respond to ongoing pastoral needs when required.

I like to think that we are in a position to be able to provide a supportive shoulder when needed through some of those difficult times in life that we all sometimes have to cope with. A listening ear or a gentle hug, just to know someone cares and is walking with us, can make a difference.

As Christmas approaches, it brings many memories of joy of course, but also of those who have gone ahead of us and are missed so much, especially at this time.

Wishing you all the blessings of the season. It is a privilege to have your trust and your support!

Marleene Kretchman, Committee Chair

Christmas House Tour

The 15th annual “*Homes for the Holidays*” Christmas house tour was successfully held on November 17.

Participating decorators include: Vermeer’s Garden Centre and Flower Shop, Le Village, Cox Home Furniture, Log Cabin Gift Shoppe, Hamiltons of Pelham, Oliver and Rust, and Embellish Interiors Niagara.

Supporting Sponsors include: Sobeys, Rice Road Greenhouses & Garden Centre, Sweet Thoughts, Fonthill & District Kinsmen, Century 21 Real Estate, and Community of Lookout Ridge.

We ask that you continue to support these decorators and sponsors.

405 tickets were sold and the proceeds from ticket sales generated \$10,125 in funds raised. The ever popular and delicious bake sale generated \$2,048.

Without the support of the congregation, this event could not be held. On the day, there were 93 volunteer positions required to ensure the smooth operation of the house tour. 61 of these positions were filled by congregational members. This does not count the many hours volunteers spent baking the scones, delivering flyers, baking for the bake sale table or any of the other volunteer jobs required prior to the day.

The house tour was successful yet again for monies raised of \$12,173, but also for the goodwill and positive image our congregation presents to the community.

Submitted by Carolyn van der Sluis and Virginia Haun

From the UCW

On Wednesday December 12 at 12:00 pm, we will enjoy a lunch out at the Swiss Chalet. All the women of the congregation are invited to join in this fun get-together. Let Maxine McPhail or the church office know if you can make it so we can reserve the space.

We will have our first meeting in the New Year on Wednesday February 13 at 1:30 at the Fonthill Church. We offer fellowship, worship, interesting presentations, and refreshments. All women of the congregation are welcome to join us anytime.

Maxine McPhail, UCW President

Stewardship Results

In October, Council sent the congregation the annual stewardship letter which asked everyone to consider their support for 2019 and to return the *intentions of giving* form. The response was encouraging! The congregation has already pledged \$123,548 toward the 2019 budget, which is an increase over last year. Compared to 2018:

- 24 people increased their pledges
- 5 people pledged for the first time
- 1 person became a new PAR supporter

Council wants to express thanks to all the people who made pledges, and to all the people who didn't make pledges, but who faithfully support the church, financially and in every other way.

Year-End Contributions – Our books will remain open until Thursday, January 3, 2019 to accept contributions for 2018. All cheques for 2018 donations must be dated before December 31, 2018.

Finance & Property Report

We expect to be in a position to provide a more detailed update, verbally, once the statements for November are finalized. At that point we will have a full accounting of another very successful House Tour. Initial indications suggest total receipts from this event exceeded \$12,000 and as of this writing, we are still recapping all related expenses. Sincere appreciation is extended to Carolyn van der Sluis, her committee and everyone who worked so hard last Saturday. These are really superior results!!!

At the end of October the operating fund deficit was \$22,100. This amount has stabilized over the past two months. If we exclude the one time gifts in 2017, we are basically even with income and expenses last year.

Earlier this year we received a very generous donation with instructions we should apply the funds where needed the most. Several initiatives were reviewed and in the final analysis, a decision was made to repay the balance of the loan we owed to the United Church.

This loan was obtained 8 years ago to cover the cost of installing the solar panels and had roughly one year to run. By repaying the loan now we will save roughly \$128 in interest costs and the approximate monthly income of \$900 will flow directly to the operating fund which will help reduce the monthly deficit. Fonthill United is most appreciative for this wonderful gift.

As the winter months approach, we would like to remind everyone to be cautious of ice build-ups which may occur on our walkways, parking lots, etc. While we monitor the situation closely, sometimes the weather may catch us off guard, so please exercise some caution to avoid any falls.

Some of you may have heard our custodian was leaving us due to health reasons. We are very pleased to report that she will continue to be with us as long as she can, albeit can not do some of the functions she was, such as cleaning the sidewalk of snow. We are looking for volunteers to do this function when necessary.

Finally, the new Growth Committee plans on getting underway in the very near future. We would welcome any ideas or thoughts you may have as to how we can attract new members. These would include any views of improvements we might make to the property to enhance the appearance.

In closing and as you consider year end gifts and donations, please do not overlook the deficit in the operating fund.

Thank you for your continued support of Fonthill United.

Jim Bradley, Chair of the Finance and Property Committee