



# Merry Christmas



“Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see —I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” Luke 2:9-12

Christmas is a time for togetherness as people travel to be with loved ones to enjoy the holiday and to reconnect with each other. At Christmas, people are challenged to bridge not only distances of geography but other distances as well like estrangement and misunderstanding, fear and loss.

The spirit of togetherness lies at the very heart of the Christmas story ~ a young mother and attentive father, with their baby, were joined by poor shepherds and visitors from afar who were drawn to a Great Light. They came with their gifts to worship the Christ Child. Ever since that day, Jesus draws people into a deeper relationship with God and each other in lives of service and commitment.

But this “drawing together” that’s so central to Christmas is not just about us connecting with others in our lives, whether they be family, friends, neighbours or fellow workers. Christmas is also about the annual renewal of the central truth that God sent his Son into the world to draw all people to himself. The Message of Christmas calls us to draw closer to God.

As people journey with us at Christ Church, may we continue to cooperate with grace in this process of drawing all people to God who has come to us in Jesus Christ bridging the distance between ourselves and God.

Jesus has come to be with us in our human condition, in the circumstances of our lives and in our deepest needs. Our good and great God seeks to join us.

The carol, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, ends by asking a question of all of us who know the Christmas story, of how God gave himself to us in humble service: 'What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part'.

The carol provides the answer 'Yet, what can I give him? Give my heart'.

Kim, Spencer and Avery join me in wishing each of you and very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.

*Byron*

Scenes from Advent 2023 | More photos at: [www.christchurchbrampton.ca/recent-events](http://www.christchurchbrampton.ca/recent-events)



## Christmas 2023



While our Christmas traditions remain and adapt, and new traditions emerge, we are honoured that you include Christ Church in your Christmas celebrations. We have been busy planning for the most wondrous time of the year and are excited to bring the glory of Christmas either In-Person or Online. In new ways, we are able to celebrate the beauty of the season and to shine a light into the darkness around us. Please join us as we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord.

**All are invited**  
**All are welcome**  
**No experience required**

### In-Person

- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent at 10:00 am
- Christmas Eve at 7:00 pm
- Christmas Day at 10:00 am

### Online

- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (Dec 24) at 4:00 pm
- Christmas Day at 10:00 am

Online services can be watched at any time once they have been premiered. Our Christmas Services will be available on YouTube and everything you need will be available on our website at [www.christchurchbrampton.ca](http://www.christchurchbrampton.ca)

We hope you'll join us—whether you are near or far, online or in-person, seeking a quiet moment of holiday solitude or safely gathering with your family or friends.

## Retirement Announced | 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

*Below a portion of the text from The Rev. Canon Byron Gilmore's retirement announcement that he made on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent (December 3, 2023)*

Dear Friends – after much prayer and discernment it has become clear to me that the time for me to retire has come. So, I announce to you that I will retire at the end of April 2024 with my last Sunday with you being the second Sunday of Easter - April 7<sup>th</sup> – four months from now.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be your Pastor these past nearly 19 years.

I am deeply grateful for how you have supported me and my family in our years together among you. It has been such a joy and a privilege, and I speak for Kim, Spencer and Avery in adding their own thank-you to mine.

I am so thankful for the way my life and the life of my family were nurtured by our lives together with you. Christ Church was, and is, a great church to grow up in. Our sons enjoyed a fulsome Sunday School and youth program and grew up loved by you; Kim found deep fulfilment in working among the children, youth and families of our parish and I have found my deepest vocational joy among you.

At the end of the day, all I can say is: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

The full copy of Byron's text is available on our website at: [www.christchurchbrampton.ca](http://www.christchurchbrampton.ca) or you can watch it on YouTube here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfqJdXd-jC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfqJdXd-jC8)

So, what are the “**next steps**” for Christ Church Brampton?

## 1. Formation of a Parish Selection Committee (“PSC”)

On December 17, 2023, a Special Vestry was held to elect members of the Parish Selection Committee as required by Canon 10 of the Diocese of Toronto (*Clerical Appointments, Exchanges, Retirements and Terminations*). Shumaila Desrochers and John Joukema as Rector’s Warden and Deputy People’s Warden, respectively, are members of the PSC in accordance with Canon 10. Members of the newly formed PSC are pictured below:



Bottom row: Nancy Kee, Shumaila Desrochers, Charlene Bickerstaffe, Liz Charters, Ken Egbuna  
Top Row: John Joukema, Stan Szepesi, Peter Harvey

Above: Chinweike Chike who missed the group photo as he was eager to get to Caring & Sharing!

*Please note that paid employees (parish administrators, musicians, youth workers, etc.) and Honorary or Associate Clergy, including Deacons, cannot serve on a PSC.*

## 2. Meet with Area Bishop

The selection process was presented at the Special Vestry. The process is fulsome for such an important task and will require our prayers and patience. The Parish Selection Committee is meeting with our Area Bishop, Kevin Robertson, on January 16, 2024, to gain a deeper understanding of the process and begin it in earnest.

Throughout the process, the PSC will keep you informed and there is most definitely an opportunity for your voice to be heard about the future of Christ Church and what we should be looking for in a new Incumbent.

## 3. Celebrate Byron | Sunday, April 7, 2024

Byron’s last Sunday with us is April 7, 2024 (the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Easter). To celebrate Byron’s retirement, please join us for a Potluck Lunch following the 10:00 service. More details to come but you won’t want to miss this occasion to thank him and the Gilmore family for their ministry here at Christ Church and beyond.

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## Be a Barnabas

Did you know that name Barnabas means “son of encouragement?” When the disciples were fearful of Paul (with just cause), it was Barnabas that vouched for him. Can you imagine how different our shared Christian story would have been if this didn’t happen? Believers in Jesus are called to “encourage one another and build up each other” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). As we enter this period of change or dip our toes into different ways of doing things, lets be eager to offer our encouragement to others.

*Lord help me to be a contribution to those around me. Forgive me for so often making it all about myself. How can I listen well, speak kindly, contribute time, invite people and serve others?*

(Lectio 365 | Jan 13/22 adapted)

## Order of the Diocese of Toronto

In 2013, the Bishop of Toronto and the College of Bishops, created an award called the Order of the Diocese of Toronto. The purpose of the Order is to recognize and honour those members of the laity in the Diocese who have given outstanding service over a significant period of time in their volunteer ministry. We give thanks to God for the work and witness of those faithful lay persons in our Diocese who in the exercise of their baptismal ministry have demonstrated that "their light shines, their works glorify."

Every 5 years, Christ Church (Brampton) can nominate someone, and we are delighted that this year, Martha Whittaker has been named to the Order. Congratulations Martha for your long-time volunteerism in child, youth, and family ministry as well as for your promotion of stewardship and donor care among churches and not-for-profits.

Please join Bishop Andrew Asbil and the College of Bishops to offer best wishes and prayers for the New Year.

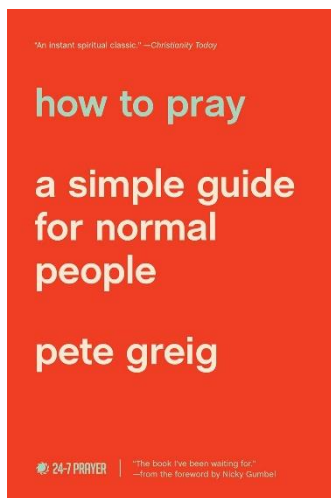
- 12:15 p.m. Said Eucharist
- 1:30-2:45 p.m. Receiving Line and Reception with the ringing of the Bells of Old York
- 3 p.m. Festive Music
- **3:30 p.m. Choral Evensong with the presentations of the Order of the Diocese of Toronto**

Come in person, or tune in for Evensong online on the diocesan YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/tordio135](http://www.youtube.com/tordio135)

## 2024 Lenten Study | How to Pray/The Prayer Course

Any time is a good time to pray but it is particularly important in a time of change. Trust God to have the right timing; we had landed on prayer as our Lenten study before Byron announced his retirement!



Starting just before Lent, we will be dipping into *How to Pray & The Prayer Course* by Pete Greig. *How to Pray* will awaken a passion for prayer in all types of people, from the committed followers of Jesus to the skeptics to those who don't really know where to begin. It uses the Lord's Prayer as a framework ~ after all that was the response to the disciples asking "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). *The Prayer Course* is the companion piece to the book. While we encourage to read the book, you are most welcome attend a small group session without doing so.

More details to come but our 8 sessions will begin:

- **On Zoom Wednesday evenings @ 8:00 pm** starting January 31
- **In-Person Saturday mornings @ 10:00 am** starting Feb 3 at Christ Church
- Books available mid-January for \$25



### And more on prayer!

- ✘ **Anointing with oil** resumes the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month starting January 7<sup>th</sup>. Our lay anointers will be available at the back of the church during Holy Eucharist. They will pray over you and anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord.
- ✘ Starting January, we will be returning to our practice of providing a prayer list at the back of the church to be included in the weekly **Prayers of the People** (Intercessions).
- ✘ Mark your calendars now for a **Prayer Retreat on Saturday, March 16 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm** at Christ Church led by Dr. Wanda Malcolm. Suitable for Middle School and up. You will not want to miss this day!

## Resource Management

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### Financial Giving

Because the life and vitality of our Church is important to us, we are each called to make a financial commitment to ensure that the ministry of our church continues to flourish now and for the years to come. We are so grateful for the intentional, purposeful and sacrificial gifts that enable us to invite, welcome and connect all of us together with Him who abides with us in all times and circumstances. We have a number of ways to give:

1. **Envelope Sets** are available by contacting the parish office.
2. **Pre-Authorized Remittance ("PAR")** is a monthly amount withdrawn from your bank account.
3. **E-Transfers** via the Interac system. Email address is: [christchurchbrampton@bellnet.ca](mailto:christchurchbrampton@bellnet.ca) If you are new to us and/or have moved, kindly include contact details in the notes for accurate receipting.
4. You can donate electronically via **CanadaHelps** using your credit card through the Christ Church Brampton website.
5. You can **drop off** your church envelope in the mail slot at the church.
6. You arrange for a **pick-up** by calling Martha at: Office: (905) 451-6649 / Phone or Text: 416-420-3765
7. **More information** is available at: <https://www.christchurchbrampton.ca/how-to-give>

### 2023 Tax Receipts

2023 Tax Receipts will be made available in February. To receive have year-end gifts reflected on your **2023 Tax Receipt**, they need to be:

- Mailed to our office, postmarked December 31 or earlier
- Given online until 11:59 p.m. on December 31

### 2024 Offering Envelopes Available

- ✘ They are listed in alphabetical order in the church office.
- ✘ **On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, all parishioners are asked to destroy any and all previous years' envelopes ~ this ensures accurate tax receipting.**

*Over the years, some numbers have been reassigned as a result of parishioners taking advantage of Pre-Authorized Remittance ("PAR") thereby reducing the number of boxed sets.*

Additionally, a review is taken each year to update our envelope subscriber listing to ensure we have current information. If you have any doubt as to your current Envelope Number, please contact me directly.

- ✘ **Many Envelope Subscribers have moved to e-transfer** and we continue to be grateful for your offerings. We have provided sets for these households. Those making e-transfers will maintain the same envelope number. The cost for a set of envelopes is quite modest so we provide them as a reminder to continue your support of our ministry at Christ Church.
- ✘ Should your envelope set not be available, you desire an envelope set or wish to switch/start Pre-Authorized Remittance, again please feel free to contact me or leave a note at the church office.

If there is anything else I can help you with, please let me know.

*Carolynne Atkinson*

Envelope Secretary | 905-453-8323 / [cdatk26@gmail.com](mailto:cdatk26@gmail.com) \*

\* Please note that this is a new email address.