

December 2020



ON THE ROAD

Learning, Living, Loving, Affirming ♦ News and Stories



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Journey to the stable...

In a world where everything moves so fast, where everything we want is on demand people spend thousands learning how to be mindful, to slow down, to sit, to be. The church, through the liturgical year knows that we get busy, get wrapped up in living our lives, and need to slow down, to sit, and to be. The seasons of Advent and Lent, Ramadan in the Muslim calendar all give us time to refocus.

Advent is a time of waiting and watching, preparing ourselves for the promise of the child Jesus being born again in our hearts. As we wait, the season provides weekly foci, Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Can you spend each week journaling where you find hope this first week? Signposts of peace in the second week? Can we share our stories of Joy and Love with one another?

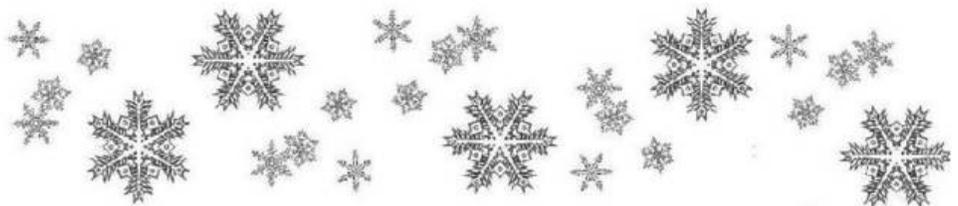
As you probably know, I find great solace in 'doing' – I'm such a product of our society! I crave getting to Epiphany and singing the first verse of 'I Am the Light of the World' – "When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and the shepherds have found their way home, the work of Christmas is begun." But Advent forces me to slow down and prepare.

My Advent song is "Come and Find the Quiet Centre" – "Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead, find the room for hope for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed. Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see, all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be."

Some of us are forced to slow down because of restrictions, some of us need help learning how to simply sit and be. I pray that you find what you need on this Advent journey. It's waiting here for you, in the candlelight, in the starlight, in the small, swaddled baby in the manger. There's plenty of work to be done after Epiphany.

Blessings,

Rev. Karen Orlandi



REMEMBERING LIZ ROULSTON

By Colleen Smith



Liz was more than a friend, she was a kindred spirit. From the first time I met Liz at a Women's Retreat five years ago I knew that there was something special about her. She had a zest for life, an amazing sense of humour and many other attributes that I admired.

Liz was multi-talented. These talents included being an avid drummer and pianist, a nature and animal lover, a story-teller, a Reiki master, a poet, a dancer and an advocate for the poor.

Here was a woman who brought out the best in me. She was supportive, generous and loving. When I broke my right arm last December, Liz became my faithful companion and chauffeur. Nothing seemed to be too much for her, whether it be staying with me in the Emergency Room as I waited to see the doctor, driving me to appointments with my doctor or physiotherapist, taking me to Morning Prayer or bringing me gifts of flowers, fresh fruit or a newly released book.

Several months before Liz died, she and I participated in a Care for the Soul meeting where we were invited to reflect on what song we are singing. Liz used that reflection time to write a poem and I share that now as a way of concluding my cherished memories.

Life on the Land

I am living my life.
Dancing my song.
Sustained by the Earth Star
From near and afar.
I sing with the animals, wild ones too,
who sing us the message of just being you.
The whispering pines
are my breath and my strength –
these Ancient Ones calling for love and respect
The gifts that I share are gifts to myself;
if given in love return a thousand fold.
I listen for magic in every bird song
No greater no lesser connected to all
I'm living my life,
Dancing my song.



On December 29 of this year, Liz would have celebrated her 80th birthday. I will light a candle on that day in memory of my dear friend and kindred spirit, Liz Roulston.

ADVENT 2020

This year you can worship with us in person or online.
Both are meaningful experiences and a sacred time to connect with God.

Advent 1 ~ Hope

November 29th

Communion Service

Special Musical Guests



Advent 2 ~ Peace

December 6th

Special Musical Guests:

The St. Mark's Singers



Advent 3 ~ Joy

December 13th

Christmas Pageant

You are all invited to wear pink.



Advent 4 ~ Love

December 20th

Welcome to the Spire Café!

Special Musical Guests: Grace Notes



Christmas Eve

5:00 pm—Family Service

7:00 pm—Communion Service

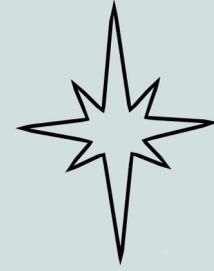
Special Musical Guests



ART AT SILVER SPIRE



Once again Adam Buller has brightened our front door in preparation for Advent. Hope, Peace, Joy & Love are declared across our windows where everyone walking down St. Paul St. can see them. If they come around the corner and head towards our parking lot, they will be delighted with the work of Matthew Vizbulis on our back shed. Covered with vibrant flowers, it will be a reminder of spring as winter looms. To the north side of the building we are still able to enjoy José Torres' art installation Traversées. We are also looking forward to another opportunity to host a NAC event on the front lawn. Art is alive and well at Silver Spire!



EPIPHANY SERVICE

Sunday,
December 29th.

Special guests Gaspar,
Melchior, and Balthazar
and Mavis the camel.

Bring coffee, and find out
what really happened
when you follow the star!



COVENANTING SYMBOLISM

I wanted to share with you some of the symbolism of the symbols and the service last week. These are some of the reasons that made our Covenanting service so very special to me, and I hope to you as well.

Bible: Kameron presented to me a copy of the Inclusive Bible. Kameron and I are doing some pretty intense Bible study with Ally in preparation for their confirmation which is really exciting. I picked the Inclusive Bible because I think many folks have used the Bible as a tool of exclusion, and I believe that it can and should be inclusive.

Water: Anne & Lowell presented water as a symbol of baptism. Anne was a member of my support team in my first year of seminary (so long ago!) and the pitcher was the one that was gifted to me by Rev. Elizabeth upon my graduation.

Basin, Pitcher and Towel: Symbols of Justice and symbols of Diaconal Ministry were presented by Ineke who also works tirelessly for justice for Palestinians in Israel. The pitcher was the one I received during my Commissioning. May we be blessed with her tenacity seeking justice for the marginalized, the LGBTQ+ community within and outside our walls, and all who come to us looking for justice.

Bread and Wine: Symbols of Communion were presented by Nancy who worked in the kitchen with me all summer long, along with Diane, Carol, Jeanette and David and so many others. The bread and wine of our tradition reminds us of our call to feed the hungry, and we are all hungry; spiritually, physically and emotionally.



Bear Clan Patrol Vest: Reg Soper presented the Bear Clan Vest as a symbol of our work on the streets of St. Catharines. We walk every Friday and Saturday evenings throughout the downtown core and the Queenston neighbourhood. We talk to people, building relationships between folks. Reg is an inspiration, who at 69 has missed only one night of walking in the past 1.5 years, and that was so he could receive an award!

Copy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples were presented by Josie and Cherie from Butterfly Spirit and the Niagara Regional Native Centre. They also presented me with the four sacred medicines of the Indigenous peoples of this land – tobacco, cedar, sweetgrass and sage. It is an honour to receive these and to be thought of as an ally. As a church we have committed our efforts to listening and learning truth and embarking on reconciliation.

Stole: The stole I wore was made by our own Fran Inglis, and has twelve flowers representing the twelve tribes of Israel and many other 12's in our sacred texts. The multitude of buttons is a representation of the Lower Mainland of B.C. which is where I grew up, and the button blankets created there by the Haida Peoples. I also wore this stole for my Commissioning.

Next up... What is Diaconal Ministry anyway?

DROP-IN CENTRE

This past weekend (November 21-22) marked the opening of our weekend drop-in. Saturday was a lovely relaxing day but by Sunday word had gotten out. Forty-two different people came in over the course of the day for hot coffee, lunch (brought over from Start Me Up), a nap, a shower or the use of a real washroom. I am so blessed, when I want to relax, I can curl up on my sofa with a book, make a coffee if I like and use my washroom anytime I want. For the folks coming into the drop-in, none of those are options for them, but when they come here, it feels like a home. Lighting is low, so you can catch some shut-eye and relax in safety. Staff is friendly and will happily make your coffee just the way you like it. If you're lucky, some of the women from church may be baking some fresh banana bread.

This has become possible for a few reasons. Firstly, we have a giant behemoth of a building which has huge amounts of space in which people can socially distance. The Niagara Region recognized the desperate need for folks to have a place to be on the weekends when other social services are closed so they offered to fund the drop-in through March. Start Me Up offered to handle the staffing and the distribution of monies if we would administer it. By doing that, we still maintain a relationship with the Region without being dependent on them. Lastly, the congregation of Silver Spire has made it a strategic priority to "[w]ork with others for a more just and equitable society by being a catalyst for community change and facilitating services that address poverty reduction." You, the congregation of Silver Spire made this possible. There are plenty of churches with space sitting empty – I'm proud to say ours is not one of them.



BACK TO CHURCH

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the second survey. 54 people responded to our survey – 39 online and 15 via Canada Post. We found out that phone calls work – it helps our members feel connected to one another. Pick up the phone and call a Silver

Spire friend or open the directory and call someone at random. You'll make a new friend.

The Back to Church team wants to make sure that you know it's OK to stay home and watch online. We really don't expect you to come, but if you do come, we have safety measures in place.

Watch for more exciting events online!



ADVENT BOXES

Our Sunday School teachers miss having children in their classes but we love having children in church. Margaret and Anne have prepared Advent Boxes for each Sunday for our children to use. The boxes have stickers, toys, colouring all relating to each Sunday of Advent. We welcome your wiggly, talkative and curious children into our worship. Ask the ushers when you arrive for an Advent Box for your child.

Our Values

We strive to be . . .

Christ-Centred - We live out the teachings of Jesus Christ, embodying compassion through listening and responding to others.

Reverent - We treat the earth and all creation as sacred gifts of God.

Welcoming - We are intentional about being invitational, building relationships and community.

Open and Accepting - We affirm diversity by including and celebrating people of every age, race, belief, culture, ability, income level, family configuration, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation in life and ministry. Full participation of everyone is included in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry.

Committed to Learning - We inspire, explore and grow together in our faith.

Truth Seeking and Truth Telling – We seek reconciliation with those historically harmed through their relationship with the church.

Good Stewards - We give to God of our time, talents and treasures and use them wisely in service of our community and the world.

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