

Rector's Annual Report for 2003

Dear Friends-in-Christ,

Making life decisions in January and February is probably not a good idea, if you can avoid it. On the other hand, sometimes there may not be much of a choice when you are "*in the bleak mid-winter*"! January, named after the pagan god Janus, is two-faced, at once looking back and looking ahead. The double perspective is instructive and important. We cannot look ahead and plan for the future unless we have a clear understanding of *where we are* and *whence we have come*. Our annual meeting in February is about stepping into that understanding and charting our course together for the year ahead.

The 2004 proposed budget presents an honest appraisal of where we are and whence we have come and what we must do to go ahead. There are many, many things to celebrate, not the least of which is how much has been done by all of us together with limited resources and in the face of adversity and controversy. The Parish properties have never looked better and, indeed, the infrastructure of the Parish is as good as it can be. We have new furnaces and new roofs, new trees, and so on and so on, many of which things were done *outside of the budget* and by way of volunteer commitments of an outstanding nature. They all presuppose, of course, *a confidence in the overall stability of the Parish*. All of these things, and more were about building for the future and not doing mere patch jobs for the present, leaving huge burdens for subsequent generations.

On that score, the most significant things have had to do with the handling of our finances and in particular, the Parish's clear determination to build up the investment portfolio for the future of the Parish many, many years down the road. Had we not embarked on that strategy, the Parish would have bled its assets completely and would have been bankrupt by now.

A feature of that strategy was the recognition that the Parish could not afford to operate with a full-time priest and maintain the properties entrusted to it and, at the same time, meet the diocesan allotment demands. It was a simple matter of necessity. *You can't pay what you don't have*. It was a tough decision but one which was made in fact before I came, as a simple result of the repairs and refurbishment of the rectory (long neglected like many other things that have been addressed in the recent years), required by virtue of the Diocesan Bishop's decision to refuse to allow the Parish to sell the rectory.

As I have indicated to you before, the Diocesan Bishop quite rightly has prohibitive or preventive powers with respect to the properties of parishes but not directive powers with respect to their assets, fixed or otherwise. Of course,

we have seen in the last number of years attempts on the part of the Bishop and the Synod together to extend their authority over such things, thereby compromising the corporate integrity of parishes and their primary responsibility for the good stewardship of the resources entrusted to them. We have rightly withstood such attempts which would have had the net result of collapsing the resources of the Parish into the Diocese. Bye-bye Parish. We have held to the corporate integrity of the Parish, for instance, with respect to the diocesan insurance programme and central payroll. We have not been able to pay allotment. For 2004, the diocese demands over \$23,000.00 from us. How does that even begin to be conceivable when we already have an overdraft?

Our strategy has been working for the most part, even in the face of the uncertainties of the investment world in the new so-called global economy and in the wake of the end of the cold-war world and the relative comforts which that had provided for Canadians in particular. The portfolio is slowly increasing. But we have had to face some *new/old* difficulties, namely, oil costs, insurance premiums and the cash-flow problem, meaning the overdraft. These continue to be some of the challenges we face as a Parish, quite apart from the matter of allotment.

For many, many years, the Parish has been operating with a deficit and has had an overdraft. Prior to 1998, the largest part of the overdraft had to do with allotment. Rather than carrying the overdraft/allotment from year to year with respect to the budget, assets were liquidated to pay it down.

In attempting to build up the investment portfolio, we have wanted to make the investments work for us in two ways: first, by drawing some monthly income from the portfolio while continuing to add to capital (subject to the market); and, second, by using the investments as surety for the overdraft. As a Parish, by virtue of decisions made at annual meetings, we have committed ourselves to adding to the portfolio by at least ten percent each year and we have refused to liquidate assets to cover operating costs. For instance, in 2003, we borrowed to purchase new furnaces in order to reduce oil costs rather than deplete assets, accepting thereby a further drain on our day-to-day operating costs.

None of this has been easy, either to live with or even to explain. At once obvious and clear, it also presents a view about taking primary responsibility for the parish that many Maritime Anglicans are unwilling to face. You have! I commend you for it. Not that I think there was really much choice, but *to will necessity is to make it a virtue*, and conveys freedom and dignity.

Because things have been so tight, it doesn't take much to change the balance and to throw us into difficulties. The past year has done precisely that because of three things: *first*, the fuel costs in the mid-winter of 2003 were greater than expected (the consequence not only of extraordinary cold weather but also old

and inefficient furnaces – the new ones for the Church and Hall were not installed until the Spring); *second*, the huge increases in insurance premiums; and *third*, the cash-flow problem of the mid-winter that required extending our overdraft protection, but with the sale of Equisure, we had to pay back in the summer what would otherwise have been dealt with in December.

This latter concern has been addressed by re-configuring our investment portfolio to cover a larger overdraft. Please recall that the overdraft from one year carries over into the next and so increases. In effect, we are suffering from an *accumulated deficit* precisely because of the build-up of the increasing discrepancy between income and expenses each year which has now reached a critical point. Please remember, too, that we have not touched our investments to cover operations.

The problem is simple. Income has remained steady, especially committed givings, while expenses have soared. What we do about it is not quite so simple. But we have reached a point where the projected overdraft for 2004 is too high, however much one might reasonably assume greater savings and less of a burden on the cash-flow as a result of the new furnaces, for example.

What can be done? There are several things to consider, some straight forward and relatively easy, others more difficult and troubling.

(1) Our treasurer has pointed out that for those on fixed incomes, if they made their contributions for the whole month on the first Sunday of each month rather than spacing it out over each Sunday, it might be easier for them (at least psychologically) and it would benefit the Parish in terms of reducing our draw on the overdraft to cover payments for things such as mortgage and furnaces. The remaining envelopes for each month could be marked *void* (or a toonie could perhaps be put in them)! It will all help with the pressing problem of cash-flow.

(2) The issue of insurance will have to be addressed. Since I have come to the Parish, insurance premiums have gone from under \$3,000.00 per annum to almost \$9,000.00. We have done the best we can to get the best deal for the parish but one possibility, albeit a difficult one, is to reduce our insurance coverage drastically for the Church, *thereby saving thousands of dollars per year*.

(3) Paying down the furnaces quickly, too, will reduce the drain on operating costs by about \$3,000.00 per annum. This requires a special effort on the part of everyone in the Parish.

(4) There is another possibility, though it is one which I am reluctant to raise but it seems to me unavoidable. The largest drain on the Parish's finances is, of course, the rector's stipend. The Diocese sets a stipend scale based on years of

service, a scale which in turn affects pension. As a priest of some twenty years in the ministry, I am at the top of the scale and have been for the last three years. I have three teenage children, one of whom is at University, another who is about to go and the third who is not so very far away from that as well. Unlike many of you, we have no equity in the form of a house or property. No-one, of course, goes into the ministry to become wealthy, but the Diocese has not kept pace in real dollar terms with what is required for clergy to live, especially clergy with families and there is a systemic conflict between the stipend scale and allotment in the policy directives of the Diocese.

At the present time, it seems that the allotment takes precedence in the diocesan view. This has the net result of putting clergy in a very difficult position. As a former Archdeacon remarked to me on the occasion of his leaving his former parish, the longer he was in the parish the more of a burden to the parish he became, as the conflict between allotment and stipend became more and more apparent in relation to the relatively limited funds of the parish. It is, perhaps, small wonder that we have so many parishes without a rector and so few younger candidates for ministry. It is impossible to survive without additional income, as worker-priests, as it were. The middle generations, of course, all live in the "*double-income*" snag.

We have as well a high percentage of clergy who are "*late vocations*", that is to say they entered into the ministry later in life, perhaps after other careers. The net result is that they have ten to fifteen years of service to offer and so remain in the low to middle range of the stipend scale. I have been in the ironic situation of being the youngest clergy with the most years' service at some clerical gatherings! Needless to say, those who have been in the ministry for many years are "*priced out*" of consideration for parochial employment especially by parishes who prize paying the diocese over paying their clergy. I think that this is immoral and unacceptable but there it is.

I have to begin to wonder whether I am the problem, though as things seem to work right now in the diocese, the parish would not be able to get a rector without first paying off the allotment arrears and then would be right back in the same situation even with a person of less years' service. Leadership, however, means being willing to do difficult things in difficult times. Priests should not be hirelings who "*flee when the wolf cometh*" whether in sheep's clothing or in the clothing of shepherds. Therefore, one possibility with respect to reducing the overdraft in 2004 and so beginning to break the cycle of accumulated deficits is for me to accept a lower salary. This is something that I have to be willing to consider (preferably, if at all, in the short term), if it is the wish of the Parish.

I remain committed to the long-term viability of the Parish and am much encouraged by the signs of spiritual life, growth, maturity and the depth of

devotion and prayer in our life together. I enjoy my ministry among you, at King's-Edgehill School, in the local community and the wider world of the Anglican Communion and beyond and hope that it can continue. I greatly appreciate the prayers and support that you have given me and my family in the years that we have been among you. It is my prayer that we will be able to face these *new-old* problems calmly and with grace in the confidence of our faith, come what may, "*looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*".

The Parish: A Year in Review

We have been richly blessed in our Parish life together in this past year. We have hosted a variety of events and services: the Eugene Cormier Classical Guitar concert; the Good Friday Ecumenical service (for the first time!); a cello concert by Nune Kafarova; and the splendid Spanish Guitar and Vocal concert under the aegis of Musique Royale at the end of the summer, followed by a wonderful wine and cheese reception. These and other events have helped to raise the profile of the Parish.

The Parish Hall has been the scene for successful events of another nature, musical and otherwise, with the very popular *Newfoundland and Country Evenings of Musical Entertainment* and the *Annual Fall Variety & Talent Show*. Emma and John Devenney and Eric Nott are to be commended for their wonderful work in organizing these events in all respects save their choice of Master of Ceremonies!

The Kingston Guild continues to provide a wonderful hospitality ministry and to hold other events such as rummage sales plus their big/little works of charity such as the Christmas Shoe-box campaign to the Mission for Seamen. They are to be thanked for their devotion and loyalty to the Parish and its mission in the community where we are placed.

The Men's Club continues to meet for breakfast once a month and has undertaken some major work this past year: re-shingling the Coronation Room roof, for instance, and planting six new trees. They continue to do an outstanding job of decorating the Church for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Christmas Stocking programme to the Waterville Youth Correctional Institute is much appreciated - our thanks for the labours of Bev Morash and Lloyd Norman. A hearty thank you for such dedicated labours and for the spirit and good will that attends all these labours of love and service.

The Sunday School flourishes and abounds with dedicated teachers and helpers and a great crew of little ones. Two thousand and three marked a slight change in pattern and purpose with the children coming into the church at communion time to receive a blessing, a change which has been very well received and has

helped to give the Parish a greater sense of itself as a whole community, comprised of *'the children of God'* from all generations. Thanks is owed to Nova-Dawn Oulton, Mary-Ann Dufour, Maggie Sangster, Jeff Burgess, Lori-Ann Kelley, Teena Baulding, and Pam McKay-Edgecombe, as well as special thanks to Micah Lee from King's-Edgehill for assisting the Sunday School. Our thanks to the Sunday School, too, for their various projects which help support the Food Bank and our outreach to those less fortunate than ourselves. May God be praised for the labour and commitment of all who are involved in the work of the Sunday School.

A Confirmation Class consisting of a delightful gaggle of girls this year has been meeting in the Coronation Room. I do not know at this point what we are looking at in terms of a service of Confirmation. For a number of years now, what has been encouraged are Regional Confirmations, like the one held at St. John the Baptist in Avondale last spring but there is no guarantee that there will be a confirmation in our region this year. What I may recommend to the families of the confirmands is the practice of admitting the confirmands to communion and then being confirmed later when that is feasible and possible. Confirmation is, strictly speaking, an independent service. It is not *'a meal-ticket'* to communion.

The Sanctuary Guild has done an outstanding and faithful job of preparing and maintaining the altar and chancel for services, keeping everything clean and pristine for the Lord's service, and working hard at enhancing the beauty of the sanctuary and the liturgy. Our thanks to Aggie Langille, Jacoba Morash, Muriel Fraser, Doreen Carter, Gwen Strum, Diana Miller and others. Their labours go on and on and on, quietly, uncomplainingly and often unnoticed. Let such committed and dedicated service be noted and may God be praised!

The Choir under the direction and care of Owen Stephens continues to uphold a fine standard of musical worship both with respect to leading the hymns and in singing the service. It is altogether remarkable how much the choir has been able to master. The *bonhomie* and *esprit du corps* make it a pleasure to behold. Those who sing pray twice, it is said, but who would have thought that it could be so much fun?

Owen Stephens' exceptionable abilities as a liturgical organist mean that the parish enjoys, as part and parcel of its worship of Almighty God, not only wonderful and well-chosen hymns and service music but preludes and postludes of a very high quality indeed. The Parish is truly blessed and I hope deeply thankful to God for Owen's contribution to the primary life and purpose of the parish - the worship of the Blessed Trinity.

The Parish's *Ministry to the Deaf* continues, albeit in a new way. I now do the service and it is signed by a qualified signer. The hospitality provided afterwards

by some of the ladies of our parish - Helen Gibson, Deani Hines and Aggie Langille and others - is very much appreciated by all concerned.

The Seniors' Drop-in has grown and has proved to be a great success. Our thanks for running this out-reach ministry must go to Aggie Langille whose welcoming personality and dedication to this programme have made it the success that it is.

The Annual Parish Ham Dinner remains a significant and much-anticipated event in the Parish and the community. Our thanks to the *terrific trio* of Gail Denman and Wanda Donnelle and Diane Oulton and to every one who participated in this annual event.

As a Parish, we undertook a campaign to replace the Prayer Books and Hymn Books which was well supported. Also in 2003, through the kind donations of individuals, we have installed *stained glass windows* in the doors at the back of the Church. The designs pick up themes present in the building and allow for more light and colour in what was a rather dark and unwelcoming area of the Church. The work was splendidly executed by Arthur Benedict who was assisted in the installation by Jim Wilcox. I think that Arthur's work is probably the only glass in the Church that can claim local provenance! Again, may God be praised!

Along the same lines, the beauty and use of the Sanctuary was much enhanced by a beautiful *Sacrament House* build by Jim Wilcox. It complements the design of the Bishop's Throne and is a most welcome addition to the Sanctuary, providing a suitably reverent and holy place for the reserved sacrament of the Altar, and appropriately dedicated to the Glory of God and in memory of Joseph Taylor, the builder of our parish church, 1882. We owe Jim a tremendous debt of thanks for his most excellent labours.

As always Bev Morash has done an outstanding job as *Sexton*, keeping the Church and Hall immaculately clean, the property nicely groomed and always, always being on hand to help out with any number of projects, big or little. Thanks as well goes to Emerson Hall for his helping hand in the many big-little projects pertaining to the property of the Parish.

We have endeavoured as a Parish not only to maintain the parish property, both buildings and land, but also in very modest ways to enhance them as part of our outreach and mission here in the community of Windsor. What we have tried to signal is the simple but profound idea that *as a parish we care about the things that have been entrusted to us* and which extend beyond us into a larger public space, namely, the local community as well as the wider Church.

One of the significant developments has had to do with the trees on the property. The elms along O'Brien Street are dying and will have to come down. Reluctant to remove large trees without putting something substantial in their place, we

embarked upon a tree-planting campaign and were successful in obtaining corporate donations that allowed us to plant six Norway Maples as part and parcel of our continuing plan to improve and beautify this outstanding property in Windsor for the sake of the wider community as much as anything else. I am very grateful for the corporate donations from Irving Oil, Brooklyn Insurance, King's-Edgehill School, and from Bruce Jodrey and Gwen Strum and for the hard work of Bev Morash, Lloyd Norman, John Devenney, and Emerson Hall in planting the trees.

Our thanks as well to Bev for his tireless dedication as *Parish Lay-reader* and to Pam McKay-Edgecombe for her dedication and help as *Sunday School Superintendent* and *Parish Lay-Reader*. Thanks, too, to Morgan Edgecombe and Carlos Herrerias for serving. We have been assisted as well on occasion by the Rev'd Leslie Ball, especially at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving Services. We are most grateful to Evelyn Holland for so graciously, faithfully, and cheerfully undertaking the task of greeting people and handing out the books and bulletins on Sundays.

The Parish Council deserves especial thanks for their commitment and advice in the year past both in dealing with the continuing financial struggles of the Parish and the controversies confronting the Anglican Communion about human sexuality. *The Theological Position* taken by our Parish has served as an encouragement to many others about how to stand firm and faithfully and yet pastorally and charitably in the face of these confusions.

Most significant with respect to the long term life of the Parish was the establishment of the *Christ Church Foundation*, which exists independently of the Parish with the specific purpose of supporting the Parish financially. Great thanks is owed in particular to our wardens, Eric Nott and Harold Adams and to the Parish Treasurer, Chris Young, in particular for her constant vigilance and care of the books, especially in such a trying and difficult year.

Our thanks to those members of the Parish Council for their valuable service who, for various reasons, are retiring this year: Jim Clarke, Gail and Emerson Hall, Elizabeth Skelhorn and Martha Jodrey. A special vote of thanks is owed to *Jim Clarke* for his many years of service and dedication to the Parish both as greeter and on council. Our special thanks as well to Gail for so ably taking the minutes of our meetings.

Such a synopsis of the year in review is, I fear, exhausting but hardly exhaustive. It serves to suggest the range and extent of our activities together as a parish and the depth of commitment and involvement on the part of so many. Most outstanding, it seems to me, is the spirit of grace and goodwill in which the various activities of the parish have been undertaken.

For myself, personally, I have continued to try to maintain a priestly ministry of teaching and preaching within and without the parish. Apart from my pastoral, preaching and teaching duties in the Parish and at King's-Edgehill School, I have also preached at the University of King's Chapel and at the Special Commemorative Service at Old St. Edward's Church, Clementsport. I gave a paper "*Alden Nowlan: The Forgotten Poet of Stanley*" at the annual West Hants Historical Association Banquet in February. I led a Quiet Day for an order of Priests and conducted a Retreat on Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, as well as presenting a paper on Aelred of Rievaulx' treatise *Spiritual Friendship* for a group of clergy and laity exploring questions about the concept of friendship. I participated in the Atlantic Theological Conference.

As a priest with some scholarly inclinations, I have published a number of things - book reviews for the *Anglican Theological Review* (*Princes, Pastors and People: The Church and Religion in England, 1500-1700*, by Susan Doran and Christopher Durston) and *The Diocesan Times*, (*Discovering the Book of Common Prayer: A Hands-On Approach, Volume I: Daily Prayer*, by Sue Careless), a paper on "*Sacred Providence in 17th and 18th Century English Theology*", given at the 2002 Atlantic Theological Conference; as well, various sermons have been published on-line or have appeared on various websites. All in all it has been a fairly eventful year.

As I think about the ministry here at Christ Church, I come back time and again to *the covenant in ministry* which, while it remains a work in progress, yet provides a clear direction and a definite sense of purpose for our life together. Parish work, as an integral part of the church militant, is always unfinished business but the covenant in ministry establishes the mutual responsibilities between priest and people.

The challenges continue for our parish. After the fifty or sixty Christmas Communion to shut-ins and the Nursing Homes, I recognize the need for a monthly mailing to the older members of our congregation who are not able to get out to Church either on a regular basis or at all. What I propose is that the Sunday bulletins and other relevant material be gathered up and packaged to be sent out once a month or so to our more senior parishioners. Some of you have indicated a willingness to help with this project. The same could be done for the young people of our parish who have gone away from the community for studies or job prospects. It is simply an attempt to stay in touch.

In closing, I include a little "*blurb*" on Christ Church which I have used for arts events at the Church. It serves, perhaps, as a little reminder of some of the outstanding features of this outstanding parish and encourages us, perhaps, to do all that is in our power by the grace of God to carry on faithfully and in good cheer.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. David Curry

About Christ Church

While the history of the Parish dates from the 1770's, the present building was begun in 1882. Designed by a Boston architect, Mr. Stephen Earle, and built by Mr. Joseph Taylor of Windsor, the building is a fine example of the "*carpenter gothic*" style of architecture popular in the second half of the nineteenth century. The *Alpha* and *Omega* beams and the *Rood Screen* separating the elevated chancel and sanctuary from the nave belong to the functional and symbolic significance of the building and contribute to its liturgical and musical ambience. Noteworthy are the *Haliburton Windows* immediately above the Baptismal font, given in memory of Judge Thomas Haliburton of "*Sam Slick*" fame, and *the King Memorial Window*, also at the back of the church, which is the oldest glass in the Church (1865), having been the sanctuary window in "*old*" Christ Church, and which shows the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite spirituality of the "*arts and crafts*" movement associated with *William Morris, Burne-Jones, Henry Holiday* and others. Part of the Parish's legacy includes the two-manual *Warren Organ* installed in the 1890's and one of the finest examples of *Georgian silver* in Nova Scotia given to the parish by George the Third in 1790, some pieces of which date from 1729. Christ Church is the only church in Windsor to have survived the great fire of 1897.

(Rev'd) David Curry