

Rector's Annual Report (2013)
Parish of Christ Church

"Above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness"

What are these things? *"Mercy and compassion, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another"*, as St. Paul advises in his Epistle to the Colossians (Col. 3.12-13). But above all these things, *"put on charity"* he says. In many ways, this epiphany epistle signals the Christian manifesto, wonderfully captured in Paul's great hymn of love in 1 Corinthians 13. *"If I have not love, I am nothing"*. The constant challenge and purpose of the Christian Church is to be defined by the love of God, the charity which is *"the bond of perfectness"*.

It is the charter of every Christian Parish, the *raison d'être* of its existence and a constant work in progress. To put on charity requires our constant learning about charity, about the deep love of God for our humanity. There is perhaps no greater challenge in our world and day where there is so much hostility and so much ignorance about God and his Church within and without. No doubt, there are our failings. Those can never be overlooked and yet they should serve as a spur to press on in taking a hold of what God seeks and wants for us; repentance, after all, is part of the royal way. It remains the constant challenge and purpose of the Church, all our failings notwithstanding.

Another year has passed and gone. Another annual meeting. I like to think of these meetings as providing a kind of witness to the purpose of our being as a Parish, as a kind of record of the struggles and the triumphs belonging to our souls and our life together in times of confusion and disarray, of unbelief and uncertainty, when it seems, *"things fall apart"* (W.B. Yeats, *The Second Coming*).

It has been a remarkable year, indeed, a *miraculous* year. As a Parish, we have persevered. We have endeavoured to be faithful to our purpose and mission, upholding the Gospel of Christ, and pressing on with the proclamation of God's redemptive Word and the celebration of His Sacraments. And, marvelous to say, you have responded to the suggestion of our Treasurer, Rod Kershaw about a modest increase in your weekly offerings that have resulted, again, marvelous to say, in our having met our budget and then some. This has allowed the Parish to make a contribution to the work of the wider Church, specifically to the Diocese, without sacrifice to our purpose and being as a Parish. It has been a year, too, when we have, through the Christ Church Foundation, been able to complete the roofing of the Church and the Hall, the latter being something quite unexpected.

The poet, T.S. Eliot, in his poem, *The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, talks about *"measur[ing] out [his] life with coffee-spoons"*, (this was before Tim Hortons). When I look back over thirty years of ministry, it seems that I have measured out my life with

roofing shingles! Especially at Christ Church! My hope and prayer is that our roofs are tight and will remain so for many a year.

Such things belong to our mission. It really is about the Church in the land especially at a time of uncertainty and despair within the institutional church and within our contemporary culture. An aging population, the out-migration of young people, the economic uncertainties, the doom and gloom that so easily besets us; all these things challenge the life and mission of the Church. And yet we have persevered and must, dare I say, continue to do so. It is really about your souls. It is about the quality of our witness.

It is easy to get down on ourselves and one another about everything declining. In part, that is based upon the assumption that everything should always be progressing, particularly in material and economic ways. That cannot be the only measure, especially for the Church. As I look back on the year, it seems to me, quite wonderful what we have been able to continue to do. That there are ups and downs is a given. That things could be better, to be sure, but, if nothing else, there continues to be the putting on of the things that matter, above all the charity of God. That is the real measure. That is everything.

We have continued with the Christ Church Concert Series, with the Pancake Supper, the Lobster Supper, the Ham Supper, with the Newfoundland and Country Evenings of Musical Entertainment, with the Men's Club breakfasts, with Lenten and Advent teaching programmes, with the Christ Church Book Club, with the Ministry of the Deaf, with the ministry to shut-ins in four or more homes of care, and with a full range of services, said and sung with organ and now, with piano as well. My thanks to all who have helped and supported all these activities and events. My thanks to the Sanctuary Guild, to Jacob Morash, Elisabeth Spurr, Muriel Fraser, and as always to Aggie Langille, the Guardian Angel of all the things of the Parish. We even added a new venture, a Pulled-Pork Supper before the *Capella Regalis* concert, thanks to Marilyn Curry, Judy Gilbreath, Scotty Cameron and others. My thanks to the Parish Council, to our Wardens, Alex Jurgens and Scott Gilbreath, to our Treasurer, Rod Kershaw, to our Secretary, Judy Gilbreath, to Bev Morash and Scotty Cameron, to our honorary Wardens, Barbara Hughes and Eric Nott, and to our Parish Solicitor and Financial advisor, Trevor Hughes. This year, too, marked the special celebration of the 225th anniversary of the founding of King's Collegiate School, now King's-Edgehill on Friday, November 1st, 2013. We have maintained a web-site and, though the changes to Google Images have resulted in less visits, it remains an important vehicle for the teaching and mission of the Parish.

We meet in the wonder of the Epiphany season for our annual meeting this year, and on the Sunday *after* Super-Bowl Sunday, you may have noticed! Epiphany is the season of teaching and the miracles really teach us about the essential divinity of Christ and about what God seeks for our humanity. Sometimes the miracles are found in the little things,

the little things that reveal so much more. I am simply amazed that year after year we have been able to maintain our pattern of prayer and praise, including so many of the mid-week holy days to which there is always a congregation! Little things that speak to bigger things, the things of our commitment and life with Christ. That is to be putting on charity above all else because it is about a kind of steadfastness at a time when the pressures to conform to the confusions of the world are so great and many. Instead, we have continued to be *"transformed by the renewing of [our] minds"* in the things of Christ.

The year has been marked with deaths and sicknesses, to be sure, but in the mercies of Christ we place our loved ones with God and in the communion of saints *"looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."* For that may God be praised. We remember Jim Wilcox, Greg Schofield, Beatrice Coadic, Chloe Paradis, and Mickey King.

I have continued with teaching and preaching, with writing and lecturing both within the Parish and elsewhere. The year 2013 marked another milestone in our personal lives with our daughter Elizabeth's marriage to Evan King in August at St. George's, Halifax, a blessed and glorious occasion. It was wonderful to have all three of our children, Elizabeth, Joel and Madeleine, together with us. There are so many blessings and we do well to treasure them as manifestations of the love of God. The same thing applies, it seems to me, to the life of the Parish. It is really all about putting on the charity of God.

Marilyn and I would be remiss in not thanking all of you for your kindness, your steadfastness and support; in short, your love. May God bless us all. Take heart and be of good courage.

Faithfully,

(Rev'd) David Curry
February 1st, 2014