

# Chalmers' Spirit

*Built by **FAITH**,  
strengthened through **WORSHIP**,  
bringing **HOPE** to life's journey.*

## Here Comes December!

December is always such a busy and yet exciting time of the year. Within your own busy schedule, I hope you'll have time to join us for some of the special services and activities we have planned at Chalmers. Starting at the end of November, we have the

Christmas Potluck followed by an Old-Fashioned Hymn Sing. The next day is the first Sunday of Advent and also the first week of Communicants' Classes for the youth. December 7th will be the day that we "Share the Light of Jesus" by

decorating the exterior of Chalmers. The Second Sunday in Advent will be White Gift Sunday. The Third Sunday will have the Reachout singers leading worship. And of course we can't forget our two Christmas Eve service!

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## Join Us!

facebook

I know that not everyone is on Facebook, and I know that not everyone wants to be on Facebook, and I know some people hate Facebook and trust me, I can respect that! BUT, if you are on Facebook, I really encourage you to check out the Chalmers Presbyterian Church Ministries Group. This is a GROUP, not a PAGE which means that it is private—you can only join with permission—at least as private as anything with 97 members can be. But it's a great place for discussion about things at Chalmers, sharing articles about faith, posting pictures of things going on at Chalmers and keeping up-to-date. I've really been enjoying some of the articles shared recently so I'd like to encourage you to check it out!

## Letter from the Editor by Lizz Thibodeau

Last month, I encouraged as many people as possible to attend either John Roberto or Rodger Nishioka's presentations (or if you're die-hard, both!)

There were many excellent points made in both presentations and I wish that I could bottle them both up and share them with Chalmers, but if there is only one thing that I can share, it was a lesson from Rodger Nishioka.

To begin, a little introduction. Rodger Nishioka is a professor of Christian Education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia. His particular passion is for building youth and young adult ministries. I have heard Rodger speak four times now and he just fills me with hope and inspiration each time. However, the biggest thing that I took away from his presentation this time actually had little to do with youth and young adult ministries.

He began his presentation by asking us why people stay at a church. Imagine that someone comes to Chalmers on a Sunday morning to see what it's like. What is the number one thing that is going to encourage them to come back to Chalmers again? There were many different things that the audience suggested: inspiring preaching, comfortable pews, a focus on scripture, lots of young people, a variety of activities to get involved in, a praise band, no praise band, etc. In fact none of these was the right answer. The answer was warmth. Not the temperature of the building (although that would be a great reason to contribute to our HVAC fund!), but the warmth of the people. And this was measured in one very simple way: how many people spoke to them. Unfortunately, there's a catch. This doesn't include greeters—greeters are very important and do a valuable job, but they don't indicate the warmth of the congregation. And this doesn't necessarily include the passing of the peace. What counts as "warmth" is that people made a genuine effort to speak to them, to welcome them. So passing the peace does count if it goes beyond a simple repetition of a phrase. In the same way, I think greeters could also count if they went out of their way to welcome new people and perhaps introduced them to someone in the congregation who could help them feel comfortable. But beyond that, the message is clear: Each one of us needs to be aware of new people around us and welcome them as Christ would. This is not a false-front that we put on or an act to increase membership. This is a heartfelt welcome into Christ's family and an expression of joy that they have chosen Chalmers as their place of worship, even if only for one day.

Here's a nice bonus in this—age doesn't matter! Teens can welcome seniors, Boomers can talk to Generation Xers, there is no rule that you need to stick to your own age group!

And what if you accidentally (as I have done) welcome someone who is not new, but has actually been worshipping at Chalmers for a while? Well then it's about time you met each other, isn't it!

## Tasteful Topics—Viva L'Italia



Our Men's Breakfasts have evolved over the past few years to include the whole congregation and sometimes be held at lunch so it was decided that a new name was in order. Tasteful Topics won the day. Here are some photos from this month's luncheon with Rev. John & Laurie speaking about their recent trip to Italy.



# Stretch Your Food Budget

Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup> 9:30am – 12:30 pm

No charge, Lunch provided

Call Joanne to pre-register by Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>



## White Gift Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup>

Bring a non-perishable food item  
(wrapped in white)  
to donate to the Care & Share.



## Scavenger Hunt



The Glen Cairn Resource Centre organized a Scavenger Hunt at White Oaks mall so the Chalmers youth entered a team. It was very well set up and the youth had a lot of fun while the store owners and other patrons were not at all disturbed by the hunt. One question involved finding the most expensive item in the mall—a necklace costing over \$33,000!!! The hunt ended with a pizza lunch in the food court, provided by GCRC. Our team did their best and earned a second place finish!

With the great success of this event, GCRC has suggested that they might run another one in the spring—let's hope so! What a fun day.

## An Exciting Sunday by Torry Thibodeau

### Introduction by Lizz Thibodeau

For school, Torry was asked to write a recount of something exciting that she did in the month of November. When I came upstairs and saw what she had written on the computer, I asked her if I could include it in the newsletter. Here is a child's perspective of what happened at Chalmers on Sunday, November 17th.

On Sunday November 17th, I received my own bible at church because in grade 3, you receive a bible. First me, my mum, Nana and Papa all went up to the front of the church. Isla and Daddy came and sat in the front pew. All the families stood in a big semi-circle and Kerry brought the bible up to the front. Then some of the children got their bibles. Next, I was called forward and received my bible. I got a (very descriptive) NIV Adventure Bible for myself. Then the last children received their bibles. Next everyone in the congregation gave us a round of applause. Finally we sat down and finished the service. It was an exciting Sunday.



## Celebrating Advent

I wanted to include some sort of activities that families could have fun with during advent so I went to the PCC website (Presbyterian Church in Canada) and found the article on the following pages. I hope you enjoy.

Celebrating Advent at home

A snapshot of family based youth ministry

DVD-based young adult studies we recommend

Tori Smit, Associate Secretary  
*The Vine: Connecting people,  
places and programs*  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
tsmit@presbyterian.ca  
1-800-619-7301 ext. 289

August 2010

## Celebrating Advent at home

By Jeremy Bellsmith



Christian education is an every day affair. The opportunity to learn continues after church school on Sunday, and families have more opportunities to demonstrate Christ's gospel in their homes than most Christian educators will ever have. Seasons like Advent are the perfect times to equip and empower adults and caregivers to nurture Christian formation in the home.

For my own family, we drew on resources that our church was producing this past Advent and integrated them with some of the things we normally do in the season. For example, an Advent calendar helped our family focus on the purpose of Advent, preparing our hearts as we got our home ready for Christmas. In addition to our calendar, we gathered 25 activities wrote them on slips of paper and placed them

inside a series of small wooden boxes we bought from a local bookstore. Others have taken these slips, looped them and made them into an Advent chain to be used in decorating.

Here are some of the things we adopted for our Advent season.

**Create an Advent wreath.** We used artificial evergreen sprigs, or picks, arranging them around votive candles. The wreath became a place to gather and talk about the theme of that week. It's great to use with an Advent devotional, too.

**Decorate with meaning.** Each time we placed decorations around the house, it was an opportunity to talk about what they meant. Here are some examples:

**Evergreens.** Because they do not lose their colour in the winter, these branches can remind us of everlasting life.

**Wreath.** A circle symbolizes eternity, so a circle of evergreen boughs reminds us of the new, abundant and eternal life Christ has brought.

**Candles.** A lit candle reminds us of Jesus' words in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world," and of Simeon's declaration in Luke 2:32 that Jesus was "a light to reveal God to the nations" (New Living Translation).

**Stars,** whether on the tree or in decorations, remind us of the star the Magi followed to worship the newborn king.

**Gifts** remind us of the gift Jesus is to us, and of the gifts the Magi brought to the Christ child.

**Angels** remind us of the angels who announced Christ's birth to the shepherds.

**And more...** There are lots of places to find ways of explaining holiday customs, including

- *In Straw and Story: Christmas Resources for Home and Church* (Joyce Miller, The Brethren Press, 1977)
- *Legends and Traditions of Christmas: Revised* (Trudy West Revoir, Judson Press, 1998)

**Tell the Christmas Story.** We tell it over and over again, taking a moment to set up the nativity scene each time. Try reading it directly from a translation such as the Good News Bible. For children, you may want to read from an appropriate book such as *The Family Story Bible* (Ralph Milton, Northstone Press, 1996) or *365 Bible Stories* (Mary Batchelor, Lion Children's Books, 1995). We found that as we used the same version each time, our kids began to fill in the spaces. They were learning to tell us the Christmas story as they acted it out with the nativity scene figures.

**Go shopping at home.** We went on a hunt through our cupboards to find food items we could collect for the food bank. It was especially meaningful when we made it a family event, inviting our kids to help choose food and travel with us to drop them off.

**Tell the story of St. Nicholas.** If you don't have a copy, borrow one from your local library.

**Watch your favourite version of A Christmas Carol,** complete with popcorn or snacks. A *Charlie Brown Christmas* is another great option for both children and grown-ups. Invite someone who is often alone to share the experience with you. Afterwards, go on a hunt for toys, furniture, canned goods or other things that can be given to others in need.

**Take time to do some Christmas baking** with family or friends. Set aside some of it for people who are often alone or for friends you haven't seen in a while.

**Prepare a takeout party for someone you haven't seen in a while.** Place hot chocolate mix, cookies, napkins, cups, a book, and a game or DVD in a basket. Take the party to the person's home and spend the evening enjoying it together.

**Give a child money to help the less fortunate.** Letting little ones place a few coins in the kettle and explaining to them where the money goes will help them learn about where the joy of Christmas comes from.



**Do a Christmas book exchange** with another person or family and make an event of it. We shared dessert with our friends, and then each family took turns reading the book they received to the children, giving the rest of us a chance to listen as our gift was enjoyed.

**Learn a blessing.** Over the holidays last year, my daughter learned the Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) as a part of our bedtime routine. Many blessings can be found in scripture or devotional books, and memorized as a holiday project. Contact your national church's resource centre for suggestions.

**Invite a friend who is often alone** to go shopping, to participate in a Christmas craft or baking project, or to just take in the sights and sounds of the season.

**Make a creative gift,** such as a redeemable chore coupon, hug coupons, or homemade tickets for an outing. Get creative with wrapping as well. Make gift tags from last year's Christmas cards. Have children draw Christmas pictures on plain white paper and use it for wrapping gifts.

**Do something unexpected for your neighbours.** Shovel their walk; take them a plate of Christmas baking; walk their dog; or offer to help clean their house for Christmas guests.

These are just some ways my family and I tried to expand or reconceive some of our usual activities into embodiments of the love and joy we celebrate at Christmas. By doing so, we are continuing the learning that happens on Sundays.

*Jeremy Bellsmith serves in The Vine.  
He and his family live in Oshawa, Ontario.*

*Please feel free to reprint this article in your  
church newsletter or on your church website.*

#### Contact Information for Resources

For a wonderful advent calender use *Azumah's Christmas in Ghana Advent Calendar*, produced by the PCC's Stewardship office - available from the Bookroom (1-800-619-7301).

Reasonably priced family resources such as Advent calendars, chains and devotion booklets are available from Creative Communications for the Parish at [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com).

## A snapshot of family-based youth ministry

In the last decade or so, there has been a significant shift in youth ministry away from a youth group model to a family-based youth ministry model. This can be attributed in many ways to the work of youth and family minister and writer Mark DeVries. Mark identifies a crisis in youth ministry when he states, "We are not leading teenagers to mature Christian adulthood." Mark believes that by stepping back from traditional structures we can develop a ministry designed to build long-term faith maturity – a ministry involving the parents of youth and the extended church family as the backbone of its structure.

In addition to serving as Associate Pastor for Youth and Their Families at First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Mark has taught at a number of colleges and seminaries, including Princeton, Vanderbilt, Calvin College and Presbyterian College, Montreal. Mark has also trained youth workers from around the world in nurturing relational youth ministry, focusing on the involvement of adults, families and congregations in the lives of young people. He has authored a variety of articles and books, including *Family Based Youth Ministry* and *Sustainable Youth Ministry*.

If you would like to hear what Mark has to say, he will be the plenary speaker at "Shift: Chaos and Sustainability," a youth ministry leadership conference at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Guelph, Ontario, September 17–18, supported in part through the conference fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. To learn more about the conference, visit [www.experienceshift.ca](http://www.experienceshift.ca).



# Can You Give One to Three Hours?

Join Us this Christmas Season, Stand at a Kettle and Help Us to Give Hope Today.

To Find Out More:

Speak to **Andrew Thibodeau**

[www.salvationarmy.ca](http://www.salvationarmy.ca)



## Sharing the Light of Jesus

Join us on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> from 9-11am to help light up Chalmers.

We are looking for:

- Volunteers to help decorate
- Donated strands of lights
- Extension cords
- Other outside decorations

Please sign up in the narthex.

## Grab a Book by Christine Hunter

Here we come a carolling.....

Christmas is just around the corner! The stores are playing Christmas music, Santa is in his place at the malls, and folks are starting to get their Christmas decorations up.

But what about some Christmas reading and viewing?

What about telling our little ones (and not-so-little ones) the true meaning of Christmas? I always used to enjoy sitting down with my children at this time of year and watching the Christmas shows ..... and my favourite, I

must confess, was "How the Grinch Stole Christmas"! Oh it was the original, but I loved the fact that Christmas came anyway – even if the Grinch took away all the things that folks think make it a good Christmas. And hopefully this helped my little ones realize that Christmas was more than gifts, more than Santa and more than turkey and plum pudding! Christmas was a time to celebrate the birth of our Saviour in that little manger in Bethlehem.

Check out all the Christmas books and videos (sorry I have no Christmas DVDs). They are on the reading table in the library. Make this a Christmas to remember for your children – and that will also make it a Christmas to remember for the parents too.

Blessings, Christine Hunter, Librarian



# POTLUCK SUPPER



Join us on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Bring a salad, a main dish OR a dessert and don't forget to double your recipe!




Please sign up in the narthex.



Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm  
(Join us for the Christmas Potluck at 6pm)



# December 2013 - Chalmers Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b>  10a Worship & Sunday School - Advent 1 11:15a Coffee Time & Library 11:30a Children's Choir 2p Presbytery Communicants' Class Reachout to Mount Zion Presb.	<b>2</b> 1:30p Fitness Class 6:30p Mission Cmte 7p Stephen Ministry	<b>3</b> 9:30a Pastoral Care 1p Care & Share 1p Seniors' Fitness 2p Session Executive 7:30p Policy & Planning 7:30p CE & Faith Development	<b>4</b> 2p Knitting 7p Reachout at Kensington	<b>5</b> 6:25p Praise Team rehearsal 7:30p Senior Choir rehearsal	<b>6</b> 9a Seniors' Fitness 1p Seniors' Euchre Stephen Ministry Christmas Party	<b>7</b> 9a Sharing the Light of Jesus
<b>8</b>  10a Worship & Sunday School - Advent 2 & White Gift Sunday 11:15a Coffee Time & Library 11:30a Children's Choir 3p Musical Celebration Reachout at Faith Pentecostal. ...	<b>9</b> 1:30p Fitness Class 7p Worship Committee	<b>10</b> 1p Care & Share 1p Seniors' Fitness 7p Session 7:30p Social Committee	<b>11</b> 2p Knitting 7p Reachout at Caressant Care	<b>12</b> 6:25p Praise Team rehearsal 7:30p Senior Choir rehearsal	<b>13</b> 9a Seniors' Fitness 1p Seniors' Euchre	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>  10a Worship & Sunday School - Advent 3 10a Reachout at Chalmers 11:15a Coffee Time & Library 11:30a Children's Choir 11:30a Teens & Twenties Lunch 2p Presbytery. ...	<b>16</b> 1:30p Fitness Class 6:30p Outreach & Comm. 7p Stephen Ministry	<b>17</b> 1p Care & Share 1p Seniors' Fitness	<b>18</b> 2p Knitting 7p Reachout at Royal Cliffe	<b>19</b> 6:25p Praise Team rehearsal 7:30p Senior Choir rehearsal	<b>20</b> 9a Seniors' Fitness 1p Seniors' Euchre	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>  10a All Ages Worship - Advent 4 11:15a Coffee Time & Library 11:30a Children's Choir 6:30p Carol singing to shut ins 7:30p Men's Mission Service	<b>23</b> 1:30p Fitness Class	<b>24</b> 10a Y4C Sandwich preparation 1p Care & Share 1p Seniors' Fitness 7p Christmas Eve Service 10p Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS DAY	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 9a Seniors' Fitness 1p Seniors' Euchre	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>  10a All Ages Worship 11:15a Coffee Time & Library	<b>30</b> 1:30p Fitness Class	<b>31</b> 1p Seniors' Fitness	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 6:25p Praise Team rehearsal 7:30p Senior Choir rehearsal	<b>3</b> 9a Seniors' Fitness 1p Seniors' Euchre	<b>4</b>

I'm absolutely sure that there will be changes to the calendar this month so please keep up to date on the church website:

[http://www.chalmerslondon.com/church\\_calendar.htm](http://www.chalmerslondon.com/church_calendar.htm)

## Last Laugh!

