

# THE PARISH LIGHT

The Parish of the Northern Lights Newsletter May 2016



## *Connected By Love*



April is almost over. It seems to me that the time is slipping away a little faster than I am prepared to handle. There are only two months left of school. I know that is an exciting prospect for some of our young people who are anxiously waiting for summer holidays. But it also means that my baby will graduate and go off to university in Newfoundland. That is a scary prospect for Eric and I. We know that Lydia is very capable. We also know that it will be a lot of new experiences for her and we pray that we have given her the grounding she needs to be safe in the world.

I have just arrived home from the women's conference in Valleyview. Some of you may remember that I jokingly said that I wanted to go so that I could find out what a "muster" seed was. Of course we know that it was an error in printing of the posters. However, Bishop Fraser talked a bit about how maybe in reality it was all part of God's plan. +Fraser was referring to "muster" points - those places where people gather together. We see them outside of malls or stores or places of business, etc. They are a place to gather to ensure that people are safe and to account for the presence of everyone who is supposed to be in that place.

Well, our muster points here in the Parish of the Northern Lights are the places where we gather with the other members of our congregation. Some of you call it going to church. That is a small error in that it is the people who gather that are the church. But no matter how we look at it - the people or the building - it needs to be a safe

place. It could be small group gatherings such as the two in Boyle or the Tuesday evening group in Colinton. Or vestries/councils.

What do you think?

Are we safe people to be around?

What is it that makes us a safe space? I think it is important to remember that safe doesn't always mean comfortable. Sometimes it is necessary, in order to be safe, to get a bit uncomfortable. Read Philippians 3. Paul is saying that the things he writes about are for the safety of the people. ***To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.*** Certainly the things he writes about are not comfortable. Sometimes going through things that are challenging or uncomfortable lead to good things such as growth in faith and depth of Christian relationship.

Another passage to consider is 2 Corinthians 7 where Paul is pointing out that the people's grief led to repentance. ***For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.*** (7:10)

Of course the best example is the truth. Jesus Christ experienced ultimate pain, suffering and rejection so that you and I could experience the ultimate safety.

There is a commercial on TV about insurance. It shows a person wrapped in layer upon layer of bubble wrap. The person might experience some protection but it is pretty hard to participate in the world around. Pretty hard to reach out and grasp and grow. That is not an ideal measure of providing safety - to bubble wrap and stop someone from experiencing all that life has to offer.

Safe places are safe because the people involved care about one another. The members look after one another. Individuals care when some are missing or hurting. The people want the best for one another. Members want to make sure that every person has the opportunity to experience all the benefits of membership.

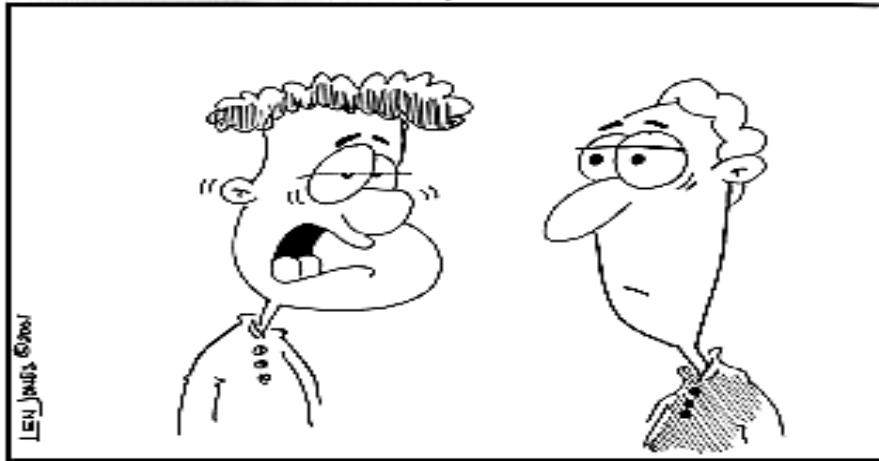
How are we doing in our muster points? Are they spaces that wrap us in bubble wrap so that we can't experience all that is available to us? Or are they places that provide each person with opportunity to grow in God's grace?

Ideally, safe places challenge us to grow. New experiences can be frightening. New experiences can be uncomfortable. But new experiences in safe places will lead to beautiful, bright and lasting goodness. My prayer for each of you, just as it is for Lydia, is that you will allow God to use you in new and challenging ways for God's glory and for your ultimate safety through a renewed and refreshed relationship with God.

In love;

Lesley+

**ALTAR EGO.** by Len Jones



**"I was just fine with the concept of sharing my faith until Pastor said we actually had to talk to people."**

## The Barber

-- Author unknown (used with permission by Servant Quarters)

A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed. As the barber began to work, they began to have a good conversation. They talked about so many things and various subjects. When they eventually touched on the subject of God, the barber said: "I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked the customer.

"Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. I can't imagine loving a God who would allow all of these things."

The customer thought for a moment, but didn't respond because he didn't want to start an argument. The barber finished his job and the customer left the shop. Just after he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. He looked dirty and un-kept. The customer turned back and entered the barber shop again and he said to the barber: "You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say that?" asked the surprised barber. "I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!"

"No!" the customer exclaimed. "Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside."

"Ah, but barbers DO exist! What happens is, people do not come to me."

"Exactly!" affirmed the customer. "That's the point! God, too, DOES exist! What happens is, people don't go to Him."

## 5 FINGER PRAYER

This is beautiful - and it is surely worth making the 5-finger prayer a part of our lives.

1. **Your thumb** is nearest you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C. S. Lewis once said, a 'sweet duty.'
2. **The next finger** is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, nurses and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.
3. **The next finger** is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the Prime Minister, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.
4. **The fourth finger** is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger, as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day and night. You cannot pray too much for them.
5. And lastly comes **our little finger** - the smallest finger of all - which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, 'The least shall be the greatest among you.' Your pinkie should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.



## Musings from Cecil in Wandering River

Dear Editor Jan

DATE LINE 3 pm Tue April 19

Marilyn is practicing music for Sunday. The chorus goes "PRAISE THE LORD!" Praise the Lord!

From our of the blue the thoughts that sprung to mind were echoes from the Last two Sundays.

Go! Tell the world about Jesus! Phil said this on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Lesley repeated this theme on the 17<sup>th</sup>. That's what I heard them say ~ "Go into our communities and spread the word".

The question was asked: Why aren't we doing this all the time? Are we afraid the men in white jackets will come take us away? I think we left church on both days with the thought "we'll hear this again on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month; and try to explain what it means to us individually.

The suggestion popped into my head: "We need to practice telling the "old story of Jesus and his love".

Let's practice on each other.

In our parish there are at least 200 Christians who might join up, take the initiative, make a special effort to call on a fellow Christian and say, "May I practice on you?" I'll bet if I imposed myself on LeRoy, Glen or Roy, none of them would say, "Get lost! Are You Nuts!!!"

We might lose our fear of "Telling the World". We might get "an echo from saying those words every Sunday: You know them – "Glory to God; whose power working in us can do more than we can ask or imagine". You know: these words that are found on page 214 in the BAS.

How to tell the world? Let's practice telling the story to each other.

Here are two possible scenarios:

I am in a casual conversation with an acquaintance or two most weeks. After we talk about the weather we might get to talking about recent events like news in the media, such as "disasters, in Greece, in Belgium, in Ontario". And my companions will provide me with a leadin, by saying "Why does God allow this?"

The conversation has opened the door. I'll say a little prayer to God, under my breath and ask Him (God) for the words that are appropriate. They may be something like "I don't believe He does", (and wait for the other shoe to drop).

If I keep asking God to make me aware of these little openings and if I believe in Him that He is beside me, I KNOW THAT THIS LITTLE EXAMPLE WILL BEAR FRUIT without throwing "the fat into the fire of endless, useless, discussion" Perhaps just saying "I don't believe God allows these happenings" is enough.

FOR I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED AND I KNOW THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP THAT WHICH I'VE COMMITTED UNTO HIM AGAINST THAT DAY.

Scenario 2: This actually happened the other day. I was in the kitchen of a friend and the 19 year old grand daughter showed me a poster on the wall. In the middle of the poster were the words

“BECAUSE I AM A CHRISTIAN”. So I exclaimed, “WOW, that’s quite a statement! What do you mean “Because I am a Christian? Tell me about it.” After several minutes, she talked. Two others present joined in and we shared our feelings and our personal beliefs. And all I said to get the conversation started was “Tell me about it.”

Can it get any better than that? Phil? Lesley? Thank you for prompting this event.

So, I throw out this little challenge. Think about it, and pray about it.

Let’s tell the “good news” to each other (the 200 Christians we know in the Parish of the Northern Lights) and stand back and watch what God will do. Every Sunday in church we confess these ideas to God and each other. Perhaps if we make a point of seeking out a few of our like-minded friends, in casual settings, over a coffee or a visit to each other’s homes, and PRACTICE...who knows what will happen?

It can’t hurt us. Our Christian friends won’t think we are “strange”. They’ll probably knock on our door and say “LET’S PRACTICE”. A word of caution. Keep it short. Don’t stay all night. And it sure helps to have a child present!

Will you risk the hostile stare?

Should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you, and you in me?



**May 7<sup>th</sup> Saturday:** Mother’s Tea and Bake Sale – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm at St Andrew’s Zion Church. Sponsored by St Thomas, Perryvale & St Andrew’s Zion, Colinton

**May 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, Friday to Sunday** – Terry Leer will be with us for that weekend. On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> and the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>, Terry will be presenting the Stewardship module that we asked for from the Athabasca Discipleship Training School. On the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup>, Terry will be leading a Vestry/Council workshop.

This will take place over supper and into the early evening. Likely beginning at 4:30 or 5:00. All members of vestries or councils from each congregation are expected to attend. Supper will be provided. More information to follow.

**May 29<sup>th</sup> is the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Service** at Perryvale at 11:00 am with a pot-luck lunch to follow.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday** of every month will provide an opportunity for someone to tell how God has been active in their life. It may be a testimony. It may be something that has happened recently. It may be something that happened a long time ago. This will help us get to know one another and help us become aware of what God is doing.

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday** of every month will be **Thanksgiving Sunday**. Everyone and anyone can say what they are thankful for.

**June 4<sup>th</sup> – Saturday...Garden & Greens Sale** at St Andrew's Zion. Perennials, house plants, garden plants, all things green for sale. Come check this one out! For more information or donation of plants, please contact Wendy @780-675-5541

**Buy-Low and Independent gift cards** (\$100) are available from LeRoy Overacker. The Refugee Sponsorship Committee will receive ten percent from each card sold. This will be put toward the Refugee Fundraising effort.

.....

Forgiveness: When we genuinely forgive, we set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner we set free was us.

..... Phillip Yancey

\*\*\*\*\*



**CHRISTIANS  
AIN'T PERFECT  
BUT JESUS IS!**