



# The Word became flesh and dwelt among us

Advent 2011

The Rector's Office, St. Luke's Church

Dear Friends and Family of St. Luke's,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ! On the day I am beginning this letter I may not have time to finish it; later a large number of us will be going to Christ Church Cathedral for the ordination of the Rev. Will Ferrey to the priesthood of the Anglican Church of Canada. As our first Assistant Curate since the Rev. David Petersen, Will has brought a lovely warmth and a mature competence to our parish, and I am personally grateful that he is here. Obviously the cost of a curate, even shared with the Diocese, has us dipping into our reserves, but I am confident that the people whose generous offerings over the years built up those reserves, would be pleased that a portion of their gifts is being used in this way.

St. Luke's was defined in the Diocesan Ministry Resource Team report five years ago as a Church at a crossroad – meaning that although we were not in crisis, we were not yet to be defined as “healthy.” That meant primarily that we were not self-sustaining (from Sunday offerings). Though financially we are still in that category, I sense a much clearer vision and commitment for ministry in our midst. Our music ministry and our Sunday School remain vital. Our out-reach to unchurched families, primarily through “Fantastic Family Fridays” (otherwise known as “Messy Church”), continues to grow in its effectiveness. Our support for South Island Counseling and Training Services, housed at a reduced rent in our “Rector’s,” continues. Our budget to assist other organizations who work directly with the needy has grown. St. Luke's is a parish which is clearly going places. I thank you for your part in this important work, in which we live out our baptismal promise to “proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ,” and to “seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves.”

2011 is the first year of our next 150 years – God Willing. Our world is shifting around us. Our membership at St. Luke's is shifting as we say farewell to long time members and commend them into God's eternal keeping, and welcome newcomers who have moved here from other parts of the country or who have decided that worship of God should be part of their lives. At the core of our life, however, is the Word, the message that is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” – our gospel message of God's unconditional love for all people. Advent reminds us of the call to be ready to receive the fullness of God's presence in our midst, as the young Mary was so ready to receive the awesome and disturbing presence of the Messiah within her very own body. It is our Creator's continual desire to be born in our lives, to take flesh in our love for God and neighbour, in our care for the earth, in our worship, in our faith.

As we celebrate Christmas together, I pray you will know the wonder and depth of God's love being born in your own life. I thank you for all the ways you make this so for others, and I wish you the joy and peace of the presence of Jesus wherever you go.

- the Rev. Canon Peter Parker, Rector

St. Luke Cedar Hill - worshipping Christ, bringing Good News to all