



IN THE LOOP

Keeping you in the Loop – An update from the Knox Board and Session

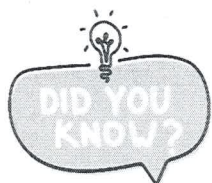
All Presbyterian Churches are governed by a group of members who have been ordained as ruling elders. This group meets once a month and is called the Session. The minister of the church is a teaching elder, and moderates the monthly meetings.

At Knox, the Session meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7pm. Our meetings include reports from all of the church committees. We make decisions regarding the use of our building, the overall direction of our church's mission, and oversee all activities that take place at Knox. At Knox, there are three clerks of Session: Sharon Pinylo (who is our recording clerk and takes the minutes of our meetings), Elizabeth MacLeod (who puts together the report package for all of our elders) and Sue Mills (who is our representative clerk, signing documents and representing our congregation at events and celebrations.)

The Board (of Managers) is a committee that reports to the Session on a monthly basis. The Board ensures our church building is in good repair and manages our church's finances – including creating a yearly budget. The chair of the Board of Managers is Ron Smith. There are several elders who also serve on the Board.

This fall, the church Library was given a fresh coat of paint, and the furniture was re-arranged to better suit the various groups that use the space. The Board and Session are reviewing how financial reports are submitted for Rodney Outreach and Organ and Music, to ensure that the statements are easier to interpret. We also received an initial idea from the Organ and Music Committee on some ways that we could make our choir loft a bit safer and more accessible. We are grateful for a significant designated gift for this purpose. The congregation will hear more about these plans, and input will be requested, once we have something put to paper!

Did you know????



That Knox offers an online service that is broadcast on Sunday mornings for those on facebook and youtube? (and that you can catch the service later on both of these platforms also?)

That you can "call in" on your phone to listen to the Sunday morning worship service every Sunday mornings at 10:30am. Simply dial: 1-844-644-8711.

That we are looking for a volunteer to put together the hymn slides for our online service this winter? Training is provided. If you have worked with power point, the program is very similar! A big thank you to Julie Meathrell who has filled this role for the last year. Julie is beginning a new course, and so is asking to be relieved of this duty! Speak to Mavis if you can help!

That Knox Church, St. Thomas has a new website design? You can check it out here!
www.knoxstthomas.ca

The bulletin is posted every Friday under the "Worship" page of the website.



Leading with Care ...

Now that we are consistently back into our building for worship and other activities, a few reminders about how we can work together to keep our building safe....

1. Sunday Evacuation Protocols: If the fire alarm sounded on a Sunday morning, we are reminded to:
 - remain in our seats for a moment for direction from the pulpit
 - do NOT USE the elevator.
 - Able bodied folk leave the sanctuary first.
 - Those who require assistance on the stairs, or move a bit slower – please wait and our security volunteers and the fire department will assist you.
 - If it is winter, DO NOT TAKE THE TIME to retrieve a coat from a coat rack in Rodney Hall or the foyer.
 - The meeting place is at the big sign on the corner of Wellington and Hincks
 - Do not exit the parking lot until the all clear has sounded.
 - Sunday Kool and nursery children will be evacuated to the second entrance on Wellington Street. Parents can retrieve their children from this location.
2. Police Records Checks, Leading with Care Training and Covenants of Care: All people working regularly with vulnerable adults or children are required to submit a vulnerable persons' screening police records check and sign a covenant of care stating that they have received Leading with Care training. These training sessions are offered several times a year. We are grateful to the members of our Christian Education Committee, our Pastoral Care Committee and all of our elders who continue to follow these protocols.
3. Defibrillators: Knox has two defibrillators, one on the sanctuary level at the top of the south stairs, and one in Rodney Hall on the wall toward the front entrance. In the event of someone experiencing cardiac arrest, please open the door to the unit. Audio directions regarding use will immediately start.
4. Safe and Healthy Space: A few notes for our groups regarding keeping our kitchen and storage areas safe and to code.
 - Please ensure that everyone in the kitchen washes their hands and wipe down the counters before preparing coffee for coffee time.
 - If your group uses the storage area that is off of the CE Hall and through the photocopier room... please note that we are NOT permitted to have any loose items that are not in a plastic tote, and that we need to ensure that there are no items on the floor area (outside of the shelving units). Thank you for your help!
5. If you are feeling unwell, please do not attend meetings or Sunday morning worship. We want to ensure that the only thing we "pick up" at Knox is faith, kindness and joy! Join in our online service until you are symptom free.

Coping with grief at Christmas time – Taken from the website “My Grief Assist”



For some, Christmas is not the time to be jolly. For some people, this Christmas will be filled with sad memories of someone close who is no longer here.

Facing your first Christmas without someone you love can be a very lonely and daunting time. There may be expectations that you will put up the Christmas tree, send out greeting cards, go out Christmas shopping and join family and friends for Christmas dinner... especially because others want to see you coping and moving on.

But when you're grieving this can be really difficult. You may have no inclination or energy to 'pretend' that you are looking forward to Christmas when in truth you wish things were the way they were last year - when you were still together with your loved one.

On the other hand, some people want to handle Christmas time by doing things in the same way as always - not changing anything and keeping to the same routines and family rituals. Keeping to the familiar gives them comfort. Allow yourself to have fun. It doesn't mean you've forgotten the person or that your grief for them is over.

When you're grieving, everyone handles their emotions and reactions differently. Here are three tips if you're facing the dilemma of how to handle this Christmas:

1. Give yourself permission not to do the things that you're finding hard to do - writing Christmas cards, putting up the tree, going to Christmas parties - it's alright to let these go this year or next, until you can cope with social events again.
2. Make a point of remembering your loved one in a special way - light a candle for them on Christmas Day, place an ornament on the Christmas tree to symbolise them, buy a gift for a needy child or family in place of the gift you would have bought.
3. Allow yourself to grieve - the days leading up to Christmas (and other significant days on the calendar) can heighten your grief. Seeing other couples and families together just hurts. Seeing the empty place at the Christmas table will be hard to bear. It's alright to cry and let people know that it's hard living without someone special. Try not to bottle up your feelings. Now's the time to tell a close friend that you're struggling to put on a happy face and that you'd appreciate their company or simply their listening ear for support.

And if you know someone who is grieving this Christmas, give them a call, write them a special card, invite them over for a quiet get together, speak up and acknowledge their loss, and have the courage to mention the name of their loved one ... and let them know that you understand that it may be a hard time for them because it's Christmas... and there are memory triggers everywhere of a missing face, an empty chair and silent thoughts of the way Christmas used to be.

Doris Zagdanski is a leading figure in modern day grief and loss education. Her seminars are included in vocational qualifications in Allied Health, Counselling and Funeral Directing.

News from the Presbytery of London

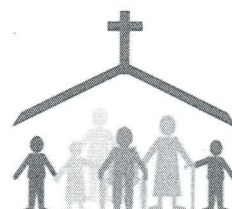
What is the Presbytery? Instead of being governed by individuals, the Presbyterian Church in Canada is governed by groups of people that are called courts. The presbytery is one of the courts of the church (along with sessions, synods and General Assembly). The Presbytery is made up of one minister and one elder (called the representative elder) from each church within a geographic bounds. The Presbytery of London includes all of the Presbyterian churches in London, and extends south to Port Stanley, east to Dorchester, and west to Dutton and just outside of Mount Brydges. The Presbytery meets on the 2nd Tuesday of September, October, November, January, February, March, April, May and June at 7pm. During the upcoming year, we will be meeting via zoom and in person – depending on weather and the length of the meeting.



So... what does the presbytery do?? The presbytery has three main roles and we are organized into three teams to do this work.

The Business Team – deals with matters related to other courts of the church; manages any funds of the court, collects police records checks for clergy and Leading with Care documents for churches, ensures that the Presbytery Lending Fund, the Refugee Committee and a Sexual Abuse and Harassment Team are functioning.

The Ministry Team – interviews students for ministry, provides a pulpit supply list, interviews candidates to serve as lay preachers, works with the congregation team to aid congregations/clergy during times of transition or difficulty.



The Congregation Team – appoints interim moderators, appoints visitation teams, works with the ministry team to aid congregations/clergy during times of transition or difficulty.



Meet the Moderator of Presbytery!

Every year, the presbytery elects a moderator for our meetings. The moderator can be an elder or a minister. The moderator represents the presbytery at functions like ordinations and inductions. The moderator's main role, however, is to chair the monthly meetings of the presbytery. The moderator for the 2023-24 year is Rev. Dr. David Clark.

The Rev. Dr. David Clark (Ph.D.) was inducted as the minister of New St. James Presbyterian Church in 2020. He previously served at Calvin Presbyterian Church (North Bay) and at St. David's Presbyterian Church (Campbellville). He serves also as a Unit Chaplain in the Canadian Army

(Primary Reserve).

Dr. Clark is a member of the Board of Governors of the Presbyterian College (Montreal)

He serves on the Committee on Ethics, Religion, and the Holocaust at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

He is married and loves spending time with his wife and children.



How do I learn more about the Presbytery of London? Go to our website!
www.presbylondon.ca, ask your rep elder or your minister!

Please pray for....

- The sessions of all of the churches in our presbytery as they make plans for Advent and Christmas activities and services.
 - The ministers who serve our churches
 - Our new moderator of Presbytery, Rev. Dr. David Clark.
 - Rev. Andrew Thompson, as he begins his new ministry at Chalmers Presbyterian Church.
- Congregations who are looking for a minister (Burns Church, Mosa, Knox-St. Andrew's, Dutton, Trinity Community Church.)

“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas” - The Meaning of Advent (borrowed from a sister church in Windsor, Ontario)

Children say, “I can’t wait for Christmas,” they convey what it means to live in Advent. With joy they are waiting for an event that is good, that has been promised, and is now hidden from sight. Children do manage to wait. One way they do this is by sharing in the many preparations for Christmas. Waiting and preparing are the themes of Advent for adults as well. But when did Advent begin? And what can it mean in your life?



Historical Roots of Advent

The calendar year may begin on January 1, but for Christians the Christian year begins with Advent – four weeks before Christmas. Advent is the beginning of a cycle of time that celebrates the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ. It may originally have been a time of instruction for people who were preparing to be baptized on January 6, on Epiphany. History reveals Advent traditions of varying lengths, but our waiting time is now the four Sundays before Christmas.

Finding Meaning in the Tradition

Advent is the time when Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. We recall those who waited and prepared for a promised Christ child: the prophet Isaiah, Mary, his mother, and John the Baptist. We also think about God’s promises that are yet to be revealed under the reign of Christ, in “the age to come” or “the day of the Lord.” Advent is oriented in both the past and the future. As we get ready for the birth of Jesus and for the promise that Christ will come again, we use gifts of spiritual preparation: worship, prayer, singing, Bible study, fellowship (Christmas parties!), and service to others.

The **Advent wreath**, is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. The Advent wreath is often an evergreen wreath with four candles, sometimes with a fifth, white candle in the center. Beginning with the First Sunday of Advent, the lighting of a candle can be accompanied by a Bible reading and prayers. An additional candle is lit each Sunday until, by the last Sunday of Advent, all four candles are lit. Our Advent wreath includes a fifth, Christ candle, which is lit on Christmas Eve.

Advent wreaths are usually circular, representing God’s infinite love, and are made of evergreen leaves, which represent the hope of eternal life brought by Jesus. Within the Advent wreath are candles that generally represent the four weeks of the Advent season as well as “the light of God coming into the world through the birth of Jesus Christ.” The candles can also symbolize the Christian concepts of hope (week one), peace (week two), joy (week three) and love (week four).

The most popular colours for the four Advent candles are violet (or blue) and rose. In the past, we have used violet candles to represent a season of penitence.

The flames of the candles are the representation of the Christmas light approaching and bringing hope and peace, as well as the symbol of the struggle against darkness.

We hope you can join us as we journey through the season of Advent at Knox!

Sunday December 3rd Advent 1: “The Hopes and Fears of All the Years” Lighting The Candle of Hope and the Sacrament of Communion

Sunday December 10th Advent 2 “Nestor, the Long Eared Donkey” Sunday Kool Christmas Pageant

Sunday December 17th Advent 3 “Not a Hallmark Christmas”

Sunday December 24th Advent 4 (10:30am) Christmas Carol Sing

Sunday December 24th Advent 5 (6pm – Family Service

8pm – Traditional Service with Brass and choir)



Archives Committee

Since our last conversation with you, Rev. Herb Hilder and I have been busy meeting almost every week in planning and coordinating our projects. It has been a very ambitious number of weeks with the following being accomplished.

- Oct. 8 Rodney Scholarship
- Oct. 14-15 Poster for display as part of Welcome Committee
- Nov. 5 WW1 presentation
- Nov. 8 Outreach presentation relating to WW1
- Nov. 12 Anniversary
- Nov. 19 Advent/Christmas (tree in Rodney Hall has been decorated by your Archives Committee). We were inspired with the theme of Christmas Past
- Nov. 26 Advent display Glass slides/ Pilgrims Progress



We are already talking about next year, and have committed ourselves to doing WW2 for November 2024. We would also like the congregation to be aware that we ran out of time to do a proper workup of the 5 boys/men who were members of Alma Presbyterian Church. A plaque was at one time located in the Church, however, we have checked the various archives only to come up empty. If anyone knows anything about this plaque please contact one of us. We will include the write ups on the 5 soldiers with the WW2 presentation, but separate. Still on that theme, as you may have a lot of time on your hands over the winter months, should you come up with any WW2 information that you would be willing to share with us, we would be most grateful.

Thank you to all who have provided information or encouragement in any way, and a special thank you for your interest in the displays that we have created.

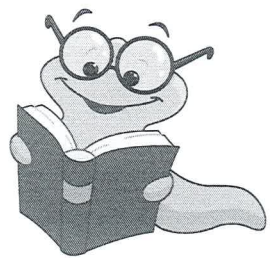
Annamaria Tolgyes



The Library Bookworms

The Library Bookworms would like to report the following accomplishments.

In the late summer- early fall, the library was given a new lease with some much needed upgrades which included painting. Many congregation members have expressed their comments to the spaciousness of the library, the flow as well as how much lighter and brighter it seems. Thank you for all the comments and for the support of the executive committees in making this a reality.



We have re-energized the Library, having completed the cataloguing of all adult books, run a successful read a book/write a review contest, completed the children's cataloguing. We will also have a display of books read by the Book Club of Knox, for those who may be interested. These books need to be signed out as all other books.

A very successful drive was held of books donated to the Library, and indirectly to the Bazaar later this month. The next book drive will be in late March. Reminders will be in future bulletins.

An open house was held on November 19 with information, photos of the building of the Barbara Turville Library as well as a selection of books from the shelves highlighting the upcoming Christmas season.

The Bookworms continue to meet monthly. Communications will be found in future Bulletins. Thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you in the Library.

Annamaria Tolgyes



Knox Foodgrains Committee

On Sunday, October 22, the Knox Foodgrains Committee held a very successful "Harvest Luncheon" with 120 members of the congregation and friends enjoying 10 soups followed by cake and ice cream. Through the generosity of the congregation, "The Harvest Luncheon", including other donations in October and November, raised over \$6000 to increase the Foodgrains account to \$12,500 for the year to date.

Two huge "thanks" goes to the Knox congregation for their outstanding support of this humanitarian program and to the nineteen members of the congregation that volunteered to help serve food and clean up.

The Committee was again very grateful for the contribution of food from the St. Thomas Foodland, Briwood, Shaw's Ice Cream and the Original Cakerie. Letters were sent out to each business thanking them for their continued support and generosity.

The next meeting for the Knox Foodgrains Committee will be on April 25, 2024 to plan for the Spring Luncheon on June 2, 2024. As always, any Knox member or adherent is more than welcome to join the Knox Foodgrains Committee and help us to continue our efforts to eliminate world hunger..

Jack McBride
Secretary, Knox Foodgrains Committee



Greetings from the Choir Loft!

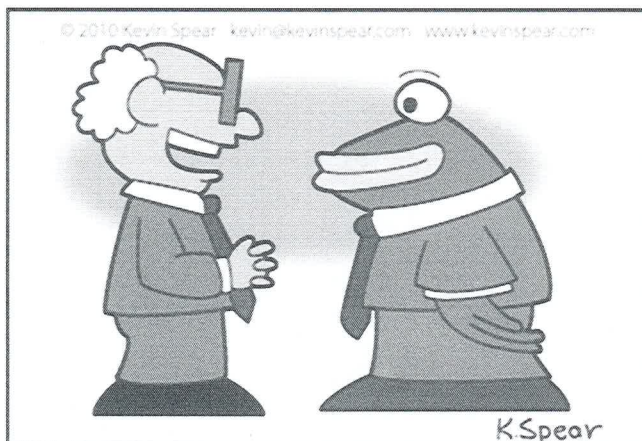


Advent is fast approaching and the Knox Senior Choir is beginning rehearsals on selections for the Christmas season under Sandy's expert direction. If you like to sing and are interested in joining us for the Christmas season, we'd love to have you!

You can talk to myself or Mavis or any choir member, or just come out on Thursday night at 7 p.m. Please use the Mitchell Street door. We usually rehearse in the sanctuary but sometimes you'll find us in the choir room at the head of the stairs. Our choir coordinator, Jean Stafford-Green, will readily outfit you with music and a choir folder and answer any questions you may have. On Sundays she will also help you find a choir gown.

Hope to see you soon,

Diane Pease, Knox Senior Choir



"Welcome to our choir. We needed a good, strong bass."



Ever thought about joining a group or activity at Knox? All of our groups are open to all! Below is a bit more information about three that you might want to join?

Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group

Every Wednesday, you are invited to join with Rev. Mavis Currie and others from Knox to study the scripture that will be the focus of the sermon the following week! No previous Bible knowledge is necessary and visitors are always welcome!

1st And 3rd Wednesdays at 10:30am – In Person Bible Study in the Church Library (use Mitchell Street entrance)

2nd and 4th Wednesday at 10:30am – Zoom Bible Study (contact Rev. Mavis Currie m.currie@knxostthomas.ca for the zoom link)

What is the Library Café?

The Library Café is an informal gathering of Knox members and friends. We meet about once a month (check the bulletin for dates) for tea, coffee and conversation in the church Library! We can count on our fearless leader, Jean MacPherson to provide us with corny jokes to share! Why not join us?

Knox Rocks

Knox Rocks is a night of fun for our youth in grades 4-8. We meet about once a month for dinner, games, crafts, desserts and a church wide game of manhunt. Friends are always welcome, the more the merrier. Contact Meghan if you'd like further information.



BOOK CLUB

Here is the list of books we will be reading for the rest of the year for the Knox book club.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| December 14, 2023: | Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt (just a fun read!) |
| January 11, 2024: | The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by CS Lewis (Children's literature) |
| February 8, 2024: | Born a Crime by Trevor Noah (Black author) |
| March 14, 2024 : | Mr Churchill's Secretary by Susan Elia Macneal (Historical Fiction and a mystery) |
| April 11, 2024: | Fire Keeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley (Indigenous author) |
| May 9, 2024: | Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Staffer and Annie Barrows. (Epistolary—a book written in letters (like the Epistles of Paul in the Bible...)) |
| June 13, 2024: | Murder at the Vicarage by Agatha Christie (mystery) |

If you would like to join us for one or two or more of our book club zoom meetings, please let Mavis Currie or myself know and we will make sure you receive the zoom link.

Happy Reading!

Gail McHardy-Leitch



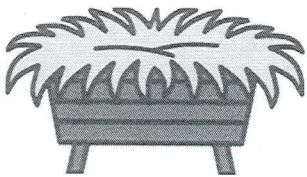
Christmas Traditions for Kids that Keep Christ in Christmas

Looking for some simple traditions to begin in our family that are centred on faith rather than materialism. Try out one (or several) of these ideas:

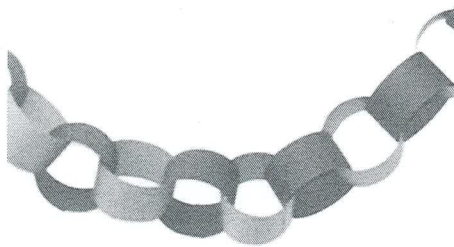


Create an advent wreath and light one candle each Sunday leading up to Advent.

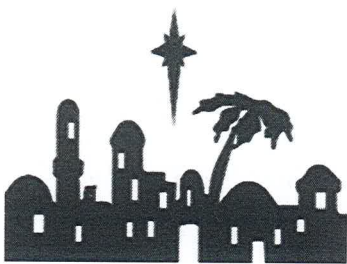
As the candle is lighted, share ideas about the word of the day (Advent 1: hope, Advent 2: peace, Advent 3: joy, Advent 4, love).



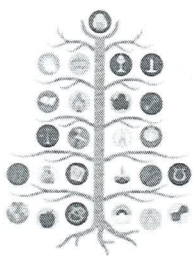
The Giving Manger — Set up a small manger near your Christmas tree. Each day, invite the children to name one kind thing they have done that day. Each act of kindness = one piece of straw (or strip of fabric). Together, our acts of kindness make a soft bed for Jesus.



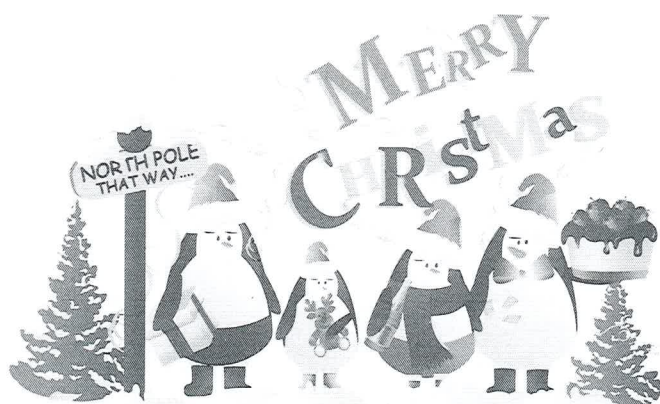
Service Christmas Paper Chain: Instead of just a normal Christmas paper chain, make it more meaningful by having acts of service or kindness on each paper for the child to take off each day. A few ideas: place candy bars on neighbor's windshield, prepare ziplock bags for the car with water and snacks to hand out to homeless people on the street, pay for person behind you in line at the drive-through or at the grocery store.



"Back to Bethlehem" Night: As a family, you gather under the tree for a picnic of sorts that includes food Mary and Joseph would have eaten. It doesn't have to be complicated, just a simple setup with items like grapes, oranges, bananas, naan/flatbread/pitas, cheese, pistachios, pomegranates, dates, hummus, pickles, olives, crackers, or grape juice are just a few ideas. Read the Christmas story of Jesus' birth or watch a Christmas movie as you dine!



Jesse Tree: A Jesse Tree is created with a set of 25 symbolic ornaments, each of which represent a different piece of the overarching redemption story of the Old Testament leading up to the birth of Jesus. The ornaments typically coordinate with a Bible story or verse from scripture and can be hung on your regular Christmas tree or on a separate tree. Want more information? Just google "Jesse tree for kids, and you can find all kinds of ideas and resources for your ornaments!



THREE ^{OF}/_A KIND

The Glory Days



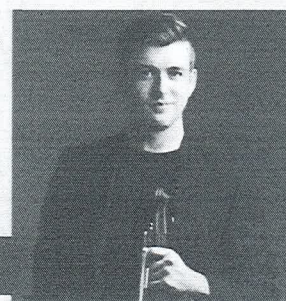
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

7:00 PM

Knox Presbyterian Church
55 Hincks St
St. Thomas, ON

For tickets visit knoxstthomas.ca
or call 519-207-8029

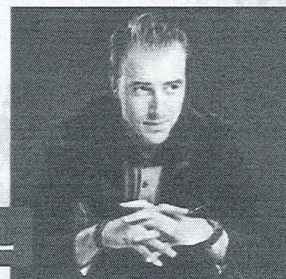
JESSE



MARK



MICHAEL



tickets cost \$35 in advance, \$25 for students, in advance
and \$40 at the door.

tickets go on sale December 1st, in time for Christmas
gift-giving.

WE'RE BACK!

By the time you get this newsletter, we, the **STARBRIGHT-CHRISTMAS-CREW**, will have returned home. Safely, I hope.

This year another sold out bus crew of *fifty* made the trek to the *Victoria Playhouse* in Petrolia to enjoy the perfect preview of Advent, **STARBRIGHT CHRISTMAS**.

The majority of the group were from KNOX but we had 'guests' from Westmount Presbyterian, Aylmer Baptist, Christian Reformed and St. Paul's United too.

STARBRIGHT CHRISTMAS has become a tradition of the Victoria Playhouse. It's an excellent show. Mark Payne, the musical director at Petrolia, was here in February with an entertaining show called **THREE OF A KIND** and I think he's coming again early in 2024.

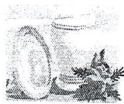
Tickets for the Christmas shows are reserved **months** before the performance. Buses are booked months ahead too. If you think you may like to go to the 2024 version, just send us an email indicating your interest. 100 people.... in two buses.... is a possibility if the interest is there.

Now, get back to your busy Christmas preparations
Christmas 2023 will be here before you know it!
Tony Stacpoole & Pat Baker

stacpooletony@gmail.com
emailpbaker@gmail.com



FUNERALS



Franz Enns—Oct 5, 2023

Louise Sifton—Oct. 10, 2023

NEW MEMBERS



Hazel Broughton – Nov. 26, 2023

Brian & Sue Broughton – Nov. 26, 2023

Richard & Julie Broughton – Nov. 26, 2023

If you have questions or would like more information about our church, reach out to one of the elders or to the Knox staff.

KNOX ELDERS

Dr. Ian Begg
Brian Bolt
Bonnie Brown
Carole Cowan
Jo-Anne Deblieck
Donna Ellis
Malcolm Ferguson
Jennifer Holt
Bill Horn
Maggie Horn
Tom Jackson

Bryce Jones
Wanda Kapogines
Wendy Liebrechts
John Lyle
Elizabeth MacLeod
Jean MacPherson
Jack McBride
Angus McKenzie
Marion McKenzie
Patricia Meathrell

Suzanne Mills
Randy Mills
Pam O'Sullivan
Diane Pease
Sharon Pinylo
Marg Rieger
Brent Sifton
Richard (Tony) Stacpoole
Pete Taylor
Frank Williamson

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is
the future, but today is a gift.
That's why it's called the present."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
Reprinted with permission of Bil Keane

KNOX STAFF

Minister: Rev. Mavis Currie 519-860-1380 (cell) 519-631-2414 (office) m.currie@knoxstthomas.ca
Christian Education and Family Minister Co-ordinator: Meghan Brockington
m.brockington@knoxstthomas.ca

Office Administrator: Kathy Kestle 519-631-2414 office@knoxstthomas.ca

Director of Music: Amadeusz Kazubowski-Houston amadeusz.scherzo@gmail.com

Church Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9am – 1pm. (NOTE: Kathy is not in the office on Friday; Meghan will be manning the phone!)

Presbyterian Church of Canada: www.presbyterian.ca

Presbyterian World Service & Development: www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd