

St. Brice's Anglican Church Newsletter January 11, 2025.



St. Brice's Anglican Church

<https://www.stbriceschurch.com/wordpress/>

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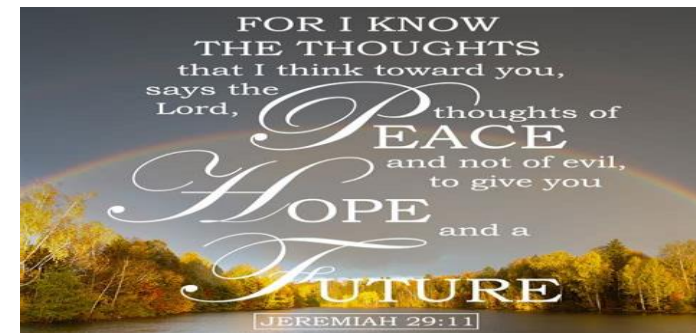
Something To Make Us Smile

Several children found a dead robin. Feeling that a proper burial should be performed, they secured a small box and some cotton batting, dug a hole in the back yard, and made ready to dispose of the deceased. The minister's 5-year-old son was chosen to say the prayer. And so with great dignity, he intoned, "Glory be to the Father...and unto the Son...and into the hole he goes."



St. Brice's Visioning Scripture

"Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus." Colossians 3: 14, 17 (NLT)



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Alpha Course



The Alpha Course – a light-hearted introduction (or review) of the Christian faith, began this past week at St. Brice's. I encourage people to participate, if we have not participated before, or have not taken the course for a long time. Friends and neighbours (especially those who have spiritual questions) are most welcome. People can still join this week.

We meet every Wednesday at 6pm in the Parish Hall. Every week considers a different theme. Supper is included. There is no cost. (We appreciate, though, that if people are planning to come as guests, that we let the parish office know, so we know how much food to prepare – stbrices.northbay@yahoo.ca, or call 705 474-4005.) For more information, people can check out <https://alphacanada.org/>.

Community Supper, To Support St. Brice's Food Bank



Community Meal

costs are currently larger than the income.

There are plans to offer a Community Supper, to support St. Brice's Food Bank, on Saturday, February 15.

There are a greater number of clients lately for the Food Bank, which means that the

However, the parishioner who was going to coordinate the supper has had to step back. If you would like to help, please let the parish office know: Call 705 474-4005 or email stbrices.northbay@yahoo.ca.

Sunday School

The Sunday School has divided into 2 groups – a younger class and an older class.

Nigerian Anglican Liturgy

For the first time, we used the Nigerian Anglican liturgy at St. Brice's. People seemed to be able to participate well. We expect that we will use it occasionally at St. Brice's.

Confirmation

A couple of people have approached me (Peter) about being confirmed.

Because Archbishop Anne has responsibilities for the National Church office until the end of June 2025, I expect



that I will need to work out a date for a service of Confirmation with the current assisting bishop, Bishop Michael Oulton (retired from Ontario diocese in the Kingston area).

I hope this might take place in late spring or early summer. I will share more information about when classes

start, when the Confirmation date is established.

Lent

The season of Lent begins this year on March 5. I have asked a couple of laypeople to coordinate a short introduction to the Bible and Christianity, to offer during Lent 2025.

We also hope to recommend a suitable devotional book to read (some of us – myself included -- were dissatisfied with the book choice for 2024).

We anticipate offering special services and other events. Details will follow, closer to Lent season.

Vestry Meeting

I would like to remind people that the Vestry meeting will be held on Sunday, February 2, following lunch. For parishioners who are responsible for a parish report, we ask that all reports be turned into the parish office (preferably by email at stbrices.northbay@yahoo.ca), by no later than this coming Saturday, January 18. Of course, it's easier for us who are in the office if we receive reports *before* the deadline. Thank you to those who have already submitted reports.

THE WIDER CHURCH

Coldest Night of the Year

CNoY, or the "Coldest Night of the Year," is a fund-raiser to support people who are homeless or whose living arrangements are insecure. In past years, The Gathering Place was the local beneficiary. This year, CNoY in North Bay will be held around suppertime on Saturday, February 22.



We encourage people to participate, or to sponsor those who do participate.

In past years, there have been 2 Anglican groups, each spearheaded by the 2 other Anglican parishes. I have written them, asking if we might aim to have a single Anglican group in 2025.

FINANCIAL UPDATE



We had a remarkably generous month in December 2024, leaving us with a very slight surplus. The numbers for the end of our fiscal year are:

Income: \$176 340.14
Expenses: \$175 767.21
Surplus: \$572.93.

This is a remarkable achievement. I believe those of us who are in leadership have striven hard to be responsible stewards of all that has been entrusted to our care. I (Peter) am sincerely grateful to God, who is the ultimate source of all our blessings. I know too that a number of parishioners give sacrificially, and I am very grateful for this too.

I remain somewhat concerned, however, for a few reasons.

- First, the pattern of some parishioners' contributions is that we have generous offerings in the month of December, but typically run deficits in the summer, late summer, and during the month of January. (Perhaps people are paying off December Christmas bills in January?)

As most expenses are pretty consistent from month to month, this means that often we are reporting a deficit from near the beginning of the year to just about the end of the year, which can be discouraging.

I hope that parishioners would prayerfully consider giving consistently – assuming our source of income is consistent. 3 easy ways to do this are:

<By using the offering envelopes,
<Participating in the easy-to-use Electronic Offering Program. (I use E.O.P. myself, and I find it very convenient.)
<Making e-transfers-- deposits@stbriceschurch.com
Envelope Secretary Fay Ivany can help if needed.

The historical Christian standard is the tithe -- 10% of income. If that is too much of a change initially, I suggest two things to keep in mind:

1. Aim to be generous;
 2. Give until we start to feel good about what we are doing.
- Second – not that I am any great shakes; I know I’m not – I learned a little while ago that the aim for a healthy Canadian parish is that the rector, the parish priest, not be in the top 5% of the financial givers.
For example, if there were 100 people giving financially to a parish, the rector should not be the most generous down to the fifth-most-generous.
When my wife Nancy and I were first married, we decided we would tithe my stipend, and we have never regretted that.
 - A third reason I remain somewhat concerned is because of events we anticipate in 2025:
 - + We pay our insurance premium for the first 10 months of the year, and our insurance is projected to go up 5% in 2025;
 - + We don’t offer Take Home Meals in the months of January and July, to give our volunteers a break;
 - + As I write this, it looks as if upcoming changes in American financial policy will lead to an economic recession in Canada.

- I am concerned about the upcoming proposals – and I am not alone;
- + Our practice has been to do the best we can to calculate our apportionment to the diocesan office each year. Along with other parishes, we receive a notice from the diocesan office in late summer, once they receive the annual returns from all the parishes.
This usually means that our apportionment goes up. (Last Sept., we learned we would have to pay an additional \$4568 in late 2024.)
To his credit, our treasurer Don Bonenfant has learned how the diocesan office calculates revenue from all the parishes, and has taken that into account when preparing the 2025 Budget.
This means that we will be less likely to receive a notice of owing more money late in the summer, but it means that our overall Budget will be higher, because our income has been steadily growing the past few years.

The Finance Committee has gone over the Budget thoroughly, but it has not yet been presented to the Board, nor adopted by the parish as a whole. However, it looks at this time as if we are looking at a 6.5% increase in our Budget in 2025. This will likely be something of a challenge to meet. It is easier to give a little more each month beginning in January, then to make up a bigger amount in early autumn.

While this might be somewhat daunting news, I know that we have a faithful God, who will help us every step of the way. I am proud beyond words of the ministries and outreach which I see taking place at St. Brice’s. It’s such a privilege to serve you. Let’s recall II Corinthians 9: 6b: “The one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”