

The Wardens' Wire

The church was alive and hopping two Sundays ago.

Bishop Jenkins and his wife Kim came for his second Episcopal visit. It's a long way from home and we hope they enjoyed it as much as we did.

The sermon was about God's love. Bishop Jenkins has a big boom to his delivery so there was no mistaking that he meant what he was saying. It was a happy sermon, reassuring, comforting, timeless. It was followed by a short vestry meeting so we could get to know one another better.

He commented on our singing. The choir was wonderful with thanks to Dr. Renwick and the choristers and according to the Bishop's comments about how well the congregation sang we didn't do too badly ourselves.

What was an extra wonderful gift was the packed church. Some of the people who came had never been before. It seems that every Sunday now people wander in to check out the Message.

We are thankful for each person who joins us for worship and lunch.

We see God's love to us at every turn.- Judy
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Thank you Father Bob for this ... how true!

"How good it is to be in church to hear the holy prayers, the chanting, the psalms! What depths are concealed in the psalms and other sacred prayers! Of course, the reader cannot grasp everything, but if just one thought makes an impression, that is good."

St. Nikon of Optina
From "Living Without Hypocrisy: Spiritual Counsels of the Holy Elders of Optina".

Check out this beautiful poem that was written for St Margaret's 25th anniversary celebration...

OUR CHURCH

It stands a sentinel of time
This gray-walled house of prayer
Not built of costly stone and lime
Yet has worth beyond compare
It stands deep-rooted in the sod,
A hallowed dwelling place,
Where faithful hearts have worshipped God
Through many years of grace.

It stands a symbol of the truth
From out the holy page,
The guardian of the child and youth
The mentor of old age
It tells the story of the Cross
Bespeaks a father's care
A haven from all worldly dross
For Christ Himself is there.

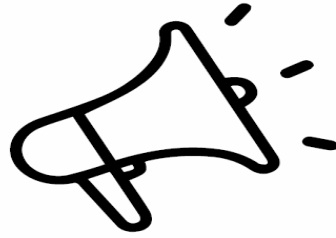
Within its walls the Sacred Cup
Is passed, the bread is given
And we before the table sup
On Christ's own body riven
For He our Church's Founder is
God's precious corner-stone
His one great message still is this,
"The Church it is my Throne"

Dear Lord, long make this house of Thine
A rest, where weary souls
May find therein Thy grace divine
When earthly sin be-fouls
Give to each heart a warmer glow
That shall the outcast win,
In Christ-like actions all men show
A living Church within.

Albert Moule, 1934

I come to the garden alone

History notes.....



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I look at the little oasis in the front yard of our church and I'm stunned by its beauty. This is the best year yet.

Notice the wall against the Parish Hall with the fulsome bushes and vines, and take a moment to look at the variety of plant material and the colours, the health of the plants, the neatly trimmed grass, the two huge planters that stand at the red doors wishing passers-by a welcome. There are so many people to thank. I don't want to leave anyone out.

If I were new in town, or even if I'd lived here for years, and saw the garden and the sign that says "You belong here" I'm sure I'd give it a try. It's a little patch of Eden in the west end of our city.

Thank you for those of you who have made this happen. It's really quite something. It's important to beautify God's house.

It's full of those green things from the Benedicite.

"Oh all ye Green Things upon the Earth, bless ye the Lord:/ praise him, and magnify him forever."
Judy

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Matt.25 -34-36,40 Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I have hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me....In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

HEARTS OF FREEDOM

YOU MUST SEE THIS WONDERFUL EXHIBIT ON TOUR AT HAMILTON CITY HALL UNTIL JUNE 20TH.

This has much meaning in our community. (see The Spectator front page of June 10th on bulletin board this week) Judy is a member of the group who organized this tribute to the Asian refugees who have come to Canada and of course lived the experience of welcoming and greeting so many brave immigrants. The members of the book club were privileged to meet Jolie Phuong Hoang and to read the story of her family's treacherous journey, entitled Three Funerals for my Father.

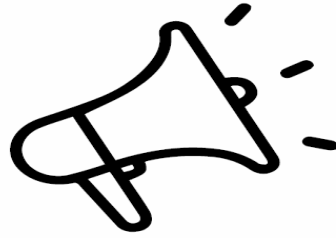
The travelling museum (first stop Hamilton) is from 8.30-4.30 Mon-Fri . in City Hall, free admission.

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World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honour refugees around the globe and celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. This day is recognized internationally on the Sunday before or after June 20th since 2001 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Welcoming refugees has been a faithful response of the church for decades. Over the last 45 years World Renew and partnering churches and groups have responded to the many and diverse needs of refugees from around the world and welcomed over 11,000 refugees to Canada.

**Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH):
World Renew**

St. George's Church has partnered with World Renew as our Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). Here is something about the work World Renew does in the area of refugee sponsorship.



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World Renew envisions a world where people experience and extend Christ's compassion and live together in hope as God's community.

World Renew (WR) is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This enables WR to sponsor refugees for their resettlement to Canada through Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSRP). World Renew partners with churches, other faith-based organizations and sponsoring groups to sponsor and resettle refugees to Canada.

Refugees have had to flee for their lives from war and persecution. They live in vulnerable and precarious situations and are in need of protection and opportunities to build a new life.

There are over 36.4 million refugees globally. These men, women, and children have often been displaced by war, persecution and violence. Many live in very difficult conditions and struggle with food insecurity and poverty.

Since 1979, World Renew with churches and other sponsoring groups, has responded to the needs of refugees around the world and has successfully sponsored and resettled more than 11,000 refugees to Canada. In 2023, World Renew sponsored 201 refugees; submitted 79 applications to IRCC; partnered with 61 churches and groups; and 120 refugees arrived in Canada.

St. George's Church is fortunate to partner with such an experienced, resourceful, and compassionate organization as World Renew .

Prayers for Refugees

*God of Grace,
Watch over the men, women and children who have been forced to flee from their homes.
Guide them as they search for a safe place to settle, for peace and for opportunity.*

*God of Mercy,
Be with them as they flee
Lead them into a safe place
Protect them from danger
Embrace them in their fears, pain and loneliness.*

*God of Creation
Let us see your image reflected in the face of each refugee
Let them see your image reflected in our faces as we open our homes and welcome them into our community.
May we stretch out our arms to them.
May they find their home in our midst.
Amen.*

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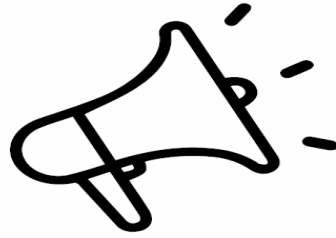
*Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee
and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today
are fleeing from danger, homeless and hungry.*

*Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts; and
guide the nations of the world toward that day when all
will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace.*

*We pray this, In the name of our God who shares
divinity with us,
In the name of our God who shares humanity with us,
In the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us,
We give our praise and thanks. Amen.*

**In Vietnamese it says it this way.
*Cang dong cang vui.***

**In English it says it this way. *The more the merrier.*
I keep that little expression, *Cang dong cang vui*, on my refrigerator door to remind me. It has stretched out its multicultural wings and changed the lives of our family. It has flown across countries, knocked down barriers, hopped over fences, challenged**



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borders. It has navigated two oceans and has declared "Yes! This is the way it could be!"

In 1859 Charles Dickens wrote *The Tale of Two Cities*. In 2024 I'm writing about *The Tale of Two Weddings*.

The Vietnamese Buddhist bride came into the room linked to the arm of the Pakistani groom of a faith different from her own. She wore the traditional red Ao Dai tunic and the Khang Dong silk circlet in her hair. The groom wore a wedding coat encrusted with beadwork along the neck and cuffs. Bach's Cello Suite # 1 accompanied them down the aisle where their parents waited, sitting facing the two hundred guests.

Within those two larger families are several cultures and three different religious groups. *Must have been tricky working this one out*, I thought.

After the traditional Vietnamese Tea Ceremony and the parents feeding cake to the couple to sweeten their marriage the bride and groom recited the vows which they had designed themselves.

The dinner, too, made me think about what was unfolding. We ate Italian food in an Italian banquet hall as Frank Sinatra crooned love songs in the background. *How do Frank and manicotti fit into this mix?* I asked myself.

And then after dinner, some traditional Bollywood style dancing by the groom's stunning family members dressed in high colours and sequins. I, of course, wanted to be one of them in that dream scenario but I'd have needed a shot of WD-40 to the joints.

A Vietnamese choir sang about a wedding couple walking down a flowered country path towards their future. When they sat down a twelve year old girl in track pants got up and Hip Hopped the night away.

The guests were introduced. From every city on Planet Earth they popped up and waved. We clapped, laughed, hugged one another. Well-wishing everywhere.

Children lit up the room. Vietnamese twins sat in their stroller wide-eye and sucking on their pacifiers. They fixated on the sweet little baby from the groom's family who looked like a cygnet in her fluffy white tulle dress as she sucked on her own pacifier. Babies come with no prior knowledge. They accept one another as mini-humans,

The newlyweds showed us the Afro-Brazilian Samba they'd been working on. These families have known one another for many years so this match was no last minute wonder.

The other wedding in this tale was as lovely, as much fun as wedding #1. The bride a beautiful young Vietnamese woman, the groom a dashing young man from Peru. (Think Prince Charming and Cinderella.) Again the Vietnamese Tea Ceremony complete with tunics and their usual unfettered grace, and followed, as one would, by the most fun South American dance music ever complete with flashing lights around our necks. I forgot about the WD-40 and joined the babies, the grandparents, the teenagers, the wedding party. It was one joyful celebration with people who flew in from Vietnam and Peru to make it happen. The Latin beat thumped, the floor shook, the people laughed.

And more recently it got even better. Afghan friends needed someone to help them out. Who volunteered? Recently arrived Syrian friends, a Sri Lankan friend, Vietnamese friends. A better world at work.

And therein is the perfect recipe for best-practice immigration, the ideal recipe for the way things can be. That is how we change newspaper headlines to something less stressful. It's only as complicated as we want it to be. It is a matter of looking into someone else's eyes and seeing our shared pain, joy, love, humanity. It's all there. We need to allow ourselves to locate it.

And at St. George's we *have* allowed ourselves to locate it. By God's Grace and in His time our friend from far away will arrive and be right here with us. His sister will be joyful and little Helen will have her Uncle all to herself!

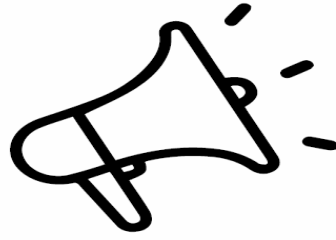
Thank you, all of you. Together we will recognize the blessings to follow, knowing that we have helped provide a future for a young man who otherwise would continue to live in fear and uncertainty.

Thank you for saying "Come to our party! Dance with us."

Judy

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