



## JANUARY, 2024 – NEWSLETTER



# **CHRISTMAS WEEK SERVICES**



**Dec 24 – Morning – 10:30 a.m.**

**In-person and Online**



**Christmas Eve Service – Evening - 7 p.m.**

**In-person and Online**

**New Years Eve, Sunday, Dec 31, 2023, 10:30 a.m.**

**In-person and Online**

## **Joy. Hope. Peace. Love.**

And an all-access pass.

If we look at the news, or even just what the world has been through in the last few years, I can't think of a better description of what the world needs.

And it was so in Jesus' time as well.

In the middle of Roman occupation;

in the middle of oppression by an empire that charged taxes too heavy for people to bear;

in the middle of trampled farmlands destroyed by armies so no food could grow;

in the middle of a culture that embraced debt slavery, child marriage, racism and class discrimination,

God sent

A baby.

WHAT?!?!?!?

What good would a baby do?

But maybe that's part of what God does.

God doesn't come to the places where the power is because then those who needed God to show up the most wouldn't have had access.

God comes to the places and people that no one thinks should be held up to the light and sends angels saying,

"Don't be afraid anymore. God's here. God is for you. God is for peace. Can I get a Hallelujah on that?"

God comes to the places of poverty and brings hope.

God comes to the places of uprootedness and running scared, and brings shelter and peace.

Even if it's a cave behind an inn.

God comes to us. No matter where we are, no matter what we think of ourselves, God's plans and God's love for us are bigger. This isn't some kind of prosperity theology where your success is judged on how blessed you are. This is the theology of God made flesh, coming to those who need it most when they need it the most. Jesus' birth is a celebration and a declaration of how precious all creation is in the love of God.

So come celebrate with us this Christmas—but not just at Christmas. Come join us on a journey of faith where all are welcome, questions of faith and spirituality are wrestled with, where we see God in the needs of others and are called to respond because that's how we believe we can be God's messengers in this community and share the love of Christ.

If God sent a baby to solve the deep hurt of the world, just imagine what God has in mind for us as we journey together.

God bless, and Merry Christmas,

Rev. Susan

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## **Session Update – December 20**

Session held their last meeting of 2023 on Dec. 11. The meeting was moderated by Rev. Susan Kerr who opened it by reading selected verses from 1 Corinthians 12 and prayer. Our first session meeting for 2024 is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 8, 2024.

1. 2023 Financial Update – provided by Ron Dekker. On a year-to-date basis (to November month-end), our surplus is slightly over \$13,000. While this is a great position to be in, with a full-time minister we will start to have a monthly deficit, which occurred in both October and November (November actual was a deficit of \$4,054.). The November deficit was a result of lower-than-normal monthly income and some extra expenses. However, given the significant year-to-date surplus from the months when we did not have a full-time minister, we are still forecasting to finish 2023 with a surplus. We encourage everyone to ensure that your givings are up to date.
2. Community Christmas Dinner – Plans are well under way for the Christmas Dinner and your contributions to this worthwhile initiative are exceeding our expectations! The registration process has started and, if early trends hold, we can expect to have 130-plus people come and enjoy a meal on Christmas Day.
3. Not Feeling Well - The winter season brings an increased chance of each of us picking up an infectious illness. Out of respect for each other, we ask that, if you are not feeling well, you join us online. That is the best way to ensure illness is not spread here at BEPC.
4. Administrative Workload and Succession Planning – Applications have been received for the Office Administrator position and the interview process has started. We hope to soon finalize who the successful person is and have them in place by mid-January.
5. 2024 BEPC Budget – Ron Dekker presented an updated 2024 budget and Session approved it for presentation to, and approval by, the congregation at the Annual General Meeting. When the budget is released in the Annual Report, you will see that it is a deficit budget as we do not anticipate having enough income to cover our expenses. The 2024 deficit will be covered by our accumulated surplus. There will be more details about this in the 2023 Annual Report.
6. Annual General Meeting – Session agreed that the Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday March 3, 2024. We will also hold communion on that Sunday.

Session wishes each and everyone a very blessed and peaceful holiday season. We trust and hope that everyone has an opportunity to spend some quality time with family and friends.

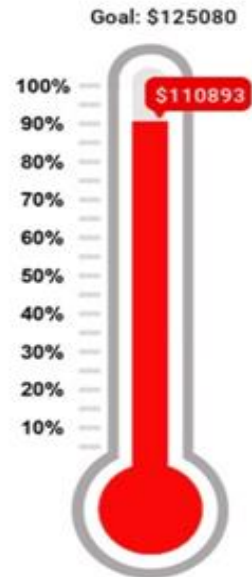
**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!**

Submitted by –  
Bob Dickison  
on behalf of the BEPC Session



**\$14,187.00 needed to reach BEPC  
Offering Budget for 2023**

**Click Link below to donate to help reach our Goal**



LOCATED AT THE FRONT AND BACK OF SANCTUARY

**e-Transfer**

SEND TO [CLERK@BURLINGTONEAST.NET](mailto:CLERK@BURLINGTONEAST.NET)

# **HOW TO GIVE TO BEPC**



MAIL TO: BEPC, 505 WALKERS LINE  
BURLINGTON, ON L7N 2E3



SEE RON DEKKER TO USE POINT OF SALE



The Burlington East Social Club had their annual Christmas dinner Dec. 4 at the Harvest Table Restaurant - a turkey dinner with all the fixings. They returned to the church to play cards and board games. (Below) On Dec. 18 they had their Christmas treat swap, bringing samples of their Christmas baking to share. (photos by Ron Dekker)



## ADVENT TEA





Advent tea and lots of fun, organized by Donna and Madeleine Beaudin and Halyna Dickison. (photos by Donna and Madeleine)

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### FAVOURITE HYMNS?

Do you have a favourite hymn (or two or more) you'd like to sing at our services?

Please let Halyna Dickison know at:

Email: [office@burlingtoneast.net](mailto:office@burlingtoneast.net) or phone 905-637-5155

*HEARING ASSISTANCE - If you need help with hearing and aren't yet sure which of our new systems is best for you, see Ron Dekker or Bob Dickison for assistance.*

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Ready for the children

Audrey Cirone has been busy preparing activities for children, building a collection of resources from craft and supply materials around the church. She says, even if no one shows up, we will be ready for them if they do.

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*Join us for fellowship after the service*

# BOOK, BIBLE & BAG LUNCH CLUB



MONDAYS  
AT 11:30  
AM



NEXT MTG  
MONDAY  
JANUARY 8



MORE  
INFORMATION  
SEE REV. KERR

**NOTE: LAST MEETING IS ON MONDAY DECEMBER 18 UNTIL JANUARY 8, 2024 WHEN THE FOCUS WILL BE ON THE BOOK OF MARK**

## Burlington East Social Club



The Social Club continues to meet every Monday afternoon, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

\$2.00 admission covers coffee, snacks and future events.

New members always welcome.

See Ron or Susan for details

NEXT WOMENS  
GATHERING IS  
LUNCH @

**LOCATION  
TBD**

**ON JANUARY 11  
AT 1 PM**

**LET ANN or JANE KNOW  
BY JANUARY 7, IF YOU  
ARE ATTENDING**

## **Men's Group**



**COME HELP THEM SOLVE THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS  
MONDAYS AT 10 AM - McRAE ROOM**

# USED BOOK CLUB BRING US YOUR USED PAPER BACK BOOKS

**BRING YOUR  
UNWANTED USED  
BOOKS TO THE  
CHURCH OFFICE  
ON SUNDAY  
OR MONDAY**



**SEE BOB DOWDING FOR MORE DETAILS**

*Prayer  
Requests*

minister@burlingtoneast.net



*Flowers in  
memory*

Send your request to:  
minister@burlingtoneast.net



**DELIVERED TO YOUR EMAIL IN-BOX**



**SEND YOUR REQUEST IN TODAY  
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BURLINGTON, ON L7N 2E3



SEE RON DEKKER TO USE POINT OF SALE

**"You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself"  
(Luke 10:27)**

Greetings, fellow Christians on a journey!

The above text is the theme for the upcoming week of prayer for Christian Unity.

We are very thankful for Rev. Pike of St. Luke Anglican church and his congregation to host the opening service for this week of prayer.

Address: 1382 Ontario Street, Burlington, L7S 1G1

When? Sunday, Jan. 21 at 2 pm

For those who have participated in the past, this Sunday service will be followed by 5 consecutive prayer times from Monday through Friday. We are working at the details of these five days and will communicate these as soon as we have all dates confirmed with hosting churches.

This week of prayer for Christian Unity has been a tremendous blessing for those who have participated in previous years and we encourage you all to invite more people of your congregations and friends

We would love to see Burlington Christians coming together, loving the Lord and our neighbours as ourselves in this way as it happens world-wide.

This year's service and content has been created by our brothers and sisters in Burkino Fasso, a beautiful country in Africa. Below is a link for the program.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/WPCU%202024%20ENG.pdf>

We will keep you posted on further details!

Merry Christmas and a blessed healthy 2024!

In His love,

Anneke Kramer

Mary Carey (Port Nelson United church)

June Pare (Appleby United Church)

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## The Best Birth Announcement Ever

**Isaiah 9:6** – For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (NKJV)

Three days before Christmas, my youngest niece, Bailey, was born. It is a day that I won't forget. It snowed, and for rural middle Georgia, a white Christmas was rare.

She was a beautiful baby with the prettiest eyes. However, I think that most people say that about babies, right?

Part of my job, besides keeping an eye on my niece, Jessica, Bailey's older sister, was to let other people know that Bailey had been born. My sister Tracey had given me a list of people to call and cards to be mailed.

The announcement of the birth of a new baby is important. Cards are sent. Balloons are tied on mailboxes. Normally, there are pictures of the newborn sent along with the announcements. Inside the card, the date of birth, and the measurement and weight of the baby are included.

When Bailey was born, there was no email, no social media, and no quick announcing her birth. There was no skywriting. Instead, I called everyone and mailed out postcards that Tracey had picked out. We tied a pink bow on a tree at my sister's house to let the community know that we had another girl in the family.

Imagine the day when Jesus was born. Remember how God spread the word? God spoke to the shepherds that night through His angel. The shepherds were keeping their sheep in the fields. "Do not be afraid," the angel first told them, and then went on to say, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10b-11 NKJV)

Of course, the angel didn't include baby Jesus' hair colour, eye colour, weight, or measurement in inches. But we found out so much more.

This baby was going to be the Lord of their lives. Whoa! And not just their lives, but our lives, too.

With the birth of Baby Jesus, the announcement was that the Saviour was here. Back then, and with us now, too, people had the need for someone who would bring them back at rights with God. They had turned to wrong living and straying off the right path, and nothing else was the answer to forgiving their sins and bringing them back to God. The same goes for us when we stray.

Nothing else could connect them to God except the sinless blood of the same person whom the baby Jesus grew up to be: Christ the Lord, the Saviour.

So, the angel told them: Here is your answer — the Christ is here. He is born, and with Him, redemption is possible. The same message is for us. Let us accept this gracious offer of forgiveness!

Talk about the best birth announcement ever!

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, the announcement of Your Son's birth brought great joy. What an amazing gift He is for us. Thank You for loving us so much. Amen.

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Please remember, we are doing everything we can to keep all the information in these newsletters as accurate, inclusive of everyone in our BEPC family, and informative as possible. We apologize in advance for any omissions or errors. They are by no means intentional.

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## **BURLINGTON EAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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