

At the Well

A PUBLICATION OF **LIFESPING 55**

DECEMBER 2021 IN THIS ISSUE

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"... but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

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JOHN 4:14

Farewell to the Brookers

Art and Carol Brooker have been an integral part of The Peoples Church family for as long as any of us can remember. For the past forty-plus years, hardly any attendee of our Sunday services would not have encountered Art's warm handshake or hug, and the warm greeting of Carol standing by his side, as they entered the main foyer. Art and Carol were quite literally the friendly face of The Peoples Church.

Their journey at Peoples began in January, 1976. Soon after arriving, in keeping with the global vision of the church, Art established the Canadian office of the Christian Blind Mission (CBMI) where he served as Executive Director from 1978 to 1999. For a number of those years he also carried the directorship of CBMI, USA. After "retiring" in 1999 Art was asked to provide leadership for In Touch Ministries, Canada, the Canadian arm of the ministry of Dr. Charles Stanley. The three-month assignment to cover the leadership responsibilities lasted for seventeen years!

During those years Art continued to participate in governance responsibilities as a member and director of Peoples Ministries Inc. He and Carol together gave 100% support to the local and global mandate of Peoples – true torchbearers for the cause of Christ.

In late November the Brookers will be relocating to Sackville, New Brunswick to live near their son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. It is safe to say that they will be sorely missed by the entire Peoples family.



We asked Art to give us a parting word for the his friends at Peoples. Here is his commendation for us:

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

We say farewell with our love and prayers as they embark on this next leg of their illustrious journey with the Lord.



A Gift Beyond Measure

For centuries, across geographical and cultural lines, the celebration of Christmas has been marked by a spirit of giving. It's at Christmas time that gifts are exchanged at all levels of engagement – families, neighbourhoods, and workplaces celebrate the Season through the joys of giving and receiving. Sadly, there are few who take the time to contemplate how it all started.

“God so loved... that He gave...” This is the distinguishing characteristic of the message of the gospel of Christ, Giving, motivated by unconditional love, is what separates Christianity from all other faith traditions.

People, in their desperate and pitiable condition, needed divine help in order to be lifted to a position of hope and purpose. God saw that before even the world was founded, and made the necessary provision.
(1 Peter 1:20)

We, therefore, have become recipients – undeserving recipients – of the lovingkindness of God. By acknowledging our need, confessing our sins, and professing Him as Lord we are given a complete gift package.

Included are freedom from sin (1 John 1:9), the life of the Spirit within (2 Corinthians 5:17) and assurance of eternal life (John 3:16). God's love for us has been convincingly demonstrated to us with the gift of His Son.

And it doesn't stop there! The apostle, Paul, in his letter to the Romans, sums up the overwhelming benevolence of God when he says, “He who did not spare His own son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things.” (Romans 8:32)

In this issue of At the Well we are considering some of those extra gifts – among them, brothers and sisters in Christ, opportunities of fellowship and service, the Lord's healing presence and a unique perspective on the birth of Jesus.

May our hearts be filled with gratitude as we celebrate the full package, leading us to exclaim with Paul, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!” (1 Corinthians 9:15)



Reg Andrews
Visitation Pastor



**I HEARD THE BELLS
ON CHRISTMAS DAY**

**AND IN DESPAIR I BOWED MY HEAD
THERE IS NO PEACE ON EARTH," I SAID,
FOR HATE IS STRONG, AND MOCKS THE SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN.
THEN PEALING THE BELLS MORE LOUD AND DEEP
"GOD IS NOT DEAD NOR DOETH HE SLEEP;
THE WRONG SHALL FAIL, THE RIGHT PREVAIL,
WITH PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN.**

- HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW -

Hymn Review

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wonderful poem "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" echoes our thoughts with deep insight.

It's sung as a Christmas carol of course yet its message is timeless. Peace on earth may seem a total impossibility now, with all the violence and misery we see, but God's word is true! And it brings hope and inner peace.



"Not as the world gives I give to you! Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
(John 14:27)

When I think of the struggles some of our hymn-writers have endured I wonder how they could find it in their heart to write such wisdom and encouragement! It is heart-warming and inspiring!

With prayer for those of us who are suffering at this Christmas time.



Bernard Pears
Lifespring 55 Member



From Fear to Faith

A TESTIMONY

When the world shut down from COVID-19 in 2020, we didn't know when things would return to normal. We didn't know who would get sick. All of that caused fear and anxiety.

It was in November 2020, when I was lying down on my bed, I felt a big growth in my stomach. I called my GP and he sent me for an Ultrasound. One week later he called us back and said that I have a tumour and it could be pancreatic cancer. We looked at each other, terrified! A death "sentence!" Days later I thought of getting rid of all my possessions and clothes.

Then our GP sent us to an oncologist at the North York General. I wanted Edmund to be there, but since COVID-19 no other person could attend. After a long haul of discussions, the oncologist let Edmund come with me, which was a great comfort.

I was diagnosed with lymphoma cancer. The tumour was inoperable, but the doctor mentioned to me, "It can be treated with chemotherapy!" "Chemotherapy?" I have always been against chemo.

In December 2020 numerous different types of tests had to be taken.

January 2021, I had my first 7-hour chemo and next day another four hours. In the evening at home, I began to shake, which did not stop. Unexpectedly I broke out into a body rash, and a high temperature of above forty. We called the Oncology Department and they said to go to Emergency immediately. When at Emerge, Edmund was not allowed to come inside with me due to Covid-19.

I was so fragile that they put me in a wheel chair. Edmund waited in the car. In Emerge, they put me on a cot in a small room. Other patients kept arriving nonstop. I saw police bringing people in handcuffs screaming. I heard in the distance children crying. It was a hectic scene!

Various tests had to be done and the emerge doctor said I had to stay in the hospital. I called Edmund, who was still waiting in the car. By that time, it was 3:00 am and he went home.



After a while one of the nurses came to tell me there is a room for me. It was at 4:00 am, when I was wheeled to the third floor and put in a private room. I said to the nurse, "This is all for me?" "Yes, all yours! You are lucky to have this big room!" I thanked the Lord for this.

I slept for 3 hours until a new young nurse, "Scarlett," came in the morning to wake me with breakfast. She looked at my rashes and after breakfast she put an ointment on my body. She was such a lovely, kind and helpful person, always smiling. A ray of sunshine! The Lord must have sent her! Each time she asked me: "What else can I do for you?" She treated me like a queen. After four days in the Hospital, I was discharged. I missed Scarlett.

Every month I had to go to the hospital for two days of chemo treatments. It was shocking to see bald women sitting there in chairs with a somber look on their faces.

Every trip to the hospital became a burden, knowing I had to have another session of chemo. It became very depressing and there seem to be no end to it.

They injected chemo with a syringe into my belly and an IV went into the back of my hand. Sometimes the nurse could not get the needle into my veins, and when I screamed from the pain, she called for another nurse who tried another vein. In the meantime, the back of my hand became black and blue. This continued for 8 months.

During that time, I questioned God: "Why is this happening to me? I had a brain tumor, wasn't that enough? And now this!" I was losing weight drastically, had horrible nausea, that lasted for weeks, and the thinning of my hair loss. What's next? I was in a dark place! I was depressed, physically run down and overwhelmed by what was happening, that I didn't have the strength to pray anymore.

I called Pastor Reg Andrews and told him about my situation. He said: "I will pray for you! I will inform our prayer group, they will put you on the prayer list, and you are not alone!" Knowing, that people were praying for me, was a great comfort.



As Paul writes in Romans 8, “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.” And in the same chapter we read that “Christ Jesus...is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” God has us covered when we just cannot pray.

When I could pray again, a spiritual delight filled my soul. I was entirely at peace, but this lasted only for the moment. I was depressed again and weary of my life. There was no comfort for me, except faith and hope, but I had very little feelings of them. Then the pain returned to my feelings, again followed by peace and contentment - it was like a roller coaster!

When I had peace, I could have said with the Apostle Paul, “Nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ.” But in the pain, “Lord, save me! I perish!”

Why was this happening? God was teaching me, that when I was comforted or depressed, He keeps me equally safe, in anguish or in well-being. He is always there! And I can trust Him!

After a while I had my follow up with the Oncologist. She gave me the “good news”: “You are one of my best patients, and the chemo worked extremely well. The C.T. scan didn’t show any hint of lymphoma!” Praise the Lord! Jesus, thank You!! He answered our prayers!

Edmund and I want to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your continued prayers, encouraging phone calls, and e-mails. You’re all a great blessing to us!



Beata Hanssmann
Lifespring 55 Member

Beata has written her autobiography,
From Tragedy to Triumph. (Available through
Essence Publishing: Essencebookstore.com)



**THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM, “DO NOT BE AFRAID.
I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY
FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.**

LUKE 2: 10



Who Cut Jesus' Umbilical Cord?

The question begs to be asked. To many, it seems almost irreverent to explore the possibilities. Surely it must have been an angel who, with marked precision and sterile technique, completed the task to cut, to physically separate the newborn King from His young mother forever. What a privilege to have been this chosen angel – whose comrades in the field were announcing the long-awaited birth. This special angel was selected to be a witness and participant in the long-awaited birth. Lest you think you have missed a verse or two in Luke 2, there is no mention of an angel to assist in the delivery of the God-man.

Who then could have filled the role? Did Joseph wander out into the streets of Bethlehem and solicit the services of an unknown midwife – in a town where he knew no one and the populous was so occupied in their affairs that a labouring woman was sent to a cow's stall? The midwife sounds like a nice alternative – still, not likely.

Did Christ himself, the helpless babe, perform his first miracle – a neonatal prodigy who can cut his own cord? It's possible, but not how God planned it. His Son was to be born like every other human being – helpless, requiring the assistance of human hands – hands which the God-man himself had created. A reverse of roles – the Creator becomes the dependent.

Who then is left in the stall? Humming cattle, cackling geese and a very nervous young man, recently married to the virgin mother. He has watched her over the past nine months develop physically into a mature woman. She who danced in the fields with her childhood friends, now huddled over in the pains of birth. Her eyes well with tears. She dare not cry out too often— between agonizing contractions, she remembers the words of Gabriel: “Fear not, you will bring forth a Son...God with us.” How can she cry at the birth of God? Her body does not always heed the comforting thoughts of her spirit.

There stands helpless Joseph – having never seen a human birth, he does not know what to expect. ‘Boil water,’ he had heard – but with what? Light a match in the straw-filled stall and the shepherds won't have any difficulty finding the blaze. We can imagine that his mom had given him a few tips about childbirth – ‘just in case’. He never thought it would come to this! Alone in another city, camped out in the cow hostel. Joseph breathes a quick prayer to God asking for smooth delivery.



The top of the head appears. Suddenly it retracts as if the babe is reconsidering its journey. With the next contraction the whole head delivers. The shoulders follow and then – the body. There lies the son of God!

The awesomeness of the moment temporarily overwhelms Joseph. He is eventually shaken by the need to ‘do something’. There lies the babe in fluid and blood, still attached to his umbilical cord, struggling to take his first breath. Joseph has a cord of string in his pocket – he firmly ties it around the umbilical cord, close to the baby (‘2 cm from the baby’ his mother had told him. He hoped he had gotten it right!) He cuts the cord beyond the tie. The babe is now completely independent from his mother. Joseph takes the sack cloth hung on the door post and dries the little baby. Tears fill his eyes as the babe musters the strength to let out his first cry – the babe would be a ‘man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.’ As Joseph looks into the little eyes that flicker open in the dark stable, he sees the eternity of love that these eyes have known and will shine on men.

Mary grunts again and Joseph turns his attention to his young wife – oh yes, the afterbirth – the placenta – this sack of flesh and fluid that nurtured the son of God for nine months. Funny thing, it looked like any other human placenta. God wanted to have the real human experience – no short cuts or special privileges.

He places the baby on Mary’s lap. They cherish the moment together. Birth is a miracle. This, however – this was the human birth of God! Could not God have done it more eloquently, more royally, with less of a mess? Of course, He could have, but He chose to experience total human life. Born a vulnerable babe and cared for by weak human hands – one day to die a vulnerable man, killed by hardened human hands. His death was the price of eternal life for mankind – a mysterious circle: death of one giving rise to life in another.

The birth of Jesus Christ – a holy night, an awesome night, but a very human experience. The slippery, wet baby would one day offer life – eternal life – to the very hands that cut his umbilical cord!



Dr. Jean Chamberlain
Obstetrician

Dr. Chamberlain is founder of the Save the Mothers charity and a graduate of Peoples Christian Academy.

News and Views

A MERRY HEART

FERVENT PRAYER?

Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs:

"I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE...
I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO...
I PRAY FOR A NEW VCR..."

His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother and said, "Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn't deaf." To which the little brother replied, "No, but Gramma is!"

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Talk to yourself. There are times when you need expert advice.
2. "In Style" are the clothes that still fit.
3. The biggest lie you tell yourself is, "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it."
4. "On time" is when you get there.
5. What did one Christmas tree say to another? Lighten up!
6. It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes and come out wrinkle-free and two sizes smaller.
7. What's the absolute best Christmas present? A broken drum — you can't beat it!
8. Lately you've noticed that people your age are so much older than you.
9. Growing older should have taken longer.

(Kindly forgive the editor for allowing too many groaners in the above list!)

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

Here are some helpful suggestions from the Insurance Bureau of Canada as we get ready for another Canadian winter!

Before you leave ---

- Check the weather forecast and delay your trip if it looks bad.
- Check road conditions: web- ontario.ca/511, phone – dial 511.
- Plan extra time for winter travel.
- Tell someone where you are going.

Safe driving practices ---

- Adjust your driving to weather and road conditions.
- Slow down
- Eliminate distractions.
- Avoid using cruise control.
- Give extra space for other vehicles.

If stranded in a storm ---

- Stay calm and remain in your vehicle.
- Activate the emergency flashers.
- Call 911.
- Run the engine sparingly.
- Keep the air in your car fresh by opening a window.





PRAYING TOGETHER

Early in November we took time to pray for the Persecuted Church, setting aside a day to unite our hearts and raise our voices in prayer together with Christians around the world for our sisters and brothers facing persecution.

As we look forward to a time of joyous celebration during the Christmas season let's not forget to continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer isolation, oppression and are at constant risk because of their belief in the One who came to save.

We encourage you to download the 2021 Open Doors World Watch List from opendoorscanada.org. Or you may request it by calling 905-636-0944, or by writing:

Open Doors Canada
8-19 Brownridge Road
Halton Hills, ON
L7G 0C6

This guide includes information and ways to pray for the 50 most dangerous countries to live in as a Christian.



This Christmas, we invite you to use our Advent Prayer Guide (you'll find a copy included in your package) as we pray, share locally, and give globally together as a church family.

PRAY

Every day, over the four weeks of Advent, we will pray and ask God about how we can share the good news with those around us. God is already moving so let's pay attention to how He is inviting us to join Him!



SHARE LOCALLY

Each Sunday, we will hear stories of how our partners are sharing God's love all around the world. As we are encouraged by their testimonies, our Advent Prayer Guide will point us to different ways we can share God's love throughout the week.

GIVE GLOBALLY

This Christmas, we're coming together to support our global partners who are sharing the good news and great joy in over 40 countries with Christ's holistic ministry of compassion, justice, and evangelism. As we hear their stories, let's ask God about how we can be a part of sharing the joy through intentional and faithful generosity.

You can give globally in the following ways:

- Online at ThePeoplesChurch.ca/Give or by texting [PEOPLESGIVE](https://www.peoplesgiving.com) to 77-9-77
- In-person during a Sunday service
- By mailing your gift to church address

Good news and great joy for all people – we do this together!

Please remember to select [Global Mission – Share the Joy](#) in the dropdown fund options. If you are giving in-person, please clearly indicate [Global Mission](#) on your gift.

We have lots of great things happening at The Peoples Church this Christmas.

CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATIONS

This Christmas Eve, we're gathering in-person and online to celebrate and welcome Jesus together! Join us for a festive celebration filled with Christmas carols, and the telling of the Christmas story. Our outdoor petting zoo is also back this year - so invite your family, friends, and neighbours too!

- IN-PERSON: 2, 4 & 6 PM
- ONLINE: 4 PM

To help ensure everyone's health and safety, registration is required for our in-person celebrations.

OUTDOOR NATIVITY DISPLAY

We invite you to bundle up and come by our front lawn, at any time throughout the holidays, to enjoy the sights and sounds of Christmas! Come and be immersed in scenes from the Christmas story – moments filled with the radiant hope and joy of welcoming Jesus.

Learn more about all that's happening this Christmas at Peoples by visiting the church website or by calling 416.222.3341.



LIFSPRING 55 MONTHLY MEETINGS

Mark your calendars! While we will not be holding our Christmas celebration this year, please note that regular monthly meetings will resume in the new year. Here are the dates for the first half of the year:

JANUARY 15
FEBRUARY 18
MARCH 19
APRIL 23
MAY 21
JUNE 18

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