

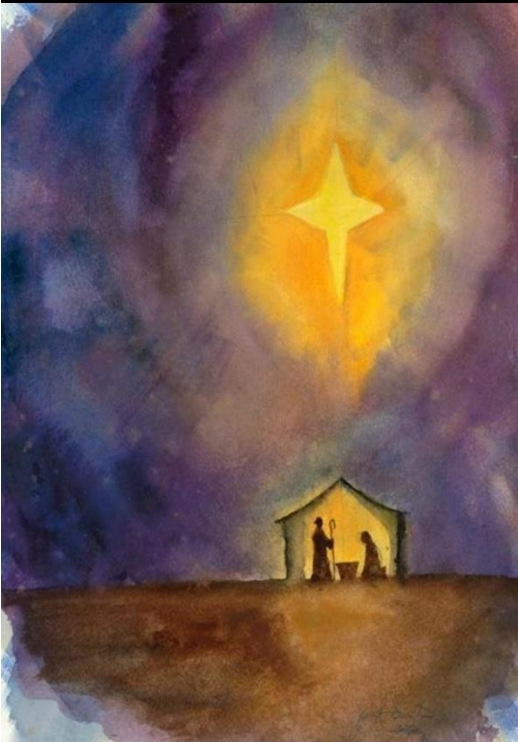
EPIPHANY THIS WEEK

December 22 - 28, 2023

Church of the Epiphany ~ 85 Larch St. Sudbury, Ontario ~ P3E 1B8

www.epiphanysudbury.org 705-675-2279 info@epiphanysudbury.org

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS



THE SEASON OF NEW BIRTH

WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON ~ SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24th ~

10:30am – Main Worship Service with music and Holy Eucharist for the Fourth Sunday in Advent.

5:00pm - Everyone is welcome to wear their pajamas to church, when we gather for our 5pm Christmas Eve worship celebration. Though there will not be photo booth this year as there was last year, you are all still welcome to celebrate the Birth of Jesus in your comfy, cozy pajamas!

9:00pm - Traditional choral Christmas Eve worship service

READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

SUMMARY OF READINGS: The waiting is over; the Lord has come. Luke tells the story of Messiah's birth simply and quietly, reserving angelic announcements and songs for the shepherd's field. The prophet Isaiah also sings of the birth of messiah, but in the triumphant tones of an ancient coronation. Such also is the mood of Psalm 96, celebrating the eternal reign of God in all creation. The epistle, in a more practical vein, reminds us that our lives are framed between "Christ has come" and "Christ will come."

QUESTION(S) FOR REFLECTION: Christmas Day brings the astonishing news that God is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the imprint of God's being and the reflection of God's glory; and we, in turn, are God's offspring through Christ. How does this news shape your self-awareness and change the way you live?

AT HOME PRAYERS - Morning – Eternal God, as I celebrate the birthday of Jesus, may I sing of your love all the days of my life, for you have made me your child forever. In Christ I pray. Amen.

Evening - Holy God, I give you thanks for the blessings of this day, both big and small, and I ask your forgiveness for the places where I have failed to reveal your love. I give thanks that you have become one of us, so that I may become more like you. As I sleep this night, may your goodness shape me to more lovingly reflect your light in the world. Amen.



COVID CASES ARE ON THE RISE IN GREATER SUDBURY: Please be mindful of not only your health, safety and well-being but also that of others. If you are not feeling well, or have any ill symptoms such as coughing, fever, fatigue, or a sore throat, please stay home and join us for the worship services that will be offered online. We are delighted to welcome you online if you are not able to join us in person. **NOTE: The 5:00 service, Pajama Church, WILL NOT be live streamed**



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHURCH WARDENS:



To All Friends and Members of Epiphany,

We, the Church Wardens, are so grateful for the many ways you so generously give to our parish. Nothing would be possible without your financial and volunteered support. Thank you.

We also need to remind everyone that if there are any donations that you wish to make for this year, we need to receive your monetary gifts by December 31st at the very latest. Again, we cannot thank you enough for faithfully helping us continue in all that we do through our church.

May you, your families and all those you love, enjoy a very Merry Christmas.

Sincerely,

Gilles Tessier Terry Kett Marion Collinson



REV. ELIZABETH’S “DROP IN” OFFICE HOURS:

Though she is available, please note that Rev. Elizabeth will not be holding regular Drop-In Office Hours until the week of January 7th.

Please be reminded that if you need to speak with Rev. Elizabeth or schedule a visit for any reason, please email her at greenepiphanypriest@gmail.com or leave a telephone message for her at the church office. Thank You



WORSHIP FOR CHRISTMAS EVE, CHRISTMAS DAY and THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY:

WORSHIP CELEBRATIONS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Back by popular demand, **5:00 pm Pajama Church** for the young and for the young at heart. People of ALL AGES are welcome to wear their cozy, comfy pajamas as we hear the Christmas story in a informal family worship service.



Christmas Day ~ Monday December 25th

Worship in Celebration of the Birth of Jesus on Christmas Morning – 10:30am.

Sunday, December 31st – Epiphany Sunday and New Year’s Eve Morning

As it happens, this year Epiphany Sunday and the morning of New Year’s Eve occur on the same day – Sunday December 31st. Following what promises to be a very special worship celebration at 10:30am, there will also be a Special Coffee Hour to mark the occasion of our celebrations.

All Are Welcome!



SANDWICHES ON THE 5th SUNDAY: Sunday December 31st is the 5th Sunday of the month which means it’s our turn to provide sandwich makings for the mission. If you can contribute a loaf or two of bred, cans of tuna, ham, etc. please speak to Terry Kett.





NEW CHURCH ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE: The Church of the Epiphany would not be able to function without your support. It is your faithful Givings that makes ministry possible and enables life to flourish in and through our church. New Church Envelopes are now available to be picked up outside of the church office. If you need someone to deliver you your envelopes, please call or email the church office. Thank You



THE ANNUAL BOOK SALE: will be taking place at the end of January. Book sale posters will be available on the table outside the church office. Please take one, or more, to post in a business you frequent, your apartment building, etc. If you would like an electronic copy to send to friends and family contact Evelyn at keeper1916@gmail.com

Books can be brought to the church beginning Sunday, January 21st, 2024.

If you are in need of help with delivery of your donated books please contact an able bodied church family member that lives in your area of town.



A NOTE FROM REV. ELIZABETH

*A Christmas Miracle –
So Sad. So Strange. So Beautiful.*

("Christ in the Rubble" – a new icon created by Kelly Latimore – kellylatimoreicons.com) ->

Dear Friends in Christ,

Since I first saw this new icon called "Christ in the Rubble" I have been using it as the focus and inspiration for my Advent and Christmas Prayers and Meditations.

Then, just when I thought I was all set to write my typical Christmas note for our parish newsletter, a sad, strange and beautiful thing happened. I received an email from my friend in Gaza. Ahmed and his family live in Gaza. They live in constant danger. Ahmed is a published poet and teacher. Just as we have English teachers in our high schools, Ahmed is a teacher of Arabic. He taught the youth in Gaza, until the school where he taught was destroyed a few weeks ago. I first met Ahmed in 2020 through a mutual friend on Facebook. Since then, he and I have become like pen pals. He'd tell me about his wife and children; and occasionally, Ahmed would send me one of his poems. Translating Arabic to English is not easy for either of us, but we do it. Over these last three years, Ahmed has sent me a poems that were literally, directly translated from Arabic into English. Then I would do my best to edit the poem for him in English and in a way that maintains the integrity of his message.

This morning I received a poem from Ahmed. After the sudden relief that came from knowing that Ahmed is alive, I read his poem. The poem is called *The Soul of My Soul*. It is about Ahmed's friend – a grandfather whose three-year-old granddaughter died tragically, painfully, and is now among the thousands of children who have been killed in Gaza.

This is the poem:

The Soul of My Soul

Written by Ahmed Miqdad

Edited by Elizabeth Green

December 22nd, 2023

The Soul of my Soul.

She is gone from me.
Like a butterfly in the afternoon sun
she flew away.



I watched as she flew fast to the far-off sky
I could not reach.
As bright and brilliant as Heaven's star she flew
in the middle of the clear blue sky
suddenly made dark in the siren noise

The Soul of my Soul

She soared in the sudden clouds
plumes of dust and ash
the fires of hate that thirst for our death.
Into those clouds, she flew.
She was an innocent child
a flower flourishing through dry concrete.
Her grandfather's tears fall
like an endless stream through the graveyard rubble
stained with blood.

The Soul of my Soul.

Where are you now, sweetheart?
Let's fly a kite over these walls, the mountains of plight
the death cage of our life.

Oh to release the heartache
that has left us to rot under the weight of our despair
to linger in the heavy fragments of timeless sorrow

Will you come to this old man?
Will you hold me in your soft warmth
will you carry me upon your butterfly wings
so fragile, so delicate?
Will you free me through your grandfather's love?
One more hug to know you are not gone from me?

The Soul of my Soul

She is gone from me now.
I see her eyes look back at me.
Cold.
But like a butterfly in the afternoon sun
she flew away.
Wait for me at the doors of heaven
for I will surely follow you there.

When we meet again the world will know our love
unlimited, everlasting
love that transcends the terror
the doom-filled shroud of war clouds.

The Soul of my Soul

Will you, like the many thousands who have died,
will you know that you are loved?

Alhamdulillah
in our hope that all butterflies live beyond the veil of life
eternal life
divine love that is told in every holy scripture.

The Soul of my Soul

You were.
You are.
You forever will be.
Fly my butterfly angel – my granddaughter
Forever at peace

in the tender age of three.

The Soul of my Soul

You are free now.
No more will the cage of death keep you.
Fly on
into the wings of the others who are there
while we remain lost to die in the dust of silence
and fierce fiery ash.

The Soul of my Soul

Speak to this world with your sweet spirit song
fill it with your baby's cooing
pleading for love, crying for peace.

Then help us to seek for justice
that now, only heaven can know.

Forever live and fly free sweet girl.

Forever may you live and fly free
in the Soul of our Souls.

Mashallah. Alhamdi Lilah

As I began to work on the edits of Ahmed's poem, it felt as if I had received a sad, strange, but oh so beautiful Christmas miracle. To me, it felt as if my invisible heart strings were tied to his, and that the long distance between Gaza and Sudbury miraculously ceased to exist.

And in receiving this sad, strange, beautiful gift, I was reminded of another one – the gift of each other - of our family and friends. It reminded me of the miraculous gift of love – fragile and pure. Love is precisely God's gift to us now and in every Christmas Season. The new birth of Christ Jesus is the new birth of God's love for us; and that is the holy, unending, never-failing gift that we celebrate.

In our broken and despairing world, where so many people are grieving, and where so many are no longer able to bestow their love upon their families and friends, I pray that this year, we will celebrate our love for our loved ones just a little bit more, and far more often. The people we love are part of God's of love for us. It is there for us to see in our Christmas creches, in our living rooms, around our dinner tables, in our Christmas cards, and in the worship that we offer.

As we enter into our Christmas celebrations may the love of God uplift us as we celebrate the new birth of Christ, of eternal love begotten, for us and for all those who we love and hold dear.

Yours Faithfully
Elizabeth+



LET US PRAY

FOR MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH FAMILY: In this Holy Season of Christmas, let's pray for everyone in our Church Family and ask God to bless all the faithful people of the Church of the Epiphany with a safe, happy and healthy Christmas Season. *God of New Birth, Hear Our Prayer. Amen*

FOR THOSE IN NEED: Dorothy; William; Jean; Pat; Nick and Ellen; John and Judith; Karen and Corrine; Della and Sandra; Frances; Monique; Carol and Bob; Maybourne.



Watch us LIVE on Sunday Mornings at www.epiphanysudbury.org/our-services

Announcements for ETW should be sent to etw@epiphanysudbury.org by NOON each Thursday.