



St. Andrew's  
G U E L P H

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November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The **Christmas season is upon us**. And yet, as I sit to write this letter - I'm watching people pass by me in shorts and T-shirts. Hardly feels like November. But it is that time of year again when we **'hit restart' on our journey as followers of Jesus**. We return to that holy stance of 'waiting and watching' as we anticipate with renewed hope and expectation the arrival of **"God-with-Us - Emmanuel"**. Our culture so wants us to get to Christmas as soon as possible but the story of God is steeped in the value and transformative power of **'in-between' times**. Moses and the people of Israel, following their exodus from the Egyptian Empire, could arrive in the land God has promised within 3-4 days of walking as per Google Maps. Yet, God has another plan in mind - a forty-year journey of shaping slaves into a liberated people. Following his death on a cross, Jesus could have rose up the very next day and yet, God reminds us that while Sunday is coming - Friday and Saturday are a vital part of the Story... **for out of darkness comes light**. That's why we wait during the season of Advent. We wait in these dark times - for the **light of the world** to illuminate even our darkest of places. To bring hope to situations we thought lost. To bring restoration to places we thought broken beyond repair. That is what we wait for in this significant season. And that is what we celebrate on that Christmas morn that is coming... oh, so soon.

Included in this letter is the line-up for our services over the Christmas Season - I do hope that you can **join us** for many, or all, of these special occasions. Please invite your friends and family to come with you as you celebrate 'God-with-Us' in worship over the next few weeks. The story is one of the greatest ever told and the music is often **familiar and inspiring**.

With a **New Year on the horizon** as well, here is a sneak peek at some things we have in store for the coming year.

- Starting on **Sunday January 15<sup>th</sup>**, I will be taking us on a deep dive with the **Letter of James**. We will explore the letter in its entirety. I can't wait to share it with you.
- The **Thursday Morning Bible Study at 10AM** in the Church Parlour will begin not begin for a bit this New Year - we will start again on **Thursday March 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Keep an eye out for that in the Sunday Bulletin.
- **St. Andrew's Book Club** starts up again in January. Our first book club meeting of the New Year will be **Friday January 27<sup>th</sup>** at 6:30PM. Our first book of 2017 will be: **The End of Your Life Book Club** by Will Schwalbe. Other upcoming titles will be: **Fifteen Dogs** by Andre Alexis, **The Happiness Advantage** by Shawn Achor, and **Furiously Happy: A Funny Book about Horrible Things** by Jenny Lawson.

May you **find the light that comes out of the darkness** in a manger in Bethlehem this year. May that **light illumine our paths** as we try to follow the One who has called us to love and serve this hurting world. A very **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year** to you and those whom you love from my family to yours.

Have fun this season,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Borthwick', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

The Rev. John Borthwick