

## *Advent Christmas Greetings 2017*

This time of year, our schedule of gospel readings for church centre on Mark's gospel. And if we followed Mark to a "T" we wouldn't have celebrated the birth story of Jesus. Mark doesn't include a birth narrative and jumps right into the "Good News of Jesus Christ", through baptism, temptation, and Jesus' ministry. Could we have changed Mark's mind about his decision not to include the story. "But Mark, how can you neglect the story of the Nativity. Even though there were lots of births happening around you, in retrospect, this one was a very special birth. How could you ignore it?"

I don't imagine Mark ignored the birth, I imagine his greater concern was to encounter Jesus as the Christ. But to get to the Christ, we have to start with the birth. Encountering Jesus is to encounter the very heart of God the Father. During Christmas we celebrate the birth of a baby who opens for us the way to a warm, intimate encounter with God. Perhaps that is part of the reason why God first comes to us as a baby. Whose heart is not moved when they see a new born baby? Defenseless, vulnerable, huggable and loveable. Jesus in the manger causes our hearts to reach out to him and in doing so come close to the heart of God. God wants us to know Jesus' love and so God comes to earth through God's only begotten son. God's Heart speaks to our hearts, through Jesus.

My prayer for all, is that this Christmas, we be renewed in the love God has made known to us through Jesus. And once Christmas comes and goes once again, the spirit of the Christ Child will remain long after the wrapping, and presents and tree are put away.

I invite you to come into this beautiful season once again. Come to worship at church. Welcome the newborn King. Savour every moment of it, so the impact of a well found season will carry you into another blessed year.

May Peace and Joy be with you and yours at this Blessed Time of year,



**Reverend Jamie York**

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### The Life and Work of the Churches

Sundays at 9:15 & 11:00 am Worship Services at Hastings & Roseneath

Sunday December 24 Sacrament of Holy Communion at both churches

Sunday December 24 Christmas Eve Family Worship Services

Roseneath 5:30 pm Hastings 7:00 pm

Sunday December 31 9:15 & 11:00am Worship at Hastings & Roseneath