

As Christmas Comes ...

The daily news from across the world in 2017 presented us with a succession of horrendous scenes. Western Canada, then California experienced those terrifying forest fires, while the Caribbean, the southern United States and elsewhere endured devastating hurricanes and floods. Severe droughts and typhoons have plagued other parts of the globe, while natural disasters of every sort took second place to acts of human aggression. Civil wars dragged on for yet another year, and terrorism took on forms we never thought possible in modern, civilized society. An estimated 20 million refugees around the world are currently in a desperate quest for personal safety and wellbeing.

Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day were moments of special gratitude in our community as families gathered together around dining tables amidst our beautiful countryside, then stood together in silence at the Cenotaph. We remembered those who gave their all that we might experience the priceless benefits of freedom, the relative safety and security, the opportunities we enjoy.

Those racing up the highway from urban areas in hopes of snatching even a few hours' break at the cottage in late autumn may well glance at our village in envy of the apparent peacefulness, the idyllic charm of clean air and water, the utter stillness and quiet. They may well be dreaming of a rural community where agreements are sometimes still made on a handshake – even through a telephone conversation! Speeding along, they may well envision a small community of genuine, mutually caring and acting people. Of course we agree, or we'd have long since relocated elsewhere!

Yet long-time residents also know from experience that even here, we're not always the perfect nirvana we may appear to be at a distance, and in our best and highest moments! Genuine and basic human needs require the constant support of the Food Bank, the Apsley Central School's Breakfast Program and similar events catered throughout the year, the all-important humanitarian projects implemented by Service Clubs with the assistance of single individuals and groups. Personal relationships in marriage, family and neighbourhood go awry in every human community, and ours is no exception, hence counselling, forgiveness and reconciliation are challenging priorities for us all.

We can easily become overwhelmed with the needs and sufferings across the larger world as its problems are now reported within hours, even minutes of their occurrence. Well within reach of all of us, however, is a community with its own hurts and needs, with strained personal

relationships, the issues well within our reach and our ability to address. The coming Season of Christmas is our celebration of the Birth of the Prince of Peace; the Light of the World; the One who claimed to have come that we might have life in all its fullness! Christmas is a special opportunity for each of us to make a difference where it truly counts, for the betterment of those close around us on every side, and hence ultimately, for ourselves as well, as we enter upon another New Year.

A very Blessed and Joyous Christmas to all!

Archdeacon David Peasgood
St. George's Anglican Church



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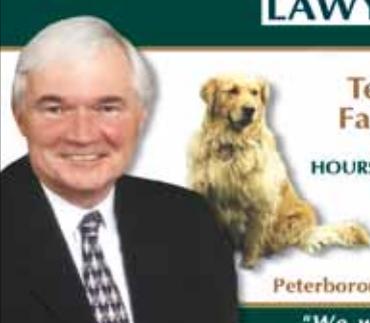
The Big 8-0 WOW!

*What a wonderful surprise party at our Legion!
There are too many people to mention names and
thanks to everyone who was involved.*

It was truly appreciated.

Irene Cole

Peter Millard B.A. (HONS.) LL.B.
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