

Any Mummers Allowed In?

The iconic image of the mummer is a beloved and ubiquitous image in Newfoundland culture. It is associated with the Christmas season in our province. Sometime during the twelve days of Christmas, people would disguise themselves with old articles of clothing and visit the homes of their friends and neighbours. They would cover their faces with a hood, scarf mask, an old curtain or pillowcase to keep their identity hidden. In fact the word "mummer" is believed to derive from the German word "mummer", meaning "disguised person".



Mummers, or "janney"s as they're known in many Newfoundland communities, would go from house to house, often carrying their own musical instruments, to play sing and dance in every house they visited. The host or hostess of the house would usually serve a glass of syrup or blueberry or dogberry wine with a piece of Christmas fruitcake. Before leaving the house they might have been given a drink of something a little more potent.



When mummers visit, everyone in the house starts playing a guessing game, trying to guess the identity of each mummer. As each one is identified, they uncover their faces. If their true identity is not guessed, they don't have to unmask.



For a time, the old tradition of "mumming", or "janneying" seemed to fade, especially in larger communities. However, in 1982, a popular musical duo called 'Simani' wrote and recorded "the Mummers' Song". The popularity of the song and the making of TV documentaries about the tradition have created a revival of the joyous Christmas activity. It is now a popular and prevalent Christmas event once again. Young and old look forward to "dressing up" and knocking on a friend's door, calling out, "any mummers 'lowed in?"

Did You Know...?

- Wesley Church has an account with Evergreen Recycling (located on Blackmarsh Road and Elizabeth Avenue) whereby anyone can bring recyclable beverage containers to their sites and have the refund money donated to the church?
- Every worship service held in the sanctuary is recorded on tape or CD. Copies are available for a small fee to anyone who would like to have it for listening at home or for a shut-in friend or family member.

Mystery Photos

The Mystery Photos in our Spring 2010 Newsletter were of: Betty Wells, Bert Guzwell & Maxine Dawe and Rev. Bill. Thanks to Betty, Bert, Maxine and Rev. Bill! Our Mystery Photo feature will return in our Spring 2011 Newsletter.

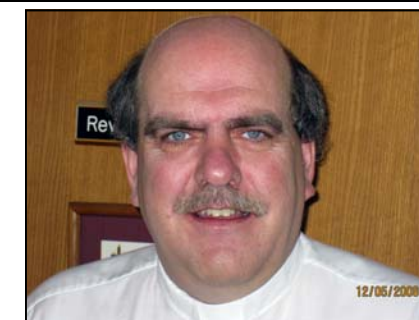
If you have a special birthday, anniversary, graduation, award, etc. that you would like to share in our newsletter, please contact Sharon at the church office—579-3682 or email sstokes@wesleychurch.ca



News from Wesley

Fall 2010

"Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly."



Rev. Bill Mercer

This verse is found in Matthew's lesser read account of Jesus' birth. It conveys the response of a 'righteous' man who discovered his bride to be pregnant with a child that was not his. For the early reader of this story, Joseph's intention would have been viewed as being the proper response to such a situation. Actually, he might have been viewed as being too kind. According to Jewish law, Joseph was well within his rights to divorce Mary for being pregnant by another man. He could easily have brought the matter to public light and Mary would have been left alone, in disgrace. However, he wanted to treat her right, even though he believed she had not treated him in the same manner. He was not only going to obey the Law but go beyond its expectations to show mercy and compassion. However, as we know from our reading of the story over the years, this would not need to be the case. An angel of the Lord appears to Joseph and explains that Mary is pregnant with God's child. As another affirmation of Joseph's righteousness, Matthew tells the reader that

Joseph did what the Lord commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. I have always enjoyed this account of Jesus' birth because of its simplicity and the message contained within. In a community that had prided itself on righteousness and obeying God's perceived Laws, God intervenes to share the message that God is doing something new, something different. Often in our personal and communal faith journeys, we present ourselves as a pious, doctrinal people. We are quick to point out flaws, pronounce judgments and admonish others for not following what we perceive to be the Laws of scripture. However, just as Joseph had his eyes opened, we, too, are invited to open our eyes. Christmas gives us the opportunity to do just that.

Christmas is the realization of the promise of Immanuel - "God with us." God would no longer dictate Laws that would be subject to the

fallible interpretations and biases of humankind. Instead, God chooses to come and be with us; to show us the way. With the birth of the Christ-child God frees us from the letter of the Law and invites us to walk with Jesus to learn the intent of the Law. God moves us from stringent rules and regulations to a journey of love in action. One of the hymns I loved to sing at Christmas as I was growing up was "Love came Down At Christmas", which contains the verse:

Love came down at Christmas,
love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
star and angels gave the sign.

Christmas reminds us that God is doing things in a new way in our lives, in our church and in our world. No longer is God a distant presence in our lives; God is right here in our midst. As we celebrate this season together let us remember that. Our hope and our salvation do not come from rules and regulations but, instead, come from our personal relationship with Jesus Christ who came to be with us and abides with us still. We kneel at the manger and look at love personified and we know that such love must be the way for our lives as well.

“Small Jobs” – An Update

In last Spring's newsletter we identified a list of “Smaller Jobs” that the Property Committee would like done to ensure the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the Church building and property. The project list was as follows:

- ✦ Construction of a shed in the garden of Wesley House to house the snow blower, lawnmower and gas etc. Projected price: \$4000.00
 - ✦ Scrape and paint the foundation of the Church building. Projected price: \$1500.00
 - ✦ Scrape and paint the concrete foundation and iron fence surrounding the grounds. Projected price: \$1500.00
 - ✦ Paint the outer office area
 - ✦ Paint trim on windows and the front entrance
 - ✦ Repair concrete steps and concrete around grounds
- Provide and spread road gravel for the upper parking lot

To date, the Healthy Lifestyles group has donated \$4000 towards the scraping and painting of the Church foundation and the iron fence, and some of this work has already been completed. Also the Thrift Shop has donated \$2000 towards the construction of the shed. If your group or you (maybe along with a couple of friends?) are in a position to help with the funding of any of these projects, or are able to provide time or labour to help out, please contact Sharon in the Church Office at 579-3682 or Jennifer Pinsent Barnes at 579-7900. Your assistance would be gratefully appreciated, and a big thank you to the Thrift Shop and Healthy Lifestyles for their donations!

How Firm a Foundation

Last June 5th a group made up of members of Wesley, attendees of the fitness group and a few other friends of Wesley undertook to paint the foundation of the Church. Five brave souls turned out on a cool and ‘mawzy’ Friday evening the night before to get a head start on scraping the foundation. The next day, Saturday, was an absolutely brilliant warm, actually hot, day with not a cloud in the sky and a group of 21, ranging in age from 3 to 82 and armed with painting materials (made possible by a donation from the Fellowship Ministry Team in response to an appeal from the Property Committee), turned out to scrape, pressure wash, paint, whipper-snip, caulk, sweep up and of course (Wesley being Wesley) enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by the ladies. The lunch was made even more special as it was Justin Janes third birthday and everyone joined in a singing of ‘Happy Birthday’, complete with a cake. After an impromptu concert which included Justin's brother and sister, Brandon and Alexandra's piano pieces for their recital that night, it was back out for a few more hours to finish up. All in all it was a great day, much enjoyed by all who turned out, and a great example of many hands making light work!! A big thank you to all of you!



Look Up.....Waaaay Up!

No, that's not Rusty.
It's not Jerome either!

It is the contractors working on our roof on July 29th! At last, after other property crises, financial emergencies, the purchase of many fish cakes and a lot of effort and dedication of our Property Committee...WE NOW HAVE A NEW ROOF ON WESLEY! And that's not the best of it – because of the many donations to the *Building for Generations Fund* all repair costs are being paid in full.



We really need to take stock of our collective achievement here, folks. We need to recognize the significance of the fact that, this day in age, we as a Church have been able to raise enough funds to replace our fire escapes, fix the roof over the annex and now the colossal task of repairing the roof over the sanctuary and that we have carried out all of these major projects without having to borrow a single dollar!! A big pat on the back for us. Hooray!!!! We are truly blessed.

The next step is to address the steeple and what exactly we can do with it – the Property committee is currently reviewing options that can be pursued.

Again many thanks to the individuals and groups who have contributed to the *Building for Generations Fund* – we own a 102 year old Church and your ongoing support for the ongoing costs of maintenance and repairs is very much appreciated.

Rev. Dr. J. Joyce's Sons Visit Wesley



Rev. Dr. J. Joyce, as many in the Wesley congregation are aware, started VOWR in 1924 after deciding that this new radio technology would be a great way to bring the Church to people who were not able to get out and attend Church in person. This past August, Rev. Joyce's sons, Douglas and Carlton visited St. John's and attended a Wesley Sunday worship service. Pictured in the photo, are the two brothers, along with Rev. Bill beside the bust of Rev. Dr. Joyce in the Church vestibule. The

brothers also visited VOWR and spent an hour with Station Manager John Tessier. Douglas resides in Toronto, Ontario and Carlton lives in Atlanta, Georgia.