

THE LYCHGATE

December 12, 2021

Parish Newsletter of
The Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields



From Fr. Philip



As we approach the Feast of the Nativity and the birth of our Saviour, the picture of the mother and child begins to take centre stage. While there are many beautiful and moving depictions of Mary and Jesus in painting and sculpture, the one that often speaks most to me is the 12th century Byzantine icon known as Our Lady of Vladimir. Even in its present damaged state, it is a powerful depiction of the love between mother and child as Jesus snuggles up under his mother's chin while Mary surrounds her son with a protective embrace. Here is both an image of great strength but also of deep tenderness, of the tenacity and resilience of Mary as well as of her supreme gentleness. It is that combination of strength and gentleness which I think is so important for us to contemplate at this particular time. It is a combination that is echoed in the canticle known as the Benedictus. "In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us." As a result of the tender compassion of our God, the very Son of God humbles himself to become for us a vulnerable child, the Babe of Bethlehem. And as he grows and matures, he describes himself in Matthew's Gospel as one who is "gentle and humble in heart."

I am always surprised at the number of times in the Gospels and the Letters that the quality of gentleness is used to describe either Jesus or the ideal disciple. It is not gentleness as an expression of passivity or weakness, but it is gentleness that reflects the loving kindness of God that embraces the suffering of the world and seeks to bring God's mercy and grace into every situation. The apostle Paul, in fact, cites gentleness as one of the great fruits of the Spirit in his letter to the Galatians, and in Colossians we are urged to clothe ourselves in that gentleness that flows from a heart that is open to the love of God. Henri Nouwen wrote so beautifully of this as he said, "What really counts is our willingness to let the immense sufferings of our brothers and sisters free us from all arrogance and from all judgement and condemnation and give us a heart as gentle and humble as the heart of Jesus."

We live in a world which seems to be increasingly harsh and cruel with the clash of nations and ideologies, the polarisation of society, the appalling abuse and hatred that seems to be everywhere in social media, and the lack of concern and consideration so often evident in the way people treat one another. As Christians called to walk in the way of the humble and gentle One, perhaps we need to focus our attention once more on living out that gentleness in our relations with our neighbour and on bringing the gentleness of Christ to a harsh and suffering world.

May the gentleness of the Christ child soften our hearts this Christmas that they might beat more and more with the tender compassion and loving kindness of our God.

Every blessing this Christmastide, Fr. Philip

Church Directory



The Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields

151 Glenlake Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M6P 1E8

www.stmartininthefields.ca

Church: 416-767-7491
Fax: 416-767-7065

Incumbent:

The Rev'd Canon Philip
Hobson OGS

Honorary Assistants:

The Rev'd Canon David
Luxton
The Rev'd James
Decker
The Rev'd Canon
Harold Nahabedian
The Rev'd Canon
Alyson Barnett-Cowan
The Rt. Rev'd Victoria
Matthews

Organist & Music Director:

Jack Hattey

Church Wardens:

Tim Stephenson
Eilonwy Morgan

Office Administrator:

Andrea Zinn

Property Manager:

Mark Kolberg

About *The Lychgate* Newsletter: *The Lychgate* is published four times a year. Parishioners and friends are encouraged to submit news and articles to the editor, Ian Greene, at iangreene0766@rogers.com. For digital access to *The Lychgate*, including colour photos and links to web sites, go to <https://stmartininthefields.ca>.

NOTE: After the church is fully re-opened, you can opt to go paperless and cancel your mailed copy of *The Lychgate* by sending an email request to Lychgate1111@gmail.com.



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, December 15:

8:00 p.m.: Christian Education, Antiphons & Chrismons

Sunday, December 19:

2:00 p.m.: Messy Church for children and youth via Zoom

4:30 p.m.: Caroling in the church garden. Covid protocols will be observed. Please pre-register on the parish web site: www.stmartininthefields.ca

Christmas at St. Martin's

Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve:

5:30 p.m.: Virtual Christmas Pageant on Zoom

7:00 p.m.: Eucharist (register for in-person on the parish web site)

10:00 p.m.: Eucharist (register for in-person on the parish web site or watch on live-stream)

Saturday, December 25, Christmas Day:

11:00 a.m.: Christmas Day Eucharist (register for in-person on the parish web site)

Sunday, December 26, First Sunday after Christmas:

11:00 a.m. Christmas Lessons & Carols with Eucharist (register for in-person on the parish web site or watch on live-stream)

Since September 27, 2021, from the Parish Registers:

Baptisms: September 26, 2021 – Ted Daniel, Samuel James Dell'Erede; November 21, 2021 – Sabrina Aurelia Bunn, Gordon Adjin-Tettey, Gareth Adjin-Tettey, Prince Gerald Adjin-Tettey

Weddings: November 20, 2021 – Jessica Ruston & Andrew Matthews

Funerals: September 30, 2021 – Brian McCarthy; October 2, 2021 – Frank Bodkin

Christmas Dinner

With the continuing restrictions on social gatherings during the pandemic, we are unable to offer the parish's Christmas Lunch which has been so popular in recent years. Instead, the parish's Outreach team is offering to prepare Christmas dinner for individuals and couples who may be alone this Christmas. The dinner could be picked up at the church or, if this is not possible, arrangements could be made for the meal to be delivered during the afternoon of Christmas Day. Please contact Father Philip should you be interested. There will be no charge but donations will be gratefully accepted.

Christmas Cheer

By Fr. Philip

Again this year we are asking for financial donations to support Christmas Cheer. The money received through the parish's Christmas Cheer program goes to purchase Christmas gifts for refugees at Romero House, Christmas gifts for our parish shut-ins, and food cards for those in need in our neighbourhood. To make a donation, please send a cheque made out to St. Martin's with "Christmas Cheer" written in the memo line, or you could use Canada Helps or E-transfers (please go to the parish web site for links) but please ensure that you put "Christmas Cheer" in the special instructions. Thank you for your support.

A Reminder From the Envelope Secretary

By Nicholas Bell

Please be aware that in order to receive a 2021 tax receipt, all donations to St. Martin's must be received at the church by Friday, December 31st. Cheques can be sent to the church by mail, or you can donate by using E-transfers or donating through Canada Helps (see the parish web site for details). Thank you.

Caroling in the Garden December 19

By Ian Greene

Thanks to a recent Diocesan decision to allow the resumption of congregational singing (with masks), St. Martin's will be able to host caroling in the garden on Sunday, December 19 at 4:30 p.m.

Space will be limited, and all must wear masks. Please watch the Sunday bulletin and the parish web site for information about pre-registration. All carolers must enter the garden from the west side. Individuals or family groups must be six feet apart.

Dress warmly and bring your singing voice and a flashlight!

Parish Celebration of Jack Hattey



On our Patronal Sunday (November 14), the parish celebrated Jack Hattey's over 50 years of music ministry at St. Martin's. Jack was presented with a book of photos taken over the 50 years, and with a certificate acknowledging that St. Martin's had established the Jack Hattey Bursary for Organ and Choral Scholars. A tribute to Jack from Bishop Poole was read by Fr. Philip, and the text is reproduced below.

A Tribute to Jack Hattey

By Bishop Philip Poole,
Bishop Suffragan (retired), Diocese of Toronto

Now I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?

Leonard Cohen



There is little doubt that Jack Hattey cares for music or, more accurately, that music pours out of every pore of his being.

I first met Jack in the late 1960s while we were leading youth choral music at our respective neighbouring parishes. Bloor West Village was not the tony address it has become over the intervening years. The Junction gang and the Swansea gang regularly faced off against each other, often using High Park as their battleground. It was not a wealthy community but a mixed demographic including hard-working immigrant families struggling to make it financially. There was not much room for extras.

Jack and I were looking for an opportunity to let



our choristers experience something together that was more than our choirs could do individually. The Toronto Diocesan Boys' Choir School, a superb, renowned summer choral experience, was simply financially out of reach for our kids. So, with the help of the famous "Father J," Archdeacon Jim Jackson, and the support of the Deanery Council, we launched the West Toronto Choir Camp, a residential experience held at Camp Artaban. We did our best to ensure that no child who wanted to attend was refused.

Jack was the musical brains and inspiration for this venture. He was a master teacher even at such a

young age. His music selections, including ones that he penned, were designed to push the choristers to achieve more than they thought possible within the context of well-crafted Anglican Choral Evensong. He demanded the best of his choristers, not in the "hit them over the head with a two by four to get their attention" approach modelled by many choral directors of the day, but rather a gentle, firm approach which assumed the best result. Plainsong, Anglican Chant, magnificent hymns with soaring descants, canticles set to music by outstanding composers, and anthems demanding excellence were part of the annual bill of fare.

But his teaching did not end at choral music. Jack wanted the kids to expand their musical knowledge more broadly, so he created a sound board. For those who might not know what a sound board is, picture a six-foot long wooden four by four from which instruments could be hung held five feet or so off the ground by two tripods. The instruments included wind chimes, a crowbar, hollow pipes, a triangle, and, my personal favourite, our gong — a large metal *Coca-Cola* sign — in short anything that could be struck with a mallet to produce sound. The kids loved it. Can't say that the Dean of Toronto was overly impressed when that instrument appeared in the Cathedral for our Evensong offering. Jack also created an oversized wooden marimba, sparking curiosity in the lives of budding musicians.

Over the decades not much has changed about Jack. (Well OK, maybe a bit less hair!) His gentle demeanour, self-effacing manner, signature shrug of the shoulders ("oh well"), and passionate love for church music has given him something that he did not set out to do, namely an outstanding legacy as a faithful, creative, and excellent church musician.

Anglican liturgy does not depend on music. Rather music serves and undergirds the liturgy, assisting worshippers in offering praise to God.

On the 22nd of November the Church will celebrate the feast day of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music and musicians. It is said that as musicians played on her forced wedding day, she "sang in her heart to the Lord". I believe that is the tradition in which Jack Hattey stands: someone who has, for more than 50 years, "sung in his heart to the Lord," providing

worshippers in the historic parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields soul-inspiring music to lift them from the cares of day-to-day life to stand in worship of Almighty God at the vestibule of heaven. For which, my friend, I say, “Thanks be to God.”

Award to Father Philip

By David McKnight

Trinity College recently honoured Father Philip with a 2021 Chancellor William C. Graham Award. The award is described by the College to “recognize individuals who have made a significant impact on the Trinity Community.”

The award citation reads:
 “The Rev’d Canon Philip Hobson has had a distinguished career in the Anglican Church of Canada, which includes serving as Rector of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church. As an alumnus, Fr. Hobson has continued to serve on numerous committees of the College, particularly on the Senate, Corporation, as Chair of Divinity Council, and on the executive of the Divinity Associates. He has been a strong advocate and supporter of the College for many decades, exhibiting a loyalty and generosity to its staff and students that is as remarkable as it is admirable.”

Congratulations Father Philip!

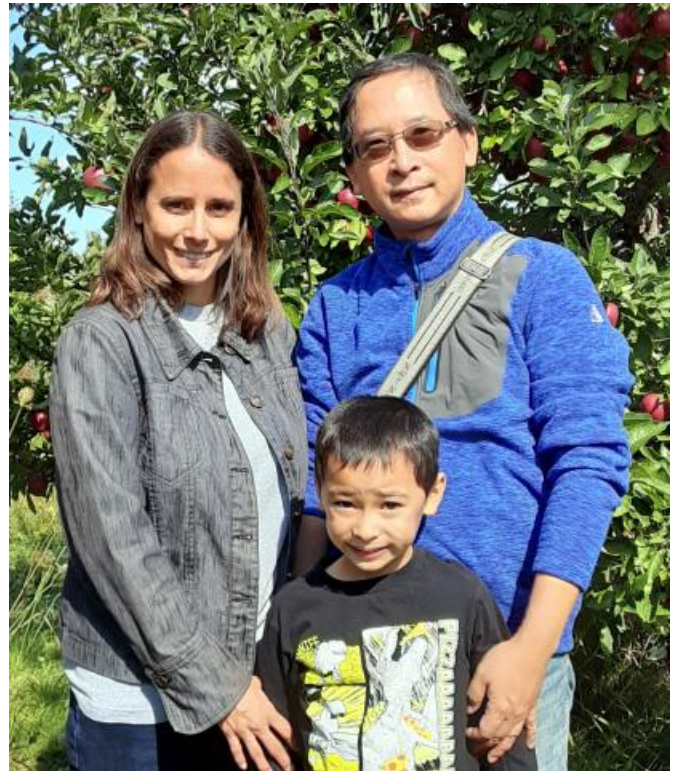
Welcome

We welcome Andrea Zinn who began her work as of December 1st as the parish’s part-time Office Administrator. We welcome Andrea to this new position and we wish her well in this work.



Parish Profile: Ron Cheung and Patricia Heath

By David McKnight



Ron Cheung was born in Hong Kong but moved to Canada in 1982 with his family — and three dogs. Ron says the dogs did not enjoy the trip or the subsequent quarantine on arrival. His grandparents and many aunts and uncles were already in Toronto, so there were familiar faces.

The family lived near Bloor and Islington and Ron went to high school at York Memorial Collegiate Institute before heading to university at McMaster. He was already very active in singing. He was in the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir from 1983–1986 and joined the Bach-Elgar Choir in Hamilton. At McMaster, Ron enjoyed singing in the university choir and especially a tour to the UK and Europe in 1988, but he was not enjoying his studies, first in economics and then in social science.

It was when the choir was in London that he visited St. Paul’s Cathedral and was taken with a terracotta virgin and child. He prayed for guidance and decided that he should change his field of study to music. The day after he got home to Toronto, he got a call offering a tenor soloist position at James

Street Baptist Church in Hamilton; he took this as a good sign. When he auditioned with the university music department for a transfer, because he had already been so active in music at the university, they were surprised he wasn't already one of their students! He was accepted into the program and graduated in music education and voice in 1992. (He still goes to visit and pray in St. Paul's and to see the statue whenever he is in London. The statue has been moved from where he first saw it, but he finds it every time.)

Patricia Heath was born in Toronto, but her family moved to nearby Unionville, now part of Markham, when she was six weeks old. Her mother was from Trinidad with parents of Indian Muslim background; she converted to Christianity after marrying Patricia's father, an Anglican from England. They have been faithful members of St. Philip's on-the-Hill in Unionville.

Patricia went to public and high school in Unionville, then went Montreal for a Bachelor of Music Education degree at McGill. After graduation, she stayed in Montréal at various jobs before getting an overseas teaching job in Bangladesh. The school, Mount Royal Academy, was run by a local man who had studied in Canada and modelled his school on Canadian education. It was an interesting time for Patricia to be in a different culture where she was not from the predominant culture or language. While in Asia, she took opportunity to travel and appreciated the chance to connect with her mother's heritage in visits to India.



Wise Men in the Garden Courtesy David McKnight

Back in Toronto after graduation, Ron started to work in the Opera Store in the mail order and choral music department. It was there that he met a frequent customer named Jack Hattey. At that time, Ron was singing in the Toronto Mendelssohn choir directed by the famed Dr. Elmer Iseler. Before long, Ron became interested in conducting choirs. He'd had his first experience with the McMaster choir — when the choir was split into two sections, the director asked Ron to direct the group singing in the balcony. Ron sought Dr. Iseler's advice and he was told to do what Elmer had done: start his own choir.

And so in 1996, Ron left the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and founded the Voices Chamber Choir, now marking its 25th year. (Marking, not celebrating. Celebrating must wait until COVID-19 is over.) Ron had further good experience and learned a lot at a symposium for choral conductors in Vancouver in 1997 with Jon Washburn and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. Later he was accepted to the Oregon Bach Festival and learned from the Bach specialist Helmuth Rilling.

With these experiences, Ron began his master's degree in choral conducting at the University of Toronto in 2000. There he was able to study again for a time with Helmuth Rilling, and also with Sir David Willcocks. He learned a great deal from both of these legendary conductors.

The choirs multiplied. In 2001, while still doing his master's degree, Ron was appointed the conductor of the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir. His first rehearsal was memorable for occurring on September 11, 2001. He continued with that choir until 2005. In 2006, Ron founded the Healey Willan Singers, a women's choir. It was the first choir named after Dr. Willan, with his daughter's permission. In 2008, Ron was asked to conduct a Canadian branch of the Yip's Children's Choir, modelled on the original choir in Hong Kong founded by Dr. Yip.

Ron has often been pressed to do quick work with a choir. In 2002, he became the music director at the Newman Centre Chapel Choir at the University of Toronto beginning in Holy Week with preparing the choir for four services in two days. Another time, in the absence of the regular director, he was asked to

prepare a choir for a tour in Italy, including choosing the program — in two days! — and then rehearsing it. The regular director only returned in time to go on the tour.

When Patricia returned to Canada, for two years she worked in a factory assembling computer mother boards while waiting for a spot to train as a teacher. She eventually got a spot in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University and graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree in 2001. She got a teaching job at Somerset Academy, a private school in Markham, and taught there for two years before moving to the Toronto District School Board where she has taught in several different schools.

While she was working in the factory, Patricia began singing lessons. Her teacher recommended that she join a choir. She heard about a choir called Voices and called the director, Ron Cheung, about an audition. Unfortunately, she was not well the day of the rehearsal she was to attend, and she couldn't go. Ron followed up, arranged an audition, and Patricia joined the choir. Several months later, Ron asked Patricia to accompany him to a function he needed to attend. And so ...

On 12 October 2002, Patricia and Ron were married at St. Philip's on-the-Hill. The date is auspicious because 12 October was the birthday of both Healey Willan (1890) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872). Their music was used for the wedding. Julian was born in 2015. For many years, Ron has been teaching music theory and voice in Markham on Tuesdays and Saturdays; Saturdays are now family occasions to visit Patricia's parents.

Both Ron and Patricia enjoy travel. They have had trips to Hong Kong and China, England, Trinidad, Italy, and Austria. In 2010, Patricia (but not Ron) went to Africa with the Canadian Teacher's Federation on a program to help with teacher development in Uganda. After 2½ weeks of workshops, the group went on safari in Uganda, Kenya, and to the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. Another opportunity for travel came for both Ron and Patricia on a tour in 2014 with the Yip's Choir to Prague, Vienna, and Salzburg.

Ron and Patricia were introduced to St. Martin's by Jack Hattey. Ron had been looking for a place to

rehearse and perform with the women's choir and Jack suggested St. Martin's. One Sunday Ron came to the service and was amazed to see Susan Bell. She had been a member of the McMaster choir and was on the tour to the UK in 1988. Because Ron had been freed from a Sunday work obligation four years earlier, he was able to fill in for Jack when he had surgery a few years ago. Since then, the family was able to attend St. Martin's more regularly — well, until COVID hit. Even the pandemic has not stopped Ron, as he has been one of our regular cantors in the live-streamed services.



These days, Ron is busy with his choirs and music teaching. Patricia is teaching at Davisville Junior Public School. She was teaching music, but when singing was banned she shifted to JK/SK. She also directs the Yip's Children's Choirs, junior and

intermediate, while Ron directs the senior and touring choirs. Julian is now in Grade 1 at Norseman Junior Middle School where his favourite subject is mathematics and, of course, he sings in Yip's choir. A musical family indeed!

St. Martin's Christmas Market

By the 2021 Market Mavens

Roseann Barry, Susan Goddard, Maggie Knight, Helen Kolberg, and Kathie Wagg

Thank you, thank you, thank you! to St. Martin's parishioners for all you made, baked and donated to our Christmas Market fundraiser. And, of course, a huge thank you also to those who purchased what was available. Many of you collect and make items throughout the year for our Market. Great job!

Thanks to you, our first tally is that we have raised just over \$11,000. We 2021 Market Mavens are all proud of our parish family!

We did have a few issues with Facebook over the week – and we apologize for those of you who had trouble accessing the site or individual booths. Without those issues, we are sure that our results would have been even better. Pray that for next year we will be able to meet in person again.

But the on-line work is only part of the Market – we also have our Market Weekend when we collect donations on Saturday and deliver all the goods on Sunday. This we could not do without volunteers from the parish – and we say another huge thank you to all those people. This event would not have happened without your help.

And, just so you know, since our last article, the group of Market Mavens has grown – from Roseann Barry and Kathie Wagg when we started this journey we added Susan Goddard, Maggie Knight, and Helen Kolberg. With this group, we were able to offer much more choice to our patrons. I think we would all agree that the work was worth it.

But if you would like this to continue, preferably in person next year, we need either one person or a small group to step up to take over this fundraiser. We 2021 Market Mavens can assure you that you will have support from the St. Martin's family. And we will certainly be included in that support! Please make your interest known to Kathie Wagg at waggfamily@bell.net. Thank you.

St. Martin's Glasses Collection Program 2021

By Glen Storey for the Missional Team

This year has seen another successful collection program for glasses at St. Martin's, even in the midst of a second year of the pandemic.

For the last several years we have been collecting prescription glasses, sunglasses, and hearing aids twice a year, in April and October, in partnership with Lions International. Our parishioners – and more and more our neighbours in the area – place these items in our special drop box at the east entrance to the church

At the end of the drop-off period, items are taken to a collection point in Mississauga so they can be shipped to Lions International (Canada) in Calgary.

They are cleaned, repaired, and graded, then sent to different parts of Asia for distribution.

This year, 239 pairs of glasses were collected, plus numerous sets of hearing aids. This kind of missional engagement with the community reminds our neighbours that we are still here and still active.

As well, thanks to Bernard for retrieving the items from the drop box on a regular basis.

Caleb Upton Moves On

By Ian Greene

The September issue of *The Lychgate* mentioned the appointment of Caleb Upton as the new Children and Youth Ministry Associate for St. Martin's. Unfortunately, Caleb has had to resign the position. Caleb is enthusiastic about the potential for children and youth ministry at St. Martin's, but life has intervened to send him in a new direction where he won't have enough time to devote to children and youth in the way he thinks this important ministry deserves. We wish him all the best and hope to see him from time to time.

Kyi Kyi Thin and Amber

By Ian Greene



On Sunday July 11, a notice was inserted into the Sunday bulletin asking for help for one of Ian Greene's former graduate students, Kyi Kyi Thin, who was working for an agency affiliated with the World Bank and was stranded in Myanmar during the recent military coup. Kyi Kyi and her newly adopted four-year-old daughter, Amber, arrived in Canada in June thanks to assistance from our MP, but all they could bring was some clothing. Kyi Kyi had rented an apartment and needed many household items.

St. Martin's parishioners responded generously, and Kyi Kyi was able to have her apartment all set up by the end of July. Amber started junior

kindergarten in September, has been participating in Messy Church, and has volunteered to be a sheep in the pageant. Kyi Kyi has resumed her former position with the Ontario Public Service and has secured more permanent housing. She and Amber will be moving over the Christmas break. Ian, Eilonwy, Christina, Philip and Girum are looking forward to their company at Christmas dinner.

Our Escape from Myanmar

By Kyi Kyi Thin

Amber and I are very grateful to Fr. Philip and the many members of St. Martin’s who have helped us resettle in Toronto. In June of this year, I was able to return home to Canada with my four-year-old daughter, Amber. Canada is now her home too! We were fleeing Myanmar, a country on the verge of a civil war; unfortunately, it is now in a full-blown civil war.



Amber with friend at a French school in Yangon just before coup

As some of you may be aware, the military took power from the civilian government in a coup on February 1, 2021. This action ended Myanmar’s ten-year experiment with democracy. In a future newsletter, I hope to share my experiences and observations about the situation in Myanmar. In this article, I’ll tell you what happened to us after the coup, and how we escaped.

After the military seized power, top elected leaders were detained, along with foreign policy advisors. People went into shock and there was no reaction for a couple of days. However, ten years of political freedom had brought Myanmar onto a new level; something clicked, and people started to come onto the streets. Within a week, thousands of people

started protesting. The crowds grew so big that every day we could feel the ground vibrating from the marching of thousands of demonstrators. After about three weeks, peaceful demonstrations turned into nightmares. The military filled the streets with tanks and trucks. Curfews were imposed. Checkpoints were manned with armed soldiers. All vehicles, except diplomatic cars, were searched. Arbitrary bullets flew out of nowhere, especially at night. Internet services were shut down much of the time. Water, electricity, and food supply chains were disrupted. Every night at 8 o’clock, people would bang their pots and pans as loud as they could to protest. Many communities established volunteer security schedules to keep out strangers.

I was lucky enough to have a letter signed by my employer that I was an employee of the World Bank Group, and that no one should check my car. I pasted the letter on the corner of the windshield. It helped me get around Yangon for essential tasks and I witnessed the daily episodes. Many businesses shut down. On the streets of Yangon, more and more children and elderly were begging for food and money. Children as young as three years old would go between cars asking for money from drivers. Mini guerilla wars started to take place in many communities, either against the military and police forces or against perceived informants and their families.

At a personal level, we were waiting for Amber’s immigration documents to come through. Due to COVID-19 and the military coup, commercial flights were suspended for months. Ian Greene was in regular contact with me whenever the internet was up and helped me to get Amber’s documents to the Canadian authorities. At night, Amber heard the sounds of explosions and gun shots. It was a constant challenge for me to explain unpleasant events to a four-year-old in a form that she could understand. Luckily Amber’s citizenship and passport came through in the middle of May. Another challenge then came along. The travel requirements introduced by the military government became more stringent in the week that we received Amber’s passport. The Canadian embassy in Myanmar became an incredible source of strength

and provided us with other necessary documents to travel to Canada.

By 3:30 a.m. in the morning of June 22nd, we were waiting in a car loaned by a very dear friend, a Swiss diplomat, along with the diplomat's local driver. Given many foreigners had been arbitrarily detained at the airport while leaving the country in those days, it was extremely important for us to be transported by a diplomat's car to go through military checkpoints. It was a very tense morning. As we waited in the car for the curfew hours to be lifted, I was very nervous and my palms were sweating. Amber was fully awake and was sitting quietly next to me in her red dress – a colour she chose because she wanted to wear the colour of the Canadian flag.

As soon as the curfew was lifted at 4 a.m., we headed to the airport. The streets were extremely dark and quiet. We went successfully through a number of checkpoints and reached the last checkpoint near the airport where soldiers asked the driver to pull over and asked us to step out. In a split moment, the driver said to us not to get out of the car and asked us to keep quiet. Then, he swiftly stepped out the car and had a conversation with the soldiers. The driver explained to them that he was taking a diplomatic family to leave the country as they finished their assignment. On the way, we learned that our driver was a son of a retired military officer. According to him, he knew how to talk to the soldiers. So, we finally arrived at the airport. The level of anxiety in me remained as we would still have to go through several more immigration checkpoints. Luckily, I planned in advance for the potential Qs and As. Finally, we boarded the plane. As we sat down in our seats and put on our seatbelts, the plane started the engines and took off in under ten minutes. We were on our way to Toronto via Incheon, South Korea.

We came home to Toronto with only suitcases. Many of your church members shared household items with us, from a floor mat to a microwave to kitchen and bedroom items. We are very grateful for everyone's generosity. As much as the household items have been useful, my appreciation is more towards the warmth, kindness, and a sense of

humanity that church members have shared with my daughter and me.

Clearly, we have experienced some degree of trauma. I am still going through incredible sadness to have witnessed many unfortunate and unpleasant events in Myanmar. Some days are good, but some days are really bad, especially when hearing of the loss of many of my friends to COVID-19 and to the brutality and crossfire between the military and civilians. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers so that I can be strong to bring up Amber with love, caring, and all the supports she deserves so that she will also grow to be a person who embraces humanity in any given situation. Your compassion, love and kindness to us will be our biggest strength.

May all of you and your loved ones be happy and healthy. We wish you a "Merry Christmas" and may the New Year bring you joy and happiness.



Approaching Bethlehem

Order of St. Martin's

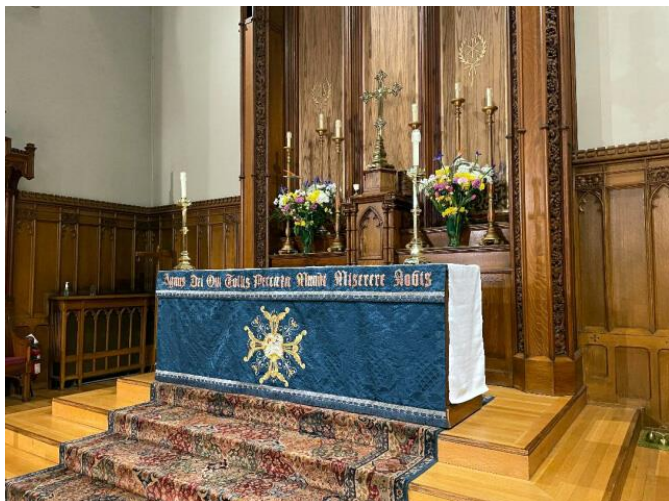
By Ian Greene

A decision was made by Parish Council to defer the nomination and selection of parishioners for the Order of St. Martin's until 2022.

Parish Council thanks all the volunteers who have supported the livestreaming of services, and all those who volunteered to do additional work to make it possible to offer services during the pandemic.

St. Martin's Seeks Part-time Pastoral Associate for Children's Ministry

St. Martin's is seeking a Pastoral Associate for Children's Ministry to help us actively engage our children and the children and families of the geographical parish of St. Martin's in every aspect of the church's community. We are a community of Christian believers in a diverse, family neighbourhood, nourished by an accessible Anglo-Catholic tradition. We are looking for an individual who can draw on their faith and their experience to nurture a safe, friendly and welcoming environment that is grounded in the Good News that is found in Jesus Christ for the children and youth of our parish. The Pastoral Associate for Children's Ministry will provide leadership in promoting and facilitating activities, programs, and events that engage the children and youth in our church as well as in the wider community both on-line and in person. For more information about the position and how to apply, there will soon be a posting on St. Martin's web page.



Advent frontal, photo Courtesy David McKnight

Parish Calendars

St. Martin's parish calendar for 2022 is now available, featuring beautiful photographs taken in our church garden over the seasons. This calendar would make a wonderful Christmas gift for friends and family. Calendars at \$12 each are available at the back of the church or by contacting Fr. Philip.



First Snowfall of fall 2021: Sunday November 28
Photo Courtesy David McKnight



Ron Cheung, Cantor,
Christmas 2020



Nativity Scene Christmas Day St. Martin's 2020



Photo Courtesy David McKnight