

# *Knox e-knews*

*January 7, 2012*  
[www.knoxhalifax.ca](http://www.knoxhalifax.ca)



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## *Minister's message*

Well, here we are and we've made it through the first week of January 2012 (almost) and how many times have you written 2011 on a cheque or document? It is one of those things that always seems to catch us off-guard. The reality is, we are now well on our way into the New year and I am very excited about the possibilities God has planned for us. I believe 2012 is going to be an awesome year in the life of Knox; what one might refer to as a "break-out" year. The question is; are you ready and willing to get on board and ride the wave of the glory of God or are you going to stay back and wait to see how it all works out? Being partially or sort of committed is like being sort of pregnant; it can't happen; you can't be sort of pregnant – you either are or you're not! You're either with God and are willing and eager to embrace the promise He offers or you're against God. Jesus says; "He who is not with me is against me." I certainly do not want to be counted as one who is against Jesus and standing in the way of the the marvelous works God has planned for us at Knox this year.

We are also now into a week on our journey through the Bible this year. How are you doing with it? It is alright if you have missed a day or two; you can catch up. Everyone, including me, will have days we miss, I already have, and that's alright; however, I encourage you to keep on track. Some of the reading is not easy, especially the names, but stick with it. I am discovering things I didn't know or had forgotten as I have waded through Genesis thus far and I am encouraged that others of you are joining me on this journey of discovery. As I mentioned last Sunday, we will gather twice a month on Sunday mornings from 9:45 – 10:15 in the Parlour to connect, support one another and discuss anything that has struck us as we have been reading. I encourage you to jot down anything that strikes you as you're reading so you can bring it up during our discussion. This is how we can make this journey more meaningful for all involved. It's also not too late to join us on our journey; just grab your Bible and follow

the list which I am including below again this week. The more the merrier. Our first discussion will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January.

We begin our Bible study of James on Tuesday January 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary and of course, everyone is welcome to join in the discussion. I hope you will make time in your schedule to join us as we delve into an Epistle which has had a storied past, but one from which we can learn much as we continue to learn how to be more faithful disciples and followers of Jesus. You will find the first week's material below as well as on our website.

We continue to meet at 10:15 each Sunday mornings in the Parlour for prayer, and as always, everyone is welcome to join us as we pray for our church and those who gather here. There is remarkable power in prayer, and many of us have seen the evidence of the power of prayer over the past couple of months.

Again, as I mentioned last Sunday, as we embark on a New Year, we are going to be doing some things differently in worship and in the life of the congregation. Some things might work and be welcomed by the folks gathered, some things might not; so be it. In the words of Yoda, from the Star Wars movies, "Do or do not. There is no try." If we do nothing, we know what the result will be...nothing. As Kenan Callaghan says, try something. If it works, great; carry on. If it doesn't, that okay; discard it and try something else. I have always been a proponent of the old adage, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

There may be some things that you connect with and others you don't; please know you are always welcome to express your thoughts in a respectful manner; and as always, your ideas for doing new ministry or ministry differently are always welcome. We may agree to disagree; however, if we are going to throw the doors open to the wider community and welcome them in, we have to be willing to accept that things may not remain as they have always been. As I have said before, the church exists for those who are not yet attending. I am the first one to acknowledge I have to be willing to change and to step out of my comfort zone in the way I do things in order to make our church, our services and our presence in the community more welcoming, accessible and inclusive and I am doing so. This e-newsletter is a prime example of my commitment to God, my friend and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Knox and to each of you; the thought of doing a weekly e-newsletter did not thrill me at first; however, I have stepped out of my routine and comfort zone and have committed to it for your sake and mine and your feedback has been appreciated. I have found a real sense of joy in communicating with you using this medium; it is not burdensome at all.

Friends, we are blessed in so many ways and we have much to be thankful for. I created a short video which I sent to my family in celebration of New Year's and in it, I shared the incredible majesty of God's glory revealed to us through your response to the Angel Tree program; their response back to me has been overwhelming and indeed a little surprising. I would like to share with you something my Uncle wrote in response to the video: *"I was delighted to hear your story of the Circle of Chairs and Angel Tree programme. This is truly not just a good news story but a wonderful testimony to the goodness of God working through His people demonstrating His love and the loving of one's neighbour. You are to be commended highly for your leadership. May God continue to bless you and your people in the days ahead."* As I have said before, there are many beyond our immediate circle, many who are unknown to us who are praying for us each and every day, thanks be to God. There is great power in prayer and we are blessed to be remembered in the prayers of others. I am including the link to the video which I initially intended for my family, but which, after prayerful consideration, have discerned God's desire for me to share with all of you; again stepping out of my comfort zone. We all have a lot to offer and lot to be thankful for; my prayer is that God will guide us with love and courage and an open willingness to put Him first in everything we say and everything we do. And I hope and pray that you will choose to ride the wave with us as we bring glory to God in service to His Kingdom in the here and now.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Brian

<http://youtu.be/iXtMdLzNqbc>

### *News from the flock:*

This feature will require some help from all of you. As many of you know, the minister is always the last to know. However, if you are aware of some news that is permitted to be shared, please let me know. Your contributions to this newsletter would be welcomed at any time.

- ✚ Just a reminder, the Out of the Cold shelter is now running for the winter months and we have now experienced some very cold nights. We will be collecting items each week which I will deliver on Wednesday evening when I work my shift. If you would like to contribute, a list of needed items is on our website in the News section, on the Out of the Cold's website, <http://outofthecoldhalifax.org/> click on the Volunteers tab, or check the list on the bulletin board in the church lobby. Any and all support for this vital ministry will be greatly appreciated.
- ✚ In response to the request for sandwiches, we will be picking a date in January when we can gather to make a batch of sandwiches for one of the shelters. Please stay tuned for the proposed date.
- ✚ If you are interested in making your offering to our church using PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) or would like to make changes to your current PAR givings, please speak to Pam following the service.
- ✚ Mark your calendars: We begin a 5 week Bible study on the Book of James this coming Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> of January at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join in the discussion as we continue to grow our faith on our journey with the LORD our Saviour Jesus Christ.

## *Dates to Remember*

*~ Special Days ~*

Jan 8<sup>th</sup> – Emenike Olugu

Jan 14<sup>th</sup> – Samuel Olugu

*Happy Birthday Emenike & Samuel*

January 10<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 p.m. – Our Bible Study of James begins in the Parlour. Everyone is welcome to join in the discussion.

Sat Jan 14<sup>th</sup> – 9:00 a.m. – Come to our congregation Breakfast at Jim's Restaurant, 243 Bedford Hwy: Join us for a time of fellowship and good food.

Sunday Jan 15<sup>th</sup> – 9:45 – 10:15 Bible – Through – the – Year discussion in the Parlour

*Musings and other Stuff*

## Let's Read through the Bible Together in One Year

As we welcome 2012 I would like you to join me on a spiritual journey this year. I am inviting you to join me in reading through the Bible in 2012. We will begin with Genesis and work our way through to Revelation by year's end. We will meet twice a month on Sunday mornings from 9:45 to 10:15 to discuss the passages we have read. I hope and pray that you will join me on this journey of discovery as we read and learn from God's Word this year.

January 1: Genesis chapters 1 & 2

January 2: Genesis chapters 3 – 5

January 3: Genesis chapters 6 – 9

January 4: Genesis chapters 10 – 11

January 5: Genesis chapters 12 – 15

January 6: Genesis chapters 16 – 19

January 7: Genesis chapters 20 – 22

January 8: Genesis chapters 23 – 26

January 9: Genesis chapters 27 – 29

January 10: Genesis chapters 30 – 32

January 11: Genesis chapters 33 – 36

January 12: Genesis chapters 37 – 39

January 13: Genesis chapters 40 – 42

January 14: Genesis chapters 43 – 46

January 15: Genesis chapters 47 – 50

January 16: Exodus chapters 1 – 4

January 17: Exodus chapters 5 – 7

January 18: Exodus chapters 8 – 10

January 19: Exodus chapters 11 – 13

January 20: Exodus chapters 14 – 17

January 21: Exodus chapters 18 – 20

January 22: Exodus chapters 21 – 24

January 23: Exodus chapters 25 – 27

January 24: Exodus chapters 28 – 31

January 25: Exodus chapters 32 – 34

January 26: Exodus chapters 35 – 37

January 27: Exodus chapters 38 – 40

January 28: Leviticus chapters 1 – 4

January 29: Leviticus chapters 5 – 7

January 30: Leviticus chapters 8 – 10

January 31: Leviticus chapters 11 – 13

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### **Between You and God – Do it Anyway**

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

These verses are reported to have been written on the wall of *Mother Teresa's* home for children in *Calcutta, India*, and are attributed to her.

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## **Bible Study of the Letter of James: Week 1, Chapter 1**

The Letter of James is one of those no-nonsense New Testament books. James tells it like it is with no holds barred. He doesn't seem concerned that he'll offend someone. He just says it. I've found that the Letter of James is a great place in which to mine and refine practical Christian living.

### **General Epistle**

The Epistle of James is included among the "General" or "Catholic" epistles, since the exact recipient church is not specified. Rather, it seems to have a more general audience, a letter to the whole Church. It is addressed "to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations." The term "twelve tribes" is reminiscent of the 12 tribes of Israel, but it is pretty clear he isn't addressing primarily Jews, but followers of Jesus. So the "twelve tribes" are more figurative, and the expression seems to view the believers as a kind of New Israel and a New Diaspora in the world.

### **Authorship**

Some in the early church felt that the Letter of James was pseudepigraphic, that is, the ascription of a false name of an author to the work.

While early church historian Eusebius (c. 263 - c. 339) regarded the Epistle as canonical (i.e., authoritative Scripture), he says,

"The first of the Epistles styled Catholic is said to be by James the Lord's brother; but it ought to be known that it is held by some to be spurious. Certainly not too many ancient writers have mentioned it."

Jerome (c. 348 - c. 420), great translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, wrote:

"James, who is called the Lord's brother, wrote one Epistle only, which is one of the seven catholic Epistles, which, it is asserted, was published under his name by another, although little by little as time went on it obtained authority."

Ultimately, the Church came to accept the Epistle not only as apostolic, but also that it should be attributed to James, the head of the early church at Jerusalem. James became a believer as a direct result of the resurrection of Christ: "he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve... Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles..." (1Corinthians 15:5, 7). This James was one of the only apostles that Paul met after his conversion (Galatians 1:19), and figured prominently in the Jerusalem Council outlined in Acts 15. He was referred to by Hegesippus (c. 180) as "James the Just," because of his faithful observance of the Jewish law.

The other prominent James mentioned in the New Testament was the brother of John, one of the sons of Zebedee, and a member of Jesus' inner circle of "Peter, James, and John." However, he was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I in 44 AD (Acts 12:2).

## Date of the Epistle

Assuming we accept the Letter's authorship by James the Just, the brother of Jesus, it could have been written any time between 40 and 60 AD, but probably closer to 60 AD.

## Luther's Criticism

Martin Luther was a bit hard on James, since the letter didn't fit closely enough to his carefully defined doctrine of *sola fide*, "only faith." James says "faith without works is dead" (2:17, 26), and that was a bit much for the Reformer. He wrote about the Letter:

"In fine, Saint John's Gospel and his first Epistle, Saint Paul's Epistles, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Saint Peter's first Epistle, -- these are the books which show thee Christ, and teach thee everything that is needful and blessed for thee to know even though thou never see or hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore is Saint James's Epistle a **right strawy Epistle** in comparison with them, for it has no gospel character to it." (from Luther's introduction to the 1522 edition of his German New Testament, Ropes' translation)

As we study the Letter, we'll see that James' divergence from Paul's salvation by grace doctrine is verbal, but not actual or real. And Luther to the contrary, I've found James a very challenging part of my growth as a disciple. He doesn't allow me to hide behind my profession of faith, deceiving myself. He challenges me to live out my faith in my everyday actions, by a love for the helpless, a controlled tongue, earnest prayer, and a concern for the wandering.

Thanks is given to Rev. Dr. Ralph Wilson for this introduction to James' epistle.

In preparation for Tuesday's gathering (**in the Sanctuary**) please read Chapter 1 of James.

Consider the following questions as you read:

1. What did you like about this passage?
2. What did you not like about this passage?
3. What did you not understand about this passage?
4. What new thing did you learn about God and/or the Kingdom of God?
5. What do you want to take away (and/or apply) from this passage?

We look forward to you joining us as we consider how God is speaking to us through this important book from the Bible.

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Some of you may remember my attempt at a Maple Syrup pie a couple of years ago. For me, it was a gooey success, but then I'm biased given that maple syrup runs through my veins.

Anyway, I thought I would post it here in the event one of you might want to attempt it. The good thing about this pie is that even if it doesn't turn out as planned, it's still delicious to eat...with a spoon if necessary. Enjoy. If any of you have a favourite recipe you'd like to share, please do not hesitate to send it to me and I'll include it in a future e-newsletter.

### Maple Syrup Pie – Au Anciens Canadiens, Quebec City

1 & 1/2 cups (375 ml) brown sugar

1/2 cup (125 ml) heavy cream (35% m.f.)

1/3 cup (75 ml) pure maple syrup, **at room temperature**

1 large egg, **at room temperature**

2 tsp (10 ml) butter, **at room temperature**

4 tbsp cornstarch

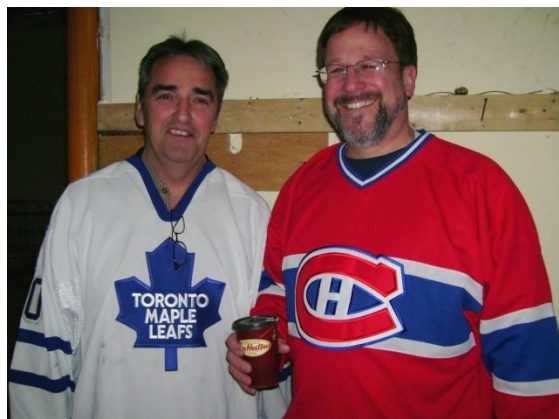
9 inch pre-baked pie shell

whipped cream, as garnish

Preheat oven to 350F (180C). In a large bowl with a spoon or fork, blend together brown sugar, cream, maple syrup, egg, butter and cornstarch until smooth and creamy.

Pour into prepared pie shell and bake 45 minutes. Gently remove from oven and cool. Place in refrigerator until a 1/2 hour before eating. Garnish with freshly whipped cream (Let's face it, if you're eating this pie, calories are not a concern; so you might as well have the real thing).

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A late night like tonight...good friends...good coffee...good rivalry.