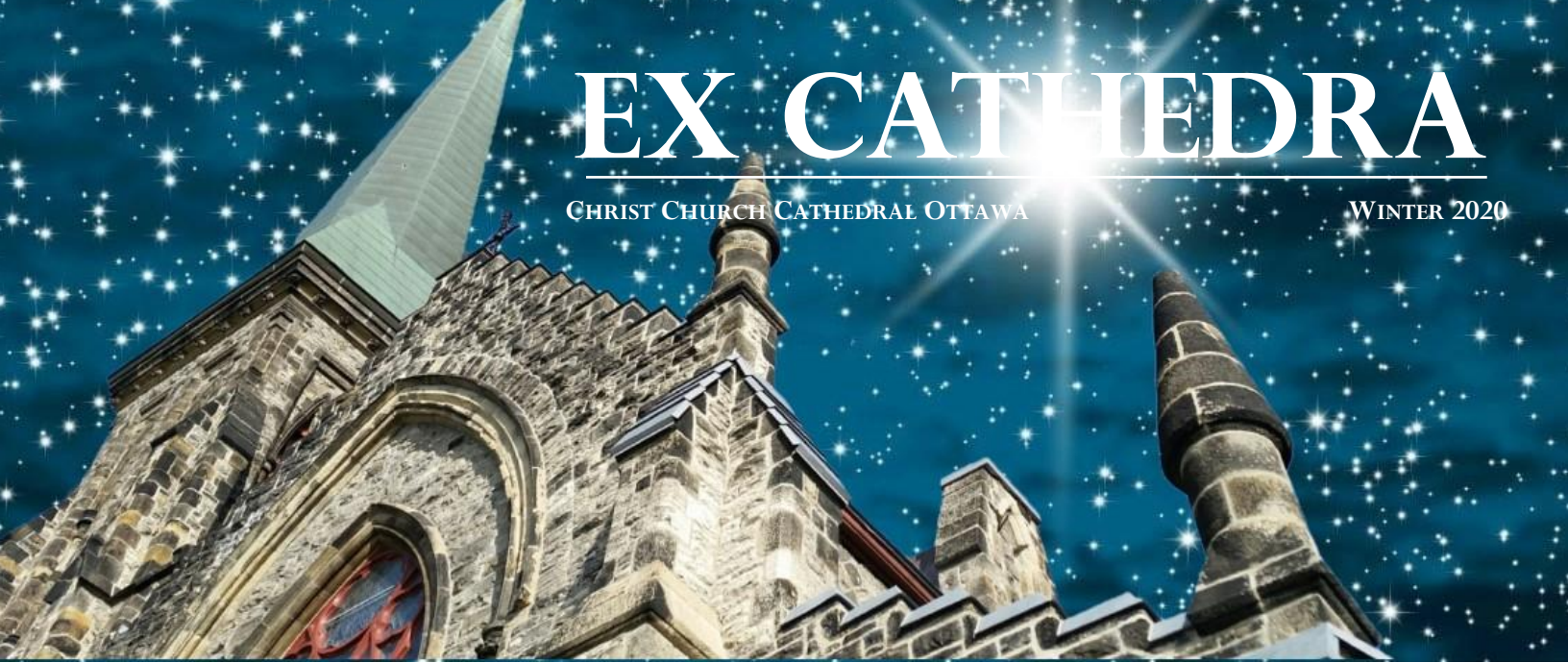


# EX CATHEDRA

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA

WINTER 2020



## THE CHURCHMICE WELCOME THE DEAN

Dean Beth knew that every year the Cathedral's churchmice gather in the Good Shepherd Chapel to share their stories for the year with Ex Cathedra. And she knew that the Dean had long ago been chosen as the one to record those stories and pass them along to the editor. Although she had heard of the churchmice and was sure she had caught glimpses of them since she arrived in early September, she did not quite know what to expect – but she was determined to continue the tradition, especially since this was been a year like no other.

She went into the chapel late on the feast of St. Nicholas, and saw the four churchmice, perched on the altar rail under the soft, warm light of the pres-

ence lamp, making special preparations: preening their whiskers, making sure their fur was neat and tidy, and cleaning behind their ears. After all, they were meeting with a new Dean and they wanted to impress!

There was much squeaking as they jumped down onto the embroidered kneelers, all tumbling into a furry pile at the Dean's feet, all excited to speak first. However, Ms. Bishopmouse took the lead—after all, she felt a certain responsibility to speak on behalf of the new occupant of the Cathedra (their old friend, confidant and former dean, Bishop Shane). “Welcome to our Cathedral,” she announced in her best formal squeak. Then she paused and did a double-take and ex-

claimed, “Wait...haven't I seen you before... Yes! You sat in Saint Joanna's stall as a Canon. And you're the one who grew up on a farm—no wonder you are so comfortable with us churchmice (unlike a certain head server...)!”

Mr. Deanmouse gently rose up on his back legs, peering at the Dean, and offering his thoughts on the last year. “Sadly, we have been alone for much of the year, left to our own mousy company. It has been so very quiet, with no music or choristers until re-



*[Click here for more](#)*

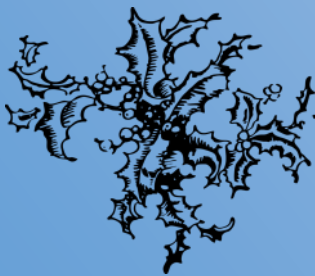


## SURVIVING DARKNESS AND SILENCE: A WINTER STORY

By Albert Dumont

**K**òkomis' (Grandmother's) heart was heavy with worry for her grandchild. The girl had suddenly become moody and withdrawn. Kòkomis instinctively knew that the very questions she herself had asked about life so long ago while in her own teenage years were now being asked by her young relative. "What is my purpose in life?" "Who am I?" "Why are things as they are?"

The grandmother began to ponder the life of the fish living under the snow, crust and ice on the lake. "How dark it must be now in their world," she thought. She knew full well that in her homeland a thick wintery ceiling covers the world of the fish for almost six months of the year. Still the fish survive in a world where neither the sun nor the wind can ever enter. She wondered what instructions the fish had been given by Great Spirit to help them survive in their time of great darkness and silence. The swimmers know that the darkness will not be everlasting and eventually the rays of the sun will again pierce the waters of the lake and shine deep into its depths. The mirrored waters of the lake will dimple with the touch of a dragonfly and fish will be aware of its presence.



The old woman understood that the thoughts entering her mind were being given to her from the spirit of the lake. Wisdom, pure and true coming like a gift to her. She was thankful for this and expressed those words of thanksgiving to the lake and all that was alive in its entity.

She had prepared good words for her grandchild, wisdom drawn from her own life's experiences. But the wisdom of the land and the counsels of her ancestors too, would contribute greatly to the coming circle of this winter's day.

## FROM THE VICAR—CHRISTMAS TIME IS HERE

By Canon Doug Richards

**T**he light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:5

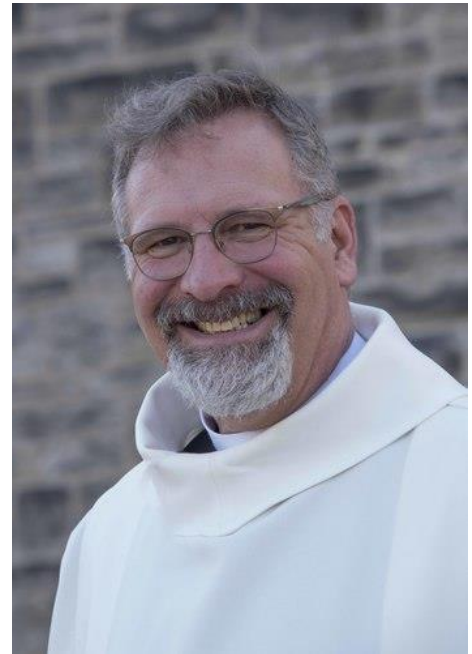
I am sure you have noticed the days getting shorter and shorter, and the time of darkness getting longer. It feels to me this year is darker than other years. It doesn't help that over the past couple of weeks the days have been grey and gloomy, which is not helping me to feel like it is Christmas time. Many of the things that I associate with this time of year are not there: gathering with friends to have a cup of Christmas cheer, going to stores to find the perfect gift and many more traditions of this season are missing.

Richard and I have done most of our shopping for Christmas online this year. The gifts we went out to buy in the stores were strategically planned, so we would not be in the store too long. Even our plan to be with family has been altered. Everything is up in the air, uncertainty is all

around, and fear seems to be taking over the world around us.

However, in the midst of the darkness, I have had some time to reflect and think about the pilgrimage to the Land of the Holy One I was on, over a year ago. Over the past eight months, I have re-lived much of my time on pilgrimage. Over Easter, I was transported back to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and my encounter with the empty tomb. During the summer months, I recalled the time spent on a boat on the Lake of Galilee. Every time I reflect upon a different part of that pilgrimage, I gain new insights into my experience of the Land of the Holy One.

So it is with this Christmas. I remember clearly getting up early on the fourth day of the Pilgrimage. We were going to Bethlehem to visit the Church of the Nativity and other sites that commemorate the Birth of Jesus. Getting off of the bus



and walking towards the Church, I was surprised at how simple the church looked. After a time of waiting in line it was our turn to descend the very narrow stairs into the Grotto of the Nativity. As I entered this sacred space I was overcome with the sense of holiness that is there.

After spending a few moments in prayer before the shrine, our group of pilgrims stood back and quietly sang Silent Night. What a moving experience! The simplicity of the moment caught me off guard. A group of pilgrims at

*[Click here for more](#)*

## COMFORT BY MAIL IN A TIME OF TROUBLE

By Tom Delsey

The Cathedral's pastoral care ministry is all about being with: being with those in need of support, those who are isolated or lonely, those grieving the loss of a loved one, those facing life challenges, those in need of spiritual guidance. It is very much about making individual connections on a personal level. Under normal circumstances that would involve clergy meeting one-on-one with parishioners to provide care, comfort and counseling, or taking communion to those in hospital, long-term care, retirement residences, or at home alone.

For members of the pastoral care team it would mean visiting with parishioners who are unable – usually because of age or infirmity – to attend regular services at the Cathedral. Clergy, pastoral care team members, and volunteers would also organize “back home” services and luncheons at Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, bringing those parishioners to the

Cathedral to take part in a special Eucharist and to enjoy the fellowship of long-time friends.

Since March of this year, of course, nothing has been normal. So we have had to find other ways of making and maintaining those personal connections. In a few cases clergy and members of the pastoral care team have been able to use video technology to connect with those we would normally have visited in person. For the most part, however, the telephone has been our primary means of keeping in touch. But even a telephone call is not always a viable means of connecting.

So in April we began preparing, printing, and mailing out a monthly Pastoral Care Messenger, each issue containing a short poem, an image chosen to complement the theme of the poem, a prayer, and a brief message from Canon Hilary, all designed to serve as a source of comfort and hope.

Since April we have also held by name in our midday prayers each of our parishioners who are in hospital, long-term care, retirement residences, or living at home alone.

The June issue of the Pastoral Care Messenger included a poem by Raoul Follereau titled “A Smile.” Four lines from that poem capture the essence of personal connection reflected in a smile:

A smile brings rest to  
the weary soul.

It cannot be bought,  
nor can it be loaned or  
even stolen,

For it is something  
which has value

Only from the very  
moment it is given.

As we look to 2021, to a time when we are able to return to something like the old normal, our hope is again to be with those most in need and to share with them a smile.





## SING WE JOYOUS, ALL TOGETHER—VIA ZOOM

By James Calkin

**A**dvent and Christmas normally bring a packed schedule of festive eucharists, carol services and concerts to our bustling cathedral music ministry. It is a magical time of the year, when the familial warmth, connection and traditions of our choirs are very much in evidence.

This year, we must be Together Apart. We must distance ourselves to maximize safety and public health — and we have, but in ways that also nourish our chorister teams and serve the mission of the Cathedral. Let me tell you about some special ways we in the music department are doing that.

You can read on pg. 11 about Andrew McAnerny and Nick Walters' trip to the Parish of the Valley to join two services on the third Sunday of Advent. This was the first of several anticipated visits by Cathedral musicians to parishes across the diocese, especially those where the pandemic has severely limited services.

Cathedral musicians and clergy have also participated in two video projects. The first was a contribution to the national lessons and carols service "From Coast to Coast to Coast." [Find it at: <https://www.anglican.ca/lessonsandcarols/>]

With cathedral choirs, organists and clergy from across Canada, members of our Boys Choir performed a hymn while the Dean and Vicar read one of the readings and collects. The second video project is a carol service featuring some of our own choristers, music staff and clergy. "Carols from Christ Church Cathedral" is intended as a worship resource for parishes and a gift for people everywhere.

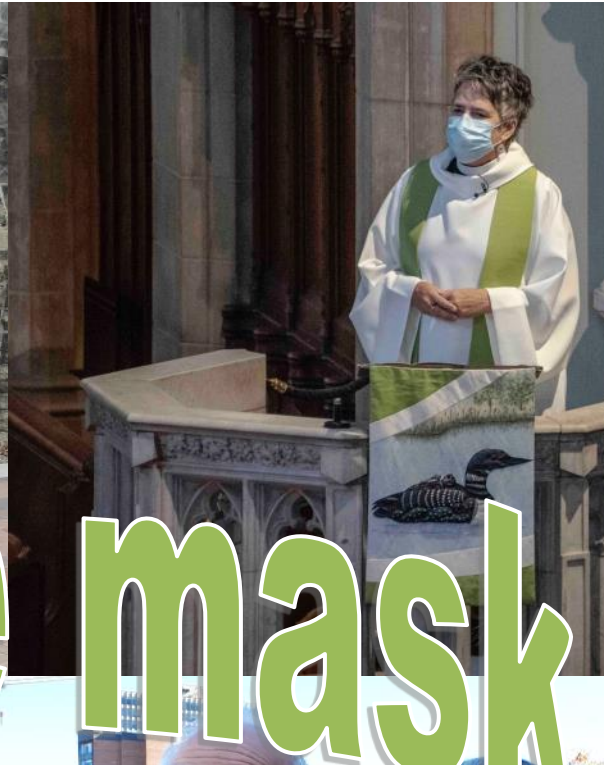
Because of the pandemic many of our parishioners are isolated and unable to attend the Cathedral in person. We try to bridge that gap with livestreamed services but took it a step further for Christmas music, with a virtual hymn sing December 18 via Zoom. We have also scheduled a small ensemble of girl choristers to sing carols to residents of Carlingwood Retirement Community. The girls must remain outside and residents are restricted



*Good Christian folk rejoice with heart and soul and Zoom—a screen shot of the on-line Christmas hymn sing*

*[Click here for more](#)*











## SHINING IN SERVICE AT SOMERSET AND BELL

By Gwynneth Evans and the Reverend Victoria Scott

**A** light is shining in the darkness of these pandemic days at the corner of Somerset and Bell streets, where Christ Church Cathedral's community ministry partner, St. Luke's Table, has expanded hours and services for the homeless and marginally housed people it serves.

The deep needs of the people who visit St. Luke's Table only intensified with the arrival of COVID-19. Among those needs were additional washrooms, showers and laundry facilities which they had been wanting to add for some time. The pandemic increased the need and when the City of Ottawa made \$300,000 available, it was time to act.



At a special Vestry meeting in November, St. Luke's congregation gave its overwhelming support for the renovations to its basement—and once construction got underway on December 6th—for St. Luke's Table to operate in the church. Now open from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday to Saturday, the centre provides between 35 and 50 people with a hot breakfast every day and more than 80 people have lunch, in a safe and distanced way. (Others get lunch at Tom Brown Arena). The sanctuary also holds cots (a warm and safe place to rest) as well as computers, and staff to listen and help.

For almost eight years, Christ Church Cathedral has been central to the work of St. Luke's Table, through our commitment to donate a minimum of \$1,250 per month to pay for nourishing food for the centre. That's in keeping with Bishop Shane's urging us all to think of ourselves as a diocesan church that serves through both parish and community ministries. This Christmastide, we are thankful for the neighbourhood partnership that has let us do that for many years. Please help keep it strong by donating to St. Luke's Table, which you can do online at <http://www.stlukestable.ca/index.php/how-to-help>





## THE HOLY FAMILY: REFUGEES WHO GAVE US MUCH

By Canon Hilary Murray

This year as I reflect on both the Advent and Christmas seasons much of my thinking has focused on the many refugees in our world. Five years ago, as we remember, the Canadian government committed to welcoming and resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees into our country. Christ Church Cathedral, like so many other churches in our diocese and around the country, came together with other organizations and groups to sponsor families entering Canada. (For more details on the work the Cathedral Refugee Settlement Group accomplished, see Peter Webber's article on pg.10) I would like to thank the members of the group for all their hard work in supporting, mentoring and offering friendship to Mohamed and Shoq Othman and their family and Hussein and Afra Othman and their children.

Life for newcomers to Canada is often not easy, especially for refugees. Their integration and adjustment to their new lives extends much farther out than two or three years. Our

Christian mission calls us to be a support and befriend those who are less fortunate than us, struggling in finding their way in a new land and dealing with the hardships of life.

There is much we can learn from newcomers, which in turn enriches our lives. As we gaze on the manger scene this year let us be reminded of the Holy family, who were refu-



**CALKIN ...**  
continued from page 5

to their rooms and balconies, but we hope nevertheless to bring a measure of cheer.

I wrote this looking forward to the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, very grateful we have been able to maintain much of our normal pattern of worship this Advent, albeit with small numbers of distanced and masked singers. Now, sadly,

gees in their own land. Although we often have very pastoral views of this manger scene, the truth is that life for the Holy family was filled with much strife and danger as it is for many of the refugee families who are in Canada today. Let us see the faces of the refugees in those of the Holy family and open ourselves to receiving their gifts of love, humility, joy and grace which is given from God to us this time of the year and always.

Blessings to you all this Christmas!

we learn And, as noted above, all livestreamed: [www.youtube.com/c/christchurchcathedralottawa](http://www.youtube.com/c/christchurchcathedralottawa). Most especially, I continue to feel blessed and thankful for the generosity of this parish towards its musicians and for the resilience, determination and faithfulness of our choristers. Wishing you a very merry Christmas!



## I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

By Peter Webber

Five years after organizing to help Syrian refugees, the Christ Church Cathedral Refugee Sponsorship Group's work is done. Now that the two families we sponsored are settled and doing well, we have decided to wind up operations.

Formed in 2015 to Syrian refugee crisis, the Cathedral partnered with the Rotary Club of Ottawa and a dedicated band of volunteers to raise more than \$70,000 to sponsor and help settle two Syrian refugee families.

The effort was led by parishioner Bjorn Helby who (together with the steering committee he chaired)

organized the fundraising and planning necessary to bring refugees to Canada. First to arrive were Mohamed and Shoq Othman and their three children, whom we welcomed in February of 2016. Mohamed's brother Hussein, his wife Afraa and their three children (they've since added a fourth) arrived in October of 2018.

Both families have settled well, living in Kanata townhouses not far from each other, and Mohamed and Shoq Othman have recently applied for citizenship. The time has gone by quickly as the families have been busy learning English, finding work and adjusting to school

(the children had never been able to attend school before).

All along they've also been supporting Mohamed and Hussein's mother and a younger brother, whom they hope to sponsor as refugees. To help with that, in winding up its current activities, the Refugee Sponsorship Group will use its remaining funds to help with that effort.

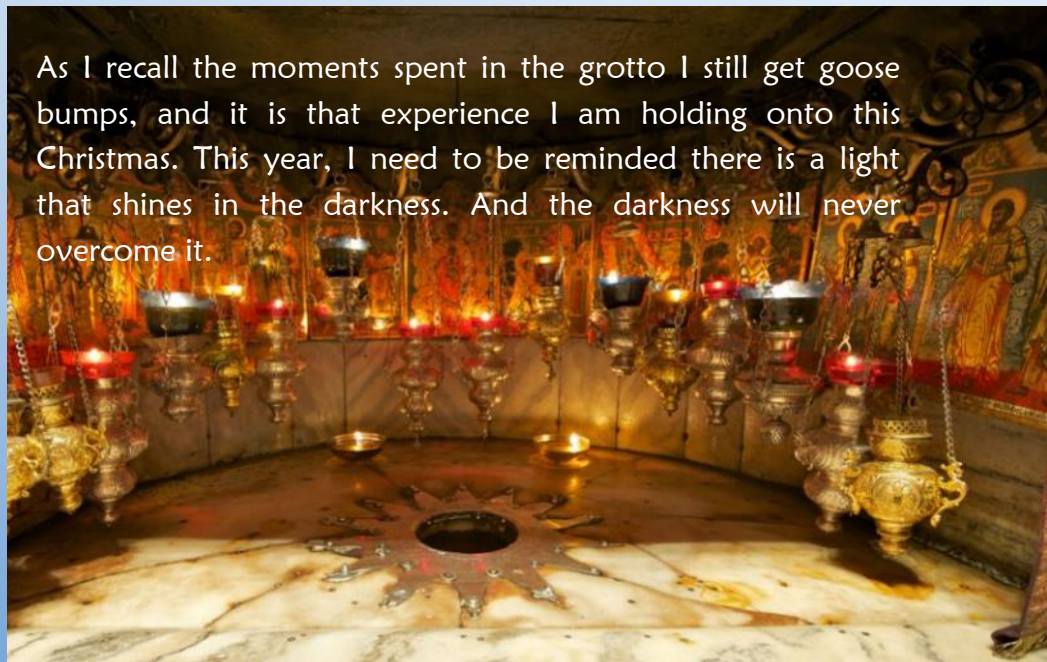
The Cathedral Refugee Group thanks all members of the congregation for their generous support, in both time and money over the years. Although we won't undertake further sponsorships, the Diocesan Refugee Ministry will continue the work.

## VICAR

continued from page 3

the site that has been set apart, since the early days of the church, as the birth place of Jesus, singing a simple carol.

As I recall the moments spent in the grotto I still get goose bumps, and it is that experience I am holding onto this Christmas. This year, I need to be reminded there is a light that shines in the darkness. And the darkness will never overcome it.





## THE VALLEY IS ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF OUR MUSIC

By Andrew McAnerney

The Cathedral's new musical outreach program — sharing our music with churches across the diocese — began December 13th with a visit to the Parish of the Valley.

The Parish of the Valley comprises 12 congregations and 15 buildings in the northern end of the diocese of Ottawa (think Mattawa, Petawawa, Eganville and Beachburg, among the many). Our intrepid musicians could not, of course, cover that much ground, limiting their visit to St Paul's Church, Cobden in the morning and Holy Trinity Church, Pembroke in the afternoon.

At St. Paul's, our director of music Andrew McAnerney sang tenor cantor and assistant organist Nicholas Walters played for Holy Communion. Bishop Michael Bird celebrated the service with extra music including the Advent prose, a new setting of the Magnificat written for the recent O antiphons service at Christ Church, and O come, O come Emmanuel.

In the afternoon, 30 kilometres up the Trans Canada, Andrew and Nicholas were joined by Justin Sidaros from the boy's choir for a service of lessons and carols at Holy Trinity. Music during the carols service included Andrew

singing Gabriel's Message, Justin singing Silent Night and Away in a Manger, and an assortment of Advent music from Nicholas on the fine Casavant Organ.

"This was my first trip to the Parish of the Valley and I was very touched by the warm welcome I received," Andrew said. "It is such a privilege to make and share music, particularly in these pandemic times."

Social distancing rules allowed only one person to sing at a time, and of course the congregation couldn't sing at all — but the music brought pleasure both to the congregations and the musicians.

"I think everybody — except perhaps the bats squeaking from the organ at Holy Trinity — enjoyed themselves. Although COVID prevents socializing, it was good to see so many people. I look forward to a time when I can return with the full choir," Andrew said, thanking Reverend Matthew Brown for



*Justin Sidaros of the boys choir sings at Holy Trinity Pembroke*

*[Click here for more](#)*

## THE DEAN ... continued from page 1

cently. At first we thought we had been abandoned. We missed the visits and the music and the people and the glorious Festal Eucharists very much. Thank heavens Canon Hilary has come to visit us and made sure we feel connected.”

Miss Pulpitmouse chimed in, “I slept sooooo much! Apart from when Archbishop Anne preached at Bishop Shane’s consecration, there was no preaching in our cathedral for the longest time, and when it did start again, I couldn’t hear at first due to those strange masks. How can people breathe, let alone talk or sing? I keep waiting for one of the preachers to pass out—big Canon Doug would certainly make a scene if he falls over. That is a story I wouldn’t want to tell!”

Mr. Lecternmouse had been having a very difficult time waiting to speak. Finally, he burst out with great emotion: “There were CHILDREN one Sunday when two youngsters were baptized! It was complicated with different water for each of them and people standing two metres away

from one another, but it was great to hear splashing water and kids laughing! And now everyone can watch the services at home, but that puts extra pressure on us – we will have to be on our best behaviour as that camera sees everything!”

There was much more conversation and laughter as the churchmice regaled the Dean with stories (especially when Deanmouse told of how Ms Bishopmouse had lapped up some spilled hand sanitizer and behaved quite differently afterwards).

Dean Beth promised the churchmice that she would encourage everyone to introduce themselves to the four faithful churchmice, knowing that they love to be visited by children of all ages. If you can’t find where they live, one of the clergy will gladly assist you, and would happily take the opportunity to become better acquainted.



## MINSTRELS ... continued from page 11

organizing the visit and to all the volunteers, musicians and congregations of St Paul’s and Holy Trinity for their welcome.

The carol service was video recorded and will be re-broadcast on the Parish of the Valley YouTube channel and YourTV Ottawa Valley over the Christmas holidays.



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