

Keeping Christmas is good, but sharing it with others is even better.

The Spirit of St. Mark's

Parish Newsletter

November 20, 2011

There's more, much more, to Christmas than candlelight and cheer. It's thoughtfulness and kindness and hope reborn again.

HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD

As we enter into one of the busiest times of year when we are occupied with so much, it is easy to get trapped in household and family routines with hardly an opportunity to give a thought to the season, its meaning or the meaning of life itself. Our body tires, and our spirit within us seems equally worn.

I know the only person who can take control of my demanding life is me. If I am to appreciate the fullness of God's incarnate son coming to us in Bethlehem two millennium ago, I need my heart to hear the grace spoken in the prophets and saints of old. I need to be reminded of the journey the Lord invites me to and the choices I must make.

As I invite you to walk slowly through

the four weeks of Advent as you prepare for Christmas, I know I am talking to myself as well. We need to allow ourselves to wait and watch for the



life-giving gifts of the season: hope, joy, peace and love. In doing so we open ourselves to hear the voice of God and the incarnate presence of Christ.

This is the season of grace, in which only the widest and patient eyes

will see the importance of this holy season and the visiting of our God to earth. O Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, desire of every nation, Saviour of all peoples, come and dwell among us.

Jim Sutton

HOME COMMUNION

During the coming holiday season, if you, a family member or friend are unable to attend Christmas services and would like to receive home communion, please contact the church office at 519-752-6451 so that we can make arrangements for one of our clergy to visit with you at home.

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As long as we know in our hearts what Christmas ought to be, Christmas is.

Eric Sevareid

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer has three major missions in its ministry (1) to encourage prayer in the life of the church, (2) to be a teaching resource helping people to grow in the life of prayer and (3) to build links between praying people.

As our parish representative in this group, I attended a meeting at Saint John the Evangelist Church in London in October. We talked about Prayer Groups, Prayer Chains and Prayer Workshops. Although we were small in number, we exchanged ideas about making some of these plans work. The idea of a prayer journal was discussed as was effective prayer and healing prayer.

In its special ministries, this group is also known for a programme called *Alongsiders*. This is set up for shut-ins, disabled, elderly or isolated persons who minister to the church by prayer. This idea of ministry comes from 1 Timothy 5:5 and from Hippolytus Apostolic Tradition which notes that widows are instituted for prayer. If widows, why not widowers, elderly persons, and others cut off from the mainstream of activities by illness, disability or isolation? *Alongsiders* are those who by their praises, thanksgivings and prayer release more of the power of God. Their intercessions support and encourage others. Where prayers are offered, action results (*Acts 12:11-12*).

On October 29th, at Saint James Westminster, London we gathered with Sister Sue from the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine to discuss various methods of prayer, among them Praying with Scriptures in the ways of St. Ignatius of Loyola and Sacred Reading: *Lectio Divina*. We also discussed Contemplative Prayer which is listening to God. This is done by filling your mind with something that is not chatter. At some level we are giving up control of prayer. We did exercises in all of the above forms of prayer.

John Ogilvie, Parish Deacon

SACRAMENTS

Baptisms

Sebastian William Jones
Jasmine Thi Hong Cuc Slaughter



Burials

Charles Elliot
Doris Balsdon
Gord Wallis
Lindsay Lorraine Mellors
Bradley Cole

Marriages

Jaclynn Huculak and Matthew Beveridge
Barbara Sales and James Williams
Nicole Barsony and Ryan Chan

The next Baptismal dates are January 8th and April 15th.

Please speak with Jim Sutton or Kathy Dunning in the church office if you are seeking baptism for yourself or child.

FROM OUR STUDENT INTERN

Jwould like to express my sincere appreciation to the people of St. Mark's for the warm welcome Pam and I have received after returning from my summer placement at Grace Church Rondeau Park. St. Mark's is a busy and vital place where the presence of Jesus can be felt emanating from you. I cannot tell you how much you have helped shape my ministry and how grateful I am for your affirmation. Thank you.

I am in my third and final year at Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto. God willing I will graduate with my Masters of Divinity (MDiv) in April 2012. Then it will be up to the Bishop to decide where my next adventure will begin.

As we wind down the church's calendar year on November 20, 2011 with "The Reign of Christ" may we take time to reflect on where Christ is working in our lives. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, says, "*the more we are drawn into the mystery of Jesus, the more our problems, fears and concerns become not matters that we passionately struggle to work to master ourselves, but things that flow from our relationship with Jesus.*"

Advent starts November 27th. Let us keep the Archbishop's words in our eyes, our minds, and our hearts as we prepare to celebrate The Birth of our Lord.

Merry Christmas,

Paul Silcox

The 2012 flower and candle charts will be available on Sunday, December 11, 2011. At that time, please feel free to write your name and phone number on any available date. Details are available in the brochure found on the Information Table.

Thank you for your previous commitment to this ministry.

PRODIGAL GOD SERIES

This project, the initiative of the Diocese of Huron, has turned out to be very enjoyable for those who have participated. Lively discussions about the nature of God, families, good and bad behaviours and our relationship with God have led to new insights. Four different groups met each week averaging about seven people each and were led by Jim Sutton, Paul Silcox and Jo McNeil.

As well, Sunday readings and Jim's sermons focused on this story of the two lost sons. While often called *The Story of the Prodigal Son*, the author of the book, *Prodigal God* argues that it is a story about two lost sons, not one, and the extravagant nature of God's love. Noted theologian Henri Nouwen has said that the whole gospel is contained in this story. Thanks to Paul, Jim and Jo for their leadership.

Communion classes will begin in late February or early March for young readers in grade two or three who want to learn more about the meaning of the Eucharist. Please contact the church office if you would like to be involved.

Good news from heaven the angels bring, glad tidings to the earth they sing. To us this day a child is given, to crown us with the joy of heaven.

Martin Luther

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES

November 27th	<i>1st Sunday in Advent</i>	
	Holy Eucharist (BCP)	9:00 am
	Holy Eucharist (BAS)	10:30 am
	Thorpe's Memorial Service	2:00 pm
	Special Advent Service	7:00 pm
November 30th	Holy Eucharist	10:00 am
December 4th	<i>2nd Sunday in Advent</i>	
	Holy Eucharist (BCP)	9:00 am
	Holy Eucharist (BAS)	10:30 am
December 7th	Holy Eucharist	10:00 am
December 11th	<i>3rd Sunday in Advent</i>	
	Holy Eucharist (BCP)	9:00 am
	A Service of Lessons and Carols	10:30 am
December 14th	Senior's Christmas Eucharist	11:00 am
December 18th	<i>4th Sunday in Advent</i>	
	A Service of Lessons and Carols	9:00 am
	Christmas Pageant	10:30 pm
	<i>(Reserve sacrament available following both services.)</i>	
December 21st	Holy Eucharist	10:00 am
December 24th	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	
	Manger Service (<i>Communion</i>)	4:00 pm
	Christmas Eucharist (BAS)	7:00 pm
	Candlelight Eucharist (BAS)	10:30 pm
December 25th	<i>Christmas Day</i>	
	Christmas Eucharist (with carols)	10:00 am
January 1st	<i>Naming of Jesus Sunday</i>	
	Holy Eucharist	10:00 am
January 8th	<i>Epiphany Sunday</i>	
	Holy Eucharist (BCP)	9:00 am
	Holy Eucharist (BAS)	10:30 am

I truly believe that if we keep telling the Christmas story, singing the Christmas songs, and living the Christmas spirit, we can bring joy and happiness and peace to this world.

Norman Vincent Peale

Confirmation of Baptismal vows takes place in the Deanery on Sunday, April 29th at 3:00 p.m. with Bishop Terry. All candidates will participate in 10 classes led by Jim Sutton beginning after Christmas. Please speak with Kathy Dunning or Jim Sutton if you or your teenager would like more information.

Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man.

CHURCH ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes for 2012 will be available for pick up early in December. If you would like envelopes or would like to change your method of giving, please contact the envelope secretaries, Dan and Anne Walker at 519-756-3685.

We offer weekly, monthly and pre-authorized donations. Information about each of these methods is available from your envelope secretaries.

AN UPDATE FROM OUR WARDENS

The Wardens, on behalf of the parish, would like to welcome Bill Schatz as our Music Director. We are looking forward to his knowledge and experience as he leads us forward in our music programme. Bill is also Department Head of the Arts at Pauline Johnson Collegiate as well as Musical and Artistic Director of the Brant Men of Song. He and the Adult Choir are busy preparing for Advent and the Christmas season.

The lounge is 98% complete. The last blind has arrived and is waiting to be installed. The ladies have assured us once the Holly Jolly Faire is over they will turn their attention to decorating.

The choir room is being renovated due to mold. The cupboards, closets and carpet have been removed and the mold eradicated. A new shelving unit for storage of music books is on order, carpet is being selected and painting is to be done. Bill should actually have an office by the first week of December if not sooner.

The new, new front doors have arrived. We are awaiting hardware so installation can take place. The new, new doors are fibreglass instead of wood.

There have been many activities taking place here at St. Mark's this Fall. Prodigal God studies are being well attended and many interesting discussions are taking place. By the time you read this letter the *Holly Jolly Faire* will have happened. We would like to thank the many volunteers for their hours of hard work in making this event a success. The *First Gobbler Dinner* is coming, as is the special Advent service being held at St. Mark's at the end of November.

This year, once again, St. Mark's is reaching out to our community and beyond with Operation Christmas Child, Personal Care Bags and the food bank. St. Mark's is truly a sharing parish.

The Wardens would like to thank the congregation for their patience and support for the many events, renovations and outreach projects at St. Mark's.

Rebecca, Charles, Frank, Jill

KITCHEN COMMITTEE

Carol Kelman, Mary Ham, Marg Sheppard, Lorette Armstrong and Caroline Shannon have offered their services to be on the Kitchen Committee. We have cleaned from top to bottom and organised the cupboards. Please bear with us if items are not in the same location. There are repairs that will be looked at in the New Year. The kitchen will be checked on a weekly basis for supplies and upkeep. We will be posting suggestions to maintain our kitchen in a clean and tidy manor. If anyone has a concern please contact a member of the committee.



Each day of the holidays comes bringing its own gifts.
Open your heart, untie the ribbons, and enjoy the contents.

CHILD AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Anticipating Advent: November 20th - December 11th

The season of Advent is the beginning of the church year. The children will discover the stories of Mary, the mother of Jesus and John the Baptist - stories that have messages for us today about what it means to prepare, wait and watch for God's amazing acts.

The Christmas Lamb: December 18th

The Sunday School children and combined choirs will present a magical musical of the seven continents of the world, as a shepherd boy searches for the newborn King. A soup and sandwich lunch and a special guest will follow. Dress rehearsal for the pageant will be held on Saturday, December 17th from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. in the church. Christmas crafts for children in Munro Hall will follow the rehearsal.

On December 25th, Christmas Day, the children may worship with their families and on January 1st, Sunday School classes will gather in Munro Hall with Mrs. McMillan to hear *The Legend of the Spider* with an art activity to follow.

On January 8th, Sunday School classes will be integrated in Munro Hall to celebrate Epiphany with a skit entitled *Star Gazers* and a 'King's Cake' treat. Our new four-week unit entitled *Practice the Prayer* will begin on January 15th.

Pat McMillan

Child and Family Ministry Co-ordinator

By collecting the following items we are able to support our community and beyond.

- pop tabs
- used stamps
- eyeglasses
- Zehrs cash register receipts
- magazines
- 4-litre milk bags

Collections containers are available by the parking lot door.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT WISH LIST



A variety of items will be needed for costumes and staging for our upcoming Christmas pageant. All items listed below are on a 'borrowing basis' and will be well looked after. Please label any items with your name.

- a clear plastic dropcloth (approx. 12' x 6' to represent ice)
- medium/large stuffed lamb
- extra large wicker basket or wagon to represent a boat
- specific costume pieces to fit children 7-11 years old: lion's mane, an elephant headpiece, a black vest (for a penguin), a shaggy brown robe (for a buffalo)
- assorted-size jungle/farm animal and angel costumes

All items may be left in the church office. Thank you for helping our children learn about the true meaning of Christmas.

It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you...yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand.

The **STATICYOUTH** group provides opportunities for developing leadership skills by participating in the church all while having fun. At the weekly drop-in evenings as well as on Sunday mornings, they participate in musical, educational and social activities from a young person's perspective.

STATIC YOUTH at ST. MARK'S

What a great Fall season it has been for the STATIC Youth of St. Mark's. Our year began with some new faces and some old friends, and we've continued to come together on Sunday nights from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Our yearly kick-off event was forced indoors as our camping trip wasn't ready to sustain 3 degrees and rain all weekend! We still had a great time watching movies, playing Wii and enjoying a re-introduction to the group.

The Annual Soccer-Baseball Challenge was a great success. This year's match-up was highly contested and required extra innings, however, the Youth prevailed to tie the all-time series at 3 wins a piece. Regardless of the outcome, I think the large group that was involved all had a wonderful time.

We have recently returned from our annual "ride-a-thon" at Wonderland. The weather was once again co-operative and the crowds were small, as always. We rode until our cold cheeks and turning stomachs couldn't take anymore! What a fun day.

Up next for the group is an outing to Laser Tag in Hamilton on Sunday, November 27th (note the date change) and our yearly Christmas sleep-over on Saturday, December 10th. More details will be available on the Youth board. Don't miss it!

A reminder that any youth between grades 7-12 are welcome to attend our regular meetings and/or special outings. From the Youth and myself to all of St. Mark's, thank you always for your wonderful support, we hope you have a blessed Christmas and a wonderful holiday season.

In Christ,

Brandon Corke

Youth Co-Ordinator



ANNUAL POINSETTIA SALE

Our servers will be at the Information Table each Sunday to take your order for their annual poinsettia sale. Each plant will have 5-6 blooms in your choice of colour: red, pink or white for only \$10.00 each. Plants may be left in the church as a memorial or used to decorate your home.

Your support is appreciated

The joy of brightening a child's heart creates the magic of Christmas.

W. C. Jones

CHRISTMAS BASKETS 2011

It's that time of year again when families are busily preparing for the holiday season. Unfortunately, there are many families in our community living with just enough money to make it through the month, having to choose between buying food and paying the rent. These families rely on the generosity of others in the community to take the challenge that no child goes without a toy at Christmas and that no family goes without a Christmas dinner. There are many ways that you can help.

Colouring Books and Crayons - The basket in the hallway by the Information Area is ready and waiting to be filled. The goal is to provide every child registered in this programme with a new colouring book and crayons. When you are out shopping, please remember them.

The Mitten Tree - Knitters are encouraged to help keep hands warm this winter by knitting mittens in all sizes to add to the tree.

Toys - There will be a box in St. Mark's Hall to collect your donations of new and gently used toys.

Food - A box has been placed in St. Mark's Hall for canned goods that could be part of a Christmas Day meal. A typical Christmas food basket would include stuffing mix, cranberry, soup, canned fruit, juice and vegetables.

Volunteers - Please consider donating time to help sort and/or clean toys, pre-packing baskets or being available on delivery day. For further information, please call our Volunteer Co-ordinator at 519-751-4357.

Christmas Day is a time for families to thank God for all his blessings. By participating in this programme, we are able to share our gifts and make a difference.

Jim and Betty Kelso

BRANTFORD FOOD BANK



Since focusing on monthly items for the Food Bank, we have been staying in close contact with Cyndy Oliver and her staff from CRS to keep abreast of their ongoing need. Since August, about 1500 pounds of food has been donated by St. Mark's as well as over \$300.00 in monetary donations.

CHRISTMAS DINNER



If you would like to make a contribution to buy turkeys for the Daily Bread Christmas dinner, funds may be included in your church envelope and marked 'Daily Bread Turkey Dinner' with the designated amount to be sent. All proceeds are greatly appreciated

Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most.

Ruth Carter Stapleton

Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas.

Peg Bracken

The giving of gifts is not something man invented. God started the giving spree when he gave a gift beyond words, the unspeakable gift of his Son.

Robert Flatt

Peace is...

- gazing at the stars with the knowledge that you know the Creator.
- Closing your eyes in sleep without the fear of tomorrow.
- The stillness in your heart when trouble swirls around you.
- A quiet mind in a raging world.

PERSONAL CARE BAGS

Thank you once again for your support of the personal care bags which will be given at the Christmas dinner to clients at the Daily Bread Meal programme at Grace Church. We have so many members of our congregation who faithfully deposit needed items in the box by the front door. Slowly the tally grows. If you check the “thermometers” you will see that our biggest needs are deodorant, washcloths, bandages, hard candy and hairbrushes.

The deadline for donations is Sunday, December 11th. If you wish, you can also make a donation through your envelopes marked *personal care bags*, which will allow us to purchase needed items. The bags will be distributed on Wednesday, December 21st and are gratefully received by the clients.

Again this year we have seen a number

of new faces at the dinners as well as an increase in the number of families attending. Children do not receive a personal care bag, but do receive a gift from Santa.

I realize that the demands upon us at this time of year are great. If you have not donated to this project before, we need your help. To the many parishioners who have given, thank you so much for your generosity. With your support we will meet our target of filling 225 bags.

Pat Perkins

Editors Note: *At the time of printing, we still require 32 bottles of shampoo, 18 personal-size kleenex packages, 65 razors, 156 packages of bandages, 91 washcloths, 48 notepads, 127 tubes of deodorant, 197 bags of hard candy and 201 hairbrushes.*

COOKIES FOR SENIORS

For many years, members of the Ladies’ Guild, along with the generous support of the members of the parish, have prepared tins of cookies to give to our Seniors at the Christmas Senior Service and Lunch. Tins are delivered to those Seniors who are unable to come to the lunch.

Wednesday, December 14th at 10:00 a.m. is the scheduled time to prepare these cookie tins. You are invited to

bring in your cookies on Sunday, December 11th, or during office hours from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on December 12th and 13th.

Thank you for your donation. Our Seniors appreciate being able to offer a ‘little bit of sweetness’ to their guests during the holiday season.

Mary Ogilvie



Christmas is sights, especially the sights of Christmas reflected in the eyes of a child.

William Saroyan

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



Operation Christmas Child is a unique project of Samaritan's Purse that offers joy and hope to children in desperate situations around the world through gift-filled shoe boxes. Time is running out, but there are still a few shoe boxes available for those who would like to be involved in this simple hands-on project.

Boxes can **only** be returned during the week of **November 21st - 25th**. This year, our boxes will be sent to Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Soloman Islands or Fiji.

During the collection week, area churches will be bringing their boxes to St. Mark's to be packed into cartons. We expect about 3500 boxes. If you are able to help with packing the boxes into cartons during that week (*Mon. - Sat.*), please speak with Kathy Dunning in the church office.

*St. Mark's Anglican Church
presents a return engagement of*

**The Brant Youth
Symphony Orchestra**
With guests, the BCI Vocal Group



**'Christmas at
St. Mark's'**

**Sunday, December 4th
3:00 p.m.**

Pay at the door only. The cost will be \$7.50 per person or \$25.00 per family



**Coming Home to the
Heart of Christmas
Sunday, November 27th
7:00 p.m.**

The guest preacher and this prayer service to celebrate God's word and the gift of song are sure to help those in attendance capture and celebrate the spirit and true reason for the season. *No tickets are required.*

St. Mark's Men's Group invite you to



A Gobbler Dinner

**Tuesday, November 29th
5:30 p.m.**

Tickets are available following each of the Sunday services or through the church office during the week.



Angel Decorations

Again this year our tree will be adorned with 400 angels made by parish members. Our tradition began in 1996 and each year a different angel was produced. On Christmas Eve, we invite you to take an angel from the tree as a gift from your St. Mark's family.

OTHER AREA EVENTS

Holy Trinity,
Brantford will hold
their Frosty Fair
Bazaar on
Saturday, Nov. 26th
from 9:00 - 1:00 .

St. Jude's
Christmas Bazaar
will be held on
Saturday, Dec. 3rd

Brant Belle-A-
Dears and the Men
of Song present
Christmas
Memories on
Saturday, Dec. 3rd
at 7:30 at New
Covenant Church.

Heritage United
Church Christmas
Fair takes place on
Saturday, Dec. 3rd
from 11:00 - 2:00.

St. Luke's,
Brantford presents
a Baroque Messiah
on Tuesday, Dec.
6th at 7:30. Tickets
available by calling
519-759-3805.

What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future.

Agnes M. Pahro

HOLLY JOLLY FAIRE UPDATE

Our 5th annual Holly Jolly Faire took place on November 12th 2011. It brought some early Christmas cheer, happy faces and great memories. Everyone did an amazing job! We raised over \$6000.00 for St. Mark's and over \$300.00 for the Food Bank. We also collected 2 large boxes of knitted wear for the Christmas Baskets programme and 2 carts full of food.

We were also greeted by a few special guests. Dan McCreary, Ward 3 Councillor and Cindy Oliver, Programme Manager for the Food Bank and Christmas Baskets Programme joined us for our Opening Ceremonies. Dave Levac joined us later in the day. Each of them expressed their thanks and acknowledgement for all the hard work and dedication that we brought to the Faire.

I would like to thank everyone for helping us out - from people who donated items, to the individuals who helped make various crafts, signs and knitted items, and to the 40+ people who volunteered their time on Saturday. I would like to say a special thanks to Sue Deakin for heading up the craft area, Christine Pizey for helping to plan and organize the event, and to my parents for losing their house space to all the items and for donating their time every day. I really couldn't have done it without all of you.

Jason Freeze

PIES, PIES, PIES

Over a period of five Thursday afternoons, members of St. Mark's Ladies' Guild met together and made 120 pies. Thank you to those who donated fruit, supplies and funds toward the making of these pies to enable us to give \$1200.00 to the Holly Jolly Faire committee. Thank you for buying our pies. We hope you enjoyed them! Not only did we raise money to help St. Mark's, we also participated in a time of fellowship together and got to know each other a little better.



Thank you to all the people and businesses who donated items for the Silent Auction. Our special thanks to these businesses. Please reciprocate their support for us.

Brantford Parks & Recreation
Ruggz Building Cleaning
Dave Levac
CKPC
Legends Estate Winery
Maple Leafs Sports Entertainment
Theatre Orangeville
Hogewoning Toyota
Michelle Ogilvie-Kucik RMT
Flat Rock Cellars
Fashion Boutique
Quality Inn Brantford

Aaron Michael's Style Professionals
Smith Drugs & Apothecary
Mostly Roses
Girls Den
Brantwood Farms
Modern Heating
Wine Kitz
Stedman's Bookstore
J.H. Young's Jewellers
Ludlow's Men's Wear
Days Inn Brantford
Toronto Blue Jays

Jebbo's Computer Warehouse
HMECU – Healthcare & Municipal
Employees Credit Union
PhotoJeniX
Divalicious Cakes
Ahh The Spahh (Paris)
Green Heron Books (Paris)
Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra
Factory Theatre
Nicol Florist
Silent Auction Services

Keeping in Touch

Each and everyone of you is an important part of our St. Mark's family. Please let us know if you move or change your contact information so that we continue to be in touch with you.



Also, let us know if you or a family member is in the hospital. The parish clergy appreciate knowing so they can visit.

Just a Little Bit of Christmas

Suzanne Dykstra Spiess

Can you just imagine Heaven,
on early Christmas morn
The excitement of the party,
on the day that Christ was born!
A singing choir of angels was heard across the sky.
"Emmanuel" sung loud and clear,
"God's gift of Love is nigh."
So, a little bit of Christmas, is sent from
us to you,
It's filled with love and peace and joy,
today and all year through!



From the St. Mark's Staff

Everyone is invited to attend our
Annual Vestry Meeting

Sunday, February 5, 2012

following the 10:30 a.m. service

Thank you for your efforts to create awareness and to support those in need in our community. Your generous, charitable donations to our St. Mark's outreach projects truly demonstrate our desire to be the hands of God in the world.

155 Memorial Drive
Brantford, Ontario N3R 5S5

The Spirit of St. Mark's