

THE LINK ATLANTIC NCF NEWSLETTER

29 Bedell Ave.

Saint John, NB, E2K 2C1

December 2010

Dear Friends,

Greetings at Christmas, as we celebrate the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We are now in the season of advent – a time of anticipation and preparation for the coming of Christ. Over 2000 years ago, God entered our earth in the form of a newborn baby. He still comes today to enter into our hearts. The gift our great Creator gives is the Babe of Bethlehem – the most precious gift we will ever be given. The gift is for all and is ours for eternity. Once in our hearts, he stays with us – loving supporting, guiding, equipping, forgiving, keeping, directing, and leading us to become that special person that He has created us to be. What an amazing gift!

Thanks be to God.

Betty Hitchcock

The darkness turns to dawn, the dayspring shines from heaven,

For unto us a child is born, To us a son is given.

The son of God most high, Before all else began,

A virgin's son behold Him lie, The newborn son of Man.

God's Word of truth and grace - Made flesh with us to dwell;

The brightness of the Father's face, the child Emmanuel.

STUDY – Luke 1: 26 to 38 the Annunciation of Jesus' birth

Read this familiar passage in Luke as you prepare for the birth of the Savior. Read slowly and really think about these verses. Try to picture in your mind what was happening.

What happens in this passage?
Who appears to Mary? Vs 26
How is Mary described? Vs 27
What did the angel say? Vs 28
What was her reaction? Vs 29
Then what does the angel say? Vs 30 – 33
What is predicted for Jesus in these verses?
What was Mary thinking? What was her reaction? Vs 34
What did the angel respond? Vs 35 – 37.
And how did Mary respond? Vs 38

Can you picture this scene? How do you picture Mary? What kind of person was she? What would her feelings have been?

Spend some time thinking about vs 37. Do we really believe this verse? How does it apply in our lives? Have you ever been in a situation that you thought was impossible? How did God work in that situation?

Think more about vs 38 – the response of Mary. What would it have taken to respond in that manner? Are there times when we may be asked to submit to the will of God? Are we as quick to submit? Why or why not? What happens when we do or do not submit to His will?

How does the coming birth of Jesus that was announced to Mary in this passage relate to us? Is it important in our lives? Daily? Moment by moment? What difference does it make? What if Mary had said “no”?

What should be our response to this marvelous news?

VISITS

The angel visited Mary and brought marvelous news. In our life we will have visits from many people. Daily we will meet and relate with others. Have you ever thought about what these visits mean?

Sometimes a visit brings great pleasure – we are so glad to see the person that comes to us – we relate well together – it is a wonderful experience to spend time together. When they leave, we feel refreshed, something special has been happening, we are happy and we look forward to our next encounter.

Some visits bring pain, hurt, and leave us wounded. Someone may come into our life and the encounter is unpleasant or hurtful. The person may say or do things that cause pain – emotional or even physical. Many people are hurt daily by others, and when the encounter is over they struggle to deal with their wounds and sorrow. There is only fear and anxiety when thinking of another encounter.

What do we feel when we encounter the Christ child? What kind of encounter will we have this year with the Babe of Bethlehem? What kind of encounter do we have daily with Him? Are we excited about the time we spend with Him? It can be our most incredible experience – something beyond our most precious of earthly visits. The time we spend with Jesus can bring great joy – joy beyond expression.

Jesus is not just an occasional visitor – He is with us forever and wants us to live our lives in Him and experience His joy constantly. We can bring our other visits to Him. We can share our pleasant visits and what we have learned and received from others. He wants to hear about it and share in that joy. We can also bring visits that have caused us pain and sorrow. He is waiting to comfort us and give us His love and healing when we have been hurt. What a wonderful experience we can have together. Try sharing all of your encounters with Him and rest in His love – and feel the everlasting arms around and under you as you journey through another year with Him.

AN ADVENT ACTIVITY

Are you looking for an Advent activity? Why not consider making a Jesse Tree this year?

A Jesse Tree is a potted tree branch which is decorated with ornaments depicting Christ's spiritual heritage and ancestors. The ornaments are homemade [part of the fun]. They might include such things as Noah's Ark, Abraham's pillar of sacrifice, the Ten Commandments, a dove, a star, etc. Before beginning, review the key people and events in the Old Testament. Choose 24 symbols to include on your tree. You might use paper, fabric or other materials. Be sure to use lots of color.

Usually one ornament is hung on the tree from December 1 to December 24. Think about your ornament and what it represents as you place it on the tree. You may want to offer a prayer as you hang each symbol and seek God's blessing and help in preparing for the birth of the Christ Child.

Creating a Jesse Tree is a wonderful way to review some of our Old Testament Heritage and if there are children in the family, this can be a wonderful teaching tool as well as an activity they will cherish and remember for years to come.

AN ADVENT HYMN

Hark the glad sound! The Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of his grace
To bless the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim;
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved name.

The following was submitted by a friend –

This new version of the 'footprints' story really caught me off-guard at the end....What a blessing.
Just Read It!

FOOTPRINTS...A New Version

Imagine you and the Lord Jesus are walking down the road together. For much of the way, the Lord's footprints go along steadily, consistently, rarely varying the pace.

But your footprints are a disorganized stream of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures, and returns. For much of the way, it seems to go like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord's, soon paralleling, His consistently...

You and Jesus are walking as true friends!

This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens: Your footprints that once etched the sand next to Jesus' are now walking precisely in His steps.

Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones, you and Jesus are becoming one..

This goes on for many miles, but gradually you notice another change. The footprints inside the large footprints seem to grow larger.

Eventually they disappear altogether. There is only one set of footprints.. They have become one.

This goes on for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back. This time it seems even worse! Zigzags all over the place. Stops. Starts. Gashes in the sand. A variable mess of prints.

You are amazed and shocked. Your dream ends. Now you pray: 'Lord, I understand the first scene, with zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But You walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with You.'

'That is correct.'

'And when the smaller footprints were inside of Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps, following You very closely..'

'Very good.. You have understood everything so far..' When the smaller footprints grew and filled in Yours, I suppose that I was becoming like You in every way.'

'Precisely.'

'So, Lord, was there a regression or something ? The footprints separated, and this time it was worse than at first.'

There is a pause as the Lord answers, with a smile in His voice.

'You didn't know? It was then that we danced!'

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: A time to weep, a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance. Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

THE FUTURE OF NCF

Last year a decision was made to start the process of establishing a separate entity for Nurses Christian Fellowship in Canada. A committee is now working on incorporation – a lengthy process. Until this is accomplished, NCF will remain under the umbrella of IVCF. Please pray for the group working on incorporation and the new structure. Pray that they might be very aware of God's leading in this process and that He would grant them patience, wisdom and a clear knowledge of His will as they work. Thank God for these dedicated individuals who are willing to work on the task of establishing National NCF. Until the new structure comes into being, please continue to send all financial support for NCF to IVCF and mark it clearly for the work of NCF in the Atlantic region.

ADDITIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for

-a year in which we share all of our experience with the Babe of Bethlehem and learn more of His peace, love and joy.

-opportunities and boldness to share our faith with those who are hurting, those in need, those who have never known the love of Jesus.

-students in nursing programs throughout our country – for joy in learning and ministering to others, may they find Christian fellowship and support in their places of learning.

-nurses working in hospital, home, community – that they may have wisdom and courage, patience and strength as they deal with daily issues – and that they may know the love of God in all they do.

-the Atlantic NCF Annual meeting to be held in April 2011 in Moncton, NB,

-the Atlantic workshop which will be in Moncton on April 16. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend.

Submissions for The Link

You are invited to submit articles, letters, poems, etc. to be included in future issues of the Link. Please send

submissions to Betty Hitchcock, 29 Bedell Ave. Saint John, NB, E2K 2C1 or email to betty.hitchcock@rogers.com