



ATLANTIC NCF NEWSLETTER

29 Bedell Ave
Saint John, NB, E2K 2C1

December 2020

Dear Friends,

Greetings at Christmas, as we celebrate the birth day of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Unto us a Son is born. – God’s precious gift to us. Emmanuel – God is with us – that first Christmas day, now and forever. Jesus entered our world as a new born baby, who would live, die and rise again, so that we might live eternally with God. We are told how a star led the wise men to the new born child. What is our star this Christmas? What is leading us to the Christ child? Are we following? What an amazing thing that our God has done and continues to do. Year after year, He invites us to come once again to view the Christ child. What do we see this Christmas season? How do we respond? God offers us the greatest gift we will ever receive. What have we offered to Him? He gave His all for us – can we give Him back any less? May we all know a new depth of His love and peace this Christmas.

Betty Hitchcock

**O Star of Wonder, Star of Night, Star with Royal Beauty bright,
Westward leading, Still proceeding, Guide us to Thy perfect Light.**

MY LORD’S LOVE

by Eric Milner-White

I see a wonderful kind of love!
Thy Highness lieth in the straw;
The hands that made the world make tiny gestures in a Mother’s arms:
the eternal Wisdom, of His own will, is powerless to speak, to think.
*Whoso is wise will ponder these things
And understand the loving kindness of the Lord.*

I see a love no less dumbfounding,
The King of Kings cursed and cast out:
Thy Highness' head is bowed, thy feet and hands
fastened with nails, thy blood drops:
the Author of life is done to death in the place of skulls,
the Holiest laid with the lowest and worst.
Whoso is wise will ponder these things and know the salvation of God.

I see a glory of love more dazzling yet,
Thy Highness on the throne of light reigning, almighty, eternal;
yet reaching out sleepless hands to the weak and sinful children of faith,
and feeding them on thine own Body and Blood.
This is the Bread which comes down from heaven,
which only if a man eat shall He not die;
and this is the Life given more and more abundantly
yesterday, to-day, and forever.
Whoso is wise will ponder these things And adore the Lord of Lords.

Prayer at Christmas

**God give us eyes this Christmas
To see the Christmas star,
And give us ears to hear the song
Of angels from afar.....
And, with our eyes and ears attuned
For a message from above,
Let "Christmas Angels" speak to us
Of Hope and Faith and Love....
Hope to light our pathway
When the way ahead is dark,
Hope to sing through stormy days With the sweetness of the lark,
Faith to trust in things unseen And know beyond all seeing
That it is our Father's Love In which we live and have our being.
And Love to break down barriers of color, race, and creed,
Love to see and understand all of those in need.**



This poem by Helen Steiner Rice shows us some of the things that we need to consider this year. What do the symbols of Christmas mean to us?

What does the Christmas star mean to us? Does it remind us of how God led the wise men to the blessed child born that first Christmas day? Have we ever really considered their journey and the way in which God led them? How does God lead us? There may not be a star that is used in our journey, but He leads us just the same. Do we recognize His leading? Are we receptive to it – do we follow it? Sometimes? Every day?

Do we hear the angel's song? What is it saying to us? God speaks to us in so many ways? Do we hear him? Are we really listening? What is lighting our pathway? How do we face the storms of life? And there will be storms in all our lives. It is often in these storms that we can grow the most. God want to be

with us at all times and He knows what each storm means to us and longs for us to lean on Him. His strength, His courage, and His peace is available to us in all situations. We do not have to face anything alone. God's love is available to us always. "more secure is no one ever – than the loved ones of the Savior"

God wants us to feel that security and only then can we sing through the storms of life. What an amazing concept! We can actually live and move and have our being in God.

Today I Got TWO Hugs by Betty Hitchcock

One day about ten years ago. I was at the hospital making cookies and visiting oncology patients. I had just finished on the oncology unit and was headed to a long term care unit to visit some patients from the church. While waiting for the elevator, I met a hospital Chaplin, who asked about our family and how things were going. We talked for a few minutes and then she reached out and gave me a hug. It felt so good. After visiting the long term care patients, I left the hospital and went to a Christmas drop in at the Volunteer Centre. At the end of the social hour, I was speaking to the Executive Director when she also reached out and gave me a hug. - Two hugs in one day!! What a wonderful gift.

I came home and was thinking about the day. My heart was so thankful. I had the distinct feeling that God knew what I needed and had worked in these two individuals to reach out and give me a hug today. The tears started to flow. Tears of joy, comfort, and gratitude for a God who cared so much for me, for 21 years of hugs from the most wonderful man, who was my husband, my soul mate, my everything, and for two precious people who had been led by God to give me the gift of a "hug" this Christmas.

STUDY – Mark 4: 35-41 [submitted by Faith Stiles]

When reading this familiar story one day, I noticed something I didn't remember seeing before. "and there were also with Him many other little ships".

Can you visualize the scene with me? Here we are at the end of a long tiring day and Jesus suggests to His disciples that they go to the other side of the lake. They have told the crowd to go home. Jesus needs a rest or He would not have gone to sleep on the boat. But many – note many – other little ships followed.

Have you noticed how voices carry over water? So as the disciples talked back and forth likely some in the other ships heard what they were saying.

Now think of the storm arising. I'm sure the disciples began to bail the water, but as it got really bad they find Jesus. And what do they do? They complain loudly and clearly "Don't you care that we are about to die?" Remember it had been Christ's suggestion that they go in the boat. By now they had seen several miracles. This was mostly the reason that others followed Christ.

But at least the disciples went to the right person for help. And true to form Christ was able to help probably beyond their expectations. They likely wanted Him to help bail the water. Instead He says "Peace be still" and immediately there is a great calm. I don't know if the men in the other ships heard Jesus speak peace or if they heard the disciples awaken Jesus, because they seemed quite perturbed with Him and we tend to raise our voices when we are cross. However, after, because there was a great calm, I'm sure they could hear Christ say to the disciples "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

Now let us think of our own lives. Who hears you complain how often that patient rings her bell for no reason? She just wants attention. Or in the cafeteria you comment on how they never have very many

good choices. Or how often do we complain about the rain, the cold, the lack of sunshine, completely forgetting that God sends the weather and likely non-Christians hear our complaints?

And when real heartache comes our way, do we display a real acceptance of God's ways or do we forget that His ways are far beyond our understanding and likely we need to trust what He has allowed in our lives and His timing? Why do we tend to fear outcomes in our difficult times?

Remember, we may not have many little ships following us, but we do have many ears that hear us and many eyes that see us. May we learn to trust Him completely.

Faith Stiles who wrote the above article went to the Lord earlier this year. This article had been written and submitted before her death. Faith had been an active member of NCFC for many years. She served on the Atlantic Advisory committee for a long time.

ADDITIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for

-a year filled with the peace, love and joy that comes from spending time with Christ, abiding in Him and allowing the Spirit to fill us and guide us daily in our walk.

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

-boldness to demonstrate the love of God in all that we do.

-students in nursing programs throughout our country – may they experience joy in learning and ministering to others, may they find Christian fellowship and support and may they grow daily in the love of the Lord.

-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.

-those suffering from Covid 19, those who are mourning the loss of loved ones that they may be comforted by God and experience His peace.

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