

**THE LINK** ATLANTIC NCF NEWSLETTER

29 Bedell Ave.

Saint John, NB, E2K 2C1

December 2011

Dear Friends,

Greetings at Advent , as we prepare for the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We are in the season of advent – a time of anticipation and preparation for the coming of Christ. The study in this edition focuses on the storey of Zacharius and Elizabeth as they found out about the coming birth of their son John, who would herald the coming of Jesus – an appropriate study for the advent season. As you prepare for Christmas this year, try to take some quiet time to reflect on the meaning of Christ's birth and how we can best prepare for that unspeakable gift that God has given to us. God gave us His son – the baby born in the manger that would grow to become the man who would teach us, show us the Father's love, and give himself for us that we too might know that love in our lives and might never be alone. Thanks be to God.

Betty Hitchcock

Thou who art God beyond all praising,

All for love's sake becamest Man;

Stooping so low, but sinners raising

Heavenward by thy eternal plan.

Thou who art God beyond all praising,

All for love's sake becamest Man.

## Study: Luke 1: 5 – 25

5. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.
6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.
7. And they had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and they were both now well stricken in years.
8. And it came to pass that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,
9. According to the custom of the priest's office his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.
10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the time of the incense.
11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar on incense.
12. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth, shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.
14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.
15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord, their God.
17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.
18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well stricken in years.
19. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings.
20. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.
21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.
22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for he made signs unto them, and remained speechless.
23. And it came to pass that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.
24. and after those days his wife, Elisabeth, conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,
25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days in which he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Read the storey of Zacharius and Elisabeth and think on the following –

What do we know of this couple? Vs. 5 to 7

What was the job of Zacharius? Was he obedient to his calling? Vs. 8 and 9

What unusual thing happened? How did Zacharius react? Vs. 11 and 12

What was the message of the angel? Vs. 13 to 17

Note vs 13 the angel begins with “Fear not” – a typical greeting when there is to be a message from God.. what do those words mean to us?

How did Zacharius respond to the message of the angel? Vs 18

What did the angel say and do? Vs 19 and 20

What did Zacharius do? Vs 22 and 23.

How was the angel’s message fulfilled?Vs 24

What did Elisabeth do? Vs 24 and 25

Think – Zacharius and Elisabeth had been praying for many years – many decades for a child – why do you think they continued to pray? God was faithful above any human understanding and gave them a child when they were both old. Is there anything in your life that you have been praying about for a long time? What is God saying to us about our situation? Are we remaining faithful even when an anser seems impossible? With God all things are possible. He hears and answers the prayers of His children.

Zacharius was struck dumb and was unable to speak and share his good news with others until after the baby was born. What is it that prevents us from sharing the good news that we now know of Jesus with others? If we can speak, should we not use our voice to spread the good news of Jesus. John was to be the forerunner of Jesus – the one who would proclaim His coming. We now know that He has come – what is our responsibility? Ask God who you should speak to today.

You may want to finish the storey in verses 57 to 80. Pay particular attention to Zacharius’ song of praise and prophesy in verses 68 to 79

## Give Me Jesus – a Hymn by Fernando Ortega

In the morning, when I rise,  
In the morning, when I rise,  
In the morning, when I rise, give me Jesus  
Give me Jesus  
Give me Jesus  
You can have all this world,  
But give me Jesus.

When I am alone,  
When I am alone,  
When I am alone, give me Jesus  
Give me Jesus  
Give me Jesus  
You can have all this world,  
But give me Jesus.

When I come to die,  
When I come to die,  
When I come to die, give me Jesus  
Give me Jesus,  
Give me Jesus,  
You can have all this world,  
You can have all this world,  
You can have all this world,  
But give me Jesus.

What a beautiful thought – Give me Jesus – what else is important? Is that our first thought in the morning? How might it change things if we were to awaken to the thought of wanting to spend each moment of the day with Jesus? He wants to spend it all with you – and is waiting for you to invite Him into every activity, every thought, every action, every word.

A little child shall lead them.

Some of you know that I mentor children at a local school once a week. These are children that need a little help with building self esteem and confidence. We are matched through Big Brothers and Sisters and stay with the same child for several years. We meet once a week and do activities that we both enjoy. Last week we were making some Christmas Cards when my little mentee [age 8] said to me. “Christmas is my favorite day of all” – and I asked her why expecting to hear about presents, food or the tree – and she replied “because it is God’s birthday” and she went on to tell me that in their house they always had a birthday cake for Jesus on Christmas day. What a wonderful tradition. I think I will make a birthday cake for Jesus this year.

Betty

## THE FUTURE OF NCF

A while ago the decision was made to start the process of establishing a separate entity for Nurses Christian Fellowship in Canada. A committee is still 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.

In Atlantic Canada there is a committee to assist with the work of NCF. Please consider whether God is calling you to consider working with this committee. The present committee would welcome inquiries from interested nurses. Please contact Jan Locket [506 847 7629], Marg Winchester [506 6936555] or Betty Hitchcock [506 648 9794]

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

I have a Christmas card that shows the baby Jesus in the manger and the words – “The wonder of Christmas is that God who dwelt among us now can dwell within us”

– Roy Lessin

What a profound thought – God became man to dwell among us – he lived here 30 years in human form – and because of that incarnation and what followed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ – we can now have God dwelling within us. This is truly an amazing thing and something for which we should offer thanks each day.

May his love and presence fill you to overflowing so that you might have much love to share this year. May those around you know that God dwells within you and may they too experience His presence in a deep and meaningful way this Christmas season.

## WHERE WILL YOU SPEND CHRISTMAS?

Where will you be spending Christmas? This is a question often heard this time of year. Often people travel long distances to be with family and friends at Christmas. It is a time when families often celebrate together – often this celebration includes attending services of worship and other traditions that have great meaning for particular families. What a wonderful privilege we have of freely worshipping in our country. For many individuals living in different countries, the act of public worship is not possible. Please remember them in your prayers this year. For others, in our own communities, Christmas may be the one time they come to a worship service, please make a special attempt to welcome them in the name of Jesus as they come to God’s house this year. For some, Christmas is a particularly difficult time as they see others gather together and live with memories of what it used to be like to have family themselves. Please think to reach out to someone who is alone this year and would welcome a friendly visit. Remember the words of Jesus – “in as much as you do it to the least of these, you do it unto me.” Where ever you are this Christmas, whoever you are with, God is there and He is wanting us to accept that most precious of gifts – His Son Jesus. Let us rejoice and be glad in Him!

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for

-a year in which we are able to share each day with the Babe of Bethlehem and learn more of His peace, love and joy.

- growth as members of the body of Christ and a stronger awareness of His leading in our lives

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

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

- faculty members throughout the country, that they may have wisdom and strength to guide students in the nursing field

-nurses working in hospital, home, community and overseas – 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.

### Submissions for The Link

Submissions are always welcome. If something has been meaningful to you, please think of sharing it with others – submit it for inclusion in the Link. This is one way to share your faith. What has helped you in your Christian walk may help others too.

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](mailto:betty.hitchcock@rogers.com)