



## CHRISTMAS LETTER

Dear Ste-Genny's family,

As Advent is rolling around the corner, Donna and I are thinking about preparing the space for the season. One question arises: Do we leave the plants on the windowsill, or do we remove them to replace them with the Christmas decorations?

As I was watering all the plants in the church, I counted them: 47. The number changes often, because some of you adopt and take home some of the plants while other plants emerge by rooting and planting cuttings or baby spider plants. 47, that's the average attendance on Sunday worship in the last year. It has been slowly and steadily increasing. Just as for the plants, the composition of the group is constantly changing as some of our beloved friends pass away and new people come to set down roots at Ste-Genny's. Some through baptism, some moving from other United Church congregations, some uprooted from their native soil by war or oppression.

So, do you think we need to remove the plants from the sanctuary? Probably not. If we just remove the pot of fake flowers, we will have enough space for the nativity set and we can weave the other decorations between the plants!

Fake flowers are always the same. They don't shrivel, they don't dry and drop. They may get dusty, but we can just give them a good wash and they are as good as new. Looking at them, we can pretend that nothing changes. Things are as they always have been and will always be. No one dies, not one moves away... Nothing new grows either. But that's not what God's creation is like. Our God is a living God, who became flesh in Jesus Christ, and experienced the messiness and pain of life.

This season, we celebrate God's incarnation! In-carnate: in the meat! In the flesh! In the thick of the messiness of life! His birth in a stable in the middle of an unwanted trip is just the beginning of this foundational narrative of God's incarnation. We'll see Jesus experience friendship, grief, joy, fatigue, anger... Share in the core of our human experience.

Just like the living God we worship, Ste-Genny's is a living congregation! We are no dusty fake plant, unchanged and unchanging. We are a living entity, ever changing, dying back, and growing at the same time, all the while experiencing friendship, grief and joy together in the presence of the Holy One.

This Advent season, I invite you to embrace life and in all of its messiness, supported by the friendship of this congregation and the love of God.

Rev. Joëlle





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## Up-Coming Events

### Regular activities:

- **Choir Practice** every Wednesday at 7 pm (new singers are welcome).
- **Wayfarers** reading club Mondays from 12 to 1:30 pm  
(On pause from December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>)
- **Men's luncheon** at La Résidence on the 3rd Thursday of every month (Nov. 16, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>) at 12 pm. Reserve yours spot with Bob Skene.
- **Worship at the Cambridge** residence every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month (December 6<sup>th</sup>) at 2 pm in the movie room.
- **Ladies' luncheon** at Marathon on Thursday December 7<sup>th</sup> at 12 pm.

### Advent and Christmas Activities

- **Year B for Banana!** Sunday, November 26 is the last Sunday of year A. To celebrate the new lectionary year, children, their parents, and their helpers will gather in the kitchen at 9 am to bake banana muffins that will be shared with the congregation at the end of worship.  
**Call the church to register your child for this activity.**
- **Take out our Christmas tree and ornaments:** On November 26<sup>th</sup>, after worship (11:30).
- **Decorate the church and the Narthex:** Volunteers may pass by to decorate the church between 8:30 am and 2 pm on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.
- **Carols and Deserts:** Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6 pm to 9 pm, come to the sanctuary to decorate the Christmas tree, have fellowship with deserts and coffee and sing some Christmas Carols in a festive and relaxed atmosphere.
- **Christmas Eve:** On Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup>, there will be no service in the morning. We will start the celebration with carol singing at 6:30 pm, followed by worship at 7 pm.
- **Joint service:** On December 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 at Roxboro United Church (116 Rue Cartier, Roxboro, QC H8Y 1G8). There will be no service at Ste-Genny's that day.